

I'll sort it out, Ranil tells Bush

By Sridhar Krishnaswamy

WASHINGTON, NOV. 5. The Sri Lankan Prime Minister, Ranil Wickremesinghe, today told the President, George W. Bush, that the recent events in his country were part of the island nation's politics for the last 25 years and that things would be sorted out when he returned.

Mr. Wickremesinghe said that he had a majority in Parliament and that it was imperative to get the peace process on track.

"The President wanted to know how things are. I said things were all right when I left. Then, this change. It has been part of Sri Lankan politics for 25 years; when I go back I will sort it out. I told him (Mr. Bush) I have a majority in Parliament and we have to get the peace process back," Mr. Wickremesinghe said after meeting Mr. Bush.

The visiting Sri Lankan leader, who met the American President for about 30 minutes, said the talks went off well and that the two leaders discussed the peace process. "I thanked him for the support the U.S. has given. I said we want to go ahead with the peace process and the economic transformation that is taking place in Sri Lanka. I

thanked him for the assistance the U.S. has given us."

Asked if he had talked to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, Mr. Wickremesinghe said: "No. The Norwegians have been in touch with the LTTE". The Prime Minister told his country's media and accredited White House press: "I have a mandate to bring peace to the country and to develop the country".

Work together, says U.S.

The Bush administration has urged the President and the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka to work together to "bolster" the peace process, even as the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, said he hoped that the peace process would not be harmed by the actions of the President, Chandrika Kumaratunga. The spokesman for Mr. Annan said that the Secretary-General "wishes to reiterate that he continues to support this (peace) process".

Mr. Wickremesinghe has decided to stick to his schedule in the U.S. and the State Department has welcomed it. "We are following the developments in Sri Lanka closely. We urge the President and the Prime Minister to work together to bolster the peace process and protect Sri Lanka's democratic institu-

tions," the State Department's deputy spokesman, Adam Ereli, said at a briefing.

"We are concerned that these events could have a negative effect on the peace process and talks with the LTTE and we stand firmly behind the Government of Sri Lanka in its search for peace after 20 years of bloody conflict," he said.

Asked how the President and the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka are going to work together given the fact that they are longstanding rivals and the President had taken actions without consulting the Prime Minister, he said:

"...Sri Lanka is a democratic country... multiparty democracy... as the name implies, public officials of different parties working together for the common interest; and we would certainly hope that that spirit informs the decisions and actions of the country's officials."

Mr. Wickremesinghe also met Senator John McCain, who heads the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, and the Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, William Thomas.

Senior officials have said that Mr. Wickremesinghe will go ahead with his schedule and leave Washington tonight for London.

US Track II derailed

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

Ind. Pak
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New Delhi, Oct. 21: A private US effort to bring India and Pakistan back to the talks table has been grounded after the external affairs ministry rejected third-party involvement in normalising bilateral relations.

The US bid was not the Bush administration's directly, but that of the Pugwash Organisation, a prestigious outfit set up with private funds that won the Nobel peace prize in 1995. It is known for encouraging "Track II" diplomacy between the two hostile neighbours.

A number of former Indian and Pakistani diplomats, bureaucrats and senior military officials were to participate in the four-day workshop in Goa from October 30.

Several westerners, including Pugwash secretary-general Paolo Cotta-Ramusino, an Italian mathematics professor, were also invited.

Pugwash "indefinitely" postponed the South Asian security

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workshop after the external affairs ministry decided not to issue visas to the participants.

"Third parties often have their agenda and priorities and want to sometimes artificially push for dialogue on issues that suit their agenda," ministry spokesperson Navtej Sarna said.

But he emphasised that Pugwash could continue its efforts at maintaining informal contact between the two sides outside India. "No definition of Track II stipulates that such contacts, midwifed by third parties, should take place only on Indian soil," he said.

Officials pointed out this did not mean all Pakistanis were being denied visas to India. Noted Pakistani singer Abida Parveen is scheduled to arrive in Delhi within days and former cricket captain Wasim Akram is already here, they said.

Delhi clarified it was focussed on issues that would help build people-to-people contact as part of its willingness to take steps "progressively" to restore normal bilateral relations.

WSA
South Asia

'U.S. will play a role in reviving Indo-Pak. talks'

10-12
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By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, OCT. 2. The U.S. President, George W. Bush, and the Pakistan Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, had discussions on a range of issues that included Kashmir, Iraq, the war on terrorism and the general security situation in the region.

According to Mr. Jamali, Mr. Bush had assured him that the United States would play an active role in the revival of talks between India and Pakistan. Administration officials had little to say formally of the Bush-Jamali talks but aides to the President have been quoted as saying only in very general terms that the two leaders discussed Iraq, bilateral and regional issues.

"Pakistan greatly values the role of the U.S. in promoting stability and peace in South Asia," Mr. Jamali has been quoted in the Pakistani media as saying, and in this context Mr. Bush assured him that the U.S. "will continue to play an important role in the revival of the Pakistan-India dialogue process."

Mr. Jamali, who is here at the invitation of Mr. Bush, will also be seeing senior members of this administration such as the U.S. Vice-President, Dick Cheney, and the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, where he is expected to continue discussions on many aspects of the U.S.-Pakistan relationship.

In remarks prior to his meeting Mr. Bush at the Oval office, Mr. Jamali said that his country was looking for a "long lasting friendship" with the U.S. He maintained

that Pakistan was keen on following through with the new democratic set-up that had been in place in the last ten months.

Mr. Bush, in welcoming Mr. Jamali said the discussion on the wide range of issues would include "our mutual desire to fight terror, our keen desire to bring stability and peace throughout the world." Mr. Bush, prior to the start of the meeting, also said he was looking forward to "discussions about our bilateral relations in regards to commerce and opportunities to enhance the livelihood of our fellow citizens."

Mr. Jamali stressed the reciprocity on the part of Pakistan in the fight against terrorism. "As far as our bilateral relations are concerned, we want a long lasting friendship with the U.S. And, that is why I am here, to bring a message of the new democratic set-up which has set in Pakistan the last 10 months. And I'm sure we intend carrying that through. Of course, with a pat on the back as far as Mr. Bush is concerned, would that be all right, I think," Mr. Jamali said. At the White House, the spokesman, Scott McClellan, hailed the role of Pakistan in the ongoing war against terrorism. "Pakistan is someone who is working closely with us in the war on terrorism and we appreciate their cooperation."

"The President made it clear last week to leaders of India and Pakistan that it is important to have dialogue to help reduce tension in the region and I am sure that topic came up as well and other issues," the spokesman added.

On the diplomatic and political fronts, the U.S. and Pakistan have seen a flurry of exchanges at the very top level in the last three months or so. In June, the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, was welcomed at the Camp David in what was passed off as a way to show this Republican White House's appreciation for Islamabad's role in the global war on terror, especially as it pertained to Afghanistan. Last week, Mr. Bush met Gen. Musharraf on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York; and now Mr. Jamali on his official visit which had actually been on the cards for quite sometime now.

Islamabad is seeking a number of things from the Bush administration in the realm of military and economic matters over and beyond the \$ 3 billion package spread over a five-year period that was announced this June. The money will come in annual tranches of about \$ 600 million which will have to be approved by Congress each year and is pegged to Pakistani cooperation on non-proliferation, terrorism and forward movement on democracy.

Officially, Washington has not responded to reports out of Islamabad that the Bush administration has agreed to modernise and refurbish the existing Pakistani fleet of F-16s. But the impression even in the Bush-Musharraf meeting this June was that the U.S. was only against the idea of selling new F-16s and that the option of modernising and refurbishing what Islamabad already had was subject to negotiations.

High Commissioners of the...
Tightrope Walk: Strong US-Pak Ties In India's Interest, Says Rocca

US balances Indo-Pak act

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 11 SEPTEMBER

EVEN as it pledged to stand by India in its battle against terrorism, the US continued its balancing act in the region with visiting assistant secretary of state Christina Rocca preaching caution while dealing with Pakistan. While affirming that the issue of cross border infiltration remained "very important" in its agenda with Pakistan, Ms Rocca, speaking at a CII-organised function, emphasised that a successful US-Pakistan relationship was in India's best interests.

Arguing that Pakistan stood at a juncture where it needed to be nudged gently into taking measures to ensure stability in the region, she said: "Pakistan is a country in the midst of a major political, economic and ideologi-



ROCCA ROLE

cal transformation. It has not yet safely escaped the dangers of a serious crisis on multiple fronts.

It must be assisted to achieve a soft landing that corrects disturbing internal trends, realigns its direction as a moderate Muslim state, and defeats definitively all terrorism emanating from its

soil," she said. "We believe Indians should welcome such assistance, and I know many do," she said. However, the US assistant secretary of state added that the US would "stand by India in its battle against terrorism, just as India had stood with the US in its battle against terrorism."

The US line, viewed here as calculated ambivalence by the Bush administration towards South Asia, was further underscored by Ms Rocca's observation that the US enjoyed good relations with India and Pakistan "simultaneously." The US balancing game became even more pronounced after 9/11 as it has needed the support of the Musharraf regime to deal with the Al Qaeda in Afghanistan.

Ms Rocca was understood to have discussed the situation in Iraq with the government here.

Trade ties take positive route

Our Delhi Bureau
NEW DELHI 11 SEPTEMBER

THE US assistant secretary of state for south Asian affairs, Christina Rocca, on Thursday said American trade interests with India is taking a positive turn and expressed optimism on foreign investment in India. Speaking at an industry gathering she denied that her visit to India was in relation to sending of Indian troops to Iraq even as she acknowledged that it figured in her talks with the government.

She said American exports to India, which have been languishing in the \$3.5-4 billion level, is likely to top \$4 billion this year.

US aid to Pak comes with strings attached

By Chidanand Rajghatta
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Washington: Pakistan will have to satisfy the US administration and the Congress on three fronts—fighting terrorism, ceasing nuclear proliferation, and moving towards democracy—before it can earn the \$3 billion, five-year aid package the White House has put on the table.

Senior administration officials who backgrounded the media on the Bush-Musharraf talks on Tuesday made it abundantly clear that the aid package was conditional even while declining to use the term.

They also disclosed that the \$600 million a year bonanza would start flowing from the financial year 2005 after Washington had satisfied itself that Pakistan was moving away from the perilous course it had embarked on.

Washington has provided \$100 million in 2003 and a \$120 million package for 2004 is in the pipeline. The \$3 billion package was separate from these outflows, and predicated on Pakistan's actions on the three fronts, officials explained. "For Congress to appropriate the funds—and, indeed, for the government to seek the funds—we're going to have to be satisfied that Pakistan is indeed working vigorously with us in the war against terrorism, is working vigorously to ensure that there is no onward proliferation and is moving smartly towards democracy," a top-ranking official who briefed the media on the sidelines of the Camp David summit said.

"I'm not calling those conditions, but let's be realistic. Three years down the road, if things are going badly in those areas, it's not going to happen. We're not going to request it, Congress won't appropriate it. And that is a bargain that the Pakistanis are entering into with their eyes wide open," the official added.

The background briefing made it evident that US President George W. Bush held Gen Pervez Musharraf feet to the fire in private even while lavishing praise on him in public.

Gen Musharraf too acquiesced to Mr Bush's persuasion, leading the senior US official who expounded on the meeting to say that "there's a good chance that 10 years from now we're going to look at this meeting here, up at Camp David, and say this was an historic meeting".

On the key issue of Kashmir and terrorism, the US official said it was discussed at a little bit of length and Gen Musharraf emphasised strongly that he had moved against cross-border infiltration and that he had made sure there were no terrorist camps inside Pakistani Kashmir.

Asked if as a result of the talks, the US was confident that cross-border terror would stop, the official replied, "I think the President put it about as well as anybody can, which is what we expect and what we think Gen Musharraf needs to commit to, and we think he has committed to a 100 per cent effort at trying to stop cross-border incidents. I'll leave it at that."

Bush tells Advani he'll get Pervez to stop terror export

WS (W) S Advani HFI-1 11/6 ✓

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, June 10

DEPUTY PRIME Minister L.K. Advani indicated here after his meetings with President George W. Bush and other US administration officials that Washington would now take up the issue of cross-border terror with Islamabad and do some tough talking.

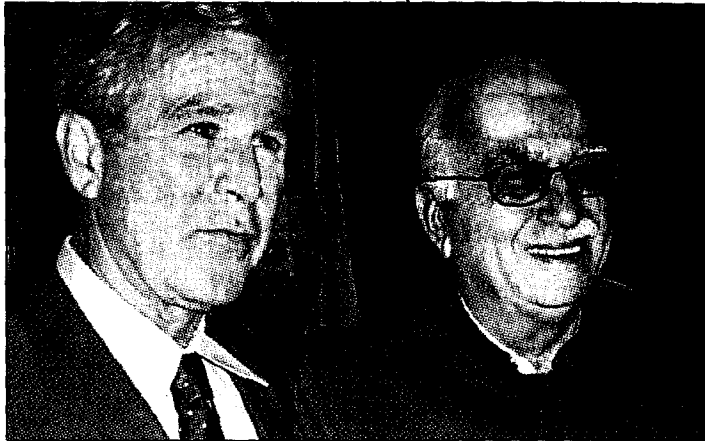
Advani had 30 minutes of talks with Bush on Monday during which the discussion centred on the continuing terror attacks in Jammu & Kashmir and the US request for deployment of Indian troops in Iraq as peacekeepers.

"I'm sure they will be discussed," Advani told reporters when asked if he thought Bush would take up New Delhi's concerns with General Pervez Musharraf when the two leaders meet at Camp David on June 24.

Bush "reflected our concerns and our problems", Advani said.

The US President praised Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's peace initiative, but Indian diplomatic sources stressed that there was no discussion on any Indo-Pak "roadmap".

They dismissed as "ridiculous



PTI
TOGETHER AGAINST TERROR: Advani with Bush at the White House.

and completely inaccurate" reports that India, at the instance of the US, had agreed to commence joint secretary-level dialogue with Islamabad next month.

The focus remained fixed on Washington's keenness that India deploy a sizeable force for "stabilisation" duties in Iraq.

Bush, who had "dropped by" within minutes after Advani began a meeting with national se-

curity adviser Condoleeza Rice at the White House, broached the thorny subject of Indian participation.

When Advani said India's Cabinet Committee on Security would like clarifications on several aspects of the proposal before taking a decision, Bush said he would send a Pentagon team to New Delhi as early as next Monday to answer all queries.

See also report on Page 4

U.S. feels 'encouraged' by India, Pakistan moves

30 MAY 2003

THE HINDU

Handwritten notes: *Handwritten notes in the left margin, including "G-8" and other illegible scribbles.*

By Sridhar Krishnaswami
WASHINGTON, MAY 29. The Bush administration has said that it is "encouraged" by the recent initiatives of India and Pakistan and that it was basically left to the two South Asian countries to carry forward that relationship.

"We are, in fact, encouraged by recent trends in the relationship between India and Pakistan. I think everybody in the G-8 is encouraged by those trends. I do believe that the core here, the key here, is that India and Pakistan themselves move the relationship forward," the U.S. President's National Security Adviser, Condoleezza Rice, said on Wednesday.

"It is not something that can be moved forth by the will of the G-8... But I know that members of the G-8 are welcoming what is happening with the Indians and the Pakistanis," she said while talking about the coming visit of Mr. Bush to Europe that will include the Summit of the Group of Eight in Evian, France.

Dr. Rice also stressed that there was "more to be done" and that the U.S. remained "very engaged" in the subcontinent. "It's not that there isn't more to be done. There is more to be done. And in fact the United States has been very engaged. Secretary (of State) Armitage was out there not too long ago; there will be a lot of other activities and visitors. But this is a time for encouragement on that particular issue," Dr. Rice maintained.

The Prime Minister, A.B. Vajpayee, will also be attending the G-8 meeting in

France but the White House has made it clear that there is no bilateral scheduled between Mr. Bush and the Indian leader. "The President is having only one bilateral during this, which is with President Hu Jintao (of China) and of course with his host, President Chirac," Dr. Rice noted.

Dr. Rice said that Mr. Bush had repeatedly spoken to Mr. Vajpayee and Pervez Musharraf about the set of issues relating to those two countries. "... We have a broad relationship with Pakistan, just as we have a broad relationship with India. And every time that he (Mr. Bush) talks to Prime Minister Vajpayee or President Musharraf, this is not the only issue on the agenda," she said.

"The issue is how to broaden and deepen our relationship with Pakistan with which we have important counter terrorism issues, important issues concerning Afghanistan, important issues of democratisation in Pakistan. We talk about those things — economic development in Pakistan. With India we talk about scientific cooperation and trade, and the fact that this is the world's biggest democracy and we share a lot in value — a lot in common and concerning values," she said.

"And so, yes, India and Pakistan are an important part of the agenda, but it's by no means the entire agenda with either India or Pakistan," Dr. Rice said.

The Bush administration will be hearing from India's Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, and Gen. Musharraf, both of whom will be here next month. In fact, giving recognition to

the importance of the relationship between the U.S. and Pakistan especially in the context of the ongoing war against terrorism, Mr. Bush will be seeing the Pakistani leader at Camp David on June 24.

'No change in Kashmir policy'

PTI reports:
Meanwhile, at a briefing, the State Department spokesman, Richard Boucher, said "a political settlement — a dialogue that can address all the issues, an eventual political settlement that can be reached by the two sides taking into account the wishes of the people of Kashmir. There is no change in our policy".

He was asked what kind of political settlement the U.S. was talking about in the light of remarks by the State Department that Washington sympathised with the people of Jammu and Kashmir and a CIA map which says "Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir". "I wouldn't draw any particular conclusion from a particular phrase or a map. I suspect that if you look at the history of these things, those things have appeared from time to time in various forms... We do consider that any political settlement needs to be one that is acceptable to the two sides."

Asked whether the State Department held the view that Jammu and Kashmir was an Indian State, Mr. Boucher said, "I will have to get back to you. If you are asking for a precise legal definition, I am not jumping into this one with three feet."

WSD
Armitage
14/5

'Armitage visit to South Asia successful'

H-D-11

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MAY 13. Over and beyond what may have been said, or not said, by the United States' Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, during his trips to India and Pakistan, the State Department here is saying that he did indeed have a "very successful visit to South Asia" where he has had the opportunity to discuss bilateral relations and also the steps being taken in the subcontinent to resolve the differences.

The State Department has further reiterated the United States' continuing interest in the promotion of stability in South Asia and is ready to assist India and Pakistan as they begin a process aimed at achieving peace.

"In both Pakistan and in India...he (Mr. Armitage) discussed the expanding bilateral relationship that we have with each country and commended both governments on their renewed efforts, begun last month by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee's speech in Srinagar and followed by the



Pakistani Prime Minister, Iamali's telephone call that began a process to resolve their differences," the Deputy Spokesman, Philip Reeker, said.

Mr. Reeker would not accept the criticism that after the initial euphoria in both India and Pakistan, New Delhi had adopted a hostile attitude, for instance, in declining to meet the Pakistani Prime Minister.

"In terms of euphoria, we are all quite euphoric when the Deputy Secretary, Armitage visits with us and visits other places. He had a very successful visit to South Asia, and I don't know that I accept the characterisations of the reactions since," Mr. Reeker said.

"As you know, the United

States has a continuing interest in strong relationships with each of the countries in the region and in promoting peace and stability... Peace in the region, whether it is in Afghanistan, or whether it's between India and Pakistan or whether it is in Nepal or in Sri Lanka, will be achieved through the efforts of the governments and peoples of South Asia, and the United States stands ready to assist South Asians in their efforts, as they may request," Mr. Reeker said.

Also without getting into the specifics of the recent visit of India's Security Adviser, Brajesh Mishra, the State Department spokesman said that it was a "very successful series" of meetings.

"It did cover a wide variety of subjects, including India's keen interest in pressing forward with high technology, commerce and civil nuclear cooperation... they are areas where we have taken a number of steps," Mr. Reeker said, adding that the first session of the High Technology Cooperation Group would be held next month.

Busy Bush has all the time for Brajesh

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Richard Armitage talks to AB Vajpayee in New Delhi on Saturday. (Reuters)

administration would do anything possible to support the move. Neither the Indians nor the Americans are willing to go into too much detail about the Oval Office dialogue citing diplomatic privilege.

But sources said it was not a monologue. Mishra is famous for his precise articulation and clarity. And as Bush told deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani last year, he admires that in his interlocutors.

But as important as the content of the talks between Mishra and Bush are the circumstances in which their meeting took place.

This has possibly been the busiest week for Bush since the war began in Iraq. On the day he met Mishra, there was a long line-up of leaders scheduled to meet the President at the White House.

Among them were the Prime Minister of Denmark, the emir of Qatar and the foreign ministers of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, whose accession to Nato was ratified by the Senate on Thursday.

This was also

the week when Bush met Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and signed a free trade agreement with the island state. Other leaders who were in Washington this week were Spain's Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar and El Salvador's Vice-President Carlos Schmidt.

Shortly before the President met Mishra, six Indian Americans were in the White House as part of an Asian American delegation. Bush told one of them, Narayanan Keshavan, executive director of the Indian American Forum for Political Education, that "India is important for all of us". He said of his plans to visit India that "it has to fall into place".

What is significant about the White House meetings this week is that every foreign visitor who met Bush was an ally of the US in the war against Saddam Hussein.

Mishra was the sole exception — from a country that did not join the "coalition of the willing" on Iraq. It is a distinction which will be noted and positively reflected in the coming months in America's dealings with India.

Bush underlined the importance his administration attached to India by insisting that he did not want to "drop in" on Mishra's meeting with his US counterpart, Condoleezza Rice. Dropping in on such meetings is a traditional White House gesture of indicating the President's direct interest in relations with a particular country.

But in Mishra's case, Bush insisted that it was not to be a "drop in" but a regular meeting in the Oval Office. Mishra was escorted into the Oval Office by Rice.

The Indian official was very modest about the White House gesture. He told Indian correspondents here that "this is not about me. It shows the importance the Bush administration attaches to Indo-US relations".

Addressing a press conference just before his departure for Paris and London, Mishra said there were absolutely no differences within the Indian leadership on the Prime Minister's initiative on Pakistan.

He said an opportunity for better relations between the two South Asian neighbours "must not be wasted" by acting in haste. It was necessary to proceed stage by stage.

QUOTE

It's a long trip to when we get there

RICHARD ARMITAGE

Armitage denies U.S. ^{US} pressured India, Pak.

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 8. The U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, said here today that considering the sensitivities between India and Pakistan, the two countries should concentrate on political and economic confidence-building measures.

Addressing a joint press conference with the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Muhammad Kasuri here after a 90-minute meeting with the Pakistan President, Gen. Musharraf, he said "there have to be serious CBMs on political and economic issues" before the two countries which had "gen-

eral confrontational stands" take up issues like arms control, he said.

Mr. Armitage was answering a question on what the U.S. is prepared to do on nuclear proliferation in the region.

"They cannot be expected to take far-reaching decisions on matters of arms control. We are wishing a cautiously optimistic stand. That is exactly what we have seen", he said.

He denied the impression that the U.S. has pressured Pakistan and India into any peace process.

"It is not our stand to pressure Pakistan or India. If we can be helpful to begin dialogue it

will be helpful".

Without going into the details of his talks with Gen. Musharraf, Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali and Mr. Kasuri, he said "my discussions here today will be faithfully carried to our Indian friends and they study the comments and decide on their course of response. I want to dispel the notion that there is pressure from the U.S.". Mr. Armitage also denied that he carried any proposals for resolution of the Kashmir issue.

Asked whether India has done enough to bring down the tensions, he said, "it is not useful pointing fingers at India and Pakistan."

Armitage denies U.S. pressured India, Pak.

The United States faithfully discusses the issues with both sides".

Replying to a question on the motives that prompted India to initiate a new peace process, he said he was not sure of the reasons.

"All I know is that Vajpayee has made a far-reaching statement in Srinagar. I have no doubt that he is a man of peace and he wants to have peace between India and Pakistan. Beyond that I cannot speculate on his motives. I think it is something our friends would discuss and find it for themselves", he said.

The U.S. and the South Asia tangle

By Rajesh Rajagopalan

110-10 9/15

WHEN THE U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, visits the region, it will mark the beginning of a new diplomatic campaign by Washington. Over the next few weeks, the U.S., along with its allies, will step up the pace of a proactive diplomatic campaign aimed at bringing peace along the Line of Control between India and Pakistan. They will, yet again, confirm Pakistan's complicity in cross-border terrorism, and even make harsh demands that it end support for terrorist groups in Kashmir. Senior U.S. officials have already started making public statements proclaiming their disappointment at Pervez Musharraf's broken promises about stopping cross-border terrorism, while also insisting that nevertheless there are no military solutions to this problem. Over the next few months, despite the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee's surprise peace initiative, New Delhi can expect to play host to a steady stream of diplomats from Washington and other capitals, all urging India to give them yet another chance to bring Pakistan around.

In evaluating these efforts, New Delhi should understand that the U.S. is severely constrained in pressuring Pakistan on the issue that matters most to India, cross-border terrorism. One of the constraints is that the U.S. believes it needs Pakistan to prosecute the war on terrorism, a dependence that is unlikely to end in the near future. But even if the war on terrorism had not complicated the issue, the U.S. is not capable of determining Pakistani behaviour on India and Kashmir. India has misread the U.S.-Pakistan relationship. New Delhi should understand the limits of American power and develop options that are independent of Washington's constraints. The alternative is to be once again sucked into the morass of the New Delhi-Islamabad-Washington triangular diplomacy, the result of which will be predictable and unfortunate.

The first constraint, the U.S. dependence on Pakistan in the war on terrorism, is something that New Delhi finds very difficult to recognise.

Indian strategic analysts, and its officials, are loath to accept the American claim that Pakistan is a 'stalwart' ally in the war on terrorism, and with some reason. Washington's own acceptance of its failure to control Pakistani actions in Kashmir, and Pakistan's complicity in the increasing violence in Afghanistan, point to the apparent hollowiness of American claims. From the Indian perspective, America's commendation of Pakistani cooperation in the war on terror betrays either American naivete or hypocrisy.

New Delhi should develop options that are independent of Washington's constraints. The alternative is to be once again sucked into the morass of triangular diplomacy.

But, from the American perspective, the picture is somewhat more complex. Islamabad has made a careful distinction between terrorism directed at the U.S. and terrorism in the pursuit of Pakistani objectives in India, Afghanistan and other parts of the region. Islamabad has discouraged any terrorism of the first kind, and has been quick to cooperate with Washington in apprehending those that have targeted the U.S. and extraditing them, sometimes even in contravention of domestic law. Clearly, self-interest dictates that the U.S. cannot but acknowledge such cooperation, even if it is a tactical move designed to forestall American pressures in other areas.

This Pakistani policy of discriminate terrorism has driven a wedge into Washington's war on terrorism, forcing the U.S. to either suborn its policy to a philosophical consistency about the indivisibility of terrorism, or recognise that American security interests can sometimes trump political rhetoric. The choice that the U.S. has made between these alternatives is, not surprisingly, to follow the dictates of its interest. This may indeed be hypocrisy, but consistency is rarely the hallmark of sensible strategic policy in any country. In any case, what is clear is that the U.S. will be careful about risking Pakistani coop-

eration in the war that Washington is waging against its terrorists for New Delhi's sake.

The second constraint that the U.S. faces is that no amount of diplomatic isolation, or American disapproval, is likely to change Pakistan's policy towards India and Kashmir. This hypothesis may also be difficult for New Delhi to accept, but a review of the two years of U.S.-Pakistan relations prior to 9/11 will provide ample support for this proposition. Pakistan-U.S. relations, which seemed to have reached their nadir after Kargil,

plummeted to even greater depths after Gen. Musharraf's coup later that year. Isolated because of the military coup, with an economy in meltdown, it is difficult to imagine a more favourable circumstance for U.S. pressure to have had an effect on Pakistani behaviour. But the record clearly indicates that Pakistan shrugged off American demands and continued its self-defeating policies. Despite being under tremendous constraints, Gen. Musharraf refused to back down from maximalist positions at the Agra summit in July 2001. These favourable circumstances are even less likely that the U.S. will be able to persuade Pakistan to change its policy.

Pakistan did modify its behaviour somewhat last summer, at least temporarily stemming the tide of cross-border transit of terrorists, for which American officials were quick to take credit. But the critical difference was the Indian military mobilisation, and clear indications that India's patience had finally run out. American diplomacy worked, but only with Indian threat of force backing it up.

The argument here is not that American diplomats or its diplomacy are lacking, but that there are severe limits to any purely diplomatic effort that aims at changing this facet of

Pakistan's policy. For Pakistan, American disapproval is a small price to pay for the pursuit of its current policies towards India and Kashmir, and it is a price that Islamabad has repeatedly demonstrated a willingness to pay.

For Washington, what matters is not the validity of the opposing Indian and Pakistani claims and counter-claims, much less national interests, but preventing these disagreements from leading to war. And because preventing a war is the primary concern, it makes no difference to Washington whether that threat of war is removed due to Pakistani concessions or Indian ones. Though the U.S. had put a considerable amount of pressure on Pakistan last year, this is unlikely to last. Many of the concessions that Washington made to India last year, such as branding more Pakistan-based terrorist groups Foreign Terrorist Organisations (FTOs) and changing the tenor of its language towards Pakistan, came after it seemed that the limits of India's patience and restraint had finally been breached after the terrorist attack on Parliament, not because any new evidence had come to light regarding Pakistan's complicity in terrorism in India. More importantly, the changes in U.S. policy reflected no change in its view of the India-Pakistan conflict but were simply one way of mollifying Indian anger. But this is not a card that India can play twice with any credibility.

India's options in dealing with Pakistan-sponsored cross-border terrorism are limited. But that should not become a temptation for shifting the load on to Washington because that would limit India's options, including military ones, without any great benefit.

In addition, U.S.-India relations are once again being held hostage to Pakistan's obduracy. Indian disappointment with the U.S. and American pressure on India threaten to torpedo the unrealised promise of closer New Delhi-Washington relations. Far from stabilising the India-Pakistan relationship, the dynamic of the triangular relationship between India, Pakistan and the U.S. will only damage these relations.

Armitage to focus on Indo-Pak ties

W

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, May 4

TROUBLE-SHOOTER RICHARD Armitage's agenda has been somewhat upstaged by the swift Indo-Pak developments of the past week, but his visit to the region will go on as scheduled. The US Deputy Secretary of State leaves for Islamabad on Monday. He then travels to Kabul and, thereafter, to New Delhi. The unstated aim of his mission was to nudge India and Pakistan towards a dialogue after pressuring Islamabad to end the terrorist infiltration into Jammu and Kashmir.

But Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee has clearly stolen the thunder from Armitage with his announcement on Friday.

Armitage's visit plan was drawn up early last month in the aftermath of the Nadimarg killings of 24 Hindus in March.

The massacre had given rise to fears here that tensions would snowball yet again as they did early last year, when the two countries massed a million troops on the border.

Reviving full diplomatic relations and restoration of air links has been a part of Armitage's brief. Secretary of State Colin Powell made

Pakistani MPs' goodwill visit to India

A 12-MEMBER team of Pakistani parliamentarians would cross over to India through the Wagah border in Punjab for a weeklong goodwill tour to New Delhi and Kolkata.

Leader of the delegation Ishaq Khehwani said from Lahore that they would cross over to India

the suggestion publicly ahead of his own visit to the two countries last year. He, however, drew a blank at the time in both the capitals.

by road on Thursday. The delegation, which has members from both ruling and Opposition parties, would travel to Amritsar by road and from there to New Delhi by air. The visit is being organised by the India-Pakistan Forum for Peace and Democracy.

PTI, Islamabad

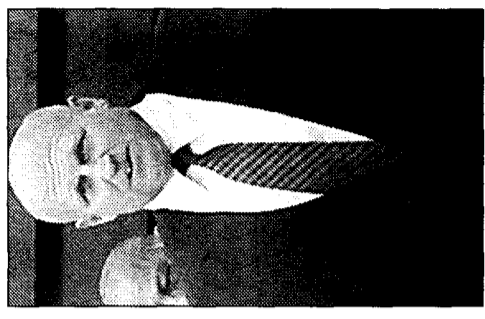
Officials here reckon that with the ice now broken between New Delhi and Islamabad, Armitage's visit may focus more on bilat-

eral issues. But the Indian sources, however, expect him to urge Pakistan to put an end to terrorist infiltration to ensure that it does not miss this opportunity for dialogue.

On his way to Islamabad, Armitage is scheduled to have a meeting with National Security Adviser Brajesh Mishra at London's Heathrow airport.

Mishra, thereafter, proceeds to New York before coming here on March 8 for talks with his American counterpart Condoleezza Rice.

In New York, Mishra will address the Council on Foreign Relations.



Richard Armitage
Easier task

Blackwill quits, to return to Harvard

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, APRIL 21. The U.S. Ambassador to India, Robert D. Blackwill, today announced that he had resigned his post as envoy to return to academic pursuits at the Harvard University, a decision that would take effect at the "end of summer", possibly in August.

Though Mr. Blackwill had informed senior functionaries of the Indian Government in advance about his decision, official sources said the Ambassador's decision had come as a surprise.

The sources also made it clear that Mr. Blackwill, who took over here in July 2001, had no problems with the Government of India. At the end of his tenure, Mr. Blackwill will have completed about two years in the job.

In a statement, Mr. Blackwill said he had informed the U.S. President, George W. Bush, and senior officials in Washington that he would be going back to



Harvard at the "end of this summer" to continue his academic career.

Giving an account of his achievements, the statement said: "With President Bush and Prime Minister Vajpayee showing the route... our consistently troubled past is behind us".

The end of sanctions after the 1998 Indian nuclear tests, the visits by over 100 Bush administration functionaries to New Delhi and joint operations by the U.S. and Indian militaries were some of the achievements Mr.

Blackwill listed. "We have vital national interests in promoting peace and freedom in Asia, slowing the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and combating international terrorism." He said the Indo-U.S. relationship had a "glittering future".

Mr. Blackwill made it clear that the fight against international terrorism could not be won until terrorism against India ended completely. "There can be no other legitimate stance by the United States, no American compromise whatever on this elemental geopolitical and moral truth."

An appointee of the Bush administration, Mr. Blackwill, had previously spent 14 years teaching at Harvard and 22 more years as a career foreign service officer.

The fact that Mr. Blackwill will continue to perform his duties till the end of summer provides an opportunity for a "smooth transition" here at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi.

Text of statement: Page 12

Blackwill quits Delhi, heads for Harvard

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TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi/Washington:



R. Blackwill

In a move described by external affairs officials as "unusual", Robert Blackwill announced on Monday his decision to quit as US ambassador to India. The high-profile envoy's announcement came well before completion of even two years of his tenure, and Mr Blackwill is now expected to leave India some time in August to return to Harvard University, where he is a lecturer at the Kennedy School of Government.

Although Mr Blackwill stated that he had informed the President and the Secretary of State among others of his plans to return to Harvard, the announcement sparked speculation about the abruptness of his departure. It is learnt that even the embassy staff were told of his plans only just before he released the statement.

The US envoy offered no precise reason for his impending departure other than to say "Harvard beckons"—comparing himself with the rather more illustrious John Galbraith in the process. The embassy spokesman, however, dismissed suggestions that there was anything unusual

in either the decision to leave or the abrupt announcement, citing past precedent of short tenures.

The speculation was, however, not without foundation as Mr Blackwill has had, at best, an intermittently rocky tenure, ruffling feathers with his unusual approach to diplomacy. In New Delhi, he was also reported to have antagonised the local staff at the embassy with what some described as an autocratic management style, leading to an inquiry last year by an oversight body from Washington.

A subsequent report by Inspector General Clark Kent Ervin found that Mr Blackwill received the lowest scores ever in terms of embassy staff morale, leading to rumours of an early exit.

Although there was speculation of the State Department's unhappiness with this presidential appointee, it appeared that on that occasion, his friendship with President George Bush saw him through stormy weather. The State Department's South Asia Bureau, however, often felt undermined by his direct access to the White House.

In his statement, Mr Blackwill delineated several milestones in the Indo-US relationship, claiming that all of these had been achieved in the last two years.

However, his statement also obliquely alluded to an area of some difference between the two countries on the issue of terrorism.

US tells LTTE to resume talks with Lankan govt

Colombo: The US on Thursday mounted a scathing attack on Tamil Tigers for suspending peace talks with Colombo and urged the guerrillas to make a firm commitment to end violence and terrorism.

The US embassy here in a statement said the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerrillas should return to peace talks immediately and take part in an aid meeting Japan is hosting in Tokyo in June.

"We call on the Tigers to reconsider

and to return to the negotiating track," the US embassy statement quoted ambassador Ashley Wills as saying.

"We also call on the LTTE and the government of Sri Lanka to honour the terms of the ceasefire even while talks are suspended." The LTTE's chief negotiator Anton Balasingham four days ago announced pulling out of talks to protest the slow progress in implementing "critical issues" relating to the peace process.

"We've reviewed carefully the os-

W. Wills said Washington supported these decisions cited in Mr Balasingham's letter to prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe," Mr Wills said. "We do not find them convincing."

His remarks came as the French government too "deplored" the LTTE decision and asked the guerrillas to reconsider it. Mr Wills said both the government and the Tamil Tigers should use the break in talks "to recommit themselves to negotiations".

Mr Wills said Washington sup-

ported the Norwegian-brokered truce in place since February 23 despite problems in enforcing it. "Blame for this does not fall exclusively on the government. The Tigers, too, bear responsibility for numerous breaches of the ceasefire."

"We urge the LTTE to reflect on its own transgressions. Killings, intimidation, taxation without representation, aggressive behaviour and continued child recruitment do not build trust in the LTTE's intentions." PT

Policy spat is not behind Blackwill's exit, says US

By Chidanand Rajghatta
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Washington: The US state department on Monday rejected reports that US ambassador to India Robert Blackwill had quit because of differences with Washington, saying any speculation that there are policy reasons for this resignation is just totally misplaced.



Robert Blackwill

He put out a statement explaining his reasons. He explained his motivations to spend time with his family and return to teaching at Harvard. I do not have anything to add to that, state department spokesman Richard Boucher said at his daily briefing when he was asked about your rather colourful Ambassador to India, as one journalist put it.

Mr Boucher said Mr Blackwill had discussed the matter with secretary of state Colin Powell some months ago and both the secretary and the President were quite aware of his plans.

Mr Powell spoke with the ambassador on Monday morning to convey his appreciation for the work he had done. They also spoke about the work on the current agenda between the US and India, since Mr Blackwill will be there for some months more, he added.

Washington's think-tanks also contested the policy wrangle theory. I'm sure he was impatient with the White House, state department and everyone else, but if that were the problem I would have expected him to go quickly rather than give the world 4 months' notice of his departure, said Teresita Schaffer, a former US envoy to Sri Lanka now with the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Meanwhile, officials at Harvard Univer-

sity's Kennedy School of Government confirmed that they expected Mr Blackwill to return to his teaching post late summer after his two year leave of absence. Although Mr Blackwill, who is a lecturer, is not tenured, he stands to lose the job if he does not return.

But the rather abrupt announcement of the resignation more than three months after he proposed it hardly dampened speculation. An important member of Washington's strategic circle and a former senior senate aide who did not want to be quoted suggested Mr Blackwill was returning to Harvard to bide his time for a more important posting in a Bush second term, perhaps as an under secretary or deputy secretary.

However, Washington's most prominent South Asia mavens declared that he was a successful US ambassador to India, regardless of the reasons or circumstances of his departure. He was supremely successful in making sure India remained high on the American agenda, said Stephen P. Cohen, South Asia scholar now with the Brookings Institution. Under his stewardship US-Indian relations broke much new ground, and set the stage for a much closer relationship in the future.

I think he was remarkably successful in transforming the US-India relationship into the kind of ties one expects the US to have with a significant power, agreed Mr Schaffer, noting that the fallout from 9/11 made it difficult to remove the Pakistan factor from the US-India relationship as fully as he might have liked, or as the Indian leadership would like. Other US officials who worked closely with Mr Blackwill and who declined to be named said there was some truth to the reports that he was a difficult man to work with, but as a strategic thinker and a diplomat, he had left his imprint on Indo-US relations

● See Edit: 77 CD 1, Page 12

Blackwill leaves in war cloud over relations

PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, April 21: Robert Blackwill, the "pro-Indian" US ambassador to Delhi, is believed to have been asked to return home by the George W. Bush administration following differences with the state department over America's policy on South Asia.

Blackwill leaves after two years in the post at a time when Indo-US relations are seen to be under strain over the Indian leadership's public criticism of the war in Iraq.

Attempting to play down the development, Blackwill said he resigned to return "to continue his academic career" at the Kennedy School of Government in Harvard University. He also referred to family compulsions.

An embassy spokesman said political appointees hold office till the pleasure of the President unless he chooses to resign. It is not correct to say that the ambassador has been recalled, he added.

Blackwill had succeeded Richard Celeste, a political appointee of former President Bill Clinton, after the inauguration of President Bush in 2001.

Blackwill's adviser Ashley Telis, a man widely believed to have played a key role in helping shape many of the ambassador's policies here, is also going back to the US this summer.

Though the date of Blackwill's departure has not yet been given, indications are he will leave in August and return to Harvard in September.

To ensure that his exit is not linked to perceived strains in



Blackwill: Bow out

Indo-US relations over Iraq, Blackwill made it clear that he had told Bush and other senior members of his administration about his decision to return to an academic career in January.

"In my view, close and cooperative relations between the United States and India will thrive in the decades ahead, most crucially because of convergence of common democratic values and vital national interests," Blackwill said in a statement this morning.

"The US-India relationship has a glittering future," he added.

But not everyone shares his

optimism. Though it may not be admitted by the Indian leadership in public, many South Block mandarins feel that secretary of state Colin Powell and his deputies will now play a stronger role in formulating US policy on South Asia. Powell believes the India-Pakistan tension over Kashmir deserves US attention as it can be a flashpoint for a nuclear conflagration.

Once Blackwill's successor is announced, Delhi will have a better idea of Washington's mind, but the current ambassador's imminent departure has caused disappointment in the corridors of power. Blackwill had developed a close relationship with deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani but not at the cost of ties with the Prime Minister's Office.

The announcement has triggered much speculation about his political future. He is now 64, and may retire from Harvard University after a year. He is then slated to join the Bush administration holding a much "higher office".

Some feel he may initially join national security adviser Condoleezza Rice, a close friend, as her deputy. There is a possibility that Rice may be appointed Vice-President in place of Dick Cheney who is keeping indifferent health. If that happens, Blackwill may even become the national security adviser.

Blackwill's biggest advantage was his access to the White House through Rice, a privilege few US ambassadors enjoy. Even if his successor has a soft corner for India, he may not be able to translate that into American policy.

U.S. lifts ban on travel to Pak.

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, APRIL 12. The U.S. today lifted the 13-month travel ban on its citizens and certain category of employees to Pakistan and authorised the immediate return of U.S. embassy and consulate employees to Islamabad, Lahore and Peshawar.

After a church blast in March 2002 in the diplomatic enclave, in which two U.S. citizens, including the wife of a diplomat died, America had withdrawn non-essential diplomatic and non-diplomatic staff from Pakistan and ordered families of all employees to leave the country immediately.

Family members of official Americans ordered to leave the

country in March 2002 are not yet being allowed to return.

"Because of regional tensions and continued high security concerns about terrorists in Pakistan, all U.S. citizens should defer travel to Pakistan. U.S. citizens in the country are strongly urged to depart. This supersedes the Travel Warning issued March 28, 2003", travel advisory put out by the State Department said.

It said U.S. citizens who remain in Pakistan despite this warning should take appropriate precautions to ensure their security and safety. These measures include being vigilant of their surroundings, avoiding crowds and demonstrations, keeping a low profile, varying

times and routes for all required travel and ensuring travel documents are current.

"Americans are also encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad or the Consulates in Peshawar or Lahore and enrol in the warden system (emergency alert network) to obtain updated information on travel and security in Pakistan. Persons wishing to register at the U.S. Consulate General in Karachi should call that office", it said.

The latest advisory said from time to time, the missions in Pakistan might suspend public services for security reasons. Also, official Americans may be prohibited from travelling to certain areas of Pakistan.

manager for Indian Airlines, said the airline has introduced summer packages offering fares of Rs. 2,000 from Delhi to Jammu or Kashmir for passengers from the Gulf to Delhi.

Mr. Ashraf said the Kashmir Tourism Department had prepared brochures in Arabic, Japanese and Chinese to be distributed among travel agents the world over. He said the State Government was offering special packages to film producers to shoot in Kashmir, providing helicopter services at discounted rates.

He said the Tourism Department had invited Dadasaheb Phalke award winner, Yash Chopra and five other producers Vidhu Vinod Chopra, Ramesh Sippy, Manmohan Shetty, Ramesh Tulani and Ashok Jharkaria to Kashmir in order to convince them about the changing milieu in the Valley.

Armitage to visit India, Pak. next month

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S. Armitage

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By C. Raja Mohan

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17. The U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, is slated to visit the subcontinent in early May. The specific dates for his trip to India and Pakistan are expected to be announced shortly.

Preventing an escalation of tensions between India and Pakistan this summer and a review of bilateral relations with New Delhi and Islamabad are expected to be at the top of Mr. Armitage's agenda.

Last summer, when India and Pakistan drifted towards war, Mr. Armitage came to the subcontinent and extracted promises from the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, that he would put an end to cross-border infiltration on a permanent basis.

Mr. Armitage's assurances encouraged India to stand down in the conflict. But there has been disappointment in New Delhi that the Bush administration has been unable to hold Gen. Musharraf's feet to fire on cross-border terrorism. India does not expect any fresh assurances from Mr. Armitage. Nor does it see the prospect for any

forward movement in India-Pakistan relations until there is a substantive reduction in cross-border terrorism.

Mr. Armitage's visit, however, provides an opportunity for an honest discussion between the Indian Government and the Bush administration on the challenge of maintaining peace and security in the subcontinent amid the continuing Pakistani support to violence in Kashmir.

The visit is also expected to be of greater value to India in terms of reviving the bilateral relationship with the U.S. The American preoccupation with Iraq has tended to slow down the forward movement in India-U.S. relations.

Although there has been strong political support from the White House for a rapid consolidation of bilateral relations in a number of areas, decision-making appears to have been stifled at the bureaucratic level in Washington. India hopes the visit will ease the obstacles in the path towards intensified cooperation in high technology areas.

Mr. Armitage's trip to the region will follow the National Security Adviser, Brajesh Mishra's visit to Washington in early May.

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THE HINDU

Armitage to visit India, Pak. next month

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By C. Raja Mohan

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Dialogue is the right solution: Powell

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, APRIL 15. The United States Secretary of State, Colin Powell, has said that his country would continue to "do everything" it could to lower the temperature in the subcontinent and see whether or not opportunities could be created for India and Pakistan to enter into a dialogue.

Gen. Powell also stressed that only dialogue, not the resort to force, was the right solution to deal with the problems between the two South Asian countries.

At the Washington Foreign Press Centre, Gen. Powell was asked whether the American war against terrorism affected not merely terrorism in the U.S. but also against a democracy like India:

and why every time New Delhi raised the issue of terrorism, Washington was calling for a "dialogue".

"We believe that terrorism is terrorism and it is not just an American phenomenon. It is a curse on the face of civilisation and affects nations throughout the world," Gen. Powell said.

"We have condemned terrorist attacks across the Line of Control on the subcontinent and we will continue to do so. We will continue to work with the Government of Pakistan and the Government of India as we move forward and we will continue to do everything we can to lower the temperature in that part of the world and to see whether or not opportunities can be created for the two sides to enter into a dialogue," Gen.

Powell said.

"Dialogue has been difficult over the years. But to solve this kind of a problem, I think, dialogue is the right solution and the resort to force would not be the appropriate solution," he remarked.

Gen Powell, who fielded questions mainly pertaining to the developments in Iraq and the post-conflict phase, rejected the notion that the Bush administration had some kind of a "list" for regime change or that the U.S. was trying to be the "policeman" of the world.

"We don't wish to be the policeman of the world," Gen. Powell said and added that the agenda of the President, George W. Bush, was one of helping people for a better life; and also an agenda that is "based on principles".

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THE HINDU

Iraq War UPDATE

Bush target of anti-war e-mail

BROOKSVILLE: A hacker broke into a Congresswoman's e-mail account and used it to send a message condemning President Bush and the war in Iraq, her office said. Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite drew attention last month when she proposed legislation to let families of Americans buried in France during the World Wars bring home the remains if they are not returned by France's stance against the war in Iraq. It was known if the hacker's motives involved that Bill. The message called Mr Bush a terrorist and that Mr Dick Cheney and Mr Donald Rumsfeld deserve death penalty. — AP

Iraq accused of abusing Shi'ite sites

TEHRAN: — The main Iraqi Opposition group today called on all Muslims to save sacred tombs in the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala from Iraqi troops using them as bases to attack coalition forces. The Supreme Assembly of Islamic Revolution in Iraq, in a statement, accused the Iraqi regime of positioning its troops in and around holy sites to draw US fire, incidents which it could then be used to inflame Islamic sentiment. — AFP



Schoolchildren hold posters showing a picture of a wounded Iraqi baby during a march to the US embassy in protest against the war on Iraq. In Athens on Thursday. — AFP

USA bombs Saddam's yacht

ON BOARD USS KITTY HAWK: Warplanes from this US Navy aircraft carrier have bombed Saddam Hussein's presidential yacht for a third time, a Navy officer Lieutenant Brook Dewalt said. He told reporters on this carrier in the Gulf that six 500 pound bombs were used in yesterday's attack, which came on the same day Rear Admiral Matthew Moffit said he was "pretty satisfied, pretty satisfied" and another bombing run would not be necessary. Mr Moffit is commander of this aircraft carrier's battle group. — AFP

Families of Uday's aides killed

BAGHDAD: Wives and children of close aides to President Saddam Hussein's elder son Uday were killed by US-British missiles on a farm north of Baghdad, the families' relatives said today. Two missiles slammed into the farm in Ishaqi, about 80 kms north of Baghdad yesterday, killing the two families, they said. Uday's two aides were not at the farm at the time of the bombings. The two men are Ayal Tabra, first vice-president of the Iraqi National Olympic Committee chaired by Uday, and Bashar Hisham, another member of the board. — AFP

USA mulls embassy in hotel

WASHINGTON: The USA plans to set up a new, temporary embassy in post-war Iraq at a Baghdad hotel it plans to lease and renovate, two senior US State Department officials said today. President Bush has asked US Congress for \$20 million to rent, refurbish and secure the site. Officials said they expected the interim embassy to be up and running shortly after Saddam Hussein is ousted. The hotel "would provide interim office capability plus quarters for a limited number of people," said under secretary of state for management Mr Grant Green. In addition to the \$20 million, Mr Bush asked Congress last week for \$35.8 million for a new, well-fortified embassy in the longer term. — AFP

Now, its French marble

WASHINGTON: — A US Congressman has asked the Bush administration to stop making headstones for military veterans from marble bought from a French-owned company. If the Veterans Administration agrees to Rep. Scott McInnis' request, the additional marble would come from two other quarries — one a Swiss-owned operation in the Colorado Republican congressman's district. The company, Georgia Marble, has been quarrying marble in Georgia since 1884. In 1995 it was bought by Imerys, a Paris-based corporation. — AP

War hits neutral Nepal, too

KATHMANDU: Number of foreign tourists in Nepal has gone down by 10 per cent compared to last year, largely due to the Iraq war, officials said. This month there have been only 18,559 tourists, said the Nepal Tourism Board. — AP



Members of the British Juliet Company of 42 Commandos stage an impromptu soccer game against local Iraqis in a friendly in Umm Khayyal recently. — AFP



'DOGS OF WAR': An Iraqi boy riding a donkey cart gives the thumbs-up sign as he passes a British position on the frontline in Basra on Thursday. — AFP

Nato finger in post-war Iraq pie

Associated Press

BRUSSELS, April 3. — US secretary of state Gen. Colin Powell and European allies today discussed a possible Nato peacekeeping role in a post-war Iraq, despite deep divisions within the alliance over the US-led war.

Spanish foreign minister Ms Ana Palacio said Gen. Powell sought to revive a US proposal for Nato to help stabilise Iraq after President Saddam Hussein is toppled. "It's not looking for decisions now (but) restarting a reflection on this," Ms Palacio told reporters after meeting Gen. Powell before the main Nato meeting.

Washington had suggested the peacekeeping role for Nato last December. This was among a range of options to engage it in the Iraq crisis. The idea was shelved after French-led objections and an increasingly acrimonious debate over Iraq provoked one of the worst splits in alliance history.

French officials insisted that today's talks — at which Gen. Powell met senior European Union officials and Russia's foreign minister and Nato allies — should focus on the role of the UN, rather than that of Nato, in postwar Iraq. But diplomats suggested that France, as well as its anti-war allies Germany and Belgium, might accept a Nato peacekeeping operation that would build on the alliance's experiences in Bosnia and Kosovo.

British foreign secretary Mr Jack Straw said postwar Iraq "should be handed over as quickly as possible to the Iraqi people". But there may have to be a brief period of military rule, as was the case in Afghanistan after the Taliban was ousted in late 2001. "That is the sort of process" the USA and its allies should consider, he said.



A girl waits for aid in Nasiriyah on Thursday. — AFP

Russian foreign minister Mr Igor Ivanov came to Brussels apparently keen to smooth Moscow's troubled relations with Washington and

London. He told reporters the main task "now, before the entire world community, was to search together for an exit from the situa-

tion". Ms Palacio said Nato ambassadors could begin examining a possible peacekeeping role for the alliance next week.

As coalition forces close in on Baghdad, the USA and European nations have been divided over how to shape postwar Iraq. "In this critical moment, it's very important to have a common vision to see how the future can be constructed," said the EU's foreign policy chief, Mr Javier Solana.

The Europeans want the UN to take an early lead role in rebuilding Iraq. But the UN plans to install an interim American administrator in Baghdad, at least in the immediate aftermath of Mr Hussein's fall.

French President Mr Jacques Chirac has opposed giving Britain and the USA a dominant role in rebuilding Iraq, arguing that would legitimise the war. "It is very important that we are on the UN track now and that we stay on the UN track," said foreign minister Mr Per Stig Moeller of Denmark, which backs the US-led war.

On the eve of Gen. Powell's meetings, Germany said it was important to improve transatlantic relations. France also appeared to soften its intense criticism of the war.

Gen. Powell has spoken of creating an international "chapeau" for the rebuilding period in which the UN would provide "an endorsement, a recognition for what's being done" to rebuild Iraq after Mr Hussein is ousted.

The Bush administration concedes that the UN has a role in providing humanitarian relief to Iraqi civilians. The tougher issue is determining what role the UN should play in running Iraq until new, democratically inclined politicians emerge.

French minister to meet Pope

Associated Press

PARIS, April 3. — French foreign minister Mr Dominique de Villepin is to meet Pope John Paul II on Friday. He is also expected to hold talks with his Russian, German and Italian counterparts.

The French minister's meeting with the Pope is weighed with symbolism. The foreign ministers of France, Russia and Germany — the trio most vocal in opposing the Iraq war — are to hold a working lunch in Paris on Friday, the ministry's deputy spokesman, Mr Bernard Valero, said today. Mr De Villepin, Mr Joschka Fischer of Germany and Mr Igor Ivanov of Russia are expected to discuss "every aspect" of the Iraq crisis, Mr Valero added. Mr De Villepin is also to fly to Italy to meet the Pope ahead of his talks with Italian foreign minister Mr Franco Frattini, the French foreign ministry said. However, it provided no time for the encounter with the Pope, which would be an unusual encounter for a French diplomat. Italy has allowed US-led forces to use its military bases for purposes like refuelling, but not for direct attacks on Iraq.

The Pope has spoken out strongly against the US-led war. France, Germany and Russia had issued two joint declarations calling for UN weapons inspectors to be given more time to disarm Iraq peacefully.

At last, a cheer for Uncle Sam

Roland Watson & David Charter
The Times, London

QATAR, April 3. — American forces at last received the greeting they had been promised as a cheering crowd welcomed them into the holy city of Najaf yesterday. But last night, overall control of the city remained contested, with US troops coming under fire from a determined group of Saddam loyalists holed up in one of the world's most holy Muslim shrines.

After days of fierce fighting, small convoys of US troops and vehicles were bringing the culturally important city under control street by street, with increasing signs of warmth and help from local Iraqis.

A group from the 101st Airborne, snaking through the outskirts of Najaf, was almost halted in its tracks by a jubilant crowd of several hundred people. After two weeks in which Shia communities throughout the south have expressed wariness bordering on hostility to their would-be liberators, the spontaneous outburst was as much of a surprise to the soldiers as their initial sullen welcome. US commanders

said, in the city of 5,000,000 people, the crowds ranged from well-wishers to the simply curious.

They stressed that the coalition was avoiding holy sites, including Najaf's gold-domed resting place of Imam Ali, a cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad. Yesterday, die-hard Fedayeen fighters were using the shrine as a base to launch sniper attacks on advancing US forces.

Brigadier General Vincent Brooks of US Central Command said that some shots were being fired from within the shrine, "a detestable example of putting historical sites in danger". He said: "This regime is firing from within a mosque, something that has no military value and should be protected by them, but instead is being protected by us." While US forces refrained from firing at the Ali mosque, coalition forces did launch strikes nearby, bombing two targets linked to Saddam's regime, one north of the mosque and one to the south.

Although hundreds of irregular fighters are believed to have slipped through the US cordon around the city, several hundred remain. Troops with

the 101st Airborne, entering the city from north, south and west, have advanced to within half a mile of the mosque but are expected to stop short of a direct confrontation unless the fighters emerge.

Instead, American forces are trying to open links with community leaders to bring in humanitarian aid and win sufficient trust from citizens to receive tips about the identities and whereabouts of Saddam loyalists. Major General David Petraeus of the 101st Airborne said, his troops had "broken the back of the resistance".

Yesterday's reception raised coalition hopes that they may be close to a critical turning point in the battle for the hearts and minds of Iraqi civilians. Securing Najaf, 90 miles south of Baghdad, has been crucial to the American advance towards the Iraqi capital.

But because of Najaf's pre-eminence as a holy city to Shia Muslims, thousands visit it each year, making pilgrimages there more important than those to Mecca. The USA hopes that if it welcomes its forces, a powerful signal will be sent to the rest of the Shia in the south to follow suit.

Pauper Unicef cries foul

Associated Press

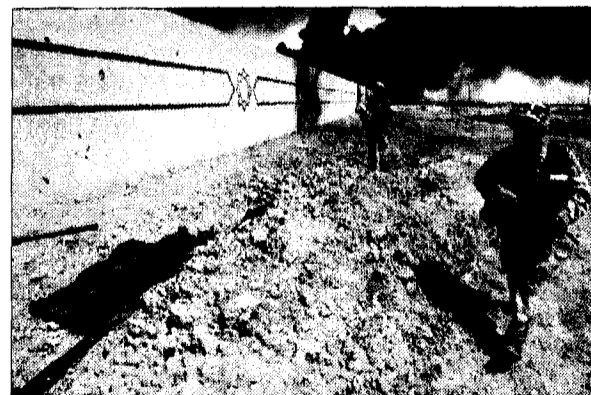
ROME, April 3. — Lack of political will to fund humanitarian aid has left Unicef, the UN agency which cares for children, short on money to face the humanitarian crisis in Iraq, an agency representative said today.

Months before the war, "governments were reluctant to provide money," said Mr Carel de Rooy, the Unicef representative in Iraq.

He spoke in Rome, a stop in his tour of European capitals, to collect pledges for the \$166 million Unicef estimates it will need, to stave off malnutrition, thirst, diarrhoea and respiratory infections in Iraqi children for the next six months.

Although the UN agency had been preparing for a possible war for the last eight months, only \$10 million were pledged, Mr De Rooy said.

In his talks with Italian officials, Unicef's representa-



A British soldier walks past a dead Iraqi in Basra. — AFP

tive was told the Italian government indicated it could increase the \$1.5 million it had so far pledged.

Horror story on scribes revealed

Associated Press

LONDON, April 3. — A private security company's search of the site in southern Iraq where journalist Terry Lloyd was killed has established that his team came under fire from both the coalition and Iraqi forces, broadcaster Independent Television News (ITN) said today.

Two of Lloyd's colleagues, cameraman Fred Nerac of France, and Hussein Osman of Lebanon, are still missing. Another ITN cameraman, Daniel Demostier, was wounded in the attack south of Basra.

ITN said the security firm AKE found the burned-out wrecks of Lloyd's car, along with two Iraqi vehicles — a pickup truck and a car — at the scene of the incident.

"The AKE team found spent ammunition of varying calibres within the vehicles," ITN said in a statement.

ITN believes the four men, travelling in two cars, were driving toward units of the US-led coalition when they were flanked by vehicles carrying Iraqi soldiers and came under fire.

"AKE said their preliminary assessment, based on the trajectory and impact of the bullets, was that Terry Lloyd's vehicle had been hit a large number of times by firing from coalition forces, some of it from quite close range," the statement said.

"It had also been hit from the opposite direction by gunfire from Iraqi weapons. The evidence suggested this came from the direction of the Iraqi pickup truck," it added.

ITN said it had asked Mr Geoff Hoon and US Defence secretary Mr Donald Rumsfeld to press coalition commanders to produce a formal account of the incident.

"We know that both US and British units were on the spot, but 12 days after the event, we still do not have any kind of official account," said Stewart Purvis, ITN chief executive and editor-in-chief.

"We're now clear that somebody in the American or British military knows what happened next, but they have not come forward," he continued.

"We need details of the incident and the immediate aftermath to understand what happened to Fred and Hussein and to ease the anguish of their desperate families."

In an appeal to the US government, Nerac's wife Ms Fabienne said: "I believe you may know the answer to so many of our questions, yet you will not tell us anything. I am writing to beg you, and to appeal to your humanity, to break your silence and tell me what happened that day."

The International Press Institute said Thursday that US and British military inquiries into the disappearance of Nerac and Osman were going too slowly. The Vienna-based press group called on Mr Rumsfeld and Mr Hoon "to carry out a full inquiry into the disappearances of the two journalists and, in the interests of transparency, make the results public as soon as possible."

ITN said it was continuing its own attempts to trace Nerac and Osman.

'IRAQ AND PAK ARE NOT SIMILAR'

Powell snubs India on hot pursuit

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SNS and Agencies

NEW DELHI, April 11. — Gen. Colin Powell has rejected India's assertions that it has a "fitter case" for pre-emptive strikes against Pakistan and said that no parallels can be drawn between this situation and the situation in Iraq.

"I don't think there is a direct parallel between the two situations," the US secretary of state told Pakistan Television in an interview yesterday. He rejected Mr Yashwant Sinha's view that a pre-emptive strike against Pakistan was as justified as the one by the US-led coalition against Iraq.

He said the stand-off between India and Pakistan was "a very difficult and dangerous situation". But "the USA wants to remain engaged in helping the two subcontinental rivals resolve their disputes in a peaceful way ... We don't believe there is any need now for any military action of any kind."

But Mr George Fernandes today endorsed the foreign minister's statement that Pakistan was a fitter case than Iraq for a pre-emptive attack. The de-



Gen. Colin Powell

fence minister was talking to reporters in Barmer. He was accompanied by finance minister Mr Jaswant Singh. Does the government plan to launch pre-emptive strikes on Pakistan? Mr Fernandes said: "This is not a subject on which I would make a comment." The foreign minister had said recently that Pakistan was a "fitter case" for a pre-emptive strike if, as in the case of Iraq, possession of weapons of mass destruction, export of terrorism and absence of democracy were the criteria for such action.

Gen. Powell said the USA wanted to make it clear that the world would be better served if states do not support terrorism. "We

hope that as result of what happened in Iraq, as a result of the revulsion that the world has towards terrorist activities and weapons of mass destruction, some of the nations that we are in touch with and speaking to, Syria and Iran, will move in a new direction." Is the USA planning to launch pre-emptive strikes against other countries in Iraq? The US secretary general said: "The USA does not have some plan or some list of nations that we are going to go attack one after another." On developments in Iraq, he hoped Iraqis would form a government that use the country's resources for the people's betterment.

State Department spokesman Mr Richard Boucher too said no parallel could be drawn between "Pakistan's terrorism" in Kashmir and the alleged Iraqi terrorism. "You can't - should never consider military force the first option. You should never consider that a situation has to be dealt with militarily. You should always look for other ways of dealing with it. The situation in Kashmir is not the same as the one in Iraq. There are better and other ways to deal with this."

THE STATESMAN

12 APR 2003

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N. Korean N-crisis can be resolved peacefully: US

Washington: In sharp contrast to its toughness towards Iraq, the US has said it seeks a peaceful and diplomatic solution to the North Korean nuclear crisis while retaining the military option.

"President Bush has repeatedly said we seek a peaceful, diplomatic solution with North Korea, even though he has taken no option off the table," assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, James A Kelly, said during a hearing of the senate foreign relations committee.

Mr Bush has also stressed that "We will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of North Korea and that it will not use food as a weapon," he said and noted that the US recently announced an initial contribution of 40,000 tonnes of food aid to the North through the World Food Programme.

Mr Kelly's remarks assume significance in the wake of criticism of the US



A South Korean soldier stands guard at an encampment for tank forces during a joint military drill with the US forces in Paju, 50 km north of Seoul, on Thursday.

aired at the NAM summit in Kuala Lumpur last month about the "double standards" adopted by Washington in dealing with Pyongyang and Baghdad.

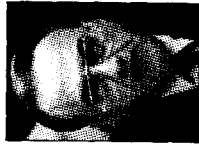
THE TIMES OF INDIA

14 MAR 2003

Pak protests against planned Indo-US exercises

By Chidanand Rajghatta
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Washington: Pakistan has complained to the US about its growing military ties with India, including the joint air exercises using state-of-the-art Sukhoi-30 and F-15C fighter planes scheduled for later this year. Pakistan's concerns were raised by its foreign minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri in meetings with senior US officials, including defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld, at the start of his Washington visit during which he is also pleading with the Bush administration to resume



K.M. Kasuri

military supplies to Islamabad. Fearing that the joint Indo-US air exercise will blunt the nuclear capability of Pakistani F-16s, which were also supplied by the US, Mr Kasuri has warned the development will strain Islamabad's ties with Washington. "We would not be happy at all if the exercise takes place, Pakistan's foreign minister on Monday told the editorial staff of *The Washington Post*, which on Tuesday reported the implications of the planned joint air exercises. "I don't think it is politically advisable at all for the military and the US government to do anything which would further complicate matters for the government of Pakistan."

Mr Kasuri is also invoking

the complication angle to plead with the administration to offer amnesty to thousands of illegal Pakistani immigrants who are in danger of being deported under the tightened procedures that requires nationals of 25 countries to be fingerprinted and photographed. Deportation of a large number of Pakistanis, even if they are in US illegally, will inflame public opinion, endanger the Musharraf dispensation, and unshingle the US war on terrorism, he argued.

But the arms issue has moved to the top of Mr Kasuri's agenda following reports of the Indo-US exercises that Pakistan sees as a threat to its offensive capability.

According to the *Post* account, the top air-to-air fighter in the US Air Force inventory, the F-15C, is expected to fly against the Russian Su-30s in the exercises planned for late this year or early next year. The US specifically asked that India fly its top-of-the-line warplanes, rather than the older MiG-29s, because the US Air Force has

never had the opportunity to exercise against the Su-30 or its variant, the Su-27.

"We requested those aircraft because the USAF already participates in exercises with countries that have Jaguar, Mirage, and MiGs, other aircraft the Indian Air Force flies, Maj James Law, a spokesman for the air force's headquarters for Pacific operations told the paper. Asked whether Pakistan's concerns had been taken into consideration, Mr Law was quoted as saying the exercise is "consistent with President Bush's strategic objectives in South Asia". But, he added, "We would not want any neighbouring country to get alarmed by these exercises."

It is becoming increasingly evident that the Bush administration is pushing its relationship with India to higher levels even as its ties with Pakistan is getting spooked by mistrust and re-creation because of Islamabad's dodgy position on terrorism and non-proliferation. Although Washington has also announced some exercises with Pakistan, its

relationship with the Islamic state appears aimed more at containment than engagement. By contrast, and particularly because India and the US have had minimal military ties during the Cold War, exchanges between them seem dramatic.

"Two years ago, the American and Indian militaries conducted no joint operations," US ambassador to India Robert Blackwill told a meeting of Indian-Americans in Washington last week. "Today they have completed six major training exercises. In recent days, senior US officials have also bluntly asked Pakistan to desist from being a platform for terrorism and signalled that it should back down from its adventurist Kashmir policy."

According to the *Post*, the joint exercises might enable India to learn how to better deter Pakistan from believing it could use US-built F-16s to threaten India with nuclear strikes. The big, twin-engine F-15 is generally seen as superior to the smaller, single-engine F-16.