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Bush and the sub-continent

The 21st century began with the political struggles of George Bush, whose deceptive weakness at the time of his election and the question of his legitimacy as the newly elected President perhaps tempted the Al-Qaida network to launch the horrific attacks of 11 September. The USA seemed like a rich, fat, flabby giant without any will to fight. In every confrontation, whether in Somalia or with the Chinese, the USA climbed down from its high pedestal often with folded hands in humiliation.

The Gross Domestic Product was going up but the fighting spirit was down. Americans would trade rather than fight. A year ago, some of us thought that Mr Bush would find it hard to complete his four-year term as a respected president of the USA. His swagger seemed to be just like whistling in the dark to keep up the courage; his mangled phrases let him down frequently. He had no foreign policy vision except to keep away from the trouble spots of the world and not to venture abroad unless it was to protect America's national interests, for example, protecting a few close allies and the flow of oil to industrialised nations.

His domestic agenda was limited to giving big tax cuts to the rich and tinkering with the education system. It seemed that the excesses of the Clinton presidency had catapulted a puny man onto a big stage. Many commentators observed that President Bush would let some members of his Cabinet, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice, exercise the executive power and limit himself to an oversight from the Oval Office.

What was expected to be a 9-to-5 presidency with long lunches and frequent retreats into his Texas ranch has become a dynamic centre of power. The initial fear in the wake of 11 September turned into an all-consuming wrath and determination that the world must be set right. In just three months, the USA recaptured its pre-eminence as the sole super power. In domestic politics, President Bush has tilted the tripartite power structure toward the White House.

Abroad, both Russia and China have become muted participants in international affairs. His approval ratings today, a snapshot of transitory public opinion, are very high, thanks to the superb military performance in Afghanistan.

President Bush is the Commander-in-Chief and when he says that Osama bin Laden is on the run and "We're going to get him and it's just a matter of time," the American people do believe that it will be done.

Mr Bush's bluntness, for

example, in establishing military tribunals and enhancing the federal government's authority in wiretapping and monitoring exchanges between lawyers and terrorist suspects in federal custody; and in foreign affairs, the rejection of the Kyoto Treaty and the Anti-Ballistic Treaty, has surprised many, though in the long run he may not be able to get away with all his unilateral moves.



Now he is looking at the sub-continent with great concern. When President Bush assures India that "Terror is terror" and the USA will work with it to fight terrorism, India better not lower its

guards; instead, follow the credo, trust but verify. It must be realised that India cannot fight terrorism without transforming Pakistan itself and this is where the USA has to play a significant role in the region.

Only a secular, multi-ethnic and democratic Pakistan can get rid of the religious extremism that has turned it into a land of bigots; and has been tearing ap-

cyber age ND BATRA

art rest of the sub-continent. General Pervez Musharraf cannot close mad-

rasas and Islamic militant organisations, the breeding grounds of terrorism, without reinventing Pakistan into a new state.

There are two hopeful signs that this might happen one day.

When Gen. Musharraf took over power in Pakistan, he conjured up the vision of Mustapha Kemal Ataturk, an army officer who transformed the relic of Ottoman Sultanate into a secular republic in 1923 and launched a social and political revolution that has created the modern-day Turkey.

More importantly, in his address to the nation on the 125th birth anniversary of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Gen. Musharraf reminded the nation about the lost vision of the founder of Pakistan, who told the Constitutional Assembly on 11 August that "you may belong to any religion or caste or creed, that has nothing to do with the business of the state."

So long Pakistan remains a mullah-and-military dominated state, Taliban and Al-Qaida cells will remain alive and regroup themselves in the course of time.

India and the USA must work together to help Pakistan reclaim Jinnah's vision and help the country move towards an open, secular and democratic state that respects the rights of women and minorities.

It amounts to nation-building but the USA has little choice, not only in Afghanistan but in Pakistan as well, a commitment that may require a prolonged military and diplomatic engagement in the region.

(ND Batra is Professor of Communications, Norwich University, Vermont.)

THE STATESMAN

15 JUL 2001

Linked in a circle of humanity

1911

Americans know little about the current confrontation of massed troops across the Line of Control, but then Americans in general know little about either India or Pakistan. This should not be surprising. What happens in distant places, places so important to those who live in them, is all too often just a small hum - if that - on the very periphery of hearing, a faint haze on the most distant limit of sight.

Americans, with their national obtuseness and their leaders' obstinate egotism, cannot afford to tell south Asia what to do. But they can always urge prudence, moderation, and the necessity of dialogue. They can also recite a lesson they would do well to learn themselves, as a nation: it is not just one nation's interest that is at stake but the fate of the entire world, writes HUCK GUTMAN

decades when cancers increase, to decades when food is either contaminated or the land on which it was produced is taken out of cultivation. Worse - can there be worse? - the prohibition which has held since Nagasaki is in danger of unravelling. "Mutually assured destruction", as savage a threat as there ever has been, has somehow constrained nations from first use of nuclear weapons for over five decades.

But once the nuclear prohibition is breached, once a nation in the post-nuclear world decides to deploy atomic bombs, it will become much easier for the next nation, or terrorist group, to use nuclear devices. The words of Louis XV of France seem eerily appropriate in this context: *Après moi, le déluge*. So there is good reason for America, and Americans, to be concerned. What is taking place in south Asia, what may transpire if tensions are not relaxed, is fearsome. We are, even if we don't always realise how urgently, in this together.

If the conflict between Pakistan and India expands, especially if it goes nuclear, the human world will pay the price. And the natural world, as well. A savage destruction looms, not as a certainty but as a possibility. Obuse as they often are, Americans know this. And so there are daily reports on the stand-off across the Line of Control, on the statements of President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, on India's demands and Pakistan's responses. It is not the place for Americans, with their national obtuseness and their leaders' obstinate egotism, to tell the nations of the sub-continent what to do. But they can always urge prudence, moderation, and the necessity of dialogue.

All are human responses that have proved useful in crisis after crisis. And they can recite a lesson they would do well to learn themselves, as a nation: it is not just one nation's interest that is at stake, or two, but the fate of the entire world. For we are all linked together, no matter how great the distance between our homes in kilometres or language or customs. Sharing the rounded globe, we are linked in a circle of humanity. The great Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai understood circles, too. His poem, *The Diameter of the Bomb*, has much to tell us about destruction and its widest circles:

The diameter of the bomb was thirty centimeters/and the diameter of its effective range about seven meters,/with four dead and eleven wounded. And around these, in a larger circle/of pain and time, two hospitals are scattered/and one graveyard. But the young woman/who was buried in the city she came from,/ at a distance of more than a hundred kilometers,/ enlarges the circle considerably,/and the solitary man mourning her death/ at the distant shores of a country far across the sea/includes the entire world in the circle./And I won't even mention the crying of orphans/that reaches up to the throne of God and/beyond, making a circle with no end and no God.

Huck Gutman is Professor of English at the University of Vermont, and co-author with US Representative Bernard Sanders of Outsider in the House (Verso). He is a regular contributor to both The Statesman in Kolkata and Dawn in Karachi.

have appeared on the world's horizon. They know that there is great anger in both India and Pakistan, anger fuelled in good measure by religious fundamentalism. The world knows about religious fundamentalism, for it displays its narrow righteousness globally, consistent (regardless of which religion is being fundamentalist) in its ubiquitous assertion of what, in the American vernacular, is called "my way or the highway".

America, too, knows about fundamentalism, and not solely because of the destruction of the World Trade Center on 11 September: Christian fundamentalism is a major force in American politics. From vitriolic opposition to abortion to a backlash against women, from the election of President Bush (inconceivable without the support of the Christian Right-wing) to lack of support for the UN, the not-so-secret hand of the Christian fundamentalist marks all of American politics. Based on their understanding of how implacable can be those who are convinced that they have God on their side, combined with their understanding (underlined in recent months) of how strong a motivating force is national pride, thoughtful Americans can foresee that the course of affairs in Kashmir might tragically slip into nuclear war.

In the middle of the 19th century, American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote a great essay about stone dropped into a pond: circular ripples appear, and they spread outward, outward, outward. He was writing about ideas, about how they circulate, about how growth and expansion is a natural law, true not only for ripples in ponds but for human culture. But there is another kind of circle, the nuclear circle. If Pakistan or India, Pakistan and India, resort to detonating nuclear weapons or blowing up nuclear reactors, hundreds of thousands will die. Tens of millions will be maimed by radiation, either immediately - as a consequence of radioactive fallout. (The victims of the nuclear accident at Chernobyl, a smaller event than war might unleash, lived in a broad swath of central Europe, and not just the city in which the reactor was located.) Hundreds of millions will be at future risk, not just the sub-continent but all over the globe, as radioactive clouds enter the jetstream. We can look forward to decades of deformed babies, to



SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY: US Secretary of State Colin Powell being seen off by Pakistani Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar at the air force base in Islamabad on Thursday and later in the night at a joint press conference with Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh in New Delhi. — AP/PTI



two nations, the former regimes of General Zia-ul-Haq and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the creation of Bangladesh, the seemingly endless migrations which continue even to the present moment - is neither known nor felt by foreign observers. Americans do not know how to weigh, in the affair of Kashmir, the competing claims of autonomy and sovereignty, of liberation and continuity, of indigenous struggle and foreign intervention, of self-determination and national integrity. What Americans do know, along with Europeans and Africans, South Asians and Lord Mountbatten, the past wars between the

them directly, and to alter the way in which they and others will henceforward view the world. Reality and symbol: both may be unalterably changed by the course of action taken by India and Pakistan in coming weeks. It will come as no surprise that in past decades, terrorism on the sub-continent has not been of concern to the American government or the vast majority of the American people. Even following the events of 11 September, it cannot be said that the attack in New Delhi has deeply affected the Americans, nor has their new understanding of Afghanistan created a hunger to understand the history of Kashmir.

Terrorism is bad, true, and Americans now oppose it everywhere, but ...India and Pakistan are very far away, and concerns about Kashmir do not register with the Americans. Although the American government said it wants to root out terrorists everywhere, what it meant - meanings differing from the literal denotation of sentences - was that it was implacably opposed to all terrorism directed toward the United States. And possibly toward some of its closer western European allies. It is American exceptionalism, American self-centredness, all over again. What America sees when it looks at India and Pakistan today is a nasty disagreement between two nuclear powers, a disagreement that could easily slide into armed conflict. And this conflict, in the view of not just American but many nations, is one that could slide further: into a war in which nuclear weapons are deployed, and used.

Readers of this report will understand many things that are hidden from the Americans, realities so well known to you that you take them for granted. Americans do not understand the place of religious difference in this disagreement, neither in Kashmir nor in the prickly relations between the two nations. Almost no American can feel the weight of lived history that shapes the ideas and passions of those in places so far from Detroit and Atlanta and Seattle. Americans have no conception of the importance of the Moghul dynasties, the British imperium, the British exploitation of the issue of partition, in the shaping of the sub-continent. What readers of this newspaper take for common knowledge and feel as part of the left or current events - the significance of Gandhi and Jinnah, the role in Kashmir's destiny of Mahatma Hari Singh and Lord Mountbatten, the past wars between the

Did the President of the United States mean to be derogatory in his usage of the term "Pakis"? I very much doubt it. What he revealed was his ignorance, his almost total lack of awareness of the difficulties so often encountered by inhabitants of the sub-continent when they interact with residents of former colonial powers. "Pakis", like "wogs", is a term of derogation and insult. But Mr Bush hardly knew of what he spoke. Unhappily, writ large, the President's ignorance is the nation's. Yet there he was, even though ignorant, trying to come to terms with the events that have taken place with great speed in south Asia. Surprisingly, it was not an exercise in American hegemony which led Mr Bush to try to address the complex issues which have brought masses of Indian and Pakistani troops to face off against each other in Kashmir. What, if not America's imperial ambitions, can explain Mr Bush's concern with events in Kashmir? To Americans, so often ignorant of and blind to the rich complexity of the south Asian sub-continent, the events which followed the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament on 13 December have the capacity both to affect

Powell prods Pervez for more action

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Jan. 18. — The US secretary of state brought with him certain "ideas" that seem to have led India to considerably soften its stand on Pakistan and Mr Jaswant Singh to speak of "expectations" from Pakistan, not "demands".

The "ideas" or "suggestions" involved a scaling down of rhetoric, and various diplomatic and political steps that would go a long way in taking India-Pakistan relations to a point from where dialogue could begin again.

"I think we're on a path that could lead to restoration of dialogue and confidence-building activities", but Islamabad needed to take "further actions before we can

really start walking down that path more aggressively," Mr Powell said today. He was addressing a press conference along with the foreign minister.

While Mr Singh said "India and Pakistan have to resolve the issue", the Prime Minister has said there should be the "earliest restoration of mutual confidence" to bring relations back on the track.

In the context of Indo-Pak relations, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee said, the most important aspect "now, today and in the future, is the earliest restoration of mutual confidence between the two countries. Once confidence is restored, everything else will fall in place, and it'll be so much easier to follow."

In the war against international

terrorism, Mr Singh said, Pakistan has announced some steps, and "whatever you have announced, please do."

Pakistan's actions were being closely watched and acts across the Line of Control should stop, Gen Powell said. Gen Musharraf, he said, was examining the cases of the 20 terrorists and criminals wanted by India, of whom 14 are Indian nationals.

"There are no caves in Karachi for them to hide," Mr Singh said, but additional evidence would be made available to Pakistan on some of these "criminals" accused of "every heinous crime." But if some of these people were handed over, and infiltration along the LoC ceased, after General Musharraf's public statement abandoning the pursuit

of terror as an instrument of state policy, then the prospects for de-escalation of tensions would brighten.

Shortly after Gen Powell left Delhi, the American ambassador, Mr Robert Blackwill, called on Mr LK Advani and said the two countries were together in the war against terrorism, PTI reports.

"There's no exception to the resolve to stamp out terrorism anywhere, including the one that is directed against India," he said after meeting the Union Home minister.

Mr Blackwill described Mr Advani's visit to the USA last week as a "great success" and said President George W Bush had "enjoyed" his conversation with the minister.

WSH. Singh 4/11

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THE STATESMAN

19 JAN 1992

Pak action on list of 20 in focus

Powell shows path of peace

FROM PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, Jan. 18: US secretary of state Colin Powell today urged the nuclear neighbours to spike rhetoric and stress on diplomatic initiatives to ease military tension, but put the onus of resuming bilateral dialogue on Pakistan by asking it to take "further action" against cross-border terror.

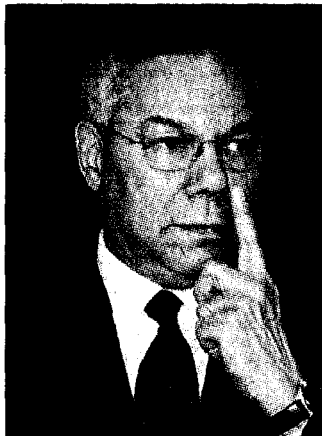
"I think we are on a path that will lead to restoration of dialogue and confidence-building activities, but it will take further action (on Pakistan's part) before we take that path," Powell said at a joint news conference with Jaswant Singh after meeting the top Indian leadership.

Powell's hint was clear: that the extent of normalisation in Indo-Pak relations hinged on Islamabad's ability to hand over some of the 20 terrorists on Delhi's most-wanted list. But at the same time, he sought to convince India that President Pervez Musharraf was serious about turning in some of them.

Delhi gave ample proof of its willingness to wind down the rhetoric with foreign minister Jaswant Singh refusing to blame Pakistan for yesterday's terrorist strike in Jammu. He also said that after Musharraf's address to the nation last week, the demand for the terrorists was no longer a "pre-condition" but an "expectation".

India kept up the pressure by handing over additional details on the terrorists to Pakistan deputy high commissioner Jaleel Abbas Jilani.

"We are aware that there are elements who want to derail the



Powell in New Delhi. (AFP)

ongoing process. We would not like to blame Pakistan or anybody else till we have the full report. But we want to condemn such terrorist acts and reiterate our resolve to fight the menace," Jaswant said.

Delhi could consider taking some steps to establish that it is willing to do its bit to normalise relations. One could be restoring the snapped air, road and rail links with Pakistan.

In the morning, Powell held back-to-back meetings with Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, national security adviser Brajesh Mishra and leader of the Opposition Sonia Gandhi. After the discussions, the secretary of state — who is on a mis-

sion to bring down temperatures in South Asia and has come with "some ideas" to break the Indo-Pak impasse — appeared confident that things were moving the way the US expected them to.

"We have seen some important words said and some important actions taken and if we continue to see progress in that regard, then I expect we will see steps taken on the part of the Indian government," Powell said.

In the morning, Vajpayee told him: "The most important aspect now, today or even later, is the earliest restoration of mutual confidence between the two countries."

Quoting the Prime Minister, Jaswant later said: "Once confidence is restored between the two countries, everything else will fall in place and will then become so much easier to act upon."

South Block is of the view that once export of terror stops — handover of terrorists is a part of this — there will be rapid progress in bilateral relations. But it will feel confident only if Musharraf delivers on the promises he made last week.

Jaswant said it was easy to find out whether Islamabad's words matched its actions by assessing the level of infiltration across the line of control.

He said that of the 20 terrorists on the list, 14 were Indians and the Pakistani authorities were aware of their activities.

"These are wanted terrorists, written about in Pakistani journals. It is not that they are hiding in caves in Karachi... There are no caves in Karachi. They are in fact visible to the Pakistan establishment."

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QUOTE

Do what is appropriate to do in the case of each one of those 20 individuals.

COLIN POWELL
on expected Pak action

USA TENDER...

...

...

Pak may relent on list of 20: Powell

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, January 17

COLIN POWELL'S whistle-stop tour of South Asia appears to have led to General Pervez Musharraf relenting on at least one count to facilitate a thaw in the current Indo-Pak diplomatic freeze. He has extracted an important concession from the Pakistani President: to act on the list of 20 "fugitives from law" whose handover has been sought by India.

Arriving here from Afghanistan this evening, Powell said at a Press conference that Musharraf had told him yesterday the handover of some of those on the list was "not ruled out". But the Pakistanis would like to put up a semblance of resistance and ask for more evidence. When he arrived here with that proposition, he sought — and received — India's agreement to furnish more information about the wanted men.

"The more evidence we provide the better," Powell said. The dialogue he began with External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh was expected to continue late into the night. Tomorrow, he will hold consultations with National Security Adviser Brajesh Mishra and call on Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

In response to a question, Powell said it was up to India to judge whether Musharraf's steps like the arrests of terrorists, banning of their organisations and closure of their offices constituted "sufficient basis" for restarting dialogue with Pakistan. He seemed to empathise with New Delhi's post-January 12 position that the Pakistani President should now implement his promises.

"Words are one thing and action another... it is perfectly un-

Axe on more groups

PAKISTAN PLANS to ban shortly three more militant outfits active in Kashmir, namely Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, al-Badar and Harkat-ul-Jehade-Islami. The Government is holding high-level meetings on the proposed ban and the announcement could come in the next few days, reported daily Pakistan on Thursday. There have been several reports of crackdown on these groups and their leaders.

PTI, Islamabad

derstandable. Musharraf did make an important statement. We will monitor the action," he said.

Before emplaning for New Delhi, Powell had said in Kabul, where he made a brief stopover after leaving Islamabad, that he would expect India to reopen the borders and restart commercial and diplomatic relations severed after the Parliament attack.

Jaswant did not concede any ground on this. "I am ready to take further steps, but I have to see action on the ground. We welcome Musharraf's promises, but they were largely about reforming the Pakistani society and polity. We will cooperate with Pakistan as soon as we see improvement on the ground."

Powell, who had said in Islamabad yesterday that he would be bringing some "ideas" to the Indian Government, preferred to play down his own remark, putting it in the context of the several contacts he had already had with New Delhi on cooling down the Indo-Pak temperature.

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Powell ruled out mediation on Kashmir but said Washington would "always be standing by". The keenness of his Government to see a swift end to the standoff was, however, conveyed through several of his remarks. "We hope the current situation can be resolved as quickly as possible."

Reduced firing

The Indian and Pakistani armies have been exchanging only small arms fire and appear to have discarded mortar shelling since Saturday night, coinciding with Musharraf's reconciliatory speech, adds HTC from Jammu.

Unlike the escalation until last week, changes have been discerned in the firing pattern. "There is routine small arms fire on the LoC and nothing alarming," defence sources said.

Except for one incident of 12-odd mortar shells falling at the Glar village in Samba on Tuesday — which local Army officers attributed to "whims of some local Pakistan Army commander unhappy with Musharraf's tone" — mortar shelling has evidently stopped. The LoC has been relatively quieter than the International Border. "There is more of small arms fire in Hira Nagar, Samba and Ranbirsinghpura than the LoC," a source said.

Indian spy plane shot down

Pakistani troops shot down an unmanned Indian reconnaissance vehicle on Thursday. It crashed in Kathua district in J&K, Defence sources said. The Defence Ministry denied the incident.

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18 JAN 2002

DIALOGUE ONLY SOLUTION TO KASHMIR

Carrying 'some ideas' to New Delhi, says Powell

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JAN. 16. The United States Secretary of State, Colin Powell, today characterised the January 12 speech of the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, and the subsequent actions by his Government as "historic and de-escalatory" and said he would carry "some concrete ideas" to New Delhi to defuse the current tension between India and Pakistan.

Addressing a news conference along with the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Abdul Sattar, after talks with Gen. Musharraf, Gen. Powell gave enough hints that he would expect New Delhi to roll back some of the diplomatic sanctions in the wake of the recent developments.

Appreciating Pakistan's readiness for a dialogue, Gen. Powell made a strong plea to India to move towards a diplomatic and political dialogue with Islamabad. He was all praise for Gen. Musharraf for the "bold and courageous" steps he had unveiled and actions initiated to confront terrorism and transform Pakistan into a "modern and progressive Islamic" state.

He said the world could not afford a conflict in the region and made it a point to note that the Indian reaction to the steps taken by Gen. Musharraf was "measured" and said regional issues could best be resolved through dialogue.

He extended an invitation on behalf of the U.S. President, George W. Bush, to visit Washington and said both sides would work out the schedule for the official visit. In response to a question on the current visit of the Indian Defence Minister, George Fernandes, to the U.S. and the apprehensions in Pakistan about its likely adverse impact on the



The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, receiving the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, in Islamabad, on Wednesday. — Reuters

military front, Gen. Powell said Washington would do nothing to "destabilise the region". He repeatedly maintained that Washington valued its relationship with Islamabad and wanted both India and Pakistan to grow and be strong. On Kashmir, he said it was a very difficult issue and a solution to the problem could flow only through dialogue between India and Pakistan. Further moves to de-escalate the situation could follow after he briefed the Indian leaders about Gen. Musharraf's plans to implement his anti-terrorism agenda.

Gen. Powell, who arrived here

on the first leg of his South Asian tour, had extensive talks on Indo-Pak. tension and bilateral ties between Pakistan and the U.S. with Gen. Musharraf and the team led by Mr. Sattar. "My presence here shows the importance President Bush attaches to this issue and desire to find a peaceful solution. We really cannot have a war. We have to find a way to work through the crisis", he said.

Gen. Powell said he considered Gen. Musharraf's actions to arrest the militants also de-escalatory. "He (Gen. Musharraf) has done a great deal. We want to find ways to de-escalate militarily. De-escalate

late some of the political and diplomatic steps taken in the recent times, such as over flights, restrictions and traffic back and forth across the borders and hopefully, we are moving across in the direction now. We will be patient", he added.

"I hope as a result of my visit we keep the process moving forward to solution to the current crisis between India and Pakistan. I am encouraged by Gen. Musharraf's speech asking Pakistanis to

Diplomatic moves

ISLAMABAD, JAN. 16. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, has said that Pakistan will move strongly on the 'diplomatic front' on the Kashmir issue and make every effort to focus the attention of international community and the media on the plight of the Kashmiri people.

Addressing his Cabinet colleagues at the weekly meeting here today, he maintained that time had come for the international community to address the issue and help resolve it in the interest of peace and progress for one billion people of this region.

stop terrorism and fundamentalism", he said.

Mr. Sattar, in his introductory comments, referred to Gen. Powell as an 'interlocutor' and said there was no room for violence irrespective of the cause involved. "A just cause does not become noble by killing innocent people", he said in clear reference to the jihadi groups engaged in Kashmir. At the same time, he said the root cause of tension between India and Pakistan needs to be addressed and the U.S. was blessed to help in the process.

THE HINDU

17 JAN 2002

'Both India, Pak need to pull back'

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South Asia

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Washington, Jan. 15

WASHINGTON, Jan. 15. — US secretary of state General Colin Powell, on the eve of his visit to New Delhi and Islamabad today, said that India and Pakistan will have to "pull back" but ruled out a nuclear confrontation in the subcontinent.

He said conflict between India and Pakistan has stabilised in recent days but a mutual pullback of troops was necessary to avoid an armed conflict.

"We need India and Pakistan to pull back. We need to reduce the possibility that something could spark conflict between the sides," he said. Gen Powell said that there is danger of war every time two armies are on hair trigger alert. He said Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf's speech on Saturday has improved the prospects for progress when he travels to the region.

"I think we will have quite a bit to work with in discussions with

both sides," he said.

Gen Musharraf, he said, should be praised for declaring



General Colin Powell

that "extremism and terrorism have no place in Pakistani society" and for calling Islam "a religion of peace and tolerance". Meanwhile, Senator Mr Joseph Lieberman said that he was encouraged by India's favourable

responses to Gen Musharraf's "principled" statement.

He also urged both countries to pull back their troops from the border so that an accident or an extremist act does not start a war. He urged President Bush to "immediately send a high level envoy to the region to help seize the moment of opportunity between India and Pakistan."

Mr Lieberman, who recently led a Congressional delegation to Pakistan, said though the parties themselves want progress, they may not be able to make it "without" their "encouragement and mediation." He said the USA must act aggressively to defuse "the most urgent and literally explosive global security crisis" today — on the border between India and Pakistan, where million soldiers are confronting each other.

He "thanked Musharraf for Pakistan's great support of military operations against terrorists in Afghanistan and urged him to do the same inside Pakistan".

THE STATESMAN

10 JAN 2002

U.S. steps up vigil on Indo-Pak. border

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, JAN. 11. The U.S. intelligence apparatus, including the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the National Security Agency, is stepping up surveillance along the India-Pakistan border looking for deployment of nuclear arsenal by both countries, according to a report in *The New York Times*. However, an unnamed official was quoted as saying, "So far there is no evidence of that."

What is causing deep concern here are intelligence reports of movement of troops to the frontlines, the calling up of reserves and movement of missiles by both nations. According to one official, the mobilisation is unprecedented. "The Indians are al-

most at full mobilisation. And that has not happened since the 1971 war", the senior administration official has said.

"We are significantly more worried today than we were several days ago", a senior member of the National Security Staff said. "We are especially concerned about reports from India suggesting start of military exercises along the border which could heighten the chances of a major miscalculation."

Blackwill's visit

Quoting officials, the paper said India had hinted that it would not take any unprovoked military action against Pakistan as long as the U.S. continued its diplomatic efforts to find a way of the crisis. The American Ambassador to In-

dia, Robert Blackwill, came for consultations at the White House on Thursday and has since left for New Delhi.

The White House, according to the paper, was trying to be careful in describing the meeting on Thursday between the U.S. President, George Bush and the Home Minister, L.K. Advani. "At a news conference, Mr. Advani thanked Mr. Bush for what he called American support of the Indian position, words that the White House was careful not to use in describing the meeting," the report said.

Mr. Bush, during the meeting with Mr. Advani, is said to have stressed the need for India and Pakistan to settle their differences through diplomatic and political means. "The President told Mr. Advani that he has urged the Pa-

kistan President, Pervez Musharraf, to take appropriate steps against extremists operating from Pakistan.

He also stressed the importance of solving Indo-Pak. differences through diplomatic and political means, the White House Spokesman, Ari Fleischer, has said.

The Bush administration has been quite careful in the way it dealt with Gen. Musharraf. On the one hand, there is constant pressure on him to come to terms with terrorists and terrorism, especially as it harmed India and on the other, it is careful in not wanting to make Gen Musharraf's position politically untenable at home. The last thing the Republican administration wants at this time is uncertainty in Pakistan.

THE HINDU

12 JAN 2002

Advani's tough talk pays off, U.S. seeks more Pak action

Times News Network

WASHINGTON: The United States has agreed with India that Pakistan and its military ruler Pervez Musharraf need to do more than just talk about fighting terrorism. Islamabad must take additional action, on top of some of the measures it has announced. Pakistan also needs to take appropriate action on the list of 20 terrorists New Delhi has handed over to Islamabad.

In a perceptible departure from the earlier U.S. stance that pressed India to respond to Pakistan's verbal assurances, Secretary of State Colin Powell switched to the we-need-action-from-Pakistan mode after a forceful

presentation from home minister L.K. Advani questioning Pakistan's sincerity in combating terrorism. The two leaders emerged from a 30-minute meeting at the state department on Wednesday, and in brief remarks to the media, Mr Powell revealed a definite change in the benchmarks set for Pakistan.

Asked about the list of 20 terrorists India had demanded Pakistan hand over, Mr Powell

said he had seen the list and discussed it with General Musharraf. He said he knew Gen Musharraf was examining it and hoped he would take appropriate action. But it was in his hands, Mr Powell said.

More significantly, Mr Powell also said there is room for more work on Gen Musharraf's part, in addition the speech he is expected to give this weekend forsaking terrorism. "We are looking forward to the speech he will be giving later this week, which I think will be a powerful signal to his nation and to India and the rest of the world," Mr Powell said. "But it's not just the speech. We will be looking to see what additional action he has taken."

He added: "I believe he has taken quite a

bit of action in recent months, but as you well know, the Indians believe more action is required, and we will see what happens in the days and weeks ahead." Even in his preamble ahead of questions from the media, Mr Powell suggested that Gen Musharraf's address has to include a condemnation of terrorism of any kind, because it is no longer acceptable in the 21st century for nations to live under this kind of threat.

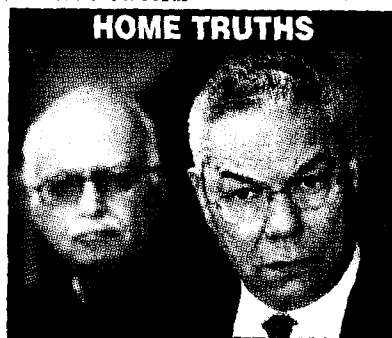
The comments suggested that Washington substantially agreed with India's argument that Pakistan has not done enough to address its concerns on terrorism. And they came after the American establishment,

including Mr Powell, a few lawmakers, and some sections of the U.S. media drummed up Gen Musharraf's forthcoming address as if it had already been delivered and indicated the onus was now on India to respond to Pakistan's climbdown.

Not so, Mr Advani told his U.S. interlocutors. Pakistan continues to be duplicitous about terrorism and had done very little about it. India was not the bel-

ligerent party, and on the contrary, had acted with great restraint in the face of a decade of proxy war initiated by Pakistan.

Mr Advani conveyed to U.S. officials what he called the four touchstones of Pakistan's sincerity that needed to be met before India would respond to calls for talks. They are: handing over the 20 terrorists; closing facilities, training camps, arms supply, funding and all other manner of direct and indirect assistance for terrorists on Pakistani soil, including areas controlled by it; stopping infiltration of arms and men from Pakistan into Jammu & Kashmir and elsewhere in India; and a categorical renunciation of terrorism in all its manifestations and wherever it exists, irrespective of the cause it seeks to further.



Home minister L.K. Advani and U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell address the media in Washington on Wednesday.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

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No beating around the Bush

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Make anti-terror stand clear, Bush tells P rvez

HT Correspondent & NYT Peshawar/Washington, Jan 8

AMID REPORTS that a panicky P rvez Musharraf has been pressuring the US to choose between Pakistan and India, an exasperated President Bush today asked the General to "make a clear statement to the world that he intends to crack down on terror" and take more measures to defuse the border tension.

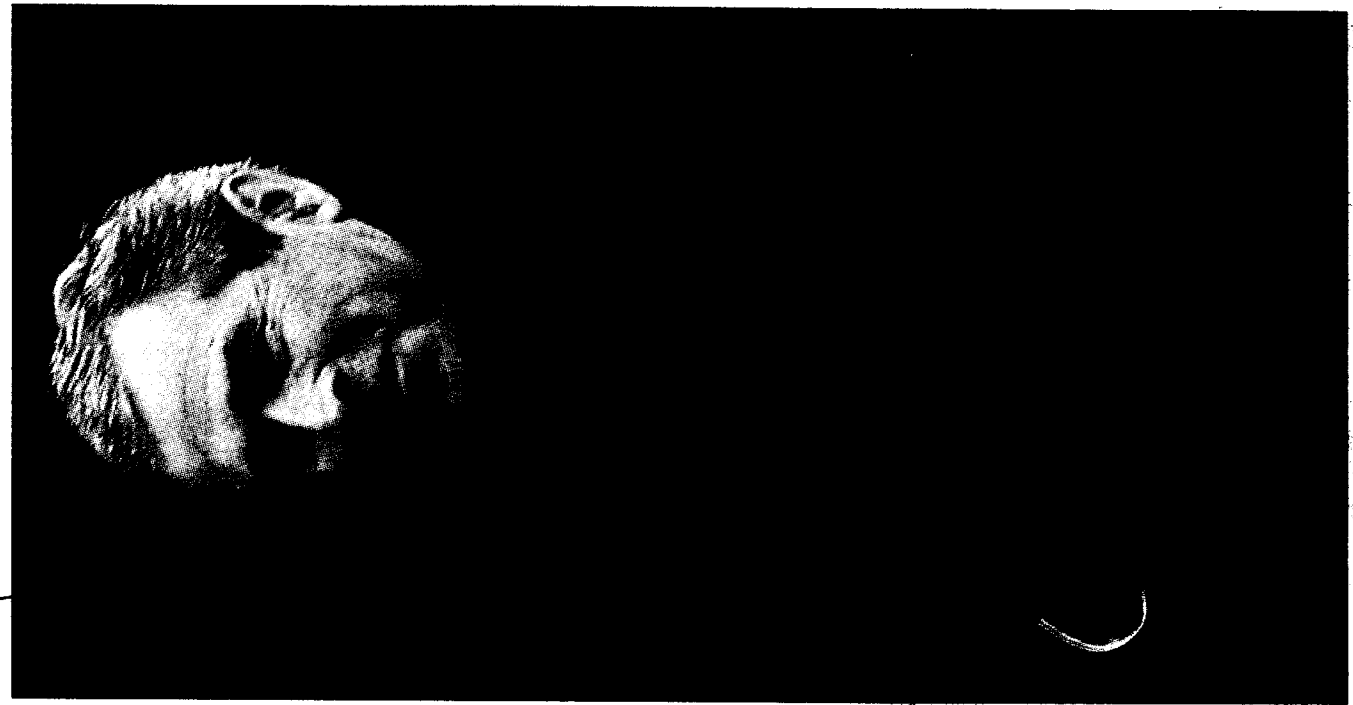
Bush's remarks appeared to signal the growing American weariness with Musharraf's distinction between "freedom fighters" in Kashmir and terrorists elsewhere.

Speaking to reporters in the Oval Office, Bush said: "I think it's very important for President Musharraf to make a clear statement to the world that he intends to crack down on terror. And I believe if he does that and continues to do what he's doing, it will provide relief in a situation that's still serious."

The comment comes close on the heels of India deciding to turn the spotlight on Pakistan's dual approach to terrorism. Atal Bihari Vajpayee's pointed observation that Musharraf made no reference to terrorism in his Saarc address has not gone unnoticed here.

The US, said Bush, was working hard to convince both India and Pakistan to avoid a war. A few days back, Musharraf got so jittery about a possible war that he rang up American Ambassador in Islamabad, Wendy J Chamberlin, to ask where Washington intended to draw the line in supporting India.

"What the General wanted to know was how Washington



BLOW HOT, BLOW COLD: President George Bush at the White House. APP PHOTO

PEACE, PAKIS!

PRESIDENT BUSH'S tongue slipped again on Tuesday as he inadvertently described Pakistanis as "Pakis", considered an ethnic slur. In the midst of a speech, Bush said: "We are working hard to convince both the Indians and the Pakis that there's a way to deal with their problems without going to war." The White House staff quickly detected the damage potential and came up with the clarification: "The President has great respect for the Pakistani people and the culture." The Pakistan Embassy played down the matter. **HTC, Washington**

could guarantee that India wouldn't wait for some new incident, then claim it was backed by Pakistan and use it as a pretext to go to war?" an aide to the General said.

He has taken a major risk by siding with the US in its war in Afghanistan. Now, the General — by cracking down on groups fighting for Kashmir — runs the risk of appearing to be bowing to India's will. Said Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar: "India's threats have very greatly reduced our room for action because our people will say we are doing India's dirty business."

Several top defence officers with links to militant groups are already angry with Musharraf and may get even more difficult to contain if India keeps up the heat.

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Wary US denies visa to Pak squash team

Kadambari Murali New Delhi, January 8

YOUNG PAKISTANIS have few reasons of late to praise US consular authorities, and these youngsters include recognised sportsmen. The US Embassy in Pakistan has refused visas to four top Pakistani players in time for them to be around and take part in the US Open Squash Championship.

The foursome, Shahid Zaman, world no. 32, Mansoor Zaman, world no. 35 (a former world junior champion), Amjad Khan (ranked 51) and Ajaz Azmat (ranked 60), all of whom have been to the US before, had invitations for the event this week in Boston.

Former British Open champion Qamar Zaman, father of Mansoor, told *Hindustan Times* that his other son, Munawar, who was to travel with the team as a coach, had been called for an interview, but was refused visa. "They said they felt once he reached the US he would not return. It's ridiculous," Zaman fumed.

Mansoor and Amjad's passports were sent to the US for verification. "The other passports — of Shahid, Ajaz and Faroukh, another player, — were not even accepted. The Pakistan Squash Federation representative who had accompanied them was told to bring them next month. It is strange and worrying to say the least. In the past, we would always apply in the morning and receive the visa the same

ANOTHER SPY PLANE

ONE MORE Pakistan spy plane intruded into Indian airspace over Poonch on Tuesday evening — the second such transgression in the past three days. The plane, however, returned to PoK without being challenged or fired at. Reports said the plane intruded around 5.30 p.m. and was in Indian airspace for more than 10 minutes.

HTC, Jammu

evening," Zaman said.

Tournament organiser John Nimick said 10 days ago, he had received an urgent e-mail request from Zaman for a copy of the invitation and had promptly sent it across.

Zaman and Pakistan Squash Federation vice-president Air Vice Marshal (Retd) Qaiser Ali believe the players have been denied visa as part of a new US immigration policy under which young Muslim males, considered a high security risk, and rich Pakistanis, perceived as potential immigrants, find it difficult than others to get visas.

"They are treating us very shabbily and I intend to give the US Ambassador a piece of my mind if I get an audience. I am a former champion and these events are the boys' bread and butter. We cannot be persecuted like this and treated like petty criminals," Ali said.

Government uncaps excise duty for war

HT Correspondent New Delhi, January 8

THE GOVERNMENT on Tuesday gave Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha sweeping powers to increase the excise duty on any commodity in the event of an emergency such as war.

Sinha was given this authority through an amendment approved by the Cabinet to the Central Excise Tariff Act, 1985. The Government has requested President K R Narayanan to issue an ordinance immediately.

Normally, any hike in excise duty has to be approved by Parliament. Even in an emergency, the Finance Minister can only double the excise duty on any given product. Through this ordinance Sinha will be given additional emergency powers to hike excise duty without limit.

Said Communications and Information Technology Minister Pramod Mahajan: "The Finance Ministry may be contemplating a hike in the excise duty of certain items for which the Cabinet has given powers." However, Mahajan said that the Cabinet was not briefed on the extent of hike in excise duty or the items that could be targeted. The authority has been conferred on Sinha under the Central Excise Tariff Act.

North Block is tight-lipped on the extent of excise duty hike in the event of a war. Peak excise duty levied currently is 40 per cent. However, most commodities attract 16 per cent central excise duty apart from 16 per cent central value added tax (Cenvat).

Spell out stand, Bush tells Musharraf

Press Trust of India

WASHINGTON, Jan. 8. — Incr easing the diplomatic pressure on President Pervez Musharraf, Mr George Bush said today. "It is very important that Musharraf make a clear statement to the world that he intends to crack down on terror".

Terming the Indo-Pak stand-off as 'serious', the US President said that if General Musharraf allows that (crackdown) and continues to do what he is doing, it will provide relief to a situation that is still serious. He added "We are working hard to con-

vince both the Indians and the Pakistanis that there is a way to deal with their problems without going to war".

The statements came shortly after Mr Tony Blair bluntly told Gen Musharraf in Islamabad that the Indo-Pak dialogue could resume only when Pakistan rejects terrorism completely.

The *New York Times* said that President Musharraf had telephoned the US ambassador in Islamabad, Ms Wendy Chamberlin, to enquire where Washington intended to draw the line in supporting New Delhi.

The General, apprehensive about the tensions around Kash-

mir spilling over into a war "wanted to know how Washington could guarantee that India wouldn't wait for some new incident to occur, then claim that it was backed by Pakistan and use it as a pretext to go to war", the daily quoted the General's aide as saying.

Quoting the aide further, it added "What if some outraged Kashmiri takes a Kalashnikov and shoots an Indian politician or puts a bomb in a parking lot? Is Pakistan going to be held accountable every time anybody picks up a weapon? Is Washington saying that all freedom struggles, everywhere, can be suppressed

under the guise of the war on terrorism?"

Gen Musharraf today held a meeting at Rawalpindi for several hours with the army's corps commanders (considered a top policy body) and senior defence officials, to discuss the operational preparedness of Pakistan's defence forces in view of the heavy build up along the Indian border.

Pakistan's foreign minister, Mr Abdul Sattar, said: "There is no question that we do have a problem with extremism in this country and we cannot deny that there is a monster in our midst that has arisen in the past

decades".

And Mr Talat Masood, a retired Pakistani General and commentator on military and political affairs, said: "India's threats in the past three weeks have greatly reduced our room for action, because our people will say: 'These people are doing India's dirty business. They are Pakistanis, so why don't they stand up for Pakistan?' These

people are perfectly capable of saying, 'We should abandon Musharraf's line and be much more aggressive, and that would bring to pass exactly the opposite of what India and the USA say they want'".

Rumsfeld says Indo-Pak war is not likely

By ELA DUTT and VASANTHA ARORA

WASHINGTON: U.S. defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld has said that he does not expect war to break out between India and Pakistan and that the two could be expected to settle differences peacefully.



Briefing reporters at the Pentagon, Mr Rumsfeld said, "I don't (think) they (India and Pakistan) are going to go to war. I think they're going to sort these things out."

This statement from the senior-most U.S. defence official is in contrast to the usual fears expressed by others in the Bush administration that war could be imminent and rumour mongering in the media and other circles about the potential threat of a nuclear war.

Mr Rumsfeld was also hopeful that India and Pakistan will move through this unquestionably tense period, "in a way that is respectful of the risks to each side, and the power of the weapons that each side has."

Mr Rumsfeld, credited with his charismatic press briefings, said, "In each case we have seen things that have led to tensions and on the other hand some steps that have

reduced that tension. And I am hopeful we will see more the latter than the former."

He made a mention about the efforts being made U.S. President George Bush, secretary of state Colin Powell and other senior members of the U.S. administration, in visits and phone calls to both sides, to ease tensions.

Meanwhile, state department spokesperson Richard Boucher also told reporters on Thursday that the U.S. continues to urge India and Pakistan to take steps to reduce tension.

"Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee also made a statement that he will make every effort to avoid a conflict with Pakistan. We are also pleased to see that

Pakistan is moving against militant groups, and we believe President (Pervez) Musharraf is committed to dismantling those groups which are a threat to Pakistan and its neighbours," Mr Boucher said.

Pakistan, Mr Boucher said, has also made a public commitment to reform its education system to remove sectarian influences and improve academic standards, and "we look forward to supporting these efforts with our assistance to Pakistan."

In response to a question on Jammu and Kashmir, Mr Boucher responded that U.S. policy was "the same as it has always been, that we are willing to help out if the parties want us to, but at this point I don't think we have been asked." (IANS)

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U.S. to continue efforts for reducing tension

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, JAN. 3. The United States has said it is pleased that India and Pakistan are continuing to take steps to defuse tensions between them.

"We'll continue to be active in working with both sides. We continue to have active diplomacy through our Ambassadors on the ground as well as directly from the Secretary of State," the State Department spokesman, Richard Boucher, said at a press briefing on Wednesday. "...there does continue to be violence in Kashmir. There were some more attacks today which we obviously condemn. And we continue to call for an end to violence there," he said.

At the same time, the Bush administration is not prepared to go to the extent of saying that the crisis has turned the corner. "I don't want to do that. We're going to continue to be active. We think it's

necessary to continue to be active, because we are interested in seeing an end to this terrorism. We are interested in seeing an end to the violence," Mr. Boucher said.

"... we will continue to work with India and Pakistan about what they can do to stop and fight terrorism and I think we'll continue to be active. I don't think one should make any sweeping statements at this moment," he added.

On whether the U.S. would like a direct meeting between the Prime Minister, A.B. Vajpayee, and the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, at the SAARC summit in Kathmandu or if the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, has suggested this in his telephone calls to the two leaders, the spokesman merely said, "the leaders are there. The Foreign Ministers are there... We do see it as an opportunity, but I'll leave it to them to decide how to use it." The State Department has

also made it known that there is no doubt as to who was behind the latest acts of violence in Kashmir. "I don't have any particular evidence of the grenades that went off today in Srinagar, of who did that. But let me remind you that the U.S. has been quite clear on the groups that we think are carrying out violence in these areas. We added two of them to the terrorism list last week... So we've been quite clear about who we think is carrying out the violence," Mr. Boucher said.

Meanwhile, the White House spokesman, Scott McClellan, from Crawford in Texas said Mr. Bush and the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, discussed the ways to reduce tensions between India and Pakistan ahead of Mr. Blair's visit to the region. "It was part of the ongoing discussions about ways our two nations can work together to help reduce tensions."

U.S. TO CONTINUE EFFORTS
FOR REDUCING TENSION