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26. These costs are incurred as a result of the inspection, as opposed to other costs that are incurred regardless of whether the inspection has taken place. The parties agreed to this understanding in order to avoid having the membership as a whole effectively subsidize the cost of verification of destruction of weapons possessed by a relatively small number of the states.
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Letters TO THE EDITOR

"Trust Us" Is Not Enough in Pakistan

It is good to see Kenneth N. Luongo and Brigadier General (Ret.) Naeem Salik's unbridled optimism about Pakistan's ability to safeguard its nuclear arsenal ("Building Confidence in Pakistan's Nuclear Security," December 2007). But a more tempered approach would perhaps have been better. In thinking about how well Pakistan may be able to secure its nuclear weapons, materials, and experts, it is worth remembering that Pakistan has been unable to protect its constitution from military coups, has lost half its territory (East Pakistan, now Bangladesh) in 1971, and has failed to safeguard the lives of its most prominent political leaders in recent months.

The goals of Pakistan's Strategic Plans Division (SPD), with which one of the authors was associated, are indeed laudable. With U.S. tutoring and funds, the SPD says it has implemented various technical precautions such as improved perimeter security, installation of electronic locks and permissive action links that require the entry of a code before nuclear weapons can explode, and implementation of a personnel reliability program. Although these increase safety against theft or unauthorized access to weapons and material, it is better to be cautious about such security given the increasingly sophisticated and violent Islamist insurgency in Pakistan and the longer-term direction and intensity of social change.

Some claims made by those in charge of Pakistan's nukes are brash. Feroz Hassan Khan, a former SPD director, for instance told *The Wall Street Journal* in late November that "[t]he system knows how to distinguish who is a 'fundu' [fundamentalist] and who is simply pious." If it were truly so, Pakistan need not have suffered the tidal wave of suicide bombings that has crashed through its towns and cities in recent years.

The feeling of being in total control starts at the top of the army. President Pervez Musharraf, who recently resigned from the military, was asked by *Newsweek's* Fareed Zakaria in January 2008 if he thought Pakistan's nuclear weapons were safe from Islamic militants. He confidently replied, "Absolutely. It [SPD] is like an army unit. Can one rifle be taken away from an army unit? Can the bullet of a rifle be taken away from an army unit? I challenge anyone to take a bullet, a weapon, away from an army unit."

But just two weeks later, the Pakistani newspaper *Dawn* reported that Taliban militants had captured four military trucks in Darra Adamkhel on the Indus Highway. Some reportedly carried ammunition, while others were transporting 4x4 military vehicles fitted with sophisticated communications and listening technology. Another week later, the trucks were recovered, minus cargo.

There are other examples. In August 2007, the BBC reported that about 250 Frontier Constabulary soldiers surrendered to the Taliban, together with their equipment and weapons, all without firing a shot. Initially an attempt was made to deny that any soldiers had been kidnapped or had surrendered. But some weeks later, after the BBC interviewed the military officers in the Taliban's captivity, President

and then-General Musharraf criticized them for cowardice and unprofessional behavior.

Here lies the crux of the problem. In spite of the SPD's professionalism, the fact is that procedures and technical fixes are only as good as the men who operate them. This is not just an academic question. For more than 25 years, the army nurtured Islamist radicals as proxy warriors for covert operations on Pakistan's borders in Kashmir and Afghanistan. This produced extremism inside parts of the military and intelligence. Today, some parts are at war with other parts.

This chilling truth is now emerging. A score of suicide attacks in the last few weeks, some bearing a clear insider signature, have rocked an increasingly demoralized military and intelligence establishment. Fearful of more deadly attacks, military officers in Pakistan have abandoned use of uniforms except when on duty. They move in civilian cars accompanied by gunmen in plain clothes and no longer flout their rank in public.

The authors state that "there have not been any examples to date of systemic failure" in Pakistan's nuclear security. But, given that there is no oversight body, how are we to know? Even the nuclear-weapon states, the United States included, have had serious problems at some point. Pakistan has the additional problem that it cannot be guaranteed

that the custodians of nuclear weapons will always be responsible to the government.

One also does not know if radical Islamists can eventually hijack a weapon or acquire the technical expertise and the highly enriched uranium needed for a crude, in situ nuclear device. But it is quite certain that, having gone to the trouble of getting it, they will use it if they can. One should not assume that London or New York will be the preferred targets because Islamabad and Delhi may be just as good—and certainly much easier. In the twisted logic of the fanatics, there is little or no difference between apostates and those who are the tools of apostates. The suicide bombings inside mosques, and in Pakistan's public places, send exactly this message.

I would like to believe Luongo and Salik that Pakistan's nuclear weapons and materials are safe. The problem is that, like me, they really do not know. In a matter involving enormous consequences, for them to say "trust us" is not good enough.

Pervez Hoodbhoy is chairman of the Department of Physics, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad, and author of *Islam and Science: Religious Orthodoxy and the Battle for Rationality* (1991).

Kenneth N. Luongo and Naeem Salik Respond:

Pervez Hoodbhoy is a longtime observer of political and nuclear developments in Pakistan, and his views are important in the debate over Pakistan's nuclear security. Our article was a factual assessment of how Pakistan's nuclear security has evolved over the past nine years, where it stands today, and how it might continue to evolve in the future. In fact, *Time* magazine characterized this piece as "the most detailed account yet of how Islamabad protects its atomic arsenal." The article speaks clearly on the threat scenarios that exist in Pakistan and acknowledges the issue of growing religious fundamentalism in both the civilian and military sectors. It emphasizes the importance of assuring and improving personnel reliability. Further, the article makes clear that Pakistan, like all nuclear nations, has ongoing and evolving security challenges and therefore must remain adaptive and open to further improvement. That is why it continues working with the United States and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Surprisingly, however, Hoodbhoy's letter also introduces examples of challenges faced by Pakistan that are really tangential to the performance of nuclear security. His arguments about Pakistan's social fragility, the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, attacks against military units, and the 1971 secession of its eastern wing are in a category of political and social challenges faced by many nuclear nations. In the nuclear era, the United States has survived the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and the attempts on the lives of Presidents Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan. The United States was unable to prevent the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and the British government failed to prevent the London Underground bombings—all acts carried out by religious extremists. These tragic events did not translate into the inability of these nations to keep their nuclear assets safe in crisis situations just as Pakistan has been able to maintain control of its nuclear assets during the recent political crisis.

Political challenges and crises will arise. The important point is to have in place the best systems possible to ensure that nuclear assets are not at risk as a result. We, like Pervez Hoodbhoy, remain concerned

with the state of nuclear safety and security in Pakistan because it is important for global security. That is why Pakistan has taken significant steps since the 1998 nuclear tests to strengthen the custodial controls of its strategic assets. This progress is important, and it needs to continue.

Kenneth N. Luongo is executive director of the Partnership for Global Security and a former senior adviser on nonproliferation policy to the secretary of energy. **Brigadier General (Ret.) Naeem Salik** is currently the South Asia Studies Visiting Scholar at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.



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