# SANDNet Weekly Update, May 18, 2003

## Recommended Citation

SANDNet, "SANDNet Weekly Update, May 18, 2003", SANDNet, May 18, 2003,
https://nautilus.org/sandnet/sandnet-weekly-update-may-18-2003/

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## Nuclear Issues

### 1. Related News and Analysis

India's Prime Minister Vajpayee stated that the US has a policy of international double standards towards states engaged in nuclear proliferation. The Daily Times (Pakistan) notes that the US has made "has made a hash of the multilateral arms control and nonproliferation agenda." Reports indicate that India's nuclear-capable 700-km- range Agni-I ballistic missile is ready for induction into the armed forces.

Jasjit Singh (Indian Express) argues that five years after its first nuclear tests, India now has "a credible limited deterrent" vis-à-vis Pakistan. Praful Bidwai (News, Pakistan) writes that "the social, economic and political impact of going nuclear has been grim, [and] in some respects, disastrous." Ramachandra Guha (Telegraph, India) remembers C. Rajagopalachari, one of India's early anti-nuclear campaigner.

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## Afghanistan

### 1. Current News

Farangis Najibullah reports that nepotism and cronyism in rampant in the Afghan government. The Daily Times (Pakistan) reports on the reemergence of the Taliban in Khandahar. Several hundred Afghans staged a demonstration in Kabul against President Hamid Karzai's offer of amnesty to some members of the ousted Taliban regime. The daily Dawn (Pakistan) reports that US planes bombed a house in eastern Afghanistan after a militiaman was killed and a US soldier wounded in an ambush by suspected Taliban fighters. More people were killed in fighting between rival Afghan factions. "US planes bomb Taliban fighters"

### 2. Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations

Prime Minister Zafarullah Jamali reportedly ordered the release of all Afghan nationals held in Pakistani jails for violating entry laws. Haji Mangal Hussain, the minister for overseas Afghans, met with Maulana Fazlur Rehman, a leader of Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) - an alliance of six Islamic parties. MMA does not recognize President Hamid Karzai's government. The Daily Times reports on tensions at the "Gate Of Friendship" - two large ochre arches covered in blue tiles - between the border towns of Chaman in Pakistan and Spin Boldak in Afghanistan that was suppose to formalize what has always been an informal border.

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## India-Pakistan Peace Initiative

### 1. News

India's External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha has stated that "every step [of the peace process] is clear in our mind." An Indian government official stated that Pakistan will need to take "several specific steps" before "meaningful talks" is possible. US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, who recently visited India and Pakistan, is "cautiously optimistic" about the prospects of peace between the two neighbors but warned that "a lot of work" remains to be done. Replying to questions on Indo-Pak ties in the Lok Sabha (lower house of the Parliament), Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee indicated, among other things, that the US war on Iraq contributed towards his decision to extend a 'hand of friendship' to Pakistan. Both India and Pakistan have named their High Commissioners for each other's country. A number of Pakistani members of the Parliament visited India. Some Indian prisoners have also been released from Pakistani jails.
"Dialogue will begin at appropriate time: Sinha"
"Can whoever says J&K will go live here?"
"Pak. to free prisoners "

Indian and Pakistan newspapers had different understanding of Vajpayee's statement that elimination of cross-border infiltration is "not a condition... it is necessary." Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf has assured the US that any terrorist camps in Pakistan controlled Kashmir ''would be gone tomorrow,'' though at the same time he claimed there were no such camps.
"Terrorism must end for talks, says PM"
"No preconditions for talks: Delhi"
"Terror camps to go tomorrow, but there aren't any: Musharraf"

Both India and Pakistan have stated their preference for 'composite' talks though with different emphasis on the centrality of the Kashmir dispute. A US based Indian newspaper reported that the US has its own road map for the peace process.
"New Delhi offers '97 format for talks: Security and Kashmir top agenda"

The annual meeting of the Indus Water Commissioners of Pakistan and India has been convened by the Indian Commissioner in New Delhi. The Daily Times (Pakistan) gives a brief account of the treaty and suggests that a quick resolution of disputes over the treaty will help the peace process.
"Indus water officials to meet on 28th"
"Pakistan demands neutral expert: Water dispute with India"

**2. Opinions and Analysis**

General Aslam Beg - Pakistan's former Chief of Army Staff - believes that "India-Pakistan stand-off 2002 and America's War on Iraq have contributed to peace initiative on Kashmir." Khalid Mahmud Arif - retired general of the Pakistan army - states that "domestic compulsions, external diplomatic pressures and Pakistan's refusal to be blackmailed by India's 'pre-emption daydream' prompted Prime Minister to initiate peace talks with Pakistan. Lt. Gen VR Raghavan - former Director General Military Operations for the Indian army - feels that "neither India nor Pakistan is willing or in a position to undertake a substantive set of initiatives towards resolving the Jammu and Kashmir issue." Karl F. Inderfurth - former US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs - stresses that India and Pakistan need to "formulate a longer-term path to resolving the [Kashmir] dispute."
"Peace prospects in S. Asia"
"Reality check on J&K"
"A ray of hope"

Articles by Pervez Hoodbhoy, M.P. Bhandara and Zubeida Mustafa urge the Pakistani government to realize that there are no military solutions to the Kashmir dispute and to rethink its Kashmir policy. Ahmad Faruqui (Daily Times, Pakistan) notes that changing his Kashmir's policy will be "formidable task" for General Musharraf who had stated earlier this year that "Kashmir runs in our blood."

"It's time to rethink Kashmir"
"Truth, realism and Kashmir"
"What next in Kashmir?"

Rajesh Rajagopalan (Hindu, India) argues that "far from stabilising the India-Pakistan relationship, the dynamic of the triangular relationship between India, Pakistan and the U.S. will only damage these relations." Bharat Bhustan (editor of the daily Telegraph, India, and a regular contributor to Daily Times, Pakistan) believes that "only the US can push the essentially military establishment in Pakistan to settle its outstanding disputes with India."
"The U.S. and the South Asia tangle"

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**Pakistan**

**1. News**

The 11-member government-opposition committee, grappling with the Legal Framework Order (LFO) which gives military political power, has reportedly formulated its recommendations. There is, however, little indication that General Musharraf which allow significant changes in the LFO. Rauf Klasra (News, Pakistan) reports that the MMA has offered to accept President Pervez Musharraf as the Army chief for two more years.

President George Bush is scheduled to meet President Pervez Musharraf in Camp David on June 24. Pakistan is seeking a $1 billion aid package from the US. Commenting on US relations with Musharraf's government, Asma Jahangir, Pakistan's leading human rights activist, sharply criticizes the US for ignoring democratic and human rights abuses in Pakistan. Thousands of tenants of military farms at Okara have been protesting attempts by the military to evict them (by changing their status to day-laborers) from the lands they have occupied for almost a century.
"Bush to meet Musharraf in Camp David"

According to the General Secretary Pakistan Medical Association, more than 20,000 women die in the country during the pregnancy and the maternity process every year.

The government of Pakistan controlled Kashmir prohibited Maulana Masood Azhar, leader of the outlawed religio-political group Jaish-e-Mohammed, from entering its territory. Azher, reportedly, defied the ban. A number of gas stations in Karachi were attacked with locally made explosive devices. A little know group calling itself Muslim United Army has taken the responsibility for the blasts.
"Masood's entry into AJK banned"

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**India**

**1. India: Domestic Situation**

During the meeting of the Inter-State Council's standing committee, States' representatives expressed reservations about New Delhi's right to unilaterally deploy armed forces in the States. The Women's Reservation Bill 1999 which seeks to reserve one-third of the seats in the Lok Sabha and the state Assemblies for women has once again been deferred. Manjo Mitta (Indian Express) reports that a Bill concerning political defection law introduced in the Parliament avoids the

recommendations of the Constitution Review Commission.
"Centre, States differ on deployment of troops"
"Bill ends up in cold storage again"
"How reform Bill was tailored to suit Govt size"

In a two-part essay on the Hindu-Muslim question, Asghar Ali Engineer writes that "what is needed is not an apology from Indian Muslims but a check on communal forces that misuse history." A statement by members of the National Campaign for the People's Right to Information criticizes attempts at silencing dissenting voices in India.
"Harsh treatment"

Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar (Hindu, India) reports on growing manifestations of urban anger.
"Rotting cities, rising rage"

India conducted multiple test of its short-range Astra air-to-air missile. Essays in Hindustan Times and the daily Hindu take a skeptical view of 'made in India' billing of Tejas, a light combat aircraft.
"Test-fired for third time"
"Technology development, credibility and economics"

### 2. Foreign Relations

Robert D. Blackwill, who recently resigned as the US ambassador to India, writes that Indo-US relationship - including defense cooperation - is "rapidly growing." Rahul Bedi (Frontline, India) examines the history of India-US defense relations and suggests that there are "fundamental differences in approach, perspective and emphasis" that can hamper the development of such relations.
"U.S.-India defence cooperation"

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## Kashmir

### 1. Domestic News

The daily Times of India reports that Indian security forces are engaged in one of the biggest counter-insurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Political violence continues to claim more lives in J&K.
"Nine killed in Valley"
"Four Indian soldiers, 10 fighters die in Kashmir"
"Commando among six killed in Kashmir"

J&K chief minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed has stated his preference for a 'soft border' between the Indian and Pakistani controlled parts of Kashmir. Praveen Swami (Frontline) believes that the economic package Prime Minister Vajpayee promised J&K "may prove illusory."

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## Sri Lanka

### 1. Peace Talks

Essays by S. Sambandan and V. Suryanarayan in Frontline magazine examine the ongoing peace

talks between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Ramachandra Guha (Himal, Nepal) examines the relationship of Tamils living in Switzerland with the LTTE.

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**Region - General**

**1. US Role**

Achin Vanaik (Hindu, India) argues that it is in India's interest to resist the unilateralist policies of the US and help build a multipolar world. Ameen Izzadeen (Daily Mirror, Sri Lanka) believes that the US involvement in the current peace process is "aimed at improving its tarnished global image." C.K. Lal (Himal, Nepal) writes that "Islamabad and New Delhi may resume their relationship [with the US] without the Marines barging in, but the Marines may yet come if the South Asian elite refuses to be assimilated in the society that has put it in a position of power."
"Resisting hegemony"

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