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## CONTENTS

**November 14, 2001**

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### Nuclear Issues

1. Al-Qaeda Nuclear Capability
2. Pakistan Nuclear Safety
3. India Nuclear Safety
4. Related News and Analysis

### Afghanistan War and Implications

1. Afghanistan: Current Situation
2. Afghanistan: Future Prospects
3. Humanitarian Crisis
4. Pakistan
5. India
6. United States' Role
7. General Assessments

### Pakistan

1. Pakistan Domestic Situation
2. India-Pakistan Relations
3. U.S.-Pakistan Relations

### India

1. India Domestic Situation
2. Pakistan-India Relations

### Kashmir

1. Internal Situation
2. United States' Role

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## **Nuclear Issues**

### **1. Al-Qaeda Nuclear Capability**

Hamid Mir, editor of Islamabad based Urdu Daily 'Ausaf', interviewed Osama bin Laden on November 7. During the interview, bin Laden claimed that his organization has acquired nuclear and biological weapons. The complete transcript of the interview was published in Dawn, Pakistan. Osama bin Laden's claim elicited different responses from Islamabad and Washington.

An unnamed Pakistani government official told Reuter news agency that two retired Pakistani nuclear scientists had met Bin Laden at least twice in Afghanistan's southern city of Kandahar. An unconfirmed report in The Frontier Post, a Peshawar based Pakistani daily newspaper, has claimed that Al-Qaeda may have successfully transported "several nuclear, biological and chemical weapons" to the United States.

### **2. Pakistan Nuclear Safety**

In an interview with Ted Koppel of ABC Television, President Pervez Musharraf revealed that Pakistan's nuclear weapons are "not in a condition in which a button has to be pressed to fire them." Dr. Hasan Askari Rizvi traces the history of international concern about the security of Pakistan's nuclear program.

### **3. India Nuclear Safety**

A P J Abdul Kalam, often referred to as the father of India's nuclear program, stated that "every weapon is made not for storing but for deployment." He was speaking to Indian media and defense research communities.

### **4. Related News and Analysis**

The United States has refused to attend the conference on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The U.S. Senate has not ratified the CTBT, signed by former President Bill Clinton in 1996.

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## **Afghanistan War and Implications**

### **1. Afghanistan: Current Situation**

Talking to a press agency, Pakistani journalist Hamid Mir recounted his personal impressions of Osama bin Laden.

The Northern Alliance forces ignored pressure from Pakistan and the United States to stay out of Kabul, and entered the city on Tuesday. Responding to the capture of Kabul, aides to former Afghan King Zahir Shah expressed concern that the Northern Alliance's entry into Kabul may make the formation of a broad based government in Afghanistan difficult.

### **2. Afghanistan: Future Prospects**

Writing for The News, a Pakistani daily, commentator Umer Farooqi has suggested that "in the fast-changing scenario of Afghanistan, most of the options, including the one aimed at bringing Zahir Shah into power, for a broad-based post-Taliban government are losing relevance."

Iran's President Mohammad Khatami has warned that the anti-terror campaign, if conducted incorrectly, may lead to the expansion of terrorism. He also underlined the need for a "civilizational dialogue".

Asia Times columnist Pepe Escobar argues that the Northern Alliance victory is "the beginning of the balkanization of Afghanistan."

### **3. Humanitarian Crisis**

Pakistan has again announced its opposition to the idea of opening its border with Afghanistan to allow Afghan refugees to enter the country. So far Pakistan has only allowed women, children and the sick to cross into Pakistan for shelter.

Writing for the Newsline Magazine, Pakistan, Massoud Ansari describes the conditions in Afghan refugee camps.

### **4. Pakistan**

A number of pro-Taliban Pakistani fighters were reportedly killed in Mazar-i-Sharif while fighting Northern Alliance forces. Responding to the fall of Taliban from Kabul, the Pakistani government has called for an international force to take over the city.

Speaking to the United Nations General Assembly, President Pervez Musharraf outlined his government's view of the political strategy that would best serve the interests of Afghanistan and the region.

### **5. India**

Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee has indicated his government's openness to accepting a future Afghan government that may include "liberal" Taliban as long as "the Taliban, as a name" is not used in any "new dispensation."

### **6. United States' Role**

In an interview with a Saudi newspaper, Arab News, the former Saudi intelligence chief Prince Turki Al-Faisal gave details of the arrangement between the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan to supply the Afghan Mujahideens with weapons to support Afghan resistance against the Soviet invasion.

### **7. General Assessments**

Rahimullah Yusufzai, a reporter for the British Broadcasting Service, has met Osama bin Laden on a few occasions. He wrote a short biography, and his personal impressions of the man, for the Pakistani magazine Newsline.

Writer A.H. Amin argues that many "myths and misconceptions" about Afghan military history have gained credence because of the war. He goes on to presents a short military history of Afghanistan.

Writing for The Hindu, India, Manabi Majumdar suggests that "peace activism" is the most effective course of action for preventing the "carnage being perpetrated by either rogue 'warlords' or 'rogue states.'"

In an essay published in Dawn, Pakistani writer and scholar, Shahid Javed Burki argues that Pakistan must fight on two fronts simultaneously; "on the battlefield and in the cities, towns and villages on both sides of the Pak-Afghan border. The other war must involve economic development, social improvement and nation-building in both Afghanistan and in the Pakistani areas along the border."

## **1. Pakistan Domestic Situation**

Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf has taken a public stand against the more militant Islamic madressahs (schools). He has also indicated his intentions to stay as the president of the country after the scheduled general elections in October 2002. Meanwhile, the Pak-Afghan Defense Council, an alliance of militant Islamic parties, has announced plans for more anti-government demonstrations in the country.

In his essay for The Nation, Pakistan, political commenter Mushahid Hussain discusses major re-alignments in domestic politics following the "U-turn in Pakistan's Afghan policy."

## **2. India-Pakistan Relations**

Speaking at the United Nations, President Pervez Musharraf has indicated his government's willingness to formalize a nuclear test ban treaty with India. Meanwhile, there were reports of clashes between Indian and Pakistani forces in the remote northern area of Siachen.

## **3. U.S.-Pakistan Relations**

Pakistani media have reported general disappointment with the U.S. aid package for the economic reconstruction of the country. President Pervez Musharraf has also expressed his disappointment at the United States' refusal to release F-16 fighter planes to Pakistan.

The United States and the United Kingdom have asked Pakistan to facilitate the immediate establishment of a 24-hour information center in Islamabad.

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## **India**

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

Two former Indian Chief Justices have opposed the promulgation of the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance (POTO).

### **2. Pakistan-India Relations**

Indian army officials have suggested that the possibility of a war between India and Pakistan cannot be ruled out.

An editorial in The Hindu, an Indian daily, criticized India for its "disinclination to engage Pakistan bilaterally" and therefore giving "the propaganda advantage" to General Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan.

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## **Kashmir**

### **1. Internal Situation**

Amid reports of continuing violence in the valley, The All Parties Hurriyat Conference has called for a ceasefire by all groups, including the Indian forces and the Mujahideen, in Kashmir.

### **2. United States' Role**

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell has ruled out mediation between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir Conflict.

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Nautilus Institute

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

[nautilus@nautilus.org](mailto:nautilus@nautilus.org)