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Nuclear Issues

1. Related News and Analysis

According to Bruce Riedel, a senior adviser to Bill Clinton, Pakistani army had mobilized its nuclear arsenal against India in July, 1999, without the knowledge of the then Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif. Writing in response to reports that Pakistan is planning missile tests, M. V. Ramana argues that such tests would only serve to increase tensions between Pakistan and India. Shaukat Qadir's article in the Daily Times argues that the real danger in South Asia is "that of a nuclear exchange through accidental use, unauthorized use, or through misperceptions." Columnist Praful Bidwai argues that there are "no worthy arguments" for India and Pakistan to keep their nuclear weapons.
"Army kept PM in dark"

Afghanistan

1. Current Situation

Unknown assailants fired two rockets at an airfield in eastern Afghanistan. Both US and British troops have launched new operations around Khost. At least 10 persons, reportedly participating in a wedding, were killed when a US warplane bombed a village in the eastern Afghan province of Khost. Afghan and coalition troops seized control of a local radio station in Khost from the supporters of warlord Padshad Khan. According to a spokesman for the British forces in Afghanistan, coalition forces have discovered another major ammunition and weaponry cache in eastern Afghanistan.
"Rockets land at US base in Afghanistan"
"US troops seize radio station"

Writer Ahmad Rashid reports that the US "is facing off against Iranians of all stripes" in western Afghanistan to the advantage of Ismail Khan, a warlord.

Reporter Rahimullah Yusufzai gives a brief background of the recently arrested former Taliban military commander Mulla Abdul Salam Rocketi.

2. Reconstruction

Afghan interim ruler Hamid Karzai is scheduled to hold talks with his Pakistani and Turkman counterparts about plans for building a pipeline to export oil and gas from Turkmenistan to the Indian sub-continent.
"Karzai to discuss pipeline project with Pakistan"

India-Pakistan Tensions

1. News

The murder of over thirty people in Jammu (see Kashmir section below) has heightened tensions

between India and Pakistan. India has asked Pakistan to recall its High Commissioner. There is concern that India might, among other actions, launch a limited strike across the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir. At least 12 people have been killed in heavy gunfire across the LoC. A Pakistan Foreign Office spokesperson has stated that in case of a military action by India, Pakistan will "hit back with full force." Unconfirmed reports indicate that the US might send Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage to the region. The just concluded visit of US Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca was apparently unsuccessful in reducing tensions between India and Pakistan.

2. Analysis

Atul Aneja of the daily Hindu reports that "India may not have the option of engaging Pakistan in a full-scale war." According to P. R. Chari India does not have a military strategy; "they do and say things ad hoc."
"Full-scale war not an option"

Pakistan

1. Pakistan: Domestic Situation

French experts investigating the recent bomb attack in Karachi that killed 11 French nationals believe that Islamic extremist in Pakistan carried out the attack. Pakistan Police has claimed that it has found a clue to the suspects allegedly involved in the suicide bombing. Over 400 people have so far been arrested in connection with the investigations. The government has started cracking down on militant Islamic groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba and has arrested its leader Hafiz Saeed. Many illegal, mostly Afghan, immigrants have also been arrested. Kamran Khan's report in the daily News indicates that there were serious lapses in security procedures for the French navy technicians working in Karachi.
"French expert sees domestic elements behind blast"
"Police looking for 3 suspects involved in blast"
"400 held in countrywide crackdown"
"Crackdown on illegal immigrants ordered"
According to a report in the daily News, President Musharraf told his federal cabinet that his "inner self is quite satisfied over the outcome of the referendum as [he] had not ordered such irregularities to be committed." The government has denied the validity of the report. M. P. Bhandara believes that "the referendum was institutionally rigged." Writing for the daily Dawn, Roedad Khan expresses his post-referendum disillusionment with President Musharraf. Afrasiab Khattak, the chief of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, warns that Musharraf's entrenchment in power will worsen human rights situation in the country.
"Referendum: the day after"
"Written in despair"
Khalid Ahmad of the Daily Times reviews stories and analysis carried by the Urdu press in Pakistan.

According to a report published by Madadgaar, a human rights organization, at least 143 children were murdered in Pakistan in the first four months of this year.

Frazana Bari's essay in the daily News examines the anti-women and oppressive nature of Pakistan's Hudood Laws.

2. Campaign Against al-Qaeda

The presence of Pakistani and US troops in Pakistan's federally administrated tribal agencies is causing resentment in the area. The US forces in the area have reportedly come under rocket attack. An unspecified number of people have been arrested in the area. The daily News reports that Pakistan has requested the US to avoid direct operations in the tribal areas.

The pan-Arab daily Asharq Al-Awsat published an unverified interview with the Taliban leader Mullah Omar. The interview was reprinted in Indian and Pakistani dailies. Rahimullah Yusufzai reports that the failed missile strike on, Gulbaddin Hekmatyar, a warlord, was "another case of poor CIA intelligence."

3. Daniel Pearl Case

Pakistani authorities have recovered a body believed to be of the slain Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl. Kamran Khan's report in the daily News details the events that led to the discovery of the body.
"Pearl's body recovered?"

India

1. India: Domestic Situation

Sporadic communal violence continued in Gujarat. An essay by Asghar Ali Engineer derives some hope from "examples of communal harmony in the midst of communal frenzy." In an essay that originally appeared in the daily Hindustan Times, Rajni Kothari argues that events in Gujarat have "led to a polarization that goes far beyond a mere Hindu-Muslim divide." Hemant Babu's essay in Frontline suggests that violence in Gujarat "is a consequence of the political recasting of social identities."

Kashmir

1. Internal Situation

Militant extremist in Jammu killed thirty people, most of them children. There were also other reports of violence and killing in Jammu and Kashmir. United Jihad Council, an alliance of militant Islamic groups, has pledged to continue the "armed struggle" until India "no longer occupy the land of Kashmir." Seema Guha's article in the daily Telegraph examines how the Indian authorities calculate figures of armed militants infiltrating into Kashmir.
"Kashmiri group vows to continue struggle"

Praveen Swami's essay in Frontline indicates that the All Parties Hurriyat Conference is split over whether or not to participate in September's State Assembly elections. Arati Jerath's article examines the links between the current India-Pakistan tensions and the upcoming elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

Regional News

1. Sri Lanka

J.N.Dixit, former Foreign Secretary of India, argues that "India must ...view the forthcoming negotiations [between the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE] with caution and limited optimism."

2. Nepal

The Communist Party of Nepal has declared a temporary unilateral ceasefire in both Nepal and India.

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org