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Non-Proliferation Project: [Home](#) | [Staff](#) | [Publications](#) | [Events](#) | [Moscow Center](#)

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 the Web

COUNTRY RESOURCES

[China](#)
[Iran](#)
[Iraq](#)
[Israel](#)
[Korean Peninsula](#)
[Libya](#)
[South Asia](#)
[Russia](#)

WEAPONS

[Biological Weapons](#)
[Chemical Weapons](#)
[Fissile Materials](#)
[Nuclear Weapons](#)
[Missile Proliferation](#)
[Missile Defense](#)

ONLINE RESOURCES

[Congress](#)
[Administration](#)
[Terrorism](#)
[Government Resources](#)
[Threat Assessments](#)
[Treaties & Agreements](#)
[Non-Proliferation Links](#)
[Reading List](#)

NUCLEAR NUMBERS

[Global Proliferation Status Map](#)
[Nuclear Status Map](#)
[Bio-Weapons Map](#)
[Chemical Weapons Map](#)
[World Missile Chart](#)

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NEWS & ANALYSIS

[Analysis Archive](#)
[News Archive](#)

Publications

Pakistan's Nuclear Dilemma

Proliferation Brief, Volume 4, Number 17
Monday, October 01, 2001

On September 23rd, Carnegie hosted three top experts to discuss the dangers Pakistan's nuclear arsenal poses in the current crisis. Below are excerpts. For streaming audio, a transcript of the event as well as extensive resources on terrorism, South Asia and a map of Pakistan's nuclear facilities, [click here](#).

Shirin Tahir-Kheli, School of Advanced International Studies:

For Pakistan, India will continue to loom large in this enterprise because of the same scenario talked about in the late '70s and throughout the '80s: the two-front threat situation. If Pakistan is going to really put its assets, its efforts and its focus on events inside Afghanistan and in securing an increasingly active border, it requires a certain amount of quiescence on the Indo-Pakistan border...

I know that there are quite a few people who think that there are fissures within the military in Pakistan as an institution. I happen not to be one of those, not because I don't think there are disagreements, but I think that, as far as I know, the Pakistan military is still an institution that acts as an institution. Therefore, especially under current conditions, it's about as transparent a process as you are going to get. Anything [the army] decides will be implemented tomorrow. If there are disagreements, they'll have to be either thrashed through very quickly or you are going to be able to tell. There's no reason why President Musharraf would not have thought this through, knowing exactly that....

Given the lack of contact between the U.S. and the Pakistani military establishment (subsequent to the 1990 cut-off of assistance) in some ways we have been reduced to counting the number of beards as an indication of how Islamic the Army is. This is a sad state of affairs. Generations of Pakistani military leaders rose through the ranks, educated in American service schools. You now have the first generation of Pakistani military leaders who are in senior positions who have not gone to Western schools. Now, presumably this new dialogue, which is just starting, will change some of that.

George Perkovich, W. Alton Jones Foundation:

The "loose nukes" scenario is something like this: Pakistan experiences chaos, perhaps even rebellion or civil war because it has joined with the U.S. in fighting the Taliban. In the process, the Taliban, or groups associated with the Taliban, get their hands on some of Pakistan's nuclear weapons. Another scenario is...with fighting going on in Afghanistan, there's turbulence in Kashmir. Pakistan, for example, increases the readiness of its nuclear forces. They're worried about preemptive attack from India or Israel, and [this] could lead to...nuclear escalation....

I would say that both are actually very overblown.... There are things that can be done to prevent both from happening....

Now, the first step that ought to be taken and I think that can be taken, is to use U.S. good offices to reassure Pakistan that India, in fact, is not planning to launch a preemptive military attack on

Related Events

Beyond Mutual Assured Destruction: Reducing Russian-American Nuclear Tensions

(Thursday, May 20, 2004) A new study, presented by Dr. Sergey Rogov, Director of the Institute of the USA and Canada.

Examination of Global Proliferation Strategy

(Thursday, February 05, 2004) 12:15 – 2:00 p.m. David Kay, Joseph Cirincione, Rose Gottemoeller, and Robert Litwak to speak at Carnegie

WMD in IRAQ: Evidence and Implications

(Thursday, January 08, 2004) Authors present findings of new report, click for audio from the event.

Recent Developments in Cross-Strait Relations

(Thursday, November 13, 2003) **Dr. Tsai Ing-wen**, chairperson of the Mainland Affairs Council in Taiwan, delivered her remarks on the current state of US-China-Taiwan relations on November 13. This forum was co-sponsored by the School of Advanced International Relations at Johns Hopkins University.

Related Publications

Niger Uranium: Still a False Claim

(Thursday, July 29, 2004) Proliferation Brief, on

Pakistan's capabilities or in any other way to take military advantage of this crisis....

Volume 7, Number 12

It's done this before; it did it in 1990. It is using good offices as a shock absorber.... If you can reassure Pakistan that there is not any kind of imminent threat to these assets, there should be no reason why Pakistan has to assemble nuclear weapons and have them in any kind of launch-ready configuration. They can be disassembled to the point where the fissile cores are not routinely kept in with the non-nuclear explosive packages. So you separate the weapons so that they're not really usable, and then you worry about the storage and security especially of those fissile cores....

The Importance of Inspections (Monday, July 26, 2004)
Proliferation Brief, Volume 7, Number 11

Since Pakistan has been developing its nuclear capability, various people, usually in the West, have thought of an Islamic bomb, which has always been, I thought, rubbish. This is a Pakistani bomb. This is a national bomb more than anything else.

A Safer Form of Deterrence and Security (Tuesday, July 13, 2004) Proliferation Brief, Volume 7, Number 9

My sense of the people who have been responsible for developing the Pakistani nuclear capability is that these men are modernists, they're not radical, they have nothing like the agenda of Osama bin Laden, and his world view is totally antithetical to the way they live their lives.

Universal Compliance: A Strategy for Nuclear Security (Tuesday, June 15, 2004)
Carnegie Endowment Report, June 2004

Rose Gottemoeller, Carnegie:

One of the reasons we have not, as a matter of U.S. policy, really concentrated yet on threat-reduction activities in either India or Pakistan is that those countries have held themselves outside of the NPT regime, and there has been a certain concern about legitimizing their nuclear capabilities....

There are three specific examples of areas where our experience in the former Soviet Union might apply.... First of all, material protection, control and accounting is the first line of defense and certainly the easiest to bring to bear in the region.... The second area to consider is consolidation of nuclear weapons and material. If materials and weapons are dispersed in a number of sites, you may wish to consider bringing them together into a central storage facility where they can be secured and protected.... The most difficult case is the case of a comprehensive transportation campaign...probably in airlift form, to insure that weapons and materials are quickly moved to a secure environment, perhaps outside of the country....

I believe that the first two types of cooperation are both the most likely and the most positive.... Even before this crisis had emerged, I understand that a request of that kind had been made last year. The third possibility -- an absolute worst case -- is a far-off option and there are many, steps that should and could be taken in advance....

One of the key rules that we have retained over the years in working with Russia and the other former Soviet states must be retained in this case: we cooperate to enhance physical security and protection of nuclear assets, not to enhance their operational capabilities.

Additional Resources:

- **Pakistan's Nuclear Dilemma, Proliferation Roundtable**, 26 September 2001
- **Excerpt from Tracking Nuclear Proliferation, 1998: Pakistan**
- **Pakistan Nuclear Infrastructure: Map and Charts (pdf)**
- **Resources on South Asia**
- **Resources on Terrorism**