

# **SANDNet Weekly Update, November 26, 2001**

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## **Recommended Citation**

SANDNet, "SANDNet Weekly Update, November 26, 2001", SANDNet, November 26, 2001,  
<https://nautilus.org/sandnet/sandnet-weekly-update-november-26-2001/>

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## **Nuclear Issues**

### **1. News and Analysis**

At a meeting in New Delhi, India, European and Indian strategic analysts expressed concern about increased risks of nuclear terrorism.

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## **Afghanistan War and Implications**

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

Kunduz, the Taliban's last northern stronghold, fell to the Northern Alliance forces raising concerns about the fate of Taliban forces. The Northern Alliance president Burhanuddin Rabbani, however, has asked his militia not to kill surrendering foreign pro-Taliban fighters. Meanwhile, hundreds of foreign fighters captured in the siege of Kunduz were killed in a prison riot.

A report in the Pakistani daily The News suggests that tensions between the Uzbek warlord Abdul Rasheed Dostum and the Tajik commander Mohammad Daud - both part of the Northern Alliance - may have delayed the capture of Kunduz.

Former Afghan commanders and tribal elders belonging to six Pashtun populated provinces of Afghanistan have sent a delegation to the Taliban leaders in Kandahar asking for "surrender and hand over of power" to the tribal elders.

According to unconfirmed reports, the Northern Alliance President Burhanuddin Rabbani has gone off to Dubai on a secret mission.

Writing for the Pakistani daily The News, Pakistani journalist Rahimullah Yusufzai remembers the journalists recently killed in Afghanistan.

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

According to a report in the Pakistani daily The News, there is no outstanding Pashtun figure attending or being represented in the United Nation-sponsored conference to discuss the future political arrangements in Kabul. The conference is set to begin on November 27 in Bonn, Germany. There have been speculations that Hamid Karzai, former foreign minister of Afghanistan with royal family links and a respected Pashtun leader, might have an important position in transitional government. Meanwhile, Burhanuddin Rabbani, still officially the president of Afghanistan, has said that he would relinquish power if the talks in Germany are successful in naming a transitional leader.

### **3. Humanitarian Crisis**

According to the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees Ruud Lubbers between fifty to seventy percent of the inhabitants of many Afghan cities have fled to the countryside and the mountains. Pakistan, meanwhile, is close to establishing the first two camps inside the Afghan territory. A report carried by Pakistan News Service quoted an unnamed senior Pakistani government official as saying that Pakistan would start "sending the refugees home within the next

few weeks." The Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammedi (TNSM), a pro-Taliban militant group, has threatened to target non-Pashtun Afghan refugees if the Northern Alliance militia executes its members fighting along with the Taliban in Kunduz.

#### **4. Pakistan**

Pakistan government has ordered the closure of the Taliban embassy in Islamabad. A report in the Indian daily The Hindustan Times raised the possibility of meeting between Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf and the Northern Alliance President Burhanuddin Rabbani. Meanwhile, there have been reports that many Pakistani Jihadis who had joined the Taliban militia have been killed in Afghanistan.

The retreating Taliban fighters may have moved into Pakistan's tribal areas in the North West Frontier Province. A report in the Asia Times examines the situation in Pakistan's tribal areas.

#### **5. India**

Writing for the Indian magazine Frontline, John Cherain notes that "India is pleased" with the developments in Afghanistan and Pakistan's "consequent discomfiture" at the successful of the Northern Alliance.

#### **6. General Assessments**

Pakistani writers and columnists examine the meaning and possible implications of the 'war on terrorism'.

Essays in the Indian magazine Frontline and The Asia Times examine the uncertain future of a broad-based political arrangement in Kabul.

Writing for The Far Eastern Economic Review, author and journalist Ahmed Rashid argues that the Northern Alliance could "sink back" into war unless a new broad-based government is quickly formed in Kabul.

The Indian and Pakistani media has extensively reported Noam Chomsky's visit to the sub-continent.

Indian novelist Arundhati Roy discussed the war in Afghanistan in an interview given to The Far Eastern Economic Review.

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### **Pakistan**

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

Anti-government and pro-Taliban rallies were reported in various cities of Pakistan. The Pakistan government has reportedly ordered the immediate closure of all printing presses publishing anti-government posters. The Interior Minister Moinud Din Hiader has announced the establishment of several hundred new army posts to further secure Pakistan's Western border.

According to a report in the Pakistani daily Dawn, General Pervez Musharraf has decided to continue as the President of the country even after the planned October 2002 elections.

Writing for the Dawn, Pakistan, Rafi Raza, a retired senior Pakistani bureaucrat, argues that Pakistan must not wait for the "US policy to evolve or be spelt out"; rather, Pakistan should

immediately establish its own priorities.

In his essay for the Pakistani daily The News, Imtiaz Alam suggests that the fall of the Taliban has offered Pakistan's democratic forces an opportunity to "capture the centre-stage and win over the people to the side of a democratic Pakistan."

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

India and Pakistan blamed each other for initiating artillery exchange along the line of control. According to Gurbachan Jagat, the Director General of Border Security Force (BSF), India will complete fencing a 189-km stretch of its border with Pakistan in Kashmir by 2003.

In a press appearance with the visiting European Union delegation, President Pervez Musharraf stated that "Pakistan is ready to discuss every issue with India" but the "focus should be on Kashmir." Meanwhile, former Prime Minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto is on personal visit to India where she has met with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and other Indian leaders.

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

The Pakistani daily Dawn summarized a report published in the New York Times that indicated a growing sense among Pakistani officials that the United States has "failed to keep its side of the deal."

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## **India**

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

The Indian opposition parties are expected to challenge the proposed Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance (POTO) in the Parliament.

Vice-Admiral Madhvendra Singh and Air Marshal S. Krishnaswamy will assume charge of the Indian Navy and the Indian Air force ,respectively, in December.

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

There have been conflicting reports about the possibility of a meeting between the Indian Prime Minister Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee and the Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf. The two leaders are scheduled to attend the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit in January 2002 in Katmandu, Nepal. Kanti Bajpai, a columnist for The Hindu, believes that "the portents for India- Pakistan talks are not all bad."

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

Indian daily The Hindu reported that the United States might have offered to assist India in countering the infiltration of terrorists from across the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir.

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## **Kashmir**

## **1. Internal Situation**

Indian and Pakistani newspapers have reported continued violence in Jammu and Kashmir. Javed Mir, vice president of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) called upon India and Pakistan to "end hostilities and start a meaningful dialogue."

## **2. India and Pakistan**

Writing for the Pakistani daily Dawn, Indian journalist Kuldip Nayar suggests that the use of non-official negotiators by India and Pakistan would help in arriving at a bilateral settlement of the Kashmir problem. Meanwhile, during his visit to Pakistan, the British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw reaffirmed the willingness of the international community to assist in finding a bilateral solution to the Kashmir problem.

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Nautilus Institute

2342 Shattuck Ave. #300, Berkeley, CA 94704 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email:

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