

# SANDNet Weekly Update, May 24, 2002

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## Nuclear Issues

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## 1. Related News and Analysis

Pakistan will conduct a series of tests of its nuclear capable surface-to-surface missiles from May 25 to 28. The US government has expressed its "disappointment" at the decision while India has dismissed the planned tests as "antics." According to a report in the New Scientist magazine at least 3 million people would be killed in a limited nuclear war between India and Pakistan. M.V. Ramana's essay in the Daily Times argues that "nuclear weapons are not to be relied on to keep the peace" between India and Pakistan.

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## Afghanistan

### 1. Current Situation

There were reports of fighting between rival warlords and attempted attacks on coalition forces operating in Afghanistan. General John McColl, the British commander of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), has expressed concern that there will be an "increase in the level of terrorism" in the country. Sami Yousafzai reports that the Afghanistan's Interim government is under extreme pressure by the people of southern Afghan provinces to release arrested Taliban soldiers. Iranian state radio has claimed that the US forces are setting up a military base near Iran's eastern border.

["Afghan clashes claim six lives"](#)

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## India-Pakistan Tensions

### 1. News

Pakistan and India have moved dangerously close to a war. There are some indications, however, that the tensions might be easing slightly. Pakistan has recalled its peace keeping troops stationed in Sierra Leone, but it is not clear if the troops currently deployed along the Afghanistan border have been moved to the eastern front. In a bid to diffuse the situation, the US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage is due to leave for South Asia on July 4. Writing for Asia Times, Saleem Shahzad suggests that Indian troops are planning intense operations against militants groups in the Indian controlled Jammu and Kashmir. An Indian government official has threatened to stop the flow of river water into Pakistan. Thousands of people have reportedly fled from the border regions of Jammu and Kashmir. There have also been reports of a number of civilian casualties as a result of continuing cross-border shelling by the two armies.

["Pakistan, India close to war, says Musharraf"](#)

["Armitage coming on 6th"](#)

["Delhi sets war sights on Indian-held Kashmir"](#)

["India threatens to scrap Indus Treaty"](#)

["Five more die in Indian firing"](#)

### 2. Analysis

Zulfiqar Ahmad of the Nautilus Institute argues that religious fundamentalist groups on both sides of the India-Pakistan border stand to gain from another war. Writing for the daily Hindu, Kuldip Nayar underscores the urgent need to resolve the Kashmir issue while stating that India has "no policy on Kashmir." Sudhi Ranjan Sen's essay in the daily Hindustan Times suggests that jihadi groups may

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not be under President Musharraf's control anymore. V.R. Raghavan's essay states that by not defining its strategic goals India has "driven itself into an unenviable dilemma on going to war." An editorial in the daily Hindu argues that "it is clear that war is no option." C. Rammanohar Reddy's article in the daily Hindu states that the "twin notions of an 'affordable war' and a 'limited war' are oxymorons."

["Nuclear Shadow Falls on Kashmir"](#)

["How far is India willing to go?"](#)

["War is no option"](#)

["The road to ruin"](#)

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## **Pakistan**

### **1. Pakistan: Domestic Situation**

In his report for the daily News, Kamran Khan suggests that "major Pakistani cities may soon witness more suicidal attacks against the westerners and key government personalities." Foreign embassies have started to pull out their staff. President Musharraf has reportedly approved new measures against the five banned extremist Islamic groups.

["Australians asked to leave Pakistan"](#)

Ahmad Rashid's essay in the Far Eastern Economic Review examines the increasingly precarious position of President Musharraf.

In an essay for Asia Times, Ahmad Faruqi examines Pakistan-China relationship and points out the limits of China's support for President Musharraf's government.

["China card could yet trump Musharraf"](#)

### **2. Campaign Against al-Qaeda**

Pakistani security forces reportedly recovered six rockets from near a military base in Sindh that is being used by the US forces. Rumors are circulating in Pakistani dailies that US-British search operations in eastern Afghanistan are aimed at locating some missing members of the US Special Forces.

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## **India**

### **1. India: Domestic Situation**

A two-part report in the daily Hindu examines the plight of women victims of the communal riots in Gujarat.

["The women in Gujarat's camps - I"](#)

["The women in Gujarat's camps - II"](#)

Writing for the daily Hindustan Times, Rajini Kothari explores the ways in which "the tendency towards polarisation which is tearing society apart" can be reversed. Imtaiz Ahmad's essay in the daily Hindu looks at the erosion of secularism in India.

["Secularism, Hindus and Muslims"](#)

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The Indian air force has named Air Marshal A. R. Gandhi as the new Chief of the Western Air-Command.

["New chief for Western Air Command"](#)

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## **Kashmir**

### **1. Internal Situation**

The senior All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leader Abdul Gani Lone was shot dead in Srinagar by unidentified gunmen.

["Hurriyat leader Lone assassinated in Srinagar"](#)

Riyaz Punjabi and Amitabh Mattoo remember Lone as a secular and moderate Kashmiri Nationalist. Mattoo writes that "the challenge for all Kashmiris [will be] to translate the political legacy of Lone into a mass movement for peace." In an interview published by the daily Times of India, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, a Hurriyat leader, also remember Lone. The daily India Express published a brief history of the Hurriyat and its key players.

["A voice of the Kashmiri people"](#)

Victoria Schofield writes in the daily Dawn that "the valley of Kashmir is still a sad place."

["The sad face of Kashmir"](#)

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