

Three Americans killed in south Yemen

MOHAMMED SUDAM

Sanaa (Yemen), Dec. 30 (Reuters): A gunman shot dead an American doctor and two of her American colleagues at a Baptist mission hospital in Yemen today in what Yemeni officials called an "Islamic extremist" attack.

Abed Abdel Razzak Kamel, 30, was arrested and named as the killer by the interior ministry. Officials said he had posed as a patient and hoped the killings would bring him closer to God.

A fourth American was wounded in the shooting at the Jibla Baptist hospital in Ebb

province, 170 km south of the capital Sanaa. Yemeni officials, who initially said Kamel was 32, had earlier also said that all three dead were doctors.

The Southern Baptist International Mission Board named them as physician Martha Myers, 57, of Montgomery, Alabama, hospital administrator William Koehn, 60, of Arlington, Texas, and Kathleen Garity, 53, from Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, a purchasing agent. Wounded pharmacist Donald Caswell, 49, of Levelland, Texas, was recovering after an operation to remove two bullets.

A Yemeni official said Kamel told police he shot them because

he believed they were Christian missionaries and he wanted to "cleanse his religion and get closer to God".

"The gunman confessed to being a member of the Islamic Jihad group and said he shot the Americans because they were preaching Christianity," the official said, referring to a Yemeni group unrelated to the Palestinian movement also called Islamic Jihad.

Witnesses said Kamel entered the clinic posing as a patient. When his turn came to be treated, he opened fire.

The ministry described Kamel as an "Islamic extremist" and said he was a member of the

Islamic Opposition Islah Party. But Islah said in a statement he had left the party to join Islamic Jihad because Islah was "too soft against the West and America".

In a message to US President George W. Bush, Yemeni leader Ali Abdullah Saleh said: "We condemn this heinous criminal act... which will strengthen our united stand against terrorism."

Yemen is seen in the West as a haven for Muslim militants, including the al Qaeda network which Washington blames for last year's September 11 attacks on the US. Anti-American sentiment has been running high in many Arab countries in recent months over Washington's sup-

port for Israel, the US-led war on Afghanistan and a possible attack on Iraq. Last month, a suspected Islamist shot dead an American missionary nurse at a clinic in Lebanon.

American diplomats declined to speculate on the motives for the attack: "We can't rule out anything but it is too early to tell," one said, adding that US investigators were in Jibla. The Yemeni official said authorities had detained many suspected militants and erected roadblocks.

"We feel as if we were all assassinated today, especially since Martha had close ties with everyone who frequented the



The three Americans who were killed in southern Yemen on Monday: (from left) Martha Myers, Kathleen Garity and William Koehn. (Reuters)

she believed it was an isolated incident, however, and may have been linked to preparations to hand over the American hospital to the poor," he added. The hospital's administrator Julie Toma told CNN from Jibla

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THE TELEGRAPH

980
Girl beheaded
for flouting
dress diktat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SRINAGAR, Dec. 21. — Close on the heels of the killing of three girls ostensibly to enforce a diktat on wearing *burqa*, militants beheaded another woman in Rajouri last night, police said. Militants barged into the house of Jan Begum (43) in the Darhal area and beheaded her, they said. The incident comes less than 24 hours of the killing of three girls in the district. Ultras have warned women against attending schools or colleges and directed them to wear *burqa*. **ITBP jawan shot:** Militants shot dead an ITBP jawan at Madina chowk in Srinagar today, adds another report. Al-Nasireen ultras fired at Jai Ram from close range at 3.15 p.m., injuring him. He was taken to hospital where he was declared brought dead. A person identifying himself as a Al-Nasireen spokesman telephoned news agencies owning responsibility for the killing. //

'Burqa' deadline: Militants kill three women in Rajouri

ARUN SHARMA
JAMMU, DECEMBER 20

WITHIN hours of the expiry of their deadline for Muslim women and girls to wear the *burqa*, militants early this morning killed three women, including two students and a teacher, at Hasiyot in Tharmandi tehsil of Rajouri district.

The killings — first by militants over the issue of *burqa* in the state sparked panic in the Muslim-domi-

nated district with girls and women teachers going to their educational institutions either in the veil or having covered their faces with a *duppatta*. The veil has never been in vogue among Muslim women in this district as the area is inhabited mostly by Gujjars.

Those killed were identified as Nureen Kousar, a first-year student of Government Degree College at Rajouri; Shehnaz, second-year student of Girls Higher

Secondary School at Palanghar; and Tahira, a private school teacher. While Tahira was picked up by militants from a wedding function at the house of her uncle, Khalil Mirza, Shehnaz and Nureen were abducted from their homes.

The targets seemed to have been selected carefully as all the three belonged to moderate Muslim families who didn't wear the *burqa* despite militant threats.

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'Burqa' deadline: Militants kill three women in Rajouri

sources said. Tahira's father, Mohammad Akhram, a farmer, had been shot dead by militants in 1996. Shehnaz's father, Rafiq, had retired from the Army a year ago while Nureen's father was a BSF head-constable. Shehnaz was continuing her studies even after her marriage to one Abdul Wassad.

The police are blaming the group, Al Badr Mujahideen, for the killings but the locals say it's the Lashkar-e-Jabbar, an offshoot of Lashkar-e-Toiba, which has been carrying out the *burqa* campaign.

Rajouri SP P R Manhas said Al Badr Mujahideen had issued a poster in the area 10 days ago asking the locals to keep away from the security forces. They may have suspected the deceased to be informers, Manhas said. He even identified the militants as Zubair Gul, Abdullah Shaheen-ul-Islam and Zahid Badri, all foreigners.

The locals say Al Badr Mujahideen has never oper-

ated in the district. It was the Lashkar-e-Jabbar that has been asking the women to wear the *burqa* and men to wear *sherwani* for over a month now with little response.

The first group had first surfaced in the Valley two years ago when it warned Muslim women and girls of dire consequences if they did not wear the *burqa*. Following resentment among the locals after acid was thrown on schoolgirls, all the major militant outfits had denied any links with Lashkar-e-Jabbar. Since then, there had been no word from it.

What set alarm bells ringing this time was the deadline of December 19. A huge banner appeared at the main entrance of Government Degree College last evening, threatening all those defying the diktat with dire consequences.

The CRPF has been camping at the college for the past six months.

The militants launched their campaign for *burqa* at Darhal where they pasted a poster outside the Government Higher Secondary School, asking girls to discontinue their studies. Later, they said they could go wearing a *burqa*.

This morning, the militants first came to the house of Khalil Mirza and called Tahira out of the marriage function. They took her away and killed her.

Then they went to the house of Shehnaz and beheaded her. Later, they abducted Nureen and shot her dead when she tried to escape.

The police and security forces rushed to the area only after they came to know about the killings this morning. Source said that militants had hanged a banner outside the local Jama Masjid warning people of similar consequences if they defied their diktat. The banner was later removed by the police.

7 : DEC 2002

NDIA EXP...

The U.S. and Muslim nations

By Hamid Ansari

The stated objective of American policy is to translate its strength and influence into decades of peace, prosperity and liberty. Missing in this vision is a concept of justice.

DURING THE Cold War, the one constant in American foreign policy was the positive relationship with the moderate Muslim states. Its purpose was to secure energy supplies, seek allies against the Soviet bloc and maintain the status quo. Prior to the Iranian Revolution, "Islam" in foreign policy terms meant the version projected by these Governments. The use of Islam as an ideological weapon against Arab nationalism was welcomed and no threat was perceived from radical movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood or the Jamaat-e-Islami.

The 1979 Iranian Revolution disturbed the strategic balance in the region. This was followed by an assault on the political stability of Saudi Arabia when Islamic radicals occupied the Grand Mosque in Mecca in November 1979. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 aggravated matters further. The first two developments enhanced the relevance of conservative Islam; the third introduced a sense of urgency to harness Islam *per se* to the anti-Soviet purposes of the U.S. and seek help from the ulema, tribal chiefs and even radical Islamists. Thus arose the need to accommodate policy to requirements that were evidently contradictory.

The end of the Cold War, and developments in Egypt and Algeria, propelled a policy review. A speech by the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, Edward Djerejian, in June 1992 addressed the question: "what should United States policy be towards Islam; how can the U.S. in its leadership role develop a considered, comprehensive policy towards the arc of crisis and the role of Islam in it?" Mr. Djerejian said, (a) the U.S. did not view Islam as the next "ism" confronting the West; (b) the Cold War was not being replaced with a new competition; (c) there was no bloc or international effort behind the Islamic groups or movements but serious concern did exist over the role of Iran and Sudan; and (d) the root cause of the problem lay in social injustice and in the absence of the democratic process. He suggested a clear differentiation between the extremists and the mainstream of Is-

lam, said the U.S. should "work more closely with the moderate Islamic governments" and proposed a dual track approach of encouraging participatory governance and free market economy. He acknowledged that the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict "will help to diffuse the anti-Western sentiment among Muslims".

Much the same ground was covered in 1994 by Clinton Administration officials Robert Pelletreau and Anthony Lake; it was summed up by a State Department official in 1995: "Our policy is to keep the lines of communications open to the moderate Islamic movements." (It was in the 1995-96 period that the U.S. was making overtures to the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.)

The 1992 policy was predicated on a set of three factors to be considered simultaneously and not sequentially: continued support of the moderate regimes; the induction of gradual change; the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The implementation of the first was easy enough; its success however hampered the second since the pressure to change slackened; as for the third, Israeli intransigence and U.S. incapacity saw the demise of the peace process and the onset of a second *intifada*. As a result, Arab opinion — which perceived the U.S. as the protector of the traditional regimes, blamed it for the failure to induce political evolution; the failure of the peace process, and for Israeli policies in the Occupied Territories — radicalised and contributed to the mindset which eventually led to the events of September 11. The domestic, the regional and the external aspects of the situation thus become part of a single package, and are presented as such in the literature emanating from radical Islamists. Its most recent example is Osama bin Laden's "Letter to America" published on November 24.

The new threat environment after 9/11 necessitated a policy review. This is reflected in "the National Se-

curity Strategy of the United States of America", signed by the President, George W. Bush, on September 17, 2002. It asserts, in the context of the fight against global terrorism, that the U.S. will support "moderate and modern Governments, especially in the Muslim world, to ensure that the conditions and ideologies that promote terrorism do not find fertile ground in any nation". Support is also promised for "a just and comprehensive settlement" of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict provided the Palestinians "firmly reject terror" and "embrace democracy".

A subtle but substantive shift of approach is evident. A number of questions remain to be answered. 1) By linking support to the amorphous concept of modernity, is not the U.S. virtually wishing to control the governance of societies at different levels of development? 2) To what extent, and at what pace, can the U.S. pressure the traditional regimes to move towards participatory governance without destabilising them? What if pressure does not produce the desired results? 3) What would be the U.S. approach to opposition (i.e. moderate Islamist) groups in these societies? 4) Israel, in strategic terms, is a net beneficiary of the post-9/11 situation in the region and would like to see a longer-term, radical, realignment of U.S. policy. How is this to be reconciled with the American objective of a just and comprehensive settlement of the conflict? 5) Are the linkages visualised in the 1992 policy still part of the U.S. approach?

The U.S. thinking on the first question remains unclear. There are some who advocate a new approach based on assertive democratisation of the region accompanied, if necessary, by some cartographic engineering. Others feel that given the totality of American interests the broad framework of the old policy may yet be the preferable option. On the second question, there is general agreement that the traditional regimes should

be subjected to sustained pressure to join the fight against terrorism, and against Iraq, and to quicken the pace of domestic reforms. How much of this is tactically related to the building up of a coalition against Iraq is not clear nor has thought been given to the implications of a possible failure of reforms undertaken under external pressure. The third question poses a dilemma because after the demise of old-fashioned Arab nationalism, the only claimants of the political space outside the circle of the establishment are different shades of moderate Islamists. If, therefore, participatory governance is to be furthered, then a *modus vivendi* with these groups has to be sought. As for the fourth question, no effort has been spared in recent months to further this line of argument. Despite this, even as strident a critic as Barry Rubin has recently concluded that the only way to counter "Arab Anti-Americanism" is for the U.S. to be steadfast in support of its interests and allies i.e. Israel and moderate Arab states. Finally, studied ambiguity rather than clarity of perception and action seems to characterise the Bush Administration's thinking on the fifth question.

America today possesses unparalleled military strength and unmatched influence. And yet, as Edward Gibbon had cautioned, "omnipotence itself cannot escape the murmurs of its discordant votaries". The West Asian states that applauded the U.S. role in the Kuwait crisis of 1990-91 are today apprehensive of American intentions. The stated objective of American policy is to translate its strength and influence into decades of peace, prosperity and liberty. Missing in this vision is a concept of justice. The grievance of injustice in U.S. policy on Palestine is widely articulated across many lands and is not confined to Arabs and Muslims; it is in no small measure a principal cause of extremism in West Asia. Would not a less ambivalent posture on addressing the grievances of the Palestinians win many friends and thus strengthen the struggle against the scourge of extremism?

(The writer is a former Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations.)

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THE HINDU

Policing culture

55-6 Islam Bangladesh
Khaleda gives in to Islamist game 14/11

The selection of *Maatir Moina* (The Clay Bird), a Bengali feature film, for an Oscar nomination is the best thing to happen to Bangladesh's moribund film industry which thrives on plagiarising Bollywood productions. Recipient of two international awards, the film has been the focus of a raging political controversy because of the refusal of the Bangladesh Film Censor Board to clear it for public viewing. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's coalition partner Jamat-e-Islam found the film "highly objectionable" and pressured the Board not to certify. The film's bold statement on the country's regressive madrasa education system, out of tune with modern demands was unacceptable to the Jamat. There is another reason for Jamat's distaste for the film's director Tareq Masood — his much acclaimed documentary films on the songs of the liberation war. To Jamat anything connected with liberation is anathema since it had collaborated with the Pakistani army in 1971. *Matir Moina* got the censor certificate only after the "objectionable portions" were scissored. Earlier the Jamat had stopped the screening of Tanvir Moqammel's *Lal Salu* in Sylhet, which shows how the laity are cheated by mullahs.

The most shocking aspect of Begum Zia's one-year rule is that the Islamists are allowed to police the country's cultural scene. They have stopped films, plays and musical performances, "found objectionable". Script writers and directors of plays, like that of *Katha Krishna Kali*, have been arrested and tortured on their dictates without proper charges. Worse, communal passions have been aroused by targeting progressive cultural troupe members. Sculpture and other forms of "unislamic arts" are derided. Already efforts are on to scuttle the publication of a Bengali encyclopaedia by leveling false blasphemy charges against its editors. High Court and Supreme Court Judges are warned not to follow the example of one of their colleagues who ruled that issuing fatwas was illegal. Ignoring Tagore's works is applauded because the poet never "cared for the Bangladeshi Muslim ethos". Is Bangladesh a moderate Muslim as claimed by Begum Zia?

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THE STATESMAN

West in danger from Muslim terrorists: Putin

110-19 John 13/11
BRUSSELS, NOV. 12. Islamic radicals are pursuing the systematic annihilation of non-Muslims, the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, charged on Monday.

Speaking at a European Union summit in Brussels, Mr. Putin said Western civilisation faced a mortal threat from Muslim terrorists, claiming that they had plans to create a "worldwide Caliphate".

His words overshadowed the main achievement of the summit, which was to end years of wrangling over Russia's isolated enclave in Kaliningrad. The two blocs reached a compromise deal that will prevent Russian citizens being cut off in the Baltic port as the E.U.'s borders move East in 2004.

Mr. Putin said the world no longer faced isolated acts of terrorism but a "concerted effort and programme" by a global network bent on slaughter, perhaps with nuclear weapons.

"They talk of the need to kill all 'Cross-bearers'. If you are Christian, your life is threatened, but even if you reject your beliefs in accordance with their philosophy, you will be killed."

Mr. Putin said the West should face up to the reality that Chechen terrorists were religious extremists in league with Al-Qaeda, rather than a separatist movement seeking a breakaway republic.

If the West failed to deal with the Chechen terrorist threat, he said, there would be a repeat of the Moscow theatre siege and the Bali resort attack "all over the world".

Mr. Putin secured an E.U.-Russia action plan to fight terrorism at the mini-summit, but he was firmly warned that Europe would not give Russia *carte blanche* in its fight against terrorism, particularly after reports that fragmentation bombs were being used widely against civilians in Chechnya.

The Danish Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who holds the rotating E.U. presidency, said: "We, of course, support Russia in the fight against terrorism. But I also want to say that it is not a long-term solution to the Chechnya problem to launch a military action and bomb the country to pieces."

He called on Moscow to abide by human rights agreements, prosecute war criminals in Chechnya, admit international observers to the conflict zone, and seek a political settlement.

Privately, E.U. diplomats said Mr. Putin was playing the Al-Qaeda card for all it was worth, seeing it as a useful way to create a sense of common purpose with the West and heighten the strategic value of Russia. — ©Telegraph Group Limited, London, 2002

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THE HINDU

Pro-Taliban cleric to be Pak PM

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Blow for Pervez supporters

Islamabad, November 5

UNCERTAINTY OVER formation of a civilian government in Pakistan appeared to have ended on Tuesday with the pro-democracy parties striking a deal with the Islamic alliance.

Former Premier Benazir Bhutto gave up her reservations on the candidature of pro-Taliban fundamentalist cleric Fazlur Rehman as next Prime Minister.

Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, chief of the 15-party Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD), of which Bhutto's PPP is a major partner, said it and the coalition of six Islamic parties, Muthahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), have secured a parliamentary majority and agreed on the names of Prime Minister, speaker and deputy speaker.

"We have reached an agreement with leaders of Muthida Majlis-e-Amal to form a coalition Government," the ARD chief told a news conference in the federal capital, Islamabad, after talks with leaders of the religious grouping. "We have a majority to form a coalition Government."

Both groups agreed to support Rahman as Prime Minister, said Riaz Durrani, a spokesman for the Islamic cleric. Khan also said Rahman would be the group's likely candidate for Prime Minister.

The United Action Forum has said it hopes to bring an Islamic revolution to Pakistan, eliminate Western influence, and kick out US troops using the country as a base to fight the war on terrorism in neighbouring Afghanistan.

Khan said the decision was taken at the two days of nego-



Maulana Fazlur Rehman at a meeting in Islamabad.

tiations, just three days before the convening of the new National Assembly on November 8.

Analysts say the two sides seemed to have been brought together by their opposition to President Gen Pervez Musharraf.

The agreement is a blow to President Pervez Musharraf because his supporters were left out of the coalition, but a spokesman for the pro-Musharraf party refused to concede defeat, saying his group was still working to form a majority and was confident it would succeed.

The pro-Musharraf Quaid-e-Azam faction of the Pakistan Muslim League won the most seats in the October 10 elections, but fell short of a majority, and the parties have been jockeying to form a coalition ever since.

The grouping of religious parties, called the United Action Forum, or Muthida Majlis-e-Amal, came in third on the strength of an anti-American, pro-Taliban platform.

PTI

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

6 NOV 2002

Bali blast accused climbs Indonesia popularity chart

DEAN YATES

JAKARTA, NOVEMBER 5

INDONESIAN Muslim cleric Abu Bakar Bashir is a long way from his first day in the dock, but the alleged spiritual leader of the Jemaah Islamiyah terror network already has the upper hand in the court of public opinion.

Virtually unknown a year ago, Bashir has become something of a cause celebre in the world's most populous Muslim nation since being arrested, finding credibility despite the militant views he holds.

Bashir is being held over a series of church bombings and a plot to kill President Megawati Sukarnoputri, not the bomb attacks in Bali that killed nearly 200 people, although suspicion for the October 12 tragedy has fallen on Jemaah Islamiyah.

He has resisted questioning and Bashir's 35-member legal team boasts top human rights lawyers and looks like it will get bigger. The head of Indonesia's second largest moderate Muslim group visited Bashir in hospital after he was detained. The nation's Vice-President said he might do the same.

All this poses a challenge to Megawati, a taciturn and passive leader, to thoroughly prosecute a case many diplomats see as a litmus test of her resolve to crack down on Islamic radicalism in the wake of



Malaysia to keep an eye on mosques

KUALA LUMPUR: In order to stop Islam from being used to undermine the government, Malaysian authorities in PM Mahathir Mohamad's home state will start videotaping sermons at mosques, reports said on Tuesday. Malaysia is trying to stamp out Muslim militancy and stem support for the conservative Islamic Opposition sweeping across Malays' northern heartland. —Reuters

the Bali blasts.

Take prominent human rights campaigner Munarman, a feisty 34-year-old lawyer who runs the Legal Aid Institute, the premier defender of Indone-

Indonesians protest against Australia's handling of the blast investigation in Jakarta on Tuesday. Reuters

sia's downtrodden masses. He has no love for radical Islam but has joined the legal team defending Bashir. "My hunch is that political motivations are certainly stronger here as opposed to upholding the law or combating terrorism," Munarman said in an interview when asked why he thought Bashir had been arrested.

What concerns Indonesians is not Bashir's radical views but other issues. Munarman said Bashir's case was a benchmark to ensure new powers to prosecute people over terrorism, introduced in the wake of the Bali blasts, did not open the way to arbitrary arrests. —Reuters

EU forces Iran rethink on death by stoning

PARINOOSHARAMI

Tehran, Nov. 3 (Reuters): Iranian reformist legislators said today they wanted to replace death by stoning with another form of punishment, following European criticism of the practice.

Under Iran's strict Islamic law, in place since the 1979 Islamic revolution, only men and women convicted of adultery are normally sentenced to death by stoning.

The European Union has highlighted stoning as a major concern as part of discussions on Iran's human rights record due to start in December. The Union opposes the death penalty.

It has linked the talks to negotiations on a trade and cooperation agreement with Tehran although Iranian officials insist the two issues are unrelated.

"Stoning is very rare in Iran, but even in those rare cases, I believe it should be replaced by another form of punishment," female parliamentarian Akram Mosavarimanesh said.

"We are at the early stages of debating the issue, but I am hopeful about the fate of the proposal," she said. She declined to say what alternative punishment could be applied and whether it would be lethal.

Those sentenced to stoning are buried in a pit — men up to their waists, women their armpits — and pelted with stones.

According to the law, the stones must be big enough to injure but not kill with just a few blows. If the victim manages to dig himself or herself out then they are acquitted.

Even if the proposal to replace stoning is adopted by the reformist-dominated parliament, it is likely to face opposition from the conservative-controlled Guardian Council, which vets legislation to make sure it is in accordance with Islamic law.

THE TELEGRAPH

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ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY-II

Respect For Freedom Of Conscience

By SALEEM KIDWAI

The Quran and the Hadith have made on several occasions references to the rights of different sections of society. These rights are also extended to the enjoyment of non-Muslims in an Islamic state. In other words, Islam granted a full-fledged Bill of Rights which is to be accepted throughout the globe. The Quran lays down fundamental values which were applied to the then society by jurists. The value pronouncements of the Quran — religious justice, equality, first distribution of economic resources — are among the modern and it is these pronouncements which are fundamental to Islam. Each universally accepted human right finds correspondence in Quranic pronouncements. The Quran unequivocally stipulates the protection of these rights in the most categorical manner.

Mixed up

Islam insists on the protection of human rights and its universal application. It rejects the selective application of the principles of human rights governed by political exigencies. Unfortunately, Islam is mixed up with Muslim societies in different Muslim countries. It is conveniently forgotten that Muslim societies are the outgrowth of their own historical and political backgrounds and are not true representatives of the Quranic value system.

Islam also accepts the principles of tolerance and pluralism. It gives to all human beings the right to belief and profession. It accepts the multiplicity of cultures and community styles. Almost from the outset, the Islamic world demonstrated an astonishing diversity. Extending over three continents, it embraced a wide variety of races, creeds and cultures which lived side by side in reasonable harmony. Sectarian strife and religious persecutions are not unknown in Islamic history but they are rare, and never reached the

level of intensity of the great religious wars and persecutions. Not only are Muslims advised to respect freedom of religion and conscience, they are even expected to be magnanimous to non-Muslims who do not fight against themselves in the cause of religion. The Prophet himself set an example in religious tolerance when he signed a treaty with Christians of Najran.

Another important feature of the Muslim experience relates to its acceptance of dissent and

opposition — individual as well as collective — as something authentic and as part of the tradition and not something outside it. The Prophet once said: "If anyone sees an evil, he should get it right with his hand; if he is unable to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is unable to do even that, then let him denounce it in his heart. But this last is the weakest form of faith".

Islamic state

On another occasion Prophet observed "The best form of Jihad is to utter a word to tyrannical

ruler". Thus, right to criticise the government has been recognised in an Islamic state. Of course, a distinction was made between *ikhtilaf* (differences) and *fitna* (rebellion) but it is significant that at least in certain major scholars of Islamic laws, opposition that involves even armed rebellion (*khrij*) is accepted as legitimate. The above features are illustrative of the Muslim tradition of governance and constitute significant pointers towards the development of a distinctly Islamic



model of democratic governance: The picture that emerges from these guidelines is quite clear. This is a faith-based society. Its sheet anchor is loyalty to God. There is, however, no room for any privileged or priestly class. All have equal rights and allegiances. All are equally responsible before the law. The rulers do not enjoy any arbitrary power. Freedom and equality are an integral part of this society. Consultation and participation in decision-making is the way.

The concept of an Islamic state reveals that most of the modern

theories of constitutional government like social contract, separation of powers, checks and balances, rule of law, natural justice, equality before the law, government as a trust, welfare of the people were known to Muslims from the earliest times. It is, therefore, concluded that there can be no great difficulty in establishing an Islamic state within the framework of modern democracy based on political theories of the present day statecraft.

Not incompatible

To sum up, the ideals of freedom for all human beings, of human brotherhood, of equality of all men before the law, of democratic government by consultation and universal suffrage, the ideals that inspired the French Revolution and the Declaration of Human Rights, that guided the American Constitution find expression in the Quran. Democracy as conceived in the modern West is infinitely nearer to the Islamic concept, for Islam maintains that all human beings are socially equal and must, therefore, be given the same opportunities for development and self-expression. If we go by Quran and Hadith, Islam appears to be quite close to democracy. To quote well known historian Bernard Lewis: "Islam offers the best prospect for western style democracy".

There is no incompatibility between Islam and a truly democratic system based on people's participation and power-sharing. If democracy means rights of a people to self-determination and self-fulfilment, that is what Islam stands for. There is no contradiction between Islam and democracy. Whatever despotic or arbitrary rule exists in Muslim lands is part of alien and imposed traditions, against which forces of Islamic resurgence are fighting. Islam and democratisation are the two sides of the same coin.

(Concluded)

ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY-I

4.6 Legitimacy Derived From Consent Of The People 28/10

By SALEEM KIDWAI

A European magazine recently published a political map of the Muslim world to illustrate, at one glance, the central theme of its cover story: are Islam and democracy compatible? The map depicts that 11 Muslim countries or countries with a predominantly Muslim population are liberal democracies, 14 are partially democratic and 27 are under varying shades of authoritarian rule. These bland statistics unless they are placed in perspective can only serve to demonise Islam and its adherents.

Way of life

Is liberal democracy basically compatible with Islam? Can democracy function in a society inspired by Islamic beliefs and principles and shaped by Islamic experience and traditions? Is Islam by its very nature antithetical to the development of democratic institutions? Is it possible for the Muslims to evolve a form of government that will be compatible with their own historical, cultural and religious traditions and yet will bring individual freedom and human rights to the governed as these terms are understood in the free societies of the world? What kind of political system does Islam legitimate?

The term democracy indicates both a set of ideas and principles and a political system, a mechanism for governance and a politico-legal culture. The philosophical roots of democracy lie in the concept of popular sovereignty. The real test for democracy is its legitimacy, laying down that the power is legitimate only when it is derived from the authority of the people and is based on their consent. The other dimensions of democracy relate to a variety of forms of self-government and popular participation in political decision-making. The substance of democracy seeks expression in the vision of a government that is chosen by the people. The democratic world is not monolithic. It contains several different forms of government — republics and monarchies, presidential and parliamentary secular states and established churches and a wide range of electoral systems.

Islam is not a religion in the limited sense of the term. It is a complete code of conduct, an all-embracing way of life. It covers all aspects of human existence. The Islamic political system is not something independent or self-contained. It is part of Islamic way of life and is inseparable from other aspects of religion. It provides a world view, a vision and a

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set of values and leaves enough room to work out details to meet all the emerging challenges of time. Most students of political Islam tend to classify an Islamic government as necessarily a theocratic government. The confusion in this respect results from another principle of Islamic government, namely, that the laws of a Muslim land should always be derived from or at least conform to the principle of Islamic law (the Shariah).

Political scientists and constitu-

Hitti, the well-known historian in his celebrated work, *The History of Arabs*, beautifully summarises the manner in which the Islamic state functioned under the Prophet: "This Islamic society or the commonwealth which the Prophet (or Islam) set up, was based on perfect equality and justice for all with divine sovereignty as its cardinal principle".

After the demise of the Prophet, the first Caliph Abu Bekr was democratically elected by the people of Madina at a conclave. Inter-



tional lawyers should distinguish two separate issues: the basis of political power and authority on the one hand, and the sources of the legal system on the other. The political system as envisaged by Islam has nothing to do with theocratic government.

Consensus

The Islamic state is characterised by the supremacy of the Shariah yet it is diametrically different from theocracy. The long western struggle between church and state is quite alien to Islamic thought, for Islam does not authorise any material form, human or institutional, that could claim to be representative of God. Prophecy ended with Prophet Mohammad. Islam does not call for a government whose authority is based on a divine will. Nor does it call for a government of clerics. According to the consensus of Muslim Sunni jurists, the legitimacy of any government derives from the consent of the people.

Let us examine the form and nature of government in the early period of Islam. So long as the Prophet lived, he was the religious and political head of the government. He was not elected or selected by anyone but was chosen by God as messenger as well as the ruler of the state which he established at Madina, soon after his migration from Mecca. Philip

estingly most of the participants were Madinites while the Caliph elected was a migrant from Mecca. It was through consensus. The second Caliph Umar was nominated by the first Caliph as his successor. But his selection was not treated valid till approved by the congregation in a mosque. Umar set up a council of six persons charging them with the duty of electing one of themselves as the Caliph by appeal to the majority principle. The Last Caliph Ali was elected by the majority. The very fact that each Caliph was appointed with reference to different methods of selection was consistent with the principle that the right to choose Caliph belongs to the entire body of Ummah and it is entitled to do so by resort to any method it sees fit. The first four Caliphs popularly known as a *Khufia-e-Rashideen* or Pious Caliphs were elected by the community though the methods of selection and approval differed. The common principle was the consent and confidence of the community and accountability.

Authority or assignment to rule over the earth has been promised to the entire community of believers and not to any particular person, family, class or group. All are equal as members of the society and criteria for leadership is tied to their qualities of trust-

worthiness, competence, God, consciousness, dutifulness and sense of accountability. Accountability is not only before God, it is also before the law and the people. It has great significance in the political system of Islam. The process of consultation has been recommended in the Quran. It says: "And who respond to (the call of) their sustainer and are constant in prayer; and who rule (in all matters of common concern) in consultation among themselves". (42:38).

Democratic decisions

Significantly, the Prophet himself was asked to consult his companions in important matters. According to the Quran: "And take counsel with them in all matters of common concern" (3:159). The Quran makes it very clear that mutual consultation is highly desirable and requires no less a person than the Prophet himself to consult his companions. The Prophet on his part implemented the Quranic teachings meticulously. For instance, decision to release prisoners of war during the Battle of Badar was taken by the Prophet after consultation with his companions. It is worth recalling that during the period of Pious Caliphate, whenever a new law was to be enacted and enforced, it used to be done after careful deliberations and extensive consultations among the knowledgeable companions of the Prophet. The decision used to be taken democratically through consensus within the framework of basic principle of the Quran.

Separation of the judiciary from the executive and its total independence at all levels has been a cardinal feature of the Islamic polity. Rule of laws and access to justice for all remained inalienable aspects of Muslim society. The judiciary was vested in the Qazis so much that even the Caliph had no immunity from the judicial process. He could be summoned in a judicial forum to answer the charge should it be brought against him, at the instance of anybody who felt aggrieved by what he did or failed to do.

The principle of separation of powers, established as it was during the pious Caliphate, continued in later periods, despite certain degeneration in the system. The supremacy of the constitution, i.e., Islamic law, remained an integral part of the Muslim experience. The entire legal system developed outside the corridors of political power and once established, the rulers were as much subject to this law as were commoners. Needless to say this had worked as a great check on arbitrary power.

(To be concluded)

Nicosia's audience warms up to Vajpayee's Pak bashing

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Nicosia (Cyprus): Here, in this charmingly laid-back Mediterranean town, which also happens to be the only divided capital in the world, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee on Tuesday cemented long-standing ties between India and Cyprus by signing a slew of agreements in areas ranging from the traditionally tried and tested, such as cultural exchange, health and post and telecommunications to those embracing the robust new frontiers of science and information technology.

Mr Vajpayee also used his visit to the island—the first by an Indian PM since 1983—to address the 2,000-strong Indian community here, delivering a stirring speech on Monday evening laced with his trademark jocular banter; some expected rah-rahs for the motherland, most notably for the manner in which elections were recently conducted in Jammu & Kashmir, and strong words against Pakistan.

His audience, mostly young IT professionals who seemed to be stricken with a strong bout of home-sickness, needed no prompting—they cheered him on each time he lambasted Gen Pervez Musharraf and clapped fulsomely at every clever turn of phrase. Mr Vajpayee, no doubt mindful of the import of any message on terrorism in an island nation which has been partly occupied by its neighbour Turkey since the early 1970s, has not spared Pakistan during this visit.

In an interview to a local newspaper here, he said, "Pakistan should understand that there can be no double standards on terrorism—it cannot fight terrorism to the west and sponsor it to its east. Its membership of the international coalition against terrorism cannot be used as a cover for terrorist activities directed against India."

The sharpness of his attack seems to have gone down well in Nicosia, where a jungle of barbed wire, otherwise known as the



Prime Minister A. B. Vajpayee inspects a guard of honour at the presidential palace in Nicosia on Tuesday.

Green Line, separates the area under Turkish occupation from the Cypriot side. Visitors can drive through the old city with its cob-

ble paths, past a wall once erected by the Venetians to keep out the marauding Ottomans, and up to the checkpoint which marks the

start of the UN-manned buffer zone between the two sides. An imposing Mediterranean-style villa, once the swanky Ledra Palace Hotel which is now pock-marked with bullet holes, is testimony as much to the on-going conflict as to the marketing skills of Nicosia's tourism department.

The Indian mission here has been at pains to underscore India's support for the claim of a united Cyprus without a foreign presence. Pakistan, it points out, has for many years been the only country which recognises Turkish-occupied Cyprus. The steadfastness of India's position has not been lost on the Cypriots. They have, it is pointedly noted, stood by India through thick and thin, even going out on a limb to support it after the Pokhran nuclear test in 1998. Cyprus was then a candidate country awaiting its turn to join the European Union. Today, it is poised to take its place in the EU, in all likelihood by December of this year.

9 OCT 2002

Malaysia, Indonesia assert Islamic identity

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, OCT. 4. Malaysia and Indonesia, both key members of the Organisation of Islamic Conference, have begun to reassert their national identities in the context of the current U.S.-led global campaign against 'terrorism'. Indonesia, home to the world's largest concentration of Muslims, is of the view that the U.S. is eager to maintain a good relationship with Jakarta despite the recent slide.

Malaysia, on the other hand, has intensified an aggressive campaign to woo and retain foreign investors. It is against this new and evolving background that the Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, has taken the line that Islamic countries were now being challenged in the ostensible anti-terror milieu because of their 'weakness' and not because of any wrong-doing. The Islamic countries, many among them

being producers of oil and natural gas, had failed to deploy oil as a 'weapon' to protect the interests of Muslims, Dr. Mahathir said at Malacca last night.

According to an authentic version of his 'dialogue' with the delegates to the "Malay and Islamic World Convention", Dr. Mahathir said that oil had not been deployed as an Islam-protective weapon because of the failure of the oil-producing nations themselves to control the production and prices.

At a separate event at Malacca, Dr. Mahathir assured Malaysia's foreign partners of full cooperation. This would indicate that his attempt at projecting oil as a political card in the hands of the Islamic countries was not designed to provoke a diplomatic confrontation between the Organisation of Islamic Conference and the U.S.-led West.

In Jakarta, the Indonesian Justice Minister, Yusril Ihza Mahendra, has observed that the

U.S. is aware of the need to retain Jakarta's friendship in the present context on the world stage. His assessment of this kind followed his talks with the U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia, Ralph Boyce, apparently at the latter's initiative.

The U.S.-Indonesia ties have come under a severe strain against indications that Washington would like Jakarta to play a proactive role in the anti-terror campaign by isolating and nullifying the suspected home-spun terrorists of Indonesia with alleged pan-regional links. Significantly in this context, the Muslim religious leaders of Indonesia and Malaysia are planning to organise a South East Asian congregation of "ulema". The Chairman of the Council of Indonesian Ulema is said to have taken the initiative in this regard.

The apparent objective is to address the new challenges of alleged militancy and other related issues.

5 OCT 2002

Attack on Iraq will alienate Muslim world: Musharraf



Musharraf

London: A US military attack on Iraq would have "really negative repercussions" on the Islamic world, Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf warned in a BBC Radio interview aired on Thursday.

Though the Pakistani government still backs US President George W. Bush's war on terrorism, "that doesn't mean we can start participating in activities all around the world," Gen Musharraf said.

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We've got too much on our hands here in this region to get involved in anything else, especially when one is very conscious that this (a US attack) will have really negative repercussions around the Islamic world," he said. Gen Musharraf, who faces general elections on October 10, was interviewed late on Wednesday night by BBC Radio's "Today" programme at his heavily-guarded offices in Rawalpindi.

In excerpts released earlier in Islamabad, Gen Musharraf denied that changes earlier this month to Pakistan's constitution

were made to strengthen his position ahead of the polls.

Asked what might be the negative effects of a US military attack on Iraq, the General said: "I think it will alienate the Islamic world more." "It's already dangerous that all political disputes at the moment all around the world are, unfortunately, involving Muslims, and Muslims are feeling that they are at the receiving end everywhere," he said.

Within Pakistan, "feelings against the US will increase certainly," the President said, though he doubted that his own position would be endangered. AFP

Spain takes back Parsley Island from Morocco

By Matthew Campbell

Morocco: Soldiers who raised their country's flag over a tiny island in the Strait of Gibraltar last weekend, only to be expelled a few days later by the Spanish special forces, were woefully ill-prepared for a lengthy occupation. For one thing, it did not occur to them to bring food and water.

This was a significant oversight. Despite its name, Parsley Island is a barren, rocky place popular only with monk seals, seagulls and goats, and there is no drinking water.

International conflicts have raged over other desolate places but few with the level of farce surrounding the Parsley crisis, which seemed to intensify on Saturday with Libya's offer to mediate and news that King Juan Carlos of Spain had postponed his summer holiday in Majorca amidst fears of Moroccan retaliation.

On Wednesday morning, in an unusual display of military might, Spanish troops backed by jets and warships slithered down ropes from helicopters onto the contested island, rounded up the half dozen Moroccan intruders and triumphantly hoisted their red and gold flag from a shrub where the Moroccans had briefly flown theirs.

"Viva Espana," said Federico Trillo, Spain's minister of defence, when he heard from the commander of the crack unit that Operation Romeo Sierra—the words stand for R and S, or "restoration of sovereignty"—had been successfully accomplished without a shot being fired.

There were casualties, however, according to Lashiri. She lives in the white-walled cottage in which she was born just 200 yards from the island, where she and her family keep goats.

"Many of the goats were terrified by the sound of the Spanish helicopters," she said over a cup of mint tea. "They jumped off the rock into the sea. We lost a lot of good meat."



M. Ben Aissa Colin Powell

For the Spanish, it was, nevertheless, the most decisive military victory that anybody could remember and certainly took less time than the expulsion of the Moors in the 15th century.

A depressed Morocco seemed in no mood to forgive the latest humiliation to have been inflicted on Muslims by infidels. King Mohammed VI may be a Western-friendly moderate and one of American President George W. Bush's closest Arab allies in the war against terror, but loathing of the Spanish has never been more intense.

As Colin Powell, the US secretary of state, held a series of telephone calls with Moroccan foreign minister Mohammed Ben Aissa and Ana Palacio, the Spanish foreign minister, Morocco seemed to raise the stakes.

It called for talks not only about the ownership of the few hundred square yards of Parsley but also about the status of Ceuta and Melilla, Spanish city enclaves on the north African coast that are claimed by Rabat.

Nato, the European Union, UN secretary general all felt obliged to take cautious positions on the Mediterranean drama. According to the Spanish press, Jose Maria Aznar, the conservative prime minister, was careful not to order the assault without telephoning the White House first.

France lived up to its reputation for putting self-interest ahead of European solidarity by vetoing an EU statement more strongly supportive of Spain: French oil companies have recently concluded a series of deals with Rabat. Britain, meanwhile, urged a "peaceful solution" and, whatever its disagreements with Madrid over Gibraltar, emphasised its friendly relations with both sides. The Sunday Times

British cleric warns of *fatwa*

Agencies *Jordan*

LONDON, Aug. 14. — London-based Muslim radicals today threatened that a *fatwa* or religious edict will be issued against USA and Britain for launching an 11-September-like attack on them if Iraq is attacked.

Sheikh Omar Bakri Muhammad of Al-Muhajiroun (an organisation that aspires to make Britain an Islamic state) who lives in north London said he and other radicals would issue a "fatwa, or religious edict, telling Muslims how to respond to the evil of an attack on Iraq." Islamic hardliners have little love for Saddam Hussein, but they see any US-British military action against Iraq as the greater evil, part of a "Satanic alliance" against Muslims around the world.

"I believe 11 September was a

Kurdish leader offers use of land

WASHINGTON, Aug. 14. — A prominent Iraqi Kurdish leader said he has offered Washington the use of military bases controlled by his group for a possible US attack on the regime of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. Mr. Jalal Talabani, head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, told CNN yesterday the US response was positive to his offer of bases in exchange for protection from possible retaliation with chemical or biological weapons. He said he has assured Washington the US troops would be welcomed. — AFP

direct response to the evil American policy in the Muslim world," Sheikh Omar Bakri said. "If there is an attack by the British government against Muslims abroad, then they have the right to retaliate and defend themselves.

"The reality of controlling Muslim land and resources, of black-mailing Muslims in the region, and supporting the killing of Islamic activists and the voices of truth, is tantamount to playing with fire," he said.

Iraq urged the USA to abandon its hostile policy and the UN to continue negotiations with Baghdad as the defiant regime mulled demands to open up to new disarmament inspections. "The USA must review its hostile policy towards Iraq and deal with it taking into account its regional, Arab and international importance," ruling Baath Party's *Ath-Thawra* newspaper said.

US defence secretary Mr Donald Rumsfeld said it would be

difficult for international arms inspectors to expose Iraq's hidden weapons of mass destruction programs even if they were let back in the country, as in the past, the biggest breaks have come from defectors.

Mr Rumsfeld noted that Saddam Hussein own son-in-law was executed for disclosures that led UN inspectors to make their biggest discoveries about Iraq's chemical and biological arms program.

US secretary of state Gen Colin Powell said the purpose of bringing Iraqi opposition leaders here recently was to judge their efficiency and discuss the possibilities if a regime change takes place in Baghdad.

Oil price hits three-month high: Oil prices rode up to three-month highs today as concerns about an attack on Iraq intensified and figures showed a huge fall in levels of US crude oil stocks.

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THE STATEMAB

Omar gets death, Musharraf faces jihadi furies

Mubashir Zaidi & Agencies
Hyderabad (Pakistan), July 15

A PAKISTANI court today sentenced Islamic militant Omar Sheikh to death for the kidnap and murder of US reporter Daniel Pearl, drawing a threat of revenge on the Government and calls for Muslims to respond.

Omar and three accomplices, who were jailed for life, showed no emotion as the sentences were read, but the fury was evident as relatives and lawyers spoke outside the court.

Omar's lawyer Rai Bashir, who told reporters the defence would appeal the verdicts, read out a message from his client saying that anyone who tried to carry out the death sentence risked a similar fate.

"I will see whether who wants to kill me will first kill me or get himself killed," Omar (28) said in his message. "I have been saying before (that) this entire (trial) is just a waste of time... It is a decisive war between Islam and kafirs and everyone is individually proving on which side he is. General Musharraf should know that Allah's justice will finally prevail."

Execution in Pakistan is carried out by hanging, but usually only after an exhaustive appeals process. A life sentence generally means a maximum of 25 years in jail. The prosecutors said they would press for heavier sentences for Omar's accomplices — Salman Saqib, Fahd Naseem and Sheikh Adil.

Omar's father Saeed Sheikh said the case against his son highlighted US hypocrisy. "The jihadis used to be the apple of their eye," he said, referring to



Omar Sheikh
Defiant

US backing for the mujahideen in Afghanistan. "Now they are rotten apples."

Sheikh Aslam, brother of Sheikh Adil, called on Muslims to rise up against the verdicts.

"If there had been an honest decision, no one would have been convicted," he said. "Pakistanis and Muslims should now rise up because the Government has bent its knees before America."

The authorities prepared for a violent backlash over the convictions after the police received tip-offs that militants were plotting retaliation.

"Our investigation teams have got information that some groups are planning to create security problems in Karachi and Hyderabad," southern Sind police chief Syed Kamal Shah said. "We are going to launch a drive against such elements."

Intelligence reports said Army and police bases may be targeted.

Today, elite commandos were deployed at the jail while more than 2,000 policemen were posted across the city.

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16 JUL 2002

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Madarsa crackdown fear crosses border

FROM RASHEED KIDWAI

New Delhi, June 22: Pervez Musharraf's crackdown on madarsas has sent shock waves across the border with major Islamic schools in India fearing a similar drive accompanied by witch-hunting.

On the face of it, Muslim leaders and scholars are putting up a brave front, claiming that the events in Pakistan would have no bearing on India. But in their heart of hearts, they apprehend that the BJP-led government at the Centre might follow Musharraf in regulating their funding.

According to Maulana Rabey Nadvi, rector of Nadwa School in Lucknow and the new chief of the All-India Muslim

Personal Law Board, madarsas in India are doing an "excellent job" of imparting education in the broader context of meeting literacy goals.

Nadwa School is one of the most respectable madarsas in the country with several branches in smaller towns.

Maulana Asad Madni of Deoband and Maulana Israrul Haq Qasmi of Milli Council said there was no need for further checks as state-run madarsa boards and other regulatory bodies were already monitoring their activities. Madni recalled that the madarsas had played a pivotal role in the freedom struggle.

"It is highly iniquitous even to think that the madarsas that performed such a great job for the nation would indulge in

something that is not in national interest," Madni said.

The Muslim law board is also circumspect about the Centre's desire for a regulatory framework, ostensibly to check sectarianism and fundamentalism.

The law board is set to pass a resolution giving clean chits to hundreds of madarsas at its ongoing general body meeting in Hyderabad. The board had recently conducted a survey in Rajasthan after there were unconfirmed reports that madarsas were becoming "breeding grounds" for activities of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence.

Board member Kamal Farooqui said: "We checked the antecedents of these madarsas and their financial dealings

and we saw nothing improper or illegal." Muslim leaders feel it is wrong to judge the functioning of the madarsas by "Pakistani standards".

In Pakistan, many madarsas receive huge funds from politically-motivated campaigners from West Asia. In India, most restrict themselves to imparting religious education.

Law board member and MP G.M. Banatwallah said he was "shocked" by a report prepared by the Union home ministry that said thousands of madarsas had mushroomed along the India-Nepal border. "I checked it with the home secretary and he told me that most of these madarsas were on the Nepalese side," Banatwallah said.

Japan to ratify global anti-terror pact

The Yomiuri Shimbun/ANN

TOKYO, June 2. — The Cabinet is set to approve the ratification of an international pact aimed at making it more difficult for terrorists to obtain funds legally as early as 11 June, as the last relevant bill necessary to ratify the pact is expected to be passed into law by the Diet this week, officials said on Saturday.

Upon ratifying the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, Japan will become the third UN member nation, following Britain and Canada, to ratify all 12 international anti-terrorism treaties.

The international pact requires the signatories to stipulate the provision of funds to terrorists as a crime under domestic laws. The convention also obliges governments to take every possible measure to deal with the illegal act of financing terrorism, including seizing the funds in question.

Of the set of three bills on the suppression of terrorist financing, a bill stipulating punishments for those found to have given money to terrorist groups is expected to pass through the plenary session of the House of Councillors as early as Wednesday.

Of the 12 international anti-terrorism pacts, Japan had already ratified 10, including three on the prevention of hijacking, before the September 11 attacks on the USA. In November, Tokyo also ratified the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings amid worldwide concern over international terrorism that intensified after September 11.

The bill stipulates that a person who provides or raises funds for terrorist activities, including murder, hijackings and the bombing of public facilities aimed at threatening the public or the government, faces either a prison term or a fine.

Nuke remarks set to storm Diet

The Yomiuri Shimbun/
Asia News Network

TOKYO, June 2. — A series of recent remarks by senior government officials, including the suggestion by one of Prime Minister Mr Junichiro Koizumi's closest aides that the nation might revise its three non-nuclear principles, is likely to spur confusion in the Diet, according to political observers.

The opposition camp plans to attack the remark made on Friday by Mr Koizumi's closest aide that Japan may revise its non-nuclear policies.

With the current Diet session drawing to an end on 19 June and deliberations yet to be finalised on important major bills, the Diet may find itself in deadlock, the observers said.

Japan has maintained since the late 1960s a set of three non-nuclear principles of not producing, not possessing and not allowing nuclear weapons into the country.

The Prime Minister's Office on Saturday tried to play down the remarks, while the senior government official in question said the remarks did not reflect his real intention. Other aides to Mr Koizumi stressed that the remarks were not far off the government's line of thinking. However, the opposition camp is considering linking the issue with a set of contingency-related bills, which could further complicate Diet deliberations.

Japanese Communist Party secretary general Mr Tadayoshi Ichida said: "It's inexcusable for a senior government official to deny the government's non-nuclear policies. I'm extremely concerned about what the gov-

ernment would do if it took the lead in deliberating the contingency-related bills."

The contingency-related bills initially were expected to pass through the Diet with few problems, but circumstances have changed since the Diet session began. Factors contributing to such changes include a scandal over the Defence Agency retaining personal data on individuals



Mr Junichiro Koizumi

who had requested information as well as a series of indiscreet remarks made by members of the Prime Minister's Office and the LDP's Mori faction, to which Mr Koizumi belongs.

A weekly magazine quoted deputy chief Cabinet secretary Mr Shinzo Abe, who is a member of the Mori faction, as saying at a recent lecture that there was no constitutional problem with the nation having atomic weapons.

Mr Ichita Yamamoto, an LDP House of Councillors Diet member, who belonged to the Mori faction, said after meeting Mr

Koizumi on Thursday at the Prime Minister's Office: "Mr Koizumi appears to intend to put priority on the passage of a set of bills on postal service privatisation and bills on medical system reforms." Mr Yamamoto's remark threw cold water on the enthusiasm of the ruling parties for passing the contingency bills.

Mr Masao Akamatsu, vice chairman of New Komeito's policy affairs research council, declared on his Web site that he wants to topple the Koizumi Cabinet. The remarks were posted after Mr Akamatsu became angry with inconsistent answers that Mr Koizumi gave to questions in the Diet session. Some Diet members said Mr Akamatsu was angered by Mr Koizumi's lack of consideration for coalition partner New Komeito. They said the Prime Minister appeared to have forgotten the party was indispensable to ensuring major bills were passed through the Diet. The top Japanese government official whose comments that the nation might one day possess nuclear weapons sought to climb down from his statement as lawmakers expressed disgust today, adds AFP from Tokyo.

"My remarks were completely my own, but (how they were interpreted) was not my intention," the official, who asked to remain anonymous, told the Asahi Shimbun yesterday. "The current Cabinet is absolutely not considering changing the three nuclear principles," he told the paper.

Communist Party's Mr Hideo Kijima said: "As the only country to suffer nuclear attack, this outrageous comment is absolutely unforgivable". Other opposition members called for a probe.

Is Islam really jehadi?

By Imtiaz Ahmad

The rise of militant trends in every Muslim society has its own context... This needs to be understood and evaluated.

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30/4

EVERY WORD of the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee's public speech at Panaji at the conclusion of his party's National Executive Committee meeting can be re-read aloud substituting the word Islam for Hinduism and it would hold equally good. He was not wrong in pointing out that the possibility of fundamentalism as an ideological response exists within Islam. Where he went wrong was in characterising Hinduism as a tolerant religion and failing to recognise that the possibilities of fundamentalism as an ideological response exist as much in other traditions including Hinduism. The point to ponder therefore is what it is that really makes all religious traditions respond in specific circumstances in militant or violent ways.

As far as the characterisation of Islam as jehadi is concerned, the Prime Minister was obviously guided by the belief common among those who have only a superficial understanding that Islam is an extremely closed religion, characterised, to a greater degree than is true of other religious traditions and ideologies, by a unity and commonality of attitudes and sentiments which renders militant mobilisation relatively easy in the case of Muslims.

Islam throughout most of its past as well as in the contemporary period has been characterised by an obvious paradox. This is its simultaneous unity as a world religion and its bewildering diversity as the living faith of local, regional and national communities. On the one hand, Islam projects itself and thrives on the celebration of the projection that it is the same everywhere. On the other hand, the patterns of beliefs and behaviour to which Muslims adhere in the course of their daily lives are diverse and varied. Indeed, the prolonged historical resistance by religions that have been able to withstand social change shows their flexibility. This capacity to outlive the historical circumstances of their birth makes it

impossible to speak of Islam in the singular as Muslims do. As a social phenomenon there are Islams that have been a living reality to Muslims of various times and places. Divergences of observances, sects and schisms and *de facto* differences of attitudes to the role of the fundamental value system in social life all attest to this.

The implication of this religious pluralism, which exists widely despite popular perceptions to the contrary, is two-fold. For one, it goes to show that the unity and integrity of Islam as a world religion is not derived from scriptural sources. It is achieved through a complex interaction between codes derived from Islamic scriptures and those derived from the exigencies of living in differing ecological, social and cultural and political environments. Second, as a practical faith Islam is far more pluralist than the extreme degree of reification and unity commonly attributed to it. While Muslims no doubt commonly subscribe to the fundamental Islamic precepts, there is no unified definition of what is truly Islamic. Each Muslim society or community carries its own self-definition about what is fundamental and adheres to it.

Of course, the reason this becomes possible arises from an inherent or inbuilt ambiguity as to what is strictly within the limits of Islam. Controversy and debate over whether particular actions of individual Muslims or particular social beliefs and practices are common to all Muslims of a given community are recurrent features of Muslim societies. The image of Islam as an aggressive, hostile and intolerant religion is an academic artefact of the historical process of colonial expansion. For the one third of humanity, self-styled as Muslim, collective

violence assumed a new dimension in the 18th century. It can be described in distinct stages, all of which derive from and relate to the economic ascendancy of European, predominantly Christian, nation-states. Twentieth century Islam, like the nation-states system, was created *de novo* in response to colonialism.

As for contemporary times, the situation is too varied and complex to allow sweeping generalisations. For one, two-thirds of the Muslim world currently lives under secular dispensations. It is true that even in some of these countries the so-called militant groups are active and have tried to capture political power. However, whenever they have seemed to be gaining political ascendancy, they have been put down with a heavy hand, though the predominant tendency has been to characterise Muslim militancy in terms as if its rhetorical message was about to become an imminent reality.

Among the countries of the Muslim world one contemporaneously finds a series of political responses ranging from the presence of an Islamic discourse to militant Islamic reassertion and open rebellion. When one looks at the varied cases comparatively, it appears that the nature of the dominant group, that is whether it is religious, national or cultural, has no bearing on the nature of Islamic response, though emphasis on Islam as a basis of identity or political reassertion almost always occurs where another religious group is present.

On the other hand, colonialism and the nature of the political regime always seem to generate Islamic self-consciousness. For example, situations of colonial domination, conquest and authoritarian rule almost always generate Islamic self-asser-

tion and the use of Islam for identity. Where Islamic self-identity is assured, Muslims tend to become extremely divided and often end up fighting among themselves.

This has direct relevance for the understanding of the widespread phenomenon of Islamic militancy. The dominant approach to the understanding of Islamic militancy, which Mr. Vajpayee demonstrated, has been to see the growth of militant trends in each individual Muslim society as the unfolding of a common pattern imposed by the unity and dogmatism that Islam as a world religion is supposed to signify and represent.

In this view, Islam is credited with an autonomous role in that the presumption always is that the developments taking place in different Muslim societies ultimately flow from the potentialities of their faith.

What is suggested by this analysis is that the rise of militant trends in every Muslim society has its own context, and often a sub-text shaped and ordered by its own temporal conditions. This needs to be understood and evaluated.

Even if two or more Islamic societies show similar developments or socio-economic manifestations, we need to look discriminately at those distinctively existential conditions that can be discerned to have prompted those manifestations, rather than presume them to have been stimulated by their common adherence to a unified faith. For example, the Godhra incident is not a mere unfolding of a design laid down by the unity of Muslim faith. It is a pattern of response (if it can be attributed to Muslims at all in the present questionable state of our knowledge) to a specific situation where the majority community goes out to demonstrate that it is assuming the role of a dominant community and needs to be understood as such.

(The writer teaches Political Sociology at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.)

30 APR 2002

Islamic nations struggle to define terrorism

Kuala Lumpur, April 2

ISLAMIC NATIONS, meeting in an atmosphere clouded by widespread outrage at Israel's attack on Palestinians, struggled on Tuesday to find a definition for terrorism.

Having denounced Israel on Monday for practicing "state terrorism," foreign ministers from the 57-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), meeting in the Malaysian capital, were at odds over who else they thought was a terrorist.

"From very divergent views at least we have come to a view that terrorism and acts of terrorism should be condemned. Now the difficulty is what amounts to an act of terrorism, what amounts to terrorism," said Syed Hamid Albar, the host and spokesman for the OIC session. The OIC countries signed a statement on Monday praising the Palestinians and their 18-month-old "blessed Intifada" uprising. But they appeared divided on whether acts such as the suicide bombing of civilians

should be deemed terrorism. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, long a supporter of the Palestinian cause, suggested any deliberate attack on civilians, including those by Palestinian suicide bombers, should be classified as acts of terror. But other delegates were less ready to agree with the straight-talking Malaysian leader's interpretation.

The question of finding a definition of terrorism is a difficult and complex one because I think even at the United Nations level there has not been

any agreement as yet," said Syed Hamid, who added that OIC would call for an international conference to determine the issue. The OIC called its three-day meeting in response to the September 11 attack on the United States, aiming to redress perceptions Muslims were responsible for most of the world's acts of terror.

Violence overshadows meet

But spiraling violence in the West Asia has overshadowed their meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

Many Arab nations sent lower-level delegations while keeping foreign ministers at home to react to the crisis. The Israeli-Palestinian violence goes to the heart of Islam's relationship with the rest of the world, challenging definitions of legitimate opposition versus terrorism. A wave of Palestinian suicide bombing at the weekend prompted Israel to send more tanks into Palestinian cities and villages, including Ramallah, where Palestinian President Yasser Arafat remains under siege.

Reuters

3 APR 2002

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

'Narrow literalism can be devastating'

I was recently asked to address a conference in Seoul on the theme of developing a culture of peace. Naturally, it fell to me to present an Islamic perspective. My response was to explain that if we want to understand what Islam has to teach us about civilisation, society and relations between communities, it is important that we consider the range of its rich intellectual heritage.

Of course, the bedrock for this is the holy Koran and the Prophetic traditions (*Al-Hadith*). But in seeking to understand these scriptures, there is much that we can learn from 15 centuries of scholarship. If we overlook such a legacy, we miss out on so many lessons that it has to teach us about the application of Islam to social life. So, from a scholarly perspective, we need to study the principles, of *ushul fiqh*, that is to say Islamic legal theory together with the treasury of the collection of legal maxims that have served to provide guiding principles down through the centuries (*qawa'idul fiqh*). There are also many other books and texts in the vast library of classical scholarship.

It may appear as if I'm talking of esoteric matters of interest only to scholars. In fact, there is a very practical and important point to be made here. During the 20th century, it became popular to talk of going back to the literal word of the scriptures and putting to one side all of the human scholarship that came between the reader and the text. On the face of it, this seems pure and noble but it also contains a hidden danger. If we take, as it were, an anti-intellectual approach to studying the scriptures, one that is quick to dismiss centuries of thoughtful scholarship, we cut ourselves off from all that accumulated wisdom. And we are left with the danger of a scripturalistic formalism that prides itself on its literalistic approach to the Holy Scriptures.

In Islam, as in other scripture-based religion, this kind of narrow literalism can have devastating consequences, especially, when it is applied to society in a formalistic fashion. This sort of literalistic and formalistic approach to Islam is the common refuge of young men from non-



Former Indonesian President ^{Si Ford?}
ABDURRAHMAN WAHID
in his discourse on developing a culture on peace, analyses how there need not be any tension between the teachings of Islam and the need to value human rights and allow freedom of conscience

religious families sent to study abroad. Very often these young people, overwhelmed by their confronting encounters with Western society, take refuge in their faith and turn to religion as the source of cultural and personal identity.

This sort of response is understandable and admirable; but too often these vulnerable young people are influenced by those who would teach simplistic religious solutions as an antidote to the modern world's complexities. Instead of arriving at a deep understanding of Islam, in its rich and subtle intellectual and cultural context, they are presented with a simplistic, anti-intellectual reading of the scriptures that turns its back on historical and cultural knowledge.

As independent and concerned citizens in a free society, it is important that we wrestle with the difficult challenge of interpreting and applying Islam in modern society. This means that we have to not just accept, but also rather positively embrace, the fact that there exists a plurality of views on just how to do that.

A practical example of how Islamic scholarship can assist us in finding answers to difficult questions is found in the case of apostasy. Not everyone will agree with me, but I speak frankly in the spirit of encouraging the acceptance of a plurality of views. It is traditionally understood that, according to Islamic law, if a person converts to Islam, they are doing a praiseworthy thing, but if the opposites occurs, and as Muslims they convert to another faith, then he or she is guilty of committing apostasy.

A "crime", in the eyes of some, that makes

them liable to the death penalty. This understanding is indirect conflict with the principles of the declaration of human rights; a declaration which has been adopted by many Muslim countries. Indonesia, for example, the world's largest Muslim country, is one such country to have ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. According to a decision by the *ulama*, or Islamic scholars, of the mass-based Islamic organisation, *Nahdlatul Ulama*, at one of their national conferences, the application of religious law must be guided by reason, the principles of

which are laid out in *ushul fiqh*.

At another NU congress, it was agreed that changes in thinking about the application of religious law must be made subject to consideration of other laws and principles that have to bear on a case. What this means in practice is that it is possible to re-interpret the legal understanding of apostasy in Islam, so that it is not understood simply to refer to a Muslim converting out of Islam into other faith - for to adopt that more simplistic understanding would be to bring Islam into conflict with the universally agreed principles of human rights.

This is an important and practical point as the application of a simplistic understanding of the law on apostasy would require the putting to death of the 20 million or so Muslims who over the decades have converted to Christianity. If we insist on simplistic and literalistic interpretations of the scriptures, then we are left in the embarrassing and troubling position of saying that the spirit of Islam means one thing but the letter of the law of Islam means another.

If, however, we are prepared to learn from the insights gained over many generations of scholarship, we will be led to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of our faith. An understanding that reveals that there is no basic tension between the teachings of Islam and the need to value human rights and to allow freedom of conscience. On this foundation alone, can we build an enduring culture of peace.

- The Jakarta Post/Asia News Network

THE STATESMAN

20 MAR 2002

9/11
10-16

Spreading tentacles

EVERY COUNTRY is on guard, every security agency is on alert. Singapore and Malaysia are no exception. Both countries have busted suspected terrorist cells, arresting several persons who were plotting terrorist acts. In the post-September 11 scenario, where the United States points to an extensive network of the Islamist Al-Qaeda network, no country can afford to take terrorist threats lightly.

While in Malaysia there have been earlier arrests of suspected terrorists belonging to the Kumpulan Mujahideen Malaysia (KMM), the detention of 15 militants belonging to the Jemaah Islamiyah is a first for Singapore.

On January 5, the Singapore Government announced the detention of the Jemaah Islamiyah men, saying they had been nabbed between December 9 and 24. In the same period, Malaysian authorities arrested 13 Islamist militants.

The Singapore statement made it clear that the arrested persons had conducted "active surveillance" of

There appears to be a larger Islamist militant plan for South East Asia, says Amit Baruah on the arrests of some extremists in Singapore and Malaysia.

establishments in the city-state for terrorist bombing.

They had also tried to procure materials for bomb construction including large quantities of ammonium nitrate. Possible targets included the American embassy.

There is little doubt that action by Singapore's security agencies has nipped the activities of the terrorist cell. But the arrest itself exposes the vulnerability of a country like Singapore where safety and security are taken for granted by citizens and foreign residents alike.

According to the Singapore Government, "several of those arrested had been to Afghanistan where they received short periods of training in Al-Qaeda terrorist camps". "Key figures of the Jemaah Islamiyah, including several of those presently in custody, have links to militant elements in Malaysia and Indonesia."

Clearly, there appears to be a larger Islamist militant plan for South-East Asia. Militants in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia are reported to have close links — a cause for concern given that the



A hero beyond his turf?

economies of the three nations are closely linked and people come and go easily from one country to another. It is evident that the Taliban-Al-Qaeda rule in Afghanistan had provided considerable space for Islamist militants from different parts of the world not just to receive military training but also for indoctrination.

The international community, by turning a blind eye to who controlled Afghanistan, has permitted the training of a large number of militants and terrorists. While some have been nabbed in Singapore and Malaysia, the possibility of "sleepers" in other parts of the world cannot be ruled out.

The Philippines (the Abu Sayyaf particularly) and Indonesia are already on American radar screens for possible extension of anti-terrorist actions. While referring to possible direct support for the Philippine military in actions against the Abu Sayyaf, the U.S. Deputy Defence Secretary, Paul Wolfowitz, said recently: "You see the potential for Muslim extremists and Muslim terrorists to link up with those Muslim groups in Indonesia and find a little corner for themselves in a country that's otherwise quite unfriendly to them."

In Indonesia, the Megawati Sukarnoputri Government has, so far, not shown the appetite to move against Islamist militants, who continue to issue statements. Even some of the more moderate groups have urged the Government not to arrest the "mujahideen".

Obviously, in this battle against extremist elements, the cooperation of the Indonesian Government is

critical. If Jakarta fails to take action against identified militant elements, then the process of cracking down on such groups in neighbouring countries may prove difficult.

In an editorial, *The Straits Times* said: "...regional (terrorist) networks cannot be unravelled unless ASEAN Governments cooperate, exchange intelligence and coordinate security sweeps."

It must be clearly understood that any South-East Asian country that does not pull its weight in this battle will be providing refuge to terrorists, and will rightly become the object of international opprobrium. Singapore is fortunate to have a partner in Malaysia."

For multi-religious nations such as Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, the need to control extremist trends cannot be over-emphasised. While Singapore has a sizable Malay/Muslim minority, the Chinese constitute about 30 per cent of Malaysia's population.

As Singapore stepped up security, the Government has assured its citizens that there is no cause for panic. Even after September 11, the Singapore Government had beefed up security — armed guards could be seen inside Changi airport.

Given the inter-linked nature of the threats, there is little doubt that countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines must cooperate in the battle against terrorism.

And, as is evident from Mr. Wolfowitz's remarks, Southeast Asia is a priority area for American anti-terrorist attention.

THE HINDU

13 JAN 2002

Cleric warns of revolution against reforms

Islamabad, Jan. 14 (Reuters): A prominent Pakistani Muslim cleric today said President Pervez Musharraf's sweeping crackdown on religious extremism was sowing the seeds of Islamic revolution.

Maulana Abdul Aziz, Imam of Islamabad's main Red Mosque, said while there was no immediate backlash to Musharraf's crackdown, announced on Saturday, a reaction was brewing.

"This government is paving the way for Islamic revolution by creating hurdles for the Islamic parties," Aziz said.

"There may not be an instant reaction but they will respond

once dust is settled," the fiery preacher said of Musharraf's decision to ban five militant Muslim groups.

"We are just watching the situation but the silence will not last for long," Aziz said, adding that he believed Musharraf launched his crackdown because of US pressure.

"The timing of this announcement by the president has raised suspicion in the minds of religious people. It is being done under US pressure," he said.

Musharraf also imposed restrictions on madarasas, which have long been seen as a breeding ground for militancy. New

madarasas cannot be built without permission and all of them have to register and be brought into the mainstream education system.

He imposed restrictions on mosques and denounced religious scholars who he said preached sectarian hatred and violence.

Aziz, who opposed Musharraf's decision to abandon support for Afghanistan's former Taliban rulers and support the US-led strikes, dismissed the government's justification.

"If they were terrorists groups, then why were they allowed to operate for such a long time?" he asked, adding that the

move would weaken the separatist movement in Kashmir.

"We have lost Afghanistan and it seems we are now losing Kashmir," he said of the banning of Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad. "This will affect the freedom movement in Kashmir."

A teacher at a madarsa in Islamabad said he had no problems with the new restrictions.

"It is a good decision by the government that madarasas will not be opened without permission. We fully support it," teacher Kaleem Mortaza said.

Mortaza said he would register his madarsa with the govern-

ment. As he spoke his students in a nearby classroom were reciting verses of the Quran.

One new student, the eight-year-old son of a shoe-shiner said he did not know why his parents took him out of a state school and sent him to the madarsa last week.

But Mortaza had an answer. "The parents send their children here to serve Islam and the holy Quran. They join our mission to propagate the teachings of Quran throughout the world," he says.

"I have memorised the Quran in two years. Now I am teaching these children to memorise Qur-

an and after graduation from here they will open more madarasas to do the same," he said.

The number of madarasas mushroomed during the 11-year military rule of President Zia-ul-Haq when front-line state Pakistan became embroiled in the U.S.-backed war against the Soviet 1979-89 occupation of Afghanistan.

Madarasas, mainly in Northwest Frontier Province and western Baluchistan provinces, produced numerous recruits for Afghanistan's hardline Taliban movement which erupted on to the scene in 1994 and took power two years later.

Pervez preaches Islam to fight militancy

FROM MOHAMAD BAZZI

Islamabad, Jan. 16: In his campaign to return Pakistan to its more moderate roots after two decades of flirting with religious extremism, President Pervez Musharraf is using a tactic rare among secular Muslim rulers: He is lecturing his country on the nature of Islam.

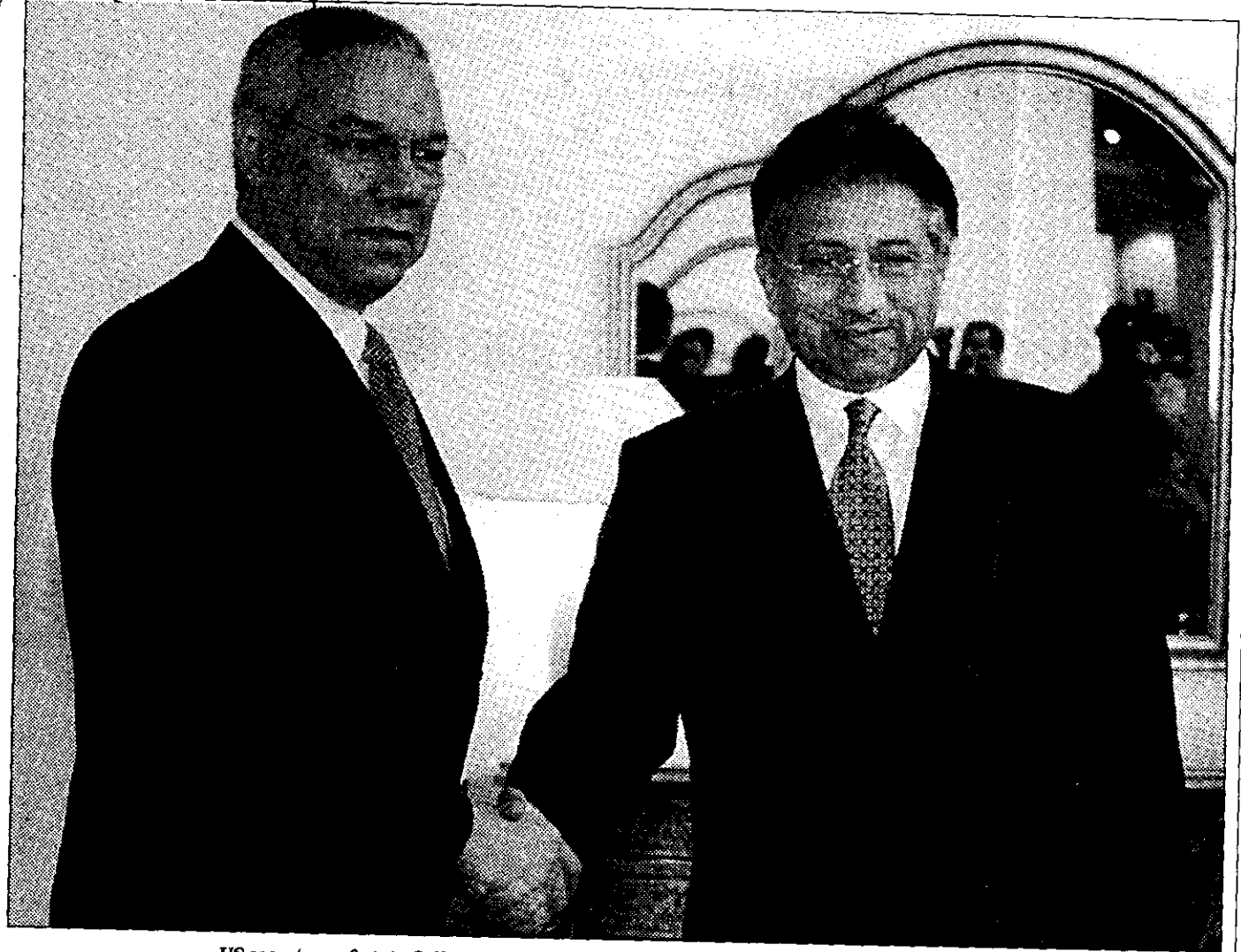
He challenged Islamic militants' practice of declaring other Muslims infidels, their conception of jihad, their use of mosques as military training grounds and the quality of instruction offered at thousands of religious schools. He invoked the Quran, the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad and the writings of Islam's great philosophers.

It was the most dramatic challenge to militant Islam by a modern-day Muslim leader. Unlike other leaders who have cracked down on militants in recent years, Musharraf went beyond banning individual groups and announcing sweeping restrictions on extremist activities. He offered a philosophical and theological critique of militant Islam, which has grown impressively strong in Pakistan over the past 20 years.

During the period, Muslim governments, most notably in Egypt and Algeria, have battled extremism with mass arrests, bloody crackdowns and suspension of civil liberties. But they rarely have accompanied such force with a thorough critique of the ideology that drives militant Islam.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak ordered the arrest, execution or deportation of thousands of militants during a battle that started in the early 1980s. But he never challenged the militants in their own language.

"Hosni Mubarak could never have given a speech like Musharraf did," said Rukhsana Sid-



US secretary of state Colin Powell with President Pervez Musharraf in Islamabad. (AFP)

diqui, chairwoman of the international relations department at Qaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad. "Musharraf was building a philosophical case against the militants, not just ordering a crackdown."

Some of the Islamic world's battles between militant groups and secular governments have been gruesomely brutal. In February 1982, Syrian President

Hafez Assad crushed a rebellion by the Muslim Brotherhood in Hama by sending in troops who massacred an estimated 10,000 people and destroyed much of the city.

Algeria's army-backed government cancelled elections in 1992 when it became clear the Islamic Salvation Front would win, a step that ignited a civil war that has killed an estimated

100,000 people or more in the past decade.

Musharraf's attack on Islamists has included 1,500 arrests in the past few days, many on criteria that typically alarm defenders of civil liberties. But there has been no major violence.

Analysts say Musharraf's response had to include his Islamic critique because he needs popu-

lar support to dismantle two decades of militant presence in the army, intelligence services and government ministries.

"He had to quote from the Quran and the Hadith because he needed to explain to the Pakistani people why we must be a moderate country," said Najam Sethi, editor of the weekly *Friday Times*.

LAT-11

THE TELEGRAPH

17 JAN 2002

Pervez attacks 'backward' Muslims

Zahid Hussain/The Times, London

KARACHI, Feb. 18. — President Pervez Musharraf provoked the ire of Islamic fundamentalists yesterday when he berated Muslims as the "most unenlightened and the weakest of all the human race" and called for an act of collective self-criticism.

He blamed the backwardness of Muslims on their involvement in "fratricidal conflicts" which, he said, was the main reason why they're perceived as terrorists. Gen Musharraf's scathing comments came while his government

is locked in a confrontation with the extremists who have vowed to bring him down.

Mr Liaquat Baluch, a leader of the Jamaat-i-Islami, has called on Pakistani Islamic groups to unite against the government, describing the military leader as a "threat to national security".

General Musharraf said the Islamic world was living in darkness. Muslims had been left behind the developed world because they had not invested in education and technology.

"Today we are the poorest, the most illiterate, the most backward, the most unhealthy, the most unenlightened, the most de-

'Today we are the poorest, the most illiterate, the most backward, the most unhealthy, the most unenlightened, the most deprived and the weakest of all the human race. The time has come for Islamic nations to take part in self-criticism.'

prived and the weakest of all the human race," he told a science and technology conference on Saturday. The time had come for Islamic nations to take part in collective self-criticism. "Once such an assessment is made, it would not be difficult to realise that the entire Islamic world was far behind the de-

veloped world," he said.

General Musharraf launched a crackdown on radicals last month, arresting more than 2,000 and banning five groups. Senior police officers said the outlawed groups were planning to attack government installations and murder government members.

General Musharraf's confrontation with extremism and his policy of supporting the USA has provoked a backlash from militants, who have kidnapped Daniel Pearl, an American journalist.

Pakistani police have arrested more than 30 people in the eastern province of Punjab, while stepping up their hunt for Amjad

Hussain Farooqui, a key suspect in the abduction. Police said that the suspect, who also used an alias, Imtiaz Siddiqui, was believed to be holding Pearl.

Pakistan denies report on Omar's statement, page 2

THE STATEMENT

FEB 18 1999