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LATEST REPORT **November 24, 2003** **Volume 4, #22**

[Nuclear Issues](#)

1. [Pakistan Nuclear Program](#)
2. [Analysis](#)

[Afghanistan](#)

1. [News & Reports](#)
2. [Pakistan and Taliban](#)
3. [Opinions & Analysis](#)

[India-Pakistan Tensions](#)

1. [News & Reports](#)
2. [Opinions & Analysis](#)

[Pakistan](#)

1. [Law & Order](#)
2. [Ban on Militant Groups](#)
3. [US-Pakistani Relations](#)
4. [Foreign Affairs](#)

[India](#)

1. [Law & Order](#)
2. [Indo-US Relations](#)
3. [Sino-Indian Relations](#)
4. [Russo-Indian Relations](#)
5. [Foreign Affairs](#)

[Jammu & Kashmir \(J&K\)](#)

1. [News & Reports](#)
2. [Talks with Indian Central Government](#)
3. [Opinions & Analysis](#)

[Sri Lanka](#)

1. [News and Reports](#)
-

Nuclear Issues

1. Pakistan Nuclear Program

The US Intelligence Agency (CIA) released a report that alluded to Sino-Pakistani nuclear cooperation, despite Chinese assurance to the contrary. China denied the accusations, and stated that all nuclear collaboration "is only limited to nuclear power plant and has been under safeguard and monitoring of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)."

["CIA sees China, Pakistan N-link"](#)

["China denies support to Pakistan's N-plan"](#)

Pakistan rejected a Times of London report that IAEA has cited Pakistan as the source of centrifuge technology and uranium enrichment equipment to Iran. The Daily Times calls on the US to "take the lead in changing the weather rather than forcing some [Iran] to undress in winters." Anwar Syed (Dawn, Pakistan) notes that "Pakistan's open-ended pledge of cooperation with the [US] is liable to strain its ties with Iran, and Pakistani measures calculated to develop any real closeness with Iran will be unwelcome in [the US]."

["The ebb and tide of it"](#)

2. Analysis

G. Parthasarathy (Indian Express, India) examines the possibility of a nuclear nexus between Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and China. Zawar Haider Abidi (Stimson Institute) proposes that India and Pakistan should work towards an agreement leading to the demilitarization of the Siachen Glacier, the formation of a Joint Consultative Group, and the establishment of low military zones or no military zones.

Afghanistan

1. News & Reports

A US military spokesman stated that "We don't have any timetable, but if the militants decide to give up tomorrow, we will stop tomorrow and if they continue we will continue." President Hamid Karzai said that he expects "accelerated" attacks from militants as the Loya Jirga (scheduled for December 10) approaches. Three US soldiers were killed in the province of Kunar when their car drove over a landmine. Afghan forces killed four alleged militants in an attack in the province of Khost. At least five civilians were reportedly killed in a US-led air strike in Barmal district, near the province of Paktika on Afghanistan's southeastern border with Pakistan. Coalition forces fired on a pickup truck,

killing six people.

["Afghan troops kill four suspected Taliban"](#)

["Five killed in US air strike in Afghanistan"](#)

Unidentified gunmen, believed to be Taliban, killed a French United Nations (UN) worker in Ghazni, less than a week after a bombing in front of the UN offices in Kandahar. Consequently, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) decided to ground its staff and temporarily close its voluntary repatriation centers until "until the security situation is clarified."

["Deadly attack against refugee workers"](#)

["UN suspends DPs' repatriation"](#)

["UNHCR to close repatriation centres"](#)

2. Pakistan and Taliban

During a recent speech at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (link to text below) in Washington DC, Afghan Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah said that "Taliban will not be able to operate inside Afghanistan without support from some elements outside Afghanistan," implicating Pakistan's hand in the Taliban resurgence. Pakistani officials expressed dismay over the accusations. Dawn (Pakistan) also criticized the minister's comments, concluding that they "serve to complicate rather than help matters" of mutual trust building. Commenting about Abdullah's claims, a US State Department spokesperson said, "Obviously, everything is not perfect, but the intent and effort is commendable."

["Abdullah's allegations"](#)

["US praises Pakistan's anti-terror fight"](#)

3. Opinions & Analysis

The daily Jang reports that some former fighters in the city of Gardez surrendered their arms under a UN-brokered disarmament initiative. A survey by the Human Rights and Advocacy Consortium, a group of 12 Afghan and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), found that Afghan citizens desire security and disarmament of armed groups in their country above all else. The Daily Times (Pakistan) urges the US to "play a more assertive role in the power struggle [between various war lords] within Afghanistan."

["Afghanistan: renewed instability?"](#)

India-Pakistan Relations

1. News & Reports

Indian Prime Minister (PM) Atal Behari Vajpayee stated that Pakistan must "break all bonds with terrorism if it wants a friendship with India." The Pakistani Foreign Secretary said that both countries need to use their "precious resources to address their development needs and to give a hopeful tomorrow to their people who remain mired in poverty." On his visit to the US, he also expressed concern over recent Indian arms deals. Pakistan offered to start talks with India to reopen the Khokrapar border (between Sindh and Rajasthan) to run a bus service. The Hindu (India) reports that the Indian Coast Guard is considering maritime confidence-building measures (CBMs), such as common fishing zones.

["US alerted on arms deals by India"](#)

["Steps planned to reduce tension with Pak. in the sea"](#)

2. Opinions & Analysis

A.G. Noorani (Hindustan Times, India) argues that the "real worth" of South Asian think tanks "lies in educating the people about the truths they need to know." Anil Bhat (Indian Express, India) believes that popular desires for peace "do not feature on Musharraf's or the Pakistani army's agenda." In the Daily Times (Pakistan), Shaukat Qadir argues that "unless some very powerful economic reasons emerge for India to become more flexible," any peace initiative between India and Pakistan will remain cosmetic in nature.

["Conflict resolution"](#)

Pakistan

1. Law & Order

Pakistani security forces arrested 60 Afghan nationals for illegally trying to cross the border. Police in Quetta detained nearly 200 Afghans in connection with several bomb blasts throughout the city.

["60 Afghan nationals arrested"](#)

Zulfiqar Khosa, a Pakistan Muslim League (L) politician believes that the Legal Framework Order (LFO) poses a more serious threat to the country than India. The Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA) has again threatened direct against the LFO.

["LFO more serious threat than India: Khosa"](#)

Ahmad Naeem Khan (OneWorld, UK) reports that Pakistan's proposed new law to regulate its seminaries [madrassas] faces opposition from the mullahs, but the government's approach has succeeded in sending foreign Islamic students home.

2. Ban on Militant Groups

The US Ambassador to Pakistan stated that the US is "particularly concerned that these banned organizations are re-establishing themselves with new names." Several days later, Pakistan banned three militant groups and began freezing assets, raiding offices, and arresting leaders. The banned militant groups are the Islami Tehrik-e-Pakistan (ITP) -- formerly Tehrik-e-Jafria (TeJ), Millat--Islamia Pakistan (MIP) -- formerly Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), and Khudamul Islam (KI) -- formerly Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM). The MMA, which counts the ITP as a member of its coalition, chose to defy the ban, claiming that "the ban on parties [is] an attempt to please the US." The US called the ban a "welcome step."

["Raids continue"](#)

["MMA to defy ban on outfits"](#)

["US welcomes move"](#)

Several Pakistani papers ran editorials challenging the long-term consequences of Pakistan's latest clampdown on militant organizations. Jang believes that it will take more than law enforcement to halt the "growth industry" that is terrorism: Pakistan must "eliminate the causes that encourage people to opt for a violent solution. Both economic factors and the overall social and political milieu breed extremism." The Daily Times points out that unless Pakistan checks the Islamist organizations "Pakistan will neither have true democracy nor function economically well enough to take its masses out of the morass of poverty." The Kashmiri Daily Excelsior blames Pakistan for pushing "the terrorists across the Line of Control into [Kashmir] to destroy its rich cultural ethos." The editorial also notes Pakistan has not yet banned the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) -- or its new incarnation, the

Jamat-ul-Dawa (JuD).

["Deeds not words"](#)

3. US-Pakistani Relations

Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed stated that "there is no question of [the US Federal Bureau of Investigation] interfering with our internal affairs." Syed Saleem Shahzad (Asia Times, Hong Kong) chronicles the FBI's counterinsurgency efforts, however, claiming that the FBI's larger role in operations weakens Musharraf's credibility in upholding Pakistan's part in the War on Terror. An MMA leader alleged that the US CIA planned to attack Iran in 2004 using Balochistan's territory. A Daily Times (Pakistan) report claims that US jet fighters momentarily entered the Pakistani airspace of the Mohmand Agency, for the first time in two years. The US has allocated \$95 million for Pakistan to import agricultural commodities in the public and private sectors.

["Pakistan struggles to keep its end up"](#)

["US wants to attack Iran from Balochistan"](#)

["American planes enter Pakistan"](#)

A Jang (Pakistan) report follows fifteen Pakistanis recently released from the Guantanamo Bay prison. One former prisoner, against whom no charges were filed, stated that "I now intend to preach Islam with a greater zeal than before." An editorial in the same paper calls upon the government "to take up the case of the remaining Pakistani detainees on a humanitarian basis" since keeping the detainees "locked up will serve no purpose except possibly gratify America's burning desire for revenge."

4. Foreign Affairs

The MI5 agent who exposed the alleged British bugging at a Pakistani embassy has reportedly fled to South Asia, and is threatening to reveal more details about the aborted spy operation. Pakistan's security forces are on high alert after intelligence reports following two explosions at synagogues in Turkey. Pilots of an unnamed international airline refused to fly Pakistanis who were being deported out of Sri Lanka for visa expiration, since police were unable to provide police escorts for every deportee. Dhaka and Islamabad began trade talks.

["Pakistan put on highest alert"](#)

India

1. Law & Order

Bihari students attacked several Assamese passengers traveling in Bihar. The attack was reportedly in retaliation for earlier attacks on Bihari students visiting Assam earlier this month for a railway recruitment test. Police have arrested several dozen suspects. Following the attacks, chief of the militant group, United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), has threatened "far reaching consequences" and warned all "Hindi-speaking" people (meaning Biharis) in the Northeast to leave the area unless the safety of the Assamese passengers is guaranteed. In retaliatory attacks, several Bihari students were attacked and suspected ULFA militants killed four Biharis at a truck stop. The All Assam Student Union (AASU) protested the attacks, forcing streets and shops to close, though no one was injured.

["Retaliatory attacks on Biharis"](#)

["ULFA kills 4 Bihari drivers"](#)

The Indian Express (India) released a video (available at the IE website) of the Environment Union Minister of State for Environment and Forests, Dilip Singh Judev, accepting cash from men who claimed they needed help in acquiring mining rights. Before being caught on tape saying, "Money isn't God but...it's no less than God," Judev was considered a strong candidate for Chief Minister (CM) of Chhattisgarh. Initially, Judev and other BJP party members denied the allegations and authenticity of the video, but a few days later, PM Vajpayee accepted Judev's resignation. The daily Hindu (India) believes that while the PM "did well to act quickly to limit the damage and not erode the people's confidence in the system of public accountability, the same cannot be said of Mr. Judev or the BJP."

["Caught on tape"](#)

["Judev quits"](#)

["Corruption on camera"](#)

Bharat Wariavwalla (Indian Express, India) calls Gujarati CM Narendra Modi "the new face of Hindutva nationalism," for his insistence that Muslims are "unpatriotic, fanatic, and socially backward." Seven improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were found in the walls of a temple in Gujarat. The daughter of a Manipuri minister was kidnapped and killed by unidentified militants.

2. Indo-US Relations

US defense companies have reportedly expressed interest in greater collaboration and joint development, which would require the relaxation of India's technology export controls. Arun Bhattacharjee (Asia Time, Hong Kong) chronicles the rise and fall of the Enron power project at Dabhol and concludes that "the government is unlikely to buckle under pressure [from foreign investors, such as General Electric, Bechtel, and Credit Suisse First Boston] as the interests of Indian investors -- around \$1.32 billion -- has to be taken into consideration for political, as well as economic, reasons." David Mulford, currently chairman of Credit Suisse First Boston in London, is slated to be the next US Ambassador to India.

["Mulford to be U.S. envoy"](#)

3. Sino-Indian Relations

P. K. Ghosh (Asia Times, Hong Kong) argues that China may respond to recent growth in Indo-US defense ties by engaging India in diplomatic and defense relations. Under Chinese guidance, an Indian military delegation will visit Tibet. Alka Acharya and G P Deshpande write in the Economic and Political Weekly (India) that a settlement of the border issue will emerge only when both countries supplant the "territorial imperative" with the "political imperative." The Chief Minister of Sikkim plans to approach the central government for economic assistance in reopening trade routes to China.

["Sikkim needs massive aid to facilitate trade with China"](#)

4. Russo-Indian Relations

The joint declaration by PM Vajpayee's and Russian President Vladimir Putin issued at the end of Vajpayee's visit to Russia included a nine-point plan to combat terrorism, particularly religious extremism. An editorial in the daily Hindu (India) states that India and Russia made this statement to distance "themselves from Washington's policy of tacking the terrorist label on to a country that it wants to attack for other reasons." Sergei Blagov (Asia Times, Hong Kong) details the plan for both countries to jointly pursue a space program, potentially sending a spacecraft to the moon together. Praveen Swami (Hindu) notes that India-Russia joint declaration condemning "double standards" in the United States' war against terrorism may have been provoked by the unhelpful attitude of the US in the ongoing investigation of the hijacking of the Indian Airlines flight in December 1999.

["Russia-India Joint Declaration"](#)

["Reaffirming a partnership"](#)

["India and Russia united in space"](#)

["U.S. unhelpful in hijack probe"](#)

5. Foreign Affairs

The Indian Express (India) believes that India's focus on Central Asia makes both strategic and economic sense, and is no longer engendered by India's relations with the Soviet Bloc. The Tajik president confirmed India's refurbishing of the Ayni air base while PM Vajpayee announced a \$40-million economic cooperation package for industrial and infrastructure projects. The daily Jang (Pakistan) deems the Ayni base as "the linchpin in this encirclement of Pakistan," and blames Pakistan foreign policy that makes possible "Indian inroad into Pakistan's backyard."

Firdaus Ahmed (India Together) argues that PM Vajpayee's pragmatism in dealing with China should be applied to relations with Pakistan, in the hopes of relieving a long-standing burden of residual nationalism. In regards to India's Afghan policy, M. K. Bhadrakumar (The Hindu, India) notes the BJP's desire for the total deconstruction of the Taliban and posits that "India cannot remain rooted to a dogmatic definition of the Taliban as Islam's uncompromising face." At an India-European Union (EU) summit later this month, India will likely pledge \$300 million towards the EU's Galileo project, an alternative to the US' Global Positioning System (GPS).

["A national confidence syndrome"](#)

["India's Afghan stakes"](#)

["India to pledge \\$300 million for European GPS"](#)

Jammu & Kashmir (J&K)

1. News & Reports

Ten people, including a Border Security Force (BSF) officer, were injured when militants detonated an explosives-laden vehicle, while in another strike militants threw a grenade onto the premises of a missionary school in the Kashmir valley, though no one was hurt. Militants shot another local People's Democratic Party (PDP) leader. Muzamil Jaleel (Indian Express, India) reports that the PDP leadership in Srinagar blames militants while the family suspects the hand of counter-insurgent agency Ikhwani. In a separate incident, militants from Al-Mansoorian attacked a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) post, killing an officer and two others. The attack is believed to be a warning for the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) members who are in the process of deciding their response to the Indian central government's offer of talks.

["Militants hurl grenade at J&K school"](#)

["Ultras send doves a reminder"](#)

A New York Times (US) report (republished in Dawn) notes Kashmiri political leaders' concern that human rights abuses by Indian security forces fuels militant insurgency in Kashmir. The daily Hindu (India) reports that cell phone jamming has been unsuccessful in the area in and around the Line of Control (LoC), permitting militants and smugglers to communicate more effectively.

["Cellphone jammers fail on Indo-Pak. border"](#)

2. Talks with Indian Central Government

The leader of the moderate faction of the APHC, Moulvi Abbas Ansari, said that a ceasefire was a

"political necessity" before the dialogue process could begin, while hardliner leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani said that the Center "should take steps to prove its sincerity" and "accept Kashmir as a disputed issue." The Kashmir Committee said in a statement that it "is unhappy about the unhelpful posture of Syed Ali Shah Geelani, leading to cleavage and break up of [APHC] into two." The Daily Excelsior (Kashmir) believes that, by offering diplomatic and moral support to Geelani's faction, Pakistan "has not hidden its intention to pat on the back of those who are out to pose problems for New Delhi."

["Ceasefire needed for talks: Ansari"](#)

3. Opinions & Analysis

While discussing the Simla Accord and UN resolutions on the Kashmir dispute, the Daily Times (Pakistan) describes India as "a recalcitrant big power that can buck international law with impunity" in a quarrel that has given "rise to two nationalist narratives" that clash. The Indian Express (India) maintains that "the problem is that unless there is some credible evidence beyond mere promises that Islamabad is willing to respect the provisions of previous agreements, entering into future dialogue appears meaningless."

Sri Lanka

1. News and Reports

Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Vidar Helgesen has stated that Norway will stay engaged with the peace process. G.H. Peiris (Outlook, India) reports that "opinion is growing in Sri Lanka that the Norwegians are not entirely impartial in their role as mediators." The Christian Science Monitor reports that despite the suspension of peace talks the Tamil Tigers has kept the ceasefire. V. Jayanth (Hindu) examines the history and power of Sri Lanka "Executive Presidency." Jayati Ghosh (Frontline, India) argues that, apart from the communal strife, Sri Lanka is "now being threatened by widespread unrest and popular dissatisfaction with the government's neoliberal economic strategy."

["We won't abandon peace process, says Helgesen"](#)

["Not So Black And White"](#)

["In Sri Lankan crisis, rebels lie low"](#)

["Sri Lanka's executive presidency"](#)

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