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Nuclear Issues

1. Related News and Analysis

President Musharraf has stated that India is engaging in "the most significant nuclear build-up of the post-Cold War era." Maqsud Nuri's essay in the daily News examines the implications of India's missile development program. M.V. Ramana's essay (Daily Times, Pakistan) enumerates reasons "that suggest possibilities for the breakdown of nuclear deterrence."
"India engaged in nuclear build-up, says Musharraf"

A daily News editorial expresses safety concerns over the planned building of new nuclear power plants in Pakistan.

Afghanistan

1. Current News

In a two-part report from Kunar province, Pepe Escober writes about the emergence of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former mujahideen and the leader of the Hezb-i-Islami Afghanistan, as a significant foe of the Karzai government. At least 15 people were reportedly killed in fighting between government forces and those of Padshah Khan Zadran in the eastern city of Khost. Meanwhile, eight people were killed in fighting between rival warlords near Mazar-i-Sharif. The daily Frontier Post reports on the difficulties faced by the coalition forces in conducting their operations against al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters. Another report in the same newspaper notes Afghan government's lack of effort in investigating alleged war crimes.
"Exit Osama, enter Hekmatyar"
"Special Forces, ordinary people"
"Dostum men clash with rivals: 8 killed"

Two Pakistani men were arrested in Afghanistan after dynamite was found on their fully loaded fuel tanker bound for Bagram Air Base, the center of US forces operations in the country.

Romesh Bhattacharji's (Frontline, India) detailed report examines opium cultivation in Afghanistan.

Campaign Against Al-Qaeda

1. News and Analysis

Two key al-Qaeda operatives were captured after a violent raid in Karachi. The arrested suspects

were later handed over to the US authorities. Kamran Khan's (News, Pakistan) report on the details of the raid notes FBI's (Federal Bureau of Investigation) involvement in the raid. Another report in the same newspaper suggests that the suspects were involved in arranging safe exit for al-Qaeda activists trapped in Pakistan. Eight more people allegedly belonging to militant organizations have reportedly been arrested. Earlier, the Daily Times had reported that arrest of two alleged al-Qaeda leaders in a separate raid. The Italian police arrested 15 men believed to be Pakistani members of al-Qaeda network.
"8 militants arrested in Karachi"

Syed Saleem Shahzad's report in Asia Times suggests that al-Qaeda activity is planning to regroup in Saharan and sub-Saharan Africa.
"From the al-Qaeda puzzle, a picture emerges"

Various Pakistani newspapers reported continued tension in Pakistan's tribal belt over military operations to locate and capture al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters thought to be hiding in the area.

The daily News reports that the FBI is collecting data on Pakistani and foreign nationals using country's international airports for traveling.

India-Pakistan Tensions

1. News

During their visit to the US to attend the United Nations (UN) General Assembly session, Pakistan's President Musharraf and the Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee exchanged accusations and insults. An editorial in the daily Hindu suggests that instead of trying to involve the US, "India and Pakistan [should] stick to the bilateral route for a resolution of the conflict between them." J.N. Dixit (Indian Express) suggests that India's expectations from Vajpayee-Bush talks "have been sadly unfulfilled."
"PM gives it to the General"
"Predictable pattern "
"Pilgrims to the US"

A new report by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines has noted extensive mine laying by India and Pakistan along their border.

2. Analysis

K.K. Katyal's essay (Hindu) urges India to "shed hesitations and engage the Pakistani side, with the objective of finding a solution to the Kashmir problem..." Amitabh Mattoo (Hindu) argues that President Musharraf has "shown no evidence of a readiness to compromise or do a deal with India." A Daily Times (Pakistan) editorial urges Pakistan "to formulate a comprehensive strategy" towards countering India's growing military cooperation with Israel.
"Engaging Pak., a better option"
"The Musharraf conundrum"

Sreeram Chaulia reviews J.N. Dixit's new book, "India-Pakistan in War and Peace".
"India and Pakistan: The ever-ever antagonism"

Pakistan

1. October Elections

Pakistani election tribunals have dismissed former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's appeal against the rejection of her nomination papers. Another tribunal disqualified the whole family of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif from contesting the election.

Kunwar Idris' essay (Dawn, Pakistan) argues that "the clerical class stands not a ghost of a chance to come into power through elections."
"Sectarian element in politics"

2. Other News

Five persons accused of plotting to assassinate President Pervez Musharraf in April have reportedly been arrested. Four alleged terrorists of the banned Lashkar-e-Jhangvi group were killed in an encounter with police. Pakistan's Interior Minister Moinuddin Haider has indicated that, under certain conditions, his government might gives concessions to the banned religious groups. Meanwhile, Maulana Masood Azhar - the chief of banned extremist group Jaish-e-Muhammad - has been granted bail. In reviewing Pakistan's Urdu language press, Khalid Ahmad notes that "the vote-catching thing to do in these pre-election days is to repeat the clerical charge that the West is killing off the Muslims."
"Five more held for plotting to kill Musharraf"

The daily News reports that construction of a natural gas pipeline from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan and on to Pakistan could begin as early as mid-2004. A Daily Times editorial, however, expresses skepticism about the materialization of the pipeline project.

Pakistan and Azerbaijan have signed an agreement aimed at increasing defense cooperation between the two countries.

3. US - Pakistan Relations

The daily News reports that the US military is stationing more troops at forward bases along Afghanistan's mountainous border with Pakistan. Mushahid Hussain (Asia Times) believes that US-Pakistan relationship now "is now more of a flickering flame than the passionate embrace that Pakistani policymakers earlier presumed."
"Pakistan's Washington embrace loosens"

India

1. India: Domestic Situation

The Indian Election Commission (EC) has insisted that imposition of President's rule in Gujarat is the only constitutionally correct option. The Chief Minister of Gujarat Narendra Modi has launched his controversial 'Gujarat gaurav rath yatra'. The daily Hindustan Times writes that India has "never seen a chief minister who is as vicious towards the minorities as Narendra Modi."
"President's rule only option in Gujarat: EC"
"Modi targets Cong. at rath yatra launch"

Supriya Roy Chowdhury's essay (Hindu) argues that "in the case of superstitious practices in India, a

reassertion of orthodoxy appears to be, first, exclusively focused on women."
"Where women bear the brunt..."

An essay and an editorial in the daily Hindu raises the concern that revisions in India's National Curriculum Framework for Secondary Education are designed to weaken India's secular ideology.
"Living with difference"
"Primary concerns remain"

A three-part essay by C.Rammanohar Reddy examines the condition of Muslims in contemporary India.
"Deprivation affects Muslims more"
"The gap widened during the 1990s"
"Facts on 'appeasement'"

Wasbir Hussain examines the issue of continuing insurgency in India's northeastern states.
"Ominous signs in the northeast"

2. India - Foreign Relations

Jyoti Malhotra believes that the US has "now agreed to work on side-stepping its own drastic anti-nuclear non-proliferation laws, which are targeted as much against its own closest friends like Israel, or newer ''natural allies'' like India." Natranjan A. Wala warns India against developing close defense ties with the US. Rahul Bedi examines India's growing presence and role in Central Asia.
"Bush & PM move fast forward"
"Fools rush in..."

9/11 – South Asian Press

1. Opinions

Almost all editorials and op-eds appearing in the South Asia press on the anniversary of last year's attack on the US expressed their sympathy with the US while expressing their growing concern at US's growing unilateralism. Pervez Hoodbhoy (News) wonders if "the horror we felt [has been] cynically capitalised upon to create a New Imperial Order?" Iffat Malik (Dawn) writes that "one year on, most of the hopes [of a better world] have been dashed, most of the fears realized." Pratap Bhanu Mehta (Hindu) suggests that the "the real meaning of September 11 will become apparent only when it becomes clear whether America will live up to its ideals, or whether it will let the arrogance of power, as has happened in the past, get the better of both an enlarged prudence and its finest aspirations. The signs are not good." Mushirul Hasan (Indian Express) laments that the US policies "tend to inflame rather than soothe religious passions."
"A year of hopes belied"
"Remembering Sept. 11"
"Looking ahead with fear"

2. Editorials

The Daily Times worries that a war on Iraq will be a "a global tragedy." The daily Dawn believes that the US has drawn wrong lessons from the tragic events. The daily Hindustan Times feels that "bullying" of the UN by the US is "plain enough." Indian Express writes that the "growth of jehadi terrorism took more than a quarter century. It would be unrealistic to expect it to go away within a

short time."
"The world after 9/11"
"The ides of September"

Kashmir

1. Elections

According to official figures, 44 percent of the electorates turned out to vote in the first phase of assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Violent militant groups have been trying to disrupt the election process. Praveen Swami believes that anti-election terror campaign by militant groups will not succeed in preventing the people from voting. Sundeep Mukhia (Indian Express) argues that "Kashmiri electorate is being expected to use up its vote to solve a problem that is not of their making, in which they are literally cannon fodder for all sides involved and in order to find a solution for which they were never consulted.
"44 p.c. turnout in first phase of J&K elections"
"Bid to disrupt polls"
"Kashmiri group says it will disrupt polls"
"Give them something to vote for"

There was a significant increase in violence as the polling process got underway in J&K.
"J&K Minister, guards shot dead at poll rally"
"Ballot-hit in J&K, militants spray bullets at funeral"

The Frontline magazine published an interview with a Pakistani terrorist.

Radha Kumar (Hindu) argues that "India, Pakistan and the Hurriyat Conference have all missed the chance of using the Kashmir election as a first step for peace."
"The Kashmir election and after"

2. India, Pakistan, US

President Musharraf has reiterated that Pakistan will not accept the conversion of Line of Control into a permanent border demarcating Indian and Pakistani controlled parts of Kashmir. Earlier, US Secretary of State Colin Powell had warned Pakistan not to interfere in elections in J&K. Najamuddin A Shaikh (Daily Times) argues that an "enduring resolution of the Kashmir dispute would require a greater willingness for compromise and accommodation" than what the Indian government has shown so far.

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