

# **SANDNet Weekly Update, September 04, 2003**

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## **Nuclear Issues**

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

Iran and Pakistan have denied any nuclear cooperation between the two countries. Two reports by Daily Times, citing unnamed intelligence sources, suggest that India and Iran are continuing collaboration on nuclear and chemical weapons programs. Sultan Shahin (Asia Times) examines various reports on Indian and Pakistani support for Iran's nuclear program and writes that the possibility of Indian government engaging in "nuclear and missile proliferation and technology transfer is close to zero."

["Iran, nukes and the South Asian puzzle"](#)

Ambreen Shahid (News, Pakistan) believes that nuclear deterrence can "usher in an era of durable peace between Pakistan and India." M.B. Naqvi (News, Pakistan) argues that US policies are encouraging global nuclear proliferation.

Kahlid Hasan (Daily Times) reports that Jonathan Pollard - convicted of passing nuclear secrets to Israel and now serving a life sentence - also passed information on Pakistan's nuclear program to Israel.

Iqbal Mustafa (News, Pakistan) - former member Central Board, State Bank of Pakistan - writes that in the immediate aftermath of May, 1998 nuclear tests, Pakistan, fearing economic sanctions by the world community, considered, among other things, defaulting on debt repayments and increasing illegal drug production and export.

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## **Afghanistan**

### **1. Current News**

Many Afghan soldiers, suspected Taliban fighters, and an American soldier were killed in stepped up fighting in Afghanistan. A group calling itself the "Fedayeen Islam" issued a statement pledging that there will be no end to violence until all foreign forces leave the country. According to a UN spokesman, Dostum and Atta Mohammed's factions had set up a peace commission in northwestern Faryab province that would meet weekly "to resolve issues that can degenerate into fighting." The Pakistan government has arrested 19 suspected Taliban fighters.

["4 more die in anti-Taliban operations"](#)

["US soldier killed in Afghanistan"](#)

["Taliban suspects to be quizzed"](#)

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The Afghan government has confirmed the arrest of three Pakistanis believed to be military personnel by the FBI in Zabul during the ongoing fighting in the southwestern province of Afghanistan. Pakistan army, however, has denied any knowledge of the arrests. (See also Pakistan section of the newsletter). According to Pakistan's Foreign Minister Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri, his government has asked both Afghan and US government officials to transfer some 643 Pakistani prisoners currently held in Afghanistan back to Pakistan. There have been reports of continued shelling by Afghan militia on a Pakistan security post on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. A hand grenade was thrown at the Indian consulate in the Afghan city of Jalalabad but there were no reports of casualties.

["Afghan forces continue shelling"](#)

The Daily Times reports that Afghanistan has abandoned its failed policy of paying farmers to stop growing opium. Kamran Khan (News, Pakistan) reports on the growing power of nacro-mafia in Afghanistan.

## **2. Analysis**

Masood-ul-Hassan (News, Pakistan) - a retired army colonel - argues that "the top brass of the Pakistan army" is responsible for making Pakistan the "single most hated country" in Afghanistan. Kamal Matinuddin - a retired Pakistani General - argues against making the Durand Line that demarcates Afghan-Pakistan border into a 'soft border'.

["A foreign policy fiasco?"](#)

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## **India-Pakistan Relations**

### **1. News**

Talks between India and Pakistan on resuming civil aviation links failed. Pakistan's Information Minister Sheikh Rashid, however, believes that the failure will have "no negative impact on the ongoing peace process." A spokesman for Pakistan Foreign Office blamed India for the failure of talks. Prime Minister Vajpayee feels that "the situation is not normal" for a "meaningful" dialogue with Pakistan. According to Daily Times (Pakistan), the Indian Army has advised Prime Minister Vajpayee to slow down the peace process with Pakistan. Some soldiers and civilian were reportedly killed in shelling along the Line of Control (LoC).

["Islamabad hopeful of air links"](#)

### **2. Analysis**

The daily News (Pakistan) writes that Pakistan "can never be sure of the sincerity" of the Indian peace talks. The daily Dawn (Pakistan) worries that the lack of improvement in India-Pakistan relations will help "hard-crust ideologues on either side to again try to seize centrestage, making compromises difficult." Anand Sahay (Hindustan Times, India) believes that people of Pakistan, unlike the Pakistani government, do not want relations with India "to be held hostage to Kashmir." Raja Mohan (Hindu, India) writes that "Mr. Vajpayee can either see his peace initiative grounded by an excessive emphasis on a "step-by-step" negotiations between the two bureaucracies or make bold by experimenting with a series of unilateral steps to regain the political initiative towards Pakistan." Bidanda M Chengappa (Deccan Herald, India) argues that "Pakistan definitely stands to gain from free trade with India."

["The goodwill bonus"](#)

["Negotiating with Pakistan"](#)

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## **Pakistan**

### **1. Arrest of Army Officers**

Pakistani newspapers reported the arrest of number of Pakistan Army officers for suspected links with extremists. The arrests were first reported by Hong Kong based Asia Times. Pakistan's Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) told a news agency that "there are about three to four officers below the rank of lieutenant-colonel. They are under investigation for alleged possible links with some extremist organization." The Daily Times urges the Pakistan government to "get rid of these skeletons in its cupboard rather than trying to act as if they did not exist." The Alliance for Restoration of Democracy has submitted an adjournment motion to the National Assembly Secretariat seeking debate on the issue of the arrest of army men.

["Musharraf's army breaking ranks"](#)

["ARD wants debate on arrest of army men"](#)

### **2. Parliamentary Crisis**

The crisis over the Legal Framework Order (LFO) continued to disrupt parliamentary process in Pakistan. Hasan Askari Rizvi (Daily Times) writes that "if the crisis of credibility of the civilian government accentuates or the civilianised political arrangements run aground, Musharraf will not escape its negative political fallout." The daily Dawn reports that the US has been urging the Pakistan government to hold discussions with the former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to end the on-going political crisis in the country. The daily News, however, notes that "Benazir Bhutto's already troubled relations with Pakistani establishment took a new dip when she revealed elements of an important military operation in a newspaper interview with an Indian journalist."

["Efforts being made for Govt-PPP dialogue"](#)

### **3. Karachi Oil Spill**

About 26,000 tons of crude oil from the broken tanker Tasman Spirit has so far spilled into the sea affecting beaches and marine life along the Karachi coast. Pakistani newspapers have been critical of the government's handling of the spill.

["Tasman Spirit: PNSC seeks \\$1bn in damages"](#)

["A sea defiled, a beach destroyed"](#)

["The oil spill disaster"](#)

Farrukh Saleem (Dawn) looks at the accident-prone history of Tasman Spirit.

### **4. Law and Order**

Pakistani authorities reportedly arrested 3 suspected al Qaeda members.

["3 Al Qaeda suspects arrested"](#)

### **5. Military Affairs**

The daily News reports that the US has offered to sell modern arms worth \$9 billion to Pakistan. The US is expected to soon deliver six C-130 aircrafts to Pakistan. The daily Dawn reports that Pakistan is seeking to buy "one squadron of Mirage 2005 from a Middle East country and two squadrons of F-16 fighter jets from Belgium."

["Delivery of C-130s soon: US"](#)

["Pakistan may buy F-16, Mirage aircraft"](#)

### **6. Foreign Affairs**

The daily Nation (Pakistan) urges the government not to send troops to Iraq under any conditions. Roedad Khan (Dawn) writes that "in their occupation of Iraq, the US and British armies have entered

the gates of hell. They have sown the wind. Let them reap the whirlwind."

["Why send troops to Iraq?"](#)

The daily News reports that Pakistan have decided to provide additional military and security personnel to Saudi Arabia to fill the gap created by the withdrawal of the US and other Western troops from the Kingdom.

## **7. Misc. Reports**

The National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) has recommended to the government that the Hudood Ordinance - that among other things criminalizes extra martial sex - should be repealed. Two Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) activists were killed in Karachi. The Daily Times criticizes PEMRA's (Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority) decision to ban Indian channels on cable TV and notes that the "Pakistani viewer has clearly taken umbrage at the decision and expressed this by buying the satellite dish and switching off the cable."

["Repeal of Hudood law recommended"](#)

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## **India**

### **1. Mumbai Bomb Blasts**

At least 46 persons were killed and many more injured in two powerful bomb explosions in Mumbai. Anupama Katakam (Hindu) notes that the "use of RDX shows that the twin blasts in Mumbai are not the handiwork of small time militants but could involve SIMI or LeT." Praveen Swami (Hindu) notes that "many of the dozen-odd young men now arrested for the recent series of bombings in Mumbai seem to be driven by the same desire for revenge" that drove the perpetrators of past bomb blasts in the city. Keki Daruwalla (Indian Express) seeks an explanation of the bombing in "how the state has handled sectarian issues; the fallout of government policies on the terrorist scene, and whether our security apparatus can handle terrorism."

["46 killed as twin blasts rock Mumbai"](#)

["On the trail"](#)

["A vicious cycle of terror, counter-terror"](#)

### **2. Religion and Politics**

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has reported to the High Court that its excavations found distinctive features of a 10th century "massive structure" beneath the Babri Mosque site. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has stated that political parties should now bring a legislation to facilitate construction of a Ram temple at the site of the demolished mosque. Pradeep Kaushi (Indian Express) notes that the Bharitya Janata Party (BJP) "conscious of this value-addition to its temple cause, has embarked on a sustained campaign for Ram temple construction." Indian historians and archaeologists had contesting assessments of the significance of ASI findings. The daily Indian Express notes that the resolution of the disputed site in Ayodhya "is a job for statesmen, not archaeologists." Meanwhile, the Supreme Court of India has refused to stay the on-going trial proceedings in the Ayodhya demolition case.

["ASI finds ``massive structure" in Ayodhya"](#)

["ASI signal puts BJP in top gear on temple"](#)

["Experts lock horns over ASI report"](#)

["What lies underneath?"](#)

["SC refuses to stay trial"](#)

The Justices G.T. Nanavati and K.G. Shah Riot Inquiry Commission investigating the February 2002 communal riots in Gujarat has been hearing testimonies of the victims of the carnage.

["Riot victims tell a tale of molestation and death"](#)

["Promised police help came too late: Jafri widow"](#)

In a two part essay, Syed Shahabuddin (Indian Express) calls upon Indian Muslims to draw up "a hard-headed electoral strategy" and seek alliances with "others marginalised by an upper caste Hindu elite."

["Muslims need to establish political clout"](#)

["Wretched of the Earth"](#)

### **3. Law and Order**

Amal Ray (Deccan Herald) writes that the "agitations in Telangana and Vidharbha may spread, giving rise to demand for a new State reorganisation panel." Praveen Swami (Hindu) believes that "Kashmir is just a bridgehead for a larger war [by jihadis] on the whole of India."

["The spreading tentacles of terror"](#)

### **4. Military Affairs**

The daily News (Pakistan) reports that "India has handed over a huge 'defence shopping list' to Israel" that includes submarine-launched cruise missiles, laser guided systems and precision-guided munitions.

### **5. Foreign Affairs**

Amulya Ganguli (Hindustan Times) and Ajit Bhattacharjea (Hindustan Times) are critical of growing India-Israel relations. K.P. Nayar (Telegraph, India) notes that while for India, "relations with Israel are extremely valuable", there are definite limits to the relationship.

["No need to go to Israel"](#)

Chinmaya R. Gharekhan (Hindu) writes that "any country acting even under a UN resolution will, in effect, be assisting the occupying authority in Iraq."

["Deploying troops"](#)

A.G. Noorani (Frontline, India) surveys the treaties and engagements that have dealt with the status of the western sector of the Sino-Indian boundary in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). B.S. Malik, India's former Chief of Army Staff, Western Command, writes that "only a really strong Indian military posture can dissuade the Chinese from challenging the LAC (Line of Actual Control) in future."

### **6. Misc. Reports and Analysis**

Pratap Bhanu Mehta (Telegraph, India) writes that the BJP will "soon have to decide whether it wants to enhance its national standing through allies, or enhance its share of seats so that it becomes less dependent upon allies." Mahesh Rangarajan (Telegraph, India) argues that the Congress Party remains "a party sans direction" in part because it lacks "the reflexes of an opposition party."

["To expand or not to expand"](#)

["A crisis of direction"](#)

The daily Hindu welcomes signs that some safeguards may be introduced into the Article 356 of the Indian Constitution. The Article gives Center the authority to dismiss any state government if there has been failure of the Constitutional machinery in the state.

["Amending Article 356"](#)

## 1. Delhi's Visit

During his visit to Srinagar to attend the meeting of Inter-State Council, Prime Minister Vajpayee stated his openness to talk with all those who "reject militancy and extreme positions and wish to play a constructive role" in the peace process. The deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani stated that he is "willing to meet Hurriyat leaders whenever they come to Delhi." The Indian Express reports that unlike Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to the Valley in April "where he set the peace ball rolling, his current visit has evoked much less enthusiasm."

## 2. News and Reports

Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to J&K was marked by acts of violence by militant separatists. Many people were killed in various attacks in J&K.

["With Delhi in Kashmir, militants let guns talk"](#)

["11 killed in Kashmir"](#)

["Six killed in Valley"](#)

["Militants target security forces across J&K"](#)

Gazi Baba, said to be a leader of the Jaish-e-Muhammad militants accused of the December 13, 2001 attack on India's parliament, was killed in a gun battle with Indian troops. A string of gun battles and bombings were reported across the state in the aftermath of the killing. A daily Telegraph report details the fight that claimed Baba's life.

["Rapid raid after Jaish radio roar"](#)

["Secret door to Gazi Baba"](#)

The daily News (Pakistan) reports that Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, a dominant militant group in J&K, will not cease its armed struggle. The Daily Times reports that the United Jihad Council and other jihadi organizations based in Pakistan administered Kashmir have decided to support Syed Ali Gillani should he form a new party to compete with J&K based Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC).

## 3. Opinions and Analysis

The daily Nation (Pakistan) writes that "APHC President Maulana Abbas Ansari's statement that it will no longer insist on a tripartite dialogue format is a significant policy shift, and is an expression of [its] lack of confidence in the Pakistan Government's Kashmir policy." Suvir Kaul, an English professor at an American University, return to his home in Srinagar and finds that "Kashmir's multi-religious, syncretic culture might be impossible to restore."

["Srinagar, four years later"](#)

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