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# SANDNet Weekly Update, October 8, 2003

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## Recommended Citation

SANDNet, "SANDNet Weekly Update, October 8, 2003", SANDNet, October 08, 2003,  
<https://nautilus.org/sandnet/sandnet-weekly-update-october-8-2003/>

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## **Nuclear Issues**

### **1. Pakistani Nuclear Issues**

Pakistan test-fired its indigenously developed short-range surface-to-surface missile Hataf- III, also known as Ghaznavi. India dismissed the tests as "nothing special." Pakistan also conducted a test of the nuclear-capable medium-range surface-to-surface missile Shaheen 1, its second test in less than a week. The Middle East Newline (Egypt) reports that Egypt and Pakistan signed an agreement to establish a \$1 million fund for joint research in nuclear technology and space.

### **2. US Reaction**

The US has pushed both India and Pakistan to renew the stalled peace process and to restrain their respective nuclear and missile programs. In response to recent Pakistani missile tests, State Department official Richard Boucher said that the "the initial reactions [to the test] are such that it doesn't seem to have heightened tensions in the region."

["US urges Pakistan, India to renew talks"](#)

### **3. Indian Nuclear Issues**

Defense Minister George Fernandes announced that India has established more than one nuclear control nerve center, while the Indian Air Chief said that the air force had begun work on a space platform for nuclear weapons. Sultan Shahin (Asia Times, Hong Kong) discusses nuclear cooperation and technology transfer between the US and India. G. Balachandran (Financial Express, India) writes that "India needs to examine the national security implications of Iran...going nuclear."

["US, India talk nuclear technology transfer"](#)

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## **Afghanistan**

### **1. News & Reports**

An explosion at a house outside the US base in Bagram killed at least seven and injured six others. One man reported having seen two children playing with small cluster bombs just before the blast occurred. About 50 suspected Taliban fighters attacked a government office in southern

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Afghanistan, sparking a shootout that left two Taliban dead and three wounded. Factional fighting continued between the mainly ethnic Tajik group, Jamiat, led by General Atta Mohammed, and the mainly Uzbek group, Junbish, led by Deputy Defense Minister Abdul Rashid Dostum. Dawn (Pakistan) reports that Taliban leader Mullah Omar's aid, Mullah Abdul Razzaq Nafees, has been killed.

["Taliban leader dies in clash"](#)

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) decided to extend the United Nations-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) beyond Kabul. Although the UN has yet to approve NATO's decision to extend the ISAF, the Security Council will send a diplomatic mission to Afghanistan in early November.

## **2. Analysis & Opinions**

In a commentary published by Foreign Policy in Focus (US), Sonali Kolhatkar recalls the Bush administration's stated policies and their effects two years on: "U.S.-backed warlords keep alive the Taliban's legacy." Reports from US military sources allege that the Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) is aiding the Taliban insurgency. Manjeet Kripalani (Indian Express, India) explores the possibility of Afghanistan's future as a democratic, free trade zone, with India and Dubai as role models for politics and economics, respectively.

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## **Pak-Afghan Border & Al Qaeda**

### **1. News & Reports**

The Pakistani Army killed at least 12 suspected al Qaeda militants and arrested 18 others during a major operation (named "Mizan") in the remote South Waziristan Agency, close to the Afghan border. A majority of the captured terrorists were Pakistanis and Afghans. There are reports that a number of civilians were killed during the search for al Qaeda operatives. The Pakistani Army also dismantled a terrorist training facility in the Northern Areas, in the Diamer district.

["Diamer terrorist camp dismantled"](#)

During his visit to Kabul, US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage praised Pakistan's "tremendous effort" in launching a major operation against the Taliban and Al Qaeda militants near the Afghanistan border. US special envoy to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad said Islamabad should do even more to stop cross border infiltration.

["US praises action against Al Qaeda"](#)

The Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid-e-Azam (PML-QA) also lauded Operation Mizan, in response to criticism from the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) and accusations from Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) that eight people killed were not linked to Al Qaeda. An editorial in the daily Jang (Pakistan) recommends that the army be more mindful of the consequences of transnational operations, namely that "alleged foreign terrorists could not have found refuge without the blessings of the local tribes who would feel honour-bound to protect and avenge them."

### **2. Analysis & Opinions**

According to the Daily Times, US Deputy Secretary Armitage believes that military forces are "200 percent" behind Pres. Musharraf, but does "not think that affection for working with [the US] extends up and down the rank and file of the Pakistani security community." US Congressman

Joseph Crowley has said that "it is plain to see that...Musharraf has not stopped support of cross border terrorism" and that conditions on the \$3 billion assistance package would "ensure that real progress is made on stopping not only terrorist infiltration across the Line of Control but also ceasing all Pakistani proliferation activities."

Husain Haqqani (Nation, Pakistan) chronicles Western governments' suspicions about the depth of Pakistan's dedication to hunting down Al Qaeda operatives. Also in the Nation, Mushahid Hussain articulates that if Pakistan is truly interested in a stable Afghanistan then that "means supporting Karzai as well since he has international legitimacy and support of Afghanistan's neighbours, including Iran and China."

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## **India-Pakistan Tensions**

### **1. News & Reports**

During his visit to the US, Prime Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali was quoted as saying that "[w]e should not let our pride or ego prevent us from pursuing a dialogue with India...[they] should not be employed to conduct foreign policies." PM Jamali also said in an interview on CNN, "The ball is in India's court. Lets see what they have to say." Pakistan agreed to India's proposal of increasing the staff at their respective missions.

["Ego should not impede efforts for talks: PM"](#)

Unnamed senior Indian army sources claim that Pakistan has at least 85 camps in which it trains militants to infiltrate the border and fight in Kashmir. Nandini Iyer (Hindustan Times, India) discusses a statement by Munir Akram, Pakistan's Ambassador to the UN, in which Akram alleged that India's external intelligence agency, RAW (Research and Analysis Wing), engineered as many as 170 attacks in Pakistan.

### **2. Analysis & Opinions**

Praful Bidwai (Jang, Pakistan) explains the disconnect between the Indian and Pakistani governments and peoples: "[the] citizens have expressed their support for...peace and reconciliation, and intensified contacts...[the governments] are doing everything possible to frustrate any progress towards normalisation of relations." In the same paper, Nasim Zehra writes that the Indian leadership must understand that "Pakistan having lived through a relatively mild summer of bloodshed compared to the horrors a communalised India can suffer, knows how difficult it is to recap the escaped genie of hate." Mubashir Hasan (Nation, Pakistan) highlights the economic and political triumph that is the Lahore- Delhi bus service. In the Hindustan Times (India), A.G. Noorani determines that the next big step in the peace process should be a resumption of a dialogue on the issues listed in the Islamabad joint statement (June 23, 1997) and in the unsigned Agra Declaration (July 16, 2001).

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## **Pakistan**

### **1. Sectarian Violence**

On their way to prayers, six Sunnis were shot dead and seven others by as-yet unidentified assailants. B. Raman (Asia Times, Hong Kong) considers the latest attack as a Shia backlash -- a

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"warning shot" to be watched closely. Other reports allege the hand of the banned Sipah-i-Sahaba (SSP) as retaliating for an assassination in June. Dawn (Pakistan) reports that investigators hold responsible "313", an alliance of three banned militant organizations (Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Harkat-u-Mujahideen al-Alami, and Harkat Jihad-ul-Islami). The US State Department (re)designated 25 groups as foreign terrorist organizations, including: Harkat ul-Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Lashkar-i-Jhangvi.

["Six Suparco employees shot dead in city"](#)

["Shi'ite warning shot in Pakistan"](#)

Maulana Azam Tariq, chief of the Millat-i-Islamia Pakistan (MIP) and member of the National Assembly, was assassinated by unidentified gunmen, though police suspect his death was in retaliation for the shooting of 6 Shia worshippers just a few days before. Azam Tariq had been associated with the banned Sipah-i-Sahaba (SSP), though he had denied any connection. Many believe that Tariq reformed the SSP under the guise of the MIP to circumvent the ban and that he continued to direct SSP operations from his protected position in the government. Demonstrations against Tariq's killing took to the streets as police tried to maintain order and stability.

["Azam Tariq gunned down in Islamabad"](#)

["KARACHI: Tension grips city localities: Azam Tariq's killing"](#)

An editorial in the Daily Times (Pakistan) does not differentiate between "jihadi" and "sectarian" groups, since "putting...tags on one or the other is a futile, in fact downright dangerous, exercise." Another editorial in Dawn (Pakistan) comments on why Pakistan should focus on the internal threat of terrorism. The Daily Times quotes President Musharraf as saying that sectarian violence could hamper Pakistan's stability and that religious leaders "must teach students about peace and harmony." Ansar Abbasi (Jang, Pakistan) criticizes the intelligence agencies for their failure to track down domestic terrorist networks.

["The enemy within"](#)

## **2. News & Reports**

Prime Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali said that there was no agreement between him and the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA) over the president's uniform: "The president earned the uniform himself. He will take it off when he wants." Anwar Syed (Dawn, Pakistan) analyzes the MMA's threats of "direct action" to challenge the Musharraf regime. A Jang (Pakistan) editorial states that President Pervez Musharraf "who has admitted he appreciates that he must not hold two offices at the same time should take a few more steps further for ending that anomaly." In the same paper, Muddassir Rizvi speculates on civil society's silence when it comes to the controversial constitutional amendment. Also in Jang, Imtiaz Alam wonders if Pres. Musharraf has opened "too many fronts" to handle and concludes that despite Musharraf's admirable record as a dictator, it is time for him to transition to civilian rule.

["Plans for agitation"](#)

Farhan Bokhari (Jang, Pakistan) questions Musharraf's self-proclaimed "indispensability." In the same paper, Mir Jamilur Rahman discusses the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group's decision to extend Pakistan's suspension on the grounds that it has not fully restored its democracy. An editorial in Dawn consider that the "increasingly intrusive presence of the military in civilian affairs...can only harm the military as an institution." Another editorial in the Nation explains how and why the uniform issue has "assumed symbolic importance as a test of General Musharraf's good faith."

["Military and civilian posts"](#)

## **3. Foreign Affairs**

Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan have decided to set up three tripartite committees to discuss political, intelligence and narcotics-related issues. Pakistan and Iran agreed to hold fortnightly meetings to discuss security issues. In the daily Nation (Pakistan), Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani asserts that both China and Pakistan stand to gain by increasing trade linkages. A senior Pakistani general official talked with UK officials about the potential for defense cooperation.

#### **4. US-Pakistani Relations**

Pending congressional approval, the US has agreed to upgrade the existing F-16s and to replenish the strength of the fleet to 40 fighters. Pakistan is likely get 60 Cobra helicopters from the US by the year-end. US Deputy Secretary of State Armitage reassured Pakistan that US nuclear cooperation with India was limited to civilian areas: "We do not feel that we are engaging in something that would disrupt the status quo in a way it's detrimental to Pakistan." An editorial (Jang, Pakistan) questions the health of US-Pakistan relations in the context of the US' defense sales to Pakistan (or lack thereof). Masooda Bano (Jang, Pakistan) uses Jamali's lack of power in his visit to highlight the "prince and beggar relationship" between Pakistan and the US.

The US renewed its request for Pakistani troops to support peacekeeping efforts in Iraq. Pakistan explained that no troops would be dispatched without UN cover, and were unlikely without the support of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). In regards to his meeting with US officials, Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri said, "The US government has become aware of the military imbalance in the region...and that is why we are confident of securing matching military supplies from Washington." In addition to the \$3 billion promised by President George Bush at Camp David (subject to the Congressional approval), US Agency for International Development (USAID) has proposed a \$390 million package for Pakistan.

["Rumsfeld renews troop request"](#)

Jang (Pakistan) reports that agents from the US Dept. of Homeland Security will be deployed at embassies to oversee visa issuances. In the same paper, Aslam Khan reports that Pakistani banks will share foreign currency bank account remittances with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Syed Saleem Shahzad (Asia Times, Hong Kong) chronicles the FBI's growing influence in the Pakistani intelligence establishment.

["Pakistan: FBI rules the roost"](#)

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## **India**

### **1. Assassination Attempt on Andhra Chief Minister**

The Peoples' War Group (PWG) claimed responsibility for the attack on Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, who has been targeted by the group once before, since Naidu banned the PWG in 1996. Sudha Ramachandran (Asia Times, Hong Kong) calls the assassination attempt a "red alert" of growing cooperation between militant groups operating in South Asia.

["Red alert in Andhra Pradesh"](#)

### **2. News & Reports**

A report by the People's Union for Democratic Rights has concluded that the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) prevents those accused in the Godhra train massacre from fairly defending themselves. Relatives of Hindu victims who died at Godhra demanded that the investigation be held outside Gujarat due to interference by the ruling Hindu radicals. In another court case related to the

communal riots in Gujarat, the Supreme Court accused a senior BJP official of intimidating witnesses to lie in court. Praful Bidwai (Frontline, India) praises the Supreme Court's recent judgment, though he expresses disappointment in the dropped charges against Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani in the demolition of the Babri mosque at Ayodhya.

["POTA being misused in Godhra case: report"](#)

Police arrest an Indian shopkeeper in Dubai -- the "missing link" in the Mumbai blasts, which killed over 50 people -- who might have potential linkages to the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

### **3. Military Affairs**

Indian and the US begin their fifth joint maritime exercise. Secretary of State Colin Powell confirmed the US commitment to the "Glide Path" -- a plan to expand trade with India in sensitive high-tech areas, space launch equipment and civilian nuclear industry (also known as the "trinity issues"). Jyoti Malhotra (Indian Express) writes that first India had to "to impress upon the US that, despite its nuclear capabilities, it would not divert any of the high-technology items it imported from Washington towards weapons." A report from the US Congressional Research Service ranks India as the third largest arms dealer in the developing world (behind China and the United Arab Emirates).

The Indian military has begun using software to track people's movements across the country and abroad via the telephone calls they make. Intelligence officials, however, argue that since the software does tape any phone calls, it circumvents the Indian Telegraphic Act, which makes it mandatory for the authorities to seek written permission to tape particular calls for a specific period. In Frontline (India), John Cherian writes about India's decision to purchase 66 British-made Hawk Advanced Jet Trainers. Vinod Patney (Indian Express) analyzes India's defense expenditure, first as a ratio of Pakistan's spending, and second, as a mark of modernization.

### **4. Foreign Affairs**

A petition has been filed for the release of more than 1000 Indians jailed in Pakistani and Chinese prisons. Despite Beijing's traditional alliance with Islamabad, China's "rapprochement with India is part of a larger strategy to counter what Beijing sees as US attempts to contain it through closer ties with its giant neighbours," writes Antoaneta Bezlova in Dawn (Pakistan). Defense Minister George Fernandes hinted at joint military exercises with China in the near future.

["India, China make things move"](#)

An article in the Hindustan Times (India) praises the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon (and growing bilateral ties) and criticizes the leftist elements of India's political spectrum for over-emphasizing India's fidelity to the Palestinian cause. In the Indian Express, Ravi Jategaonkar speculates how India could leverage its relationship with each side (of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) to brokering a solution.

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## **Jammu & Kashmir (J&K)**

### **1. News & Reports**

Indian security forces claimed to have killed several militants, including three Pakistani nationals, who were members of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM). Three pilgrims in Doda were shot by militants, while three other civilians were killed by a bomb explosion.

Local police arrested Masrat Alam, chief of the Muslim League in Srinagar. The police in J&K have approached the United Kingdom about setting up a satellite station in J&K. Pakistani (or "Azad") Jammu and Kashmir President Sardar Muhammad Anwar Khan argued for the Kashmiris' right to self-determination, citing Article 370 of the Indian constitution, which he claims accepted J&K as disputed.

Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed launched a project to build a multi-purpose shopping arcade in Srinagar, hoping to attract revenue from tourism.

## **2. Analysis & Opinions**

An editorial in the Times of India opines that the Kashmir dispute is about "a microscopic piece of mountain-locked land [that] has become an obsession so monomaniacal for the neighbours that neither can see anything beyond it." In a speech, Teresita Schaffer, South Asia Program Director at the Center for Strategic International Studies (CSIS), said that the Kashmir dispute should be treated as one of people rather than of territory. Vir Sanghvi (Hindustan Times, India) concludes that the US' dependence on Pakistan for help on its war on terror precludes the US from offering the help India needs; India is "alone" in its battle against terrorism in Kashmir.

Seema Guha (Telegraph, India) writes about heroin trafficking as a source of funding, a recent trend with Kashmiri militant groups. In Frontline (India), Praveen Swami deplores militant groups' ongoing recruitment of children.

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## **Regional**

### **1. Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka has asked Canada to help persuade the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to return to the negotiating table. A LTTE delegation is currently on a seven-day visit to Dublin, Ireland, to finalize proposal for an Interim Administration. The Sri Lankan government believes that the format of discussion with the LTTE outlining the powers of the interim administrative structure should be modified with more focus on 'committee work.'

The US re-designated the LTTE as a terrorist organization. The UN Secretary General Kofi Annan reportedly postponed a planned visit to Sri Lanka this week amid opposition to his meeting with LTTE leaders inside guerrilla-held territory.

A Sri Lankan government spokesman accused President Chandrika Kumaratunga's party of trying to "to provoke India to give some reaction against the peace process..." People's Alliance (PA) parliamentarian Anura Bandaranaike reiterated his commitment to forming an alliance between the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) in a bid to topple the government. The Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka) reported that the PA and other parties are planning to introduce a no confidence motion against Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe. A demonstration in Colombo, Sri Lanka's capital city, denounced Sri Lankan government's attempts at striking a peace deal with LTTE.

### **2. Philippines**

The US re-designated the Abu Sayyaf group as a 'foreign terrorist organization'. According to a press report, Indonesian terror suspect Riduan Isamuddin, alias Hambali, told US investigators that



there are definite links between al-Qaeda, Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The US Ambassador to the Philippines Francis Ricciardone reiterated the link between MILF and JI. Jowie F. Corpuz's (Manila Times) reports quoted a Filipino official as stating that "we should be cautious about the various financial and economic aid being given to us by the United States, they [Americans] maybe trying to brainwash our own people so that the clamor for the return of their bases would come from within."

A Filipino official indicated that his government is ready to resume separate peace talks with MILF and the National Democratic Front (NDF). Presidential Management Staff (PMS) head Silvestre Afable will be the new chief of the government negotiating panel in the peace talks

### **3. Bangladesh**

The water sharing talks at Bangladesh-India Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) was reported stalled over the inclusion of river-linking issue in the discussion agenda. The next round of JRC is scheduled for January next year. Sanat Mukherjee (Independent, Bangladesh) explains critical water disputes between Indian and Bangladesh.

The US and Bangladesh air force staged joint exercises.

The conflict between the two main political organizations active in Chittagong Hill Tracts is reportedly growing.

### **4. Nepal**

Nepali news sources reported continued attacks on country's infrastructure despite the recent declaration of a short-term unilateral ceasefire by Maoists. Nepali legal officials were reportedly unable to serve warrant notices to Maoist leaders indicted on charges of assassinating country's Armed Police Force chief. The Asian Development Bank has launched a \$24 million initiative to provide safe water supply and sanitation to underserved populations in poor and remote areas of mid-western and far-western Nepal.

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