

US accepts Musharraf assurance on secrets

Washington, Dec. 23 (Reuters): Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf has assured the US that his government is not — at least “in the present time” — providing any nuclear secrets to countries like Iran and North Korea, Bush administration officials said today.

White House spokesman Scott McClellan called Musharraf's personal assurances “important” and said close cooperation between the US and Pakistan in the war on terrorism would continue — despite any transfers of nuclear technology and know-how that might have taken place in the past.

“That is the past. And for a variety of reasons, I'm not in a position to discuss those matters,” White House spokesman Scott McClellan said. “But let me talk to the Present. President Musharraf has assured us there are not any transfers of WMD-related technologies or know-how going on in the present time,” McClellan said. Diplomats in Vienna said last month the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency was investigating whether blueprints for Iran's centrifuge had come from someone in Pakistan or elsewhere.

Tehran has acknowledged using centrifuge designs that appear identical to ones used in Islamabad's nuclear weapons programme.

The Pakistani government said yesterday that Abdul Qadeer Khan, the father of Pakistan's atom bomb, was being questioned about reports of possible nuclear links between the two countries. Khan is a national hero in Pakistan for developing a nuclear bomb tested in 1998 to rival India's.

4 DEC 2004

Pakistan admits role in N-proliferation

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Agencies

ISLAMABAD, Dec. 23. — Pakistan said today that rogue nuclear scientists driven by "personal ambition and greed" may have spread sensitive technology to Iran — its most explicit acknowledgment after months of denials. The admission, prompted by information given by Iran to the UN nuclear watchdog, is the latest in a wave of nuclear disclosures out of Libya, Pakistan and Iran.

"The information that was shared with us pointed to certain individuals and we had to hold the debriefing sessions," foreign ministry spokesman Masood Khan told a press briefing here. He didn't elaborate on what kind of information was provided by Iran or the UN agency. "There're indications that certain individuals might have been motivated by personal ambition or greed," he said. "But let me add we have not made a final determination. Let's not jump to conclusions."

Mr Khan reiterated that Pakistan's government had never authorised any such transfer of know-how from the secretive programme that built the Islamic world's first nuclear bomb, tested in 1998.

That assurance, however, is unlikely to dispel suspicions that Pakistan's government may have been party to proliferation at some point in its 30-year odyssey towards building a deterrent to ward off rival India.

It could also revive allegations, strongly denied by Islamabad, that it has traded nuclear technology to North Korea's communist regime in exchange for missiles, or proliferated to Libya, which like Iran has recently agreed to open its nuclear programme to UN inspections. "This could lead to a much deeper investigation of the alleged collaboration with North Korea," said Dr AH Nayyar, a physicist at Islamabad's Quaid-e-Azam University who has closely followed his country's nuclear

programme. "Even if irresponsible individuals were behind it (the alleged proliferation to Iran), it can't be ruled out that the same didn't happen with North Korea."

It was admissions made by Iran to the International Atomic Energy Agency that forced Pakistan last month to start questioning several scientists at its top nuclear laboratory, the Khan Research Laboratories.

Mr Khan said the founder of Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme, Abdul Qadeer Khan — a national hero and 1990 winner of Pakistan's "Man of the Nation Award" — was being questioned in connection with debriefings of other scientists, but was not in custody. At least two scientists from KRL have been held for questioning. They included Mohammad Farooq, its former DG and aide to Abdul Qadeer Khan. Another scientist has already been released. Pakistani officials have refused to give details of when the alleged proliferation took place or what

technology was shared. Mr Khan made repeated references in his press conference today to the current strong "command and control system" governing Pakistan's nuclear programme, an apparent hint that any nuclear leak happened only before Gen Pervez Musharraf seized power in 1999.

The White House had said yesterday that Gen Musharraf had assured the USA that Pakistan was not offering technology related to WMDs to Libya and Iran. "President Musharraf has assured us there are not any transfers of WMD-related technologies or know-how going on in the present time," White House press secretary Mr Scott McClellan had said, though he had declined to comment on allegations from the past.

Bush 'backs' Blackwill: Former US ambassador to India Mr Robert Blackwill may succeed Ms Condoleezza Rice as National Security Adviser if Mr George W Bush wins a second term, the *Washington Post* has hinted.

'Pak not trustworthy ally'

NEW YORK, Dec. 23. — Casting doubts on Pakistan being a trustworthy ally of USA in the war on terror, an American daily today asked the Bush administration to hold President Pervez Musharraf to his promises on nuclear exports, terrorist infiltration and restoring democracy.

In an editorial today, the *New York Times* questioned the sincerity of the pledge by Gen. Musharraf to stop terrorists from infiltrating into Kashmir, saying such vows are easily made in December when infiltration routes are blocked with snow. An effective crackdown on militants requires "reining in army leaders who use the Kashmir issue to win higher military budgets than Pakistan can afford and local commanders who wink at border crossing militants". Gen. Musharraf's undermining of mainstream opposition parties had helped strengthen Islamic parties that now rule areas along Afghan border where Taliban recruiters openly operate. — PTI

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Pak faces heat of N-tech exports

Regime forced to change tack on Kashmir, distances itself from 'rogue' scientists

By Manoj Joshi and
Chidanand Rajghatta
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi\Washington: For several weeks, there has been speculation in New Delhi as to why Pakistan has changed its tone in its dealings with India. "When we sent our 12-point proposal for kick-starting normalisation in October, the Pakistani response was not just lukewarm, but actually insulting," says an official in New Delhi.

He was referring to Pakistan's demand that passengers on the Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus service proposed by India carry UN documents and to the nastier offer to provide medical assistance to victims of rape and violence by Indian forces in Kashmir. Yet, a month later in November, Prime Minister M.J.K. Jamali and then President Pervez Musharraf came up with a much more reasonable response.

Now, say officials, things have become clearer. The Musharraf-Jamali regime is being forced to confront mounting evidence of Pakistan's irresponsible transfer of nuclear technology to a number of countries, some of them prominent in the American "axis of evil" category.

It now turns out that Pakistan not only transferred nuclear expertise to Iran and North Korea, but also possibly to Libya. Experts scrutinising Libya's advances in the field following its decision to give up its nuclear weapons programme are said to have found similarities to the Pakistan-Iran deal.

The US is not amused. Actually, according to Indian diplomats, it is livid. America's post 9-11 nightmare is the use of a dirty bomb by terrorists. While terrorists would find it extremely difficult to make a nuclear device, it is much simpler to make a

"dirty bomb", which is a conventional explosive packaged with radioactive material that scatters when the bomb goes off. Building the conventional bomb is relatively simple, but the difficulties lie in acquiring radioactive material. This is where Pakistani rogue scientists come in.

According to a western diplomat, "No one is suggesting that Gen Musharraf's government is involved in supporting these terrorists, but Pakistan's India obsession has given life to this

istani scientists," the 'Daily Times' newspaper quoted an unnamed and presumably government source as saying. The source said Gen Musharraf had personally ordered an investigation into the leaks and "there is no question of sparing anyone if he is found to have leaked any information in any manner".

Two Iranian diplomats recently implicated Mr Khan, saying he had made several secret trips beginning in 1987 to help with the Iranian uranium enrichment pro-

Collateral damage

No one is suggesting that the Gen's govt is involved in supporting terrorists who might seek dirty bombs, but Pak's India obsession has given life to this Frankenstein. Everyone now wants the genie back in the bottle, even, some suggest, General Musharraf himself



Gen Musharraf

Frankenstein." Everyone now wants the genie back in the bottle, even, some suggest, General Musharraf himself.

Pakistan, meanwhile, has moved quickly to distance itself from the proliferation charges, suggesting that the leaks were the work of greedy rogue scientists and were done without the government's backing or knowledge.

The military government has begun questioning A.Q. Khan, widely known as the father of the Pakistani bomb, following the detection of nuclear leaks and consequent pressure from the US and the international community. Certain unspecified restrictions have been imposed on Mr Khan while he is being debriefed in the course of a government investigation, according to reports in the Pakistani media.

"The President (Gen Musharraf) was shattered when Iran named some Pak-

gramme. One of the diplomats also said Mr Khan had been given a villa on the Caspian Sea in return for his assistance.

While Mr Khan, through an intermediary, denied ever having travelled to Iran, Gen Musharraf contradicted him and said the visits were connected to the purchase short-range missiles, not nuclear-technology sales.

Pakistani officials have also been suggesting that whatever proliferation occurred did before the Musharraf regime came to power, a proposition generally accepted by US officials, including Secretary of State Colin Powell. But US and Indian intelligence reports indicate that nuclear and ballistic missile technology exchanges between Pakistan and North Korea continued till as recently as last year, some three years after Gen Musharraf came to power in a military coup.

No rollback of Kashmir policy, says Musharraf

Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD, Dec. 22. — Pakistan President Gen. Pervez Musharraf today assured the Kashmiri leaders that he was not rolling back his country's Kashmir policy and the resolution of the Kashmir problem would continue to be central to Indo-Pak relations.

"The way forward is finding a lasting and durable solution of the Kashmir issue in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people," official APP news-agency quoted him as saying to an invited gathering of Kashmiri leaders. Stating that "centrality" of Kashmir was important for durable peace in South Asia, he said Pakistan continues to have "unwavering" commitment to resolution of Kashmir issue. "Pakistan has a principled stand on Kashmir and the country's support for Kashmiris remains resolute."

The meeting was attended, among others, by the President and Prime Minister of PoK, leaders of the PoK unit of the Hurriyat Conference, Pakistan foreign minister Mr Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri and Pakistan information minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad.

While some leaders attending the meeting said Gen. Musharraf had assured them he still believed that the Kashmir issue should be resolved through UN resolutions, official media reports said he reiterated his comments in a recent interview that India should show flexibility to resolve the Kashmir issue.

The meeting was Gen. Musharraf's first with the Kashmiri leaders after last week's interview in which he indicated that he was flexible over Pakistan's endur-

ing demand for a referendum to decide the future of Kashmir, a comment which created quite a stir. Pakistan Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali and senior ministers told the media later that Pakistan had not abandoned its stand on UN resolutions.

"I haven't given any proposal which might dent the Kashmir cause. The interview that I had given to a foreign news agency should be read in its real context," a Kashmir leader who did not want to be identified quoted Musharraf as saying.

According to the official media reports, Gen. Musharraf hoped that public opinion would influence Indian leaders into entering a dialogue process for durable peace in South Asia. He said the international community was interested in peace in South Asia and all major powers including the US and European Union were focused on resolution of the Kashmir issue.

In his address and the question-answer session that followed, Gen. Musharraf referred to the four-step approach he had offered for arriving at a solution to the Kashmir issue. According to the approach, the two sides should first start the dialogue process, accept the centrality of the Kashmir dispute, eliminate whatever is unacceptable to the two sides and then arrive at a solution acceptable to both countries and the people of Kashmir.

Mr Ahmed told reporters that during the meeting, leaders from PoK expressed their support to resolve the Kashmir issue in accordance with wishes of people of Kashmir. Gen. Musharraf assured them that there would not be peace between India and Pakistan without the resolution of Kashmir issue.

THE

23 DEC 2004

Al Qaida hand suspected in Musharraf blast

Islamabad, Dec. 16 (Reuters): Pakistani authorities suspect the hand of al Qaida may be behind a weekend bid to assassinate President Pervez Musharraf, officials said today.

But intelligence agents are also wondering if an internal leak gave the perpetrators the advance warning needed to plan the attack.

Musharraf, a key ally in the US-led war on terror, narrowly escaped Sunday's attack when a series of explosions ripped apart a bridge in the city of Rawalpindi just after his motorcade passed over it.

Intelligence officials said they had no firm leads so far but suspicion was falling on al Qaida or an allied Pakistani group, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen al-Almi, several of whose members have already been convicted for trying to kill Musharraf.

"The method used in the explosions points fingers towards them," said one intelligence official.

"It is the handiwork of highly trained people and that's why we suspect them."

Information minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said five explosive devices — of a type never used before in Pakistan — were



Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf (right) with his Indonesian counterpart Megawati Sukarnoputri in Islamabad on Monday. (Reuters)

placed under the bridge on Sunday. He called it the work of a "most expert" person.

But intelligence agents are also wondering how the attackers knew which route the President would be taking as he returned home from the airport after a trip to Karachi, especially because the explosives may have been planted 12 hours before.

"The question is how they got

to know about the route so far in advance, and this is what needs to be found out," said one.

The list of Musharraf's enemies is long.

In September Arabic television broadcast an audio tape purportedly from al Qaida deputy leader Ayman al-Zawahri urging Pakistanis to overthrow Musharraf for supporting America. Several key al Qaida mem-

bers, including organisation number three Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, have been arrested inside Pakistan, often with the help of US investigators.

Hundreds of other suspected al Qaida or Taliban members have also been rounded up after they fled Afghanistan in the wake of the Taliban's overthrow in late 2001, officials say. Many have since been handed over to US custody.

Three members of al-Almi were convicted in October for another failed bid to kill Musharraf by parking an explosives-laden car along a route that his motorcade was to take during a visit to the southern city of Karachi.

"We may also interrogate the three al-Almi members convicted for the previous attempt," another intelligence official said.

Al-Almi is an offshoot of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, which has long figured on a US list of organisations deemed terrorist.

Its parent organisation was once one of the most important groups fighting Indian rule in the disputed Kashmir region, and many of its members are thought to have trained in al Qaida training camps inside Afghanistan during Taliban rule.

Pervez bags loan, not nuke plant

Beijing, Nov. 5 (Reuters): Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf bagged a half-billion dollar loan from China and commitments to boost trade, but flew out today without an expected nuclear power plant cooperation deal in hand.

"No agreement has been signed on nuclear plant cooperation," a Pakistan embassy spokesperson said. "It was just speculation."

Before Musharraf left for China, a Pakistani foreign ministry official said it was possible a deal would be finalised whereby China would help Pakistan build a nuclear power plant on the banks of the Indus.

If it goes ahead, it will be the second nuclear power plant in Pakistan to be built with Beijing's assistance.

"I was surprised it wasn't one of the deals they signed," said a Western diplomat.

During Musharraf's visit,

his first to Beijing since a sweeping leadership transition in China, seven official agreements, including an extradition treaty and a preferential trade agreement, were signed.

He also secured a \$500 million loan for bilateral trade and economic cooperation, the *China Daily* newspaper said.

About 20 other deals — joint ventures, letters of intent, memoranda of understanding — were also signed between Pakistani and Chinese companies.

China's foreign ministry spokeswoman said yesterday the two sides had discussed the power plant and "reached a consensus", but declined to explain what that meant.

Still, Musharraf spoke highly of his trip on the third and final day during meetings with Chinese defence minister Cao Guangchuan and head of the powerful Central Military Commission, former President Jiang Zemin.

"We had an excellent time here in China for the last three days. In fact, we feel very much at home here in China," Musharraf, who swept to power in a bloodless coup in 1999, told Cao.

The US, entangled in a year-old crisis over North Korea's nuclear ambitions, has repeatedly urged China to stop its nuclear cooperation with Pakistan, but Beijing and Islamabad stress their cooperation is for peaceful purposes.

Pakistan has also been accused of helping North Korea with its nuclear arms ambitions in return for missile parts. Washington sanctioned a Pakistani laboratory in March for arranging a transfer of nuclear-capable missiles to Pakistan from North Korea.

Pakistan has also been accused of sharing expertise with Iran that could help Tehran develop nuclear weapons.



Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf (left) with former Chinese President Jiang Zemin in Beijing on Wednesday. (AFP)

Diplomats visit Pak-Afghan border

Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD, Oct. 26. — In an apparent attempt to stem the growing tide of international criticism that it was not cracking hard on Al Qaida militants, Pakistan has taken top Islamabad-based diplomats on a conducted tour of the Pak-Afghan border claiming that its troops killed 10 militants and detained 230 others in recent operations.

Corps Commander Lt General Ali Muhamad Aurakzai told a team of foreign diplomats that three phases of the operation Al Meezan, which was launched on 2 October, have been completed while the fourth phase is continuing.

During the operation 10 militants were killed and 230 Al Qaida suspects detained, Aurakzai was quoted as saying by official APP newsagency.

The ambassadors, high commis-

sioners and diplomats, who visited the border Mohammed Agency belonged to Russia, Sweden, Egypt, Brazil the Netherlands, Finland, Norway, Belgium, Japan, South Africa, Canada, Australia, Iran, China, UK, and Turkey. Indian diplomats, however, were not invited.

The tour of top diplomats followed criticism by America and the international media that Pakistan was not cracking hard on Taliban and Al Qaida militant who regrouped in Afghan borders, specially in the inaccessible tribal areas. Gen. Aurakzai said besides the intelligence network, ground and air surveillance system had also been intensified to check infiltration of terrorists and other undesired elements from across the border.

Pakistan opposition parties, especially the Islamic alliance, Muthahid

Majlis Amal have criticised the operations, which they claimed infuriated tribals and turned them against Pakistan.

Briefing the diplomats, the North West Frontier Province Governor Syed Iftikhar Hussain criticised Western media reports which created an impression that there were base camps of the Taliban or Al Qaida militants in the region. "These were baseless allegations as there was no substance in it," he said.

Though movement of people across the Indo-Pak border was continuing, it was through a regularised system and no undesired element was allowed to sneak into Pakistan's territory, he said.

Moreover, for the first time since independence, the Pakistan army entered the Federally Administered Tribal Areas where no regular force could ever get access in the past.

27 OCT 2003

27 OCT 2003

'Ready to help Iraqis in every way'

PAK (W)
HD-14
20/10

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, OCT. 19. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia said here today that they had no intention of sending troops to Iraq unless Iraqis expressly wished so.

This was stated at a joint press conference by the Foreign Ministers of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

Asked if they meant a request from the Governing Council, the Saudi Foreign Minister, Saud al-Faisal said the Council would have to "prove many things". Prince Faisal said that both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were ready to help the Iraqi people in every way.

The prince said that Turkey decided to send its troops but the Iraqi Governing Council had rejected it.

The Pakistani Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri, said that Pakistan always emphasised on the legality of action and the U.N. role in this matter.

He said that Islamabad agreed with Saudi thinking. He said the people of Pakistan supported the President, Musharraf's decision to help fight terrorism after 9/11 but now their sentiments are against sending troops to Iraq.

International disputes

Last night, the Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah held extensive talks with the Pakistani leadership. Iraq, the reorganisation of the OIC, the problems faced by Muslim Ummah and the situation in South Asia figured in the two-hour talks.

Gen. Musharraf said that peaceful settlement of international disputes was the only way to eliminate extremism and terrorism.

"We must find out how extremism is produced. When people do not get their rights they take on guns. This means, we must have to resolve the issues to bring peace," he said at a civic reception in honour of the Crown Prince here.

He claimed that Pakistan had always wanted and invited talks on Kashmir but India had never given it a serious thought. "On the contrary, India is involved in a great imbalance of arms in the region."

Gen. Musharraf said Pakistan would welcome mediation on Kashmir. He said Pakistan would not allow use of its soil against Afghanistan or any other Muslim country.

He said the Islamic States should cooperate with one another to effectively combat the menace of terrorism and ensure prosperity.

Peres plea to Pak.

ISLAMABAD, OCT. 19. In a rare appearance by an Israeli leader on Pakistan television, the former Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, urged Islamabad on Sunday to hold an open discussion on forming diplomatic relations, following years of discreet and unproductive contacts.

Mr. Peres also denied reports that Israel was helping India against Pakistan-supported guerillas in Kashmir. — AP

Pak. helped Iran's n-programme, says report

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, AUG. 27. According to a report in *The Washington Post*, Iran has for the first time admitted that it has received substantial foreign assistance in building a secret nuclear facility south of its capital that is beginning to enrich uranium; and the need for suspicion on this source points to Pakistan.

"While Iran has not yet identified the source of the foreign help, evidence collected by the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency implicates Pakistani companies as suppliers of critical technology and parts, officials familiar with a U.N. investigation of Iran's programme said yesterday," the paper

said, if Pakistan were indeed identified as the supplier, that would be a new foreign policy issue the Bush administration would have on its hands vis-a-vis Islamabad.

But if the pattern of response of this Republican administration is anything to go by, Washington will be inclined to play this down as it did over revelations of the Pakistan-North Korea 'nexus' on similar cooperation.

The report says that Pakistan is believed by many non-proliferation specialists to have passed nuclear secrets to both Iran and North Korea with Islamabad denying providing such assistance.

The IAEA has said in a confidential report — portions of which were pro-

vided to the paper — that Iran has not fully accounted for its activities that have led to fears that the country is in the pursuit of developing nuclear weapons.

Teheran's claim of peaceful programme was questioned when IAEA inspectors found traces of highly enriched uranium on a newly constructed facility in Nantaz. Iran told the U.N. agency that the uranium came into the country on "contaminated equipment" from another country.

"In the past, Iran had claimed that the technology was indigenous and they were quite proud of that. Now, they're saying that they did get a lot of help. This was a major change in the story," a European diplomatic official

has said. Further, the paper cites two officials familiar with the findings that the tainted equipment was from a type of centrifuge acquired by Pakistani scientists in the 1970s and used in its nuclear programme.

The Iran-Pakistan nexus is surfacing at a time when the U.S. officially praising Islamabad for its 'cooperation' in the war against terror; and this is especially so in the context of Afghanistan. At the same time, several law-makers have been telling this Republican administration that Pakistan is literally getting away on accountability on many critical areas such as proliferation, terrorism, especially as it relates to the cross-border variety with India, and internal democracy.

At the time of the revelations on a dubious relationship with North Korea, the Bush administration sought to downplay concerns on Pakistan's involvement by constantly harping on the theme that this had happened in the 'past'.

But not many agree on the timeframe when it comes to Iran.

"The notion that Pakistan wasn't involved (in the Iran programme) is getting less and less tenable. Some might make the claim that this was something that happened in the past.

But it wasn't all that long ago," a top Pentagon non-proliferation official in the Senior Bush administration, Henry Sokolski, has been quoted as saying.

Belgium ready to sell F-16s to Pak

ASIAN NEWS INTERNATIONAL
ISLAMABAD, AUGUST 19

BELGIUM has officially confirmed that it has received a formal request from Pakistan to provide up to two squadrons of F-16 fighter planes. Reports from Brussels quoted Belgian defence ministry sources, as saying on Monday that they were "inclined to oblige Pakistan by providing the required number".

Belgium Defence Minister Andre Flahaut was reported by *The Nation* as saying that there would be no problem in selling F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan. Belgium had bought the F-16 planes from the US, but the contract stipulates it can only sell them after US approval. "The dossier has not yet been examined, therefore, we have not initiated consultation with the US as yet," Flahaut reportedly said. Sources said Belgium would have to consult EU states before seeking US permission for the sale to go through.

INDIAN EXPRESS

20 AUG 2003

Pak condition for sending Iraq troops

IMTIAZ GUL

Islamabad, July 21: Pakistan today welcomed the installation of the governing council in Iraq as a step in the right direction and dropped the first hint that it may send troops to Iraq only if there was an international cover for a peacekeeping force.

"There are other developments in the area and we would keep responding to the evolving situation. However, let me tell you that no decision has been made yet on sending troops to Iraq," foreign ministry spokesman Masood Khan said at his regular Monday briefing.

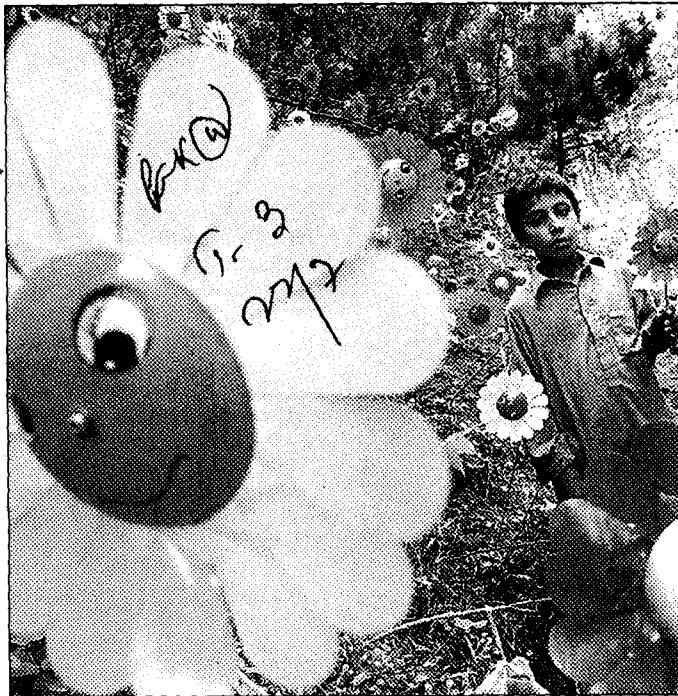
He said the government was very sensitive to public opinion and assured that the sentiment of the people of Pakistan would be respected.

Both the US and Britain had requested Pakistan for two army divisions which would be part of an international peacekeeping force in Iraq.

President Pervez Musharraf had received the requests during his recent visits to London and Washington DC. But he has since reiterated on various occasions that Pakistan would send troops only if there was an international cover for peacekeepers in Iraq.

Musharraf had stressed that such a force should at least have the sanction of the 52-member Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) if not the United Nations.

The US state department had late last week said that Pakistan had rejected its request for send-



A boy sells toy flowers at Muree hill station in Pakistan. (AFP)

ing troops to Iraq. However, the Pakistani spokesman called it an incorrect understanding of its position.

"We are still looking at the request and waiting to see the kind of modalities that might be worked out for the deployment of an international peacekeeping force in a Muslim country," Masood Khan said.

Most Opposition parties here had reacted adversely to the suggestion that Islamabad might be sending its troops to Iraq. This had forced the government to fall

back on the condition for international cover.

The Jamaat-e-Islami and the Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam, whose head Maulana Fazl-ur Rehman met Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee yesterday, had led fierce protests against the US-led invasion of Iraq and demanded that the government condemn these attacks.

Observers believe the demand for an international cover appeared to be a move to wriggle out of the obligation without annoying either the US or Britain.

22 JUL 2003

Pak, Afghanistan to bury row on US insistence

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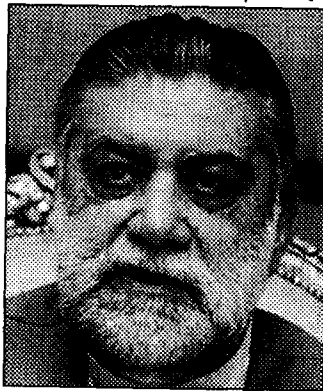
Kabul/Islamabad, July 15 (Reuters): Afghanistan and Pakistan agreed today to send investigators to their border to try to end a row over alleged Pakistani incursions, while the US urged them to patch up their differences.

In the Afghan capital, about 200 Afghans protested against the alleged border intrusions by Pakistan, while Pakistan's Prime Minister said he was saddened by the deterioration in relations between the neighbours.

The peaceful protest in Kabul came a day after Afghanistan said Pakistani troops crossed up to 600 metres into the eastern part of the country, an area where soldiers from both sides have clashed in recent weeks.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali denied any incursions had taken place.

"What would we gain by entering 600 metres? We are not in



Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali. (Reuters)

an athletics race, are we? It doesn't make any sense," he said in Islamabad.

Afghanistan and Pakistan have long had disagreements over their porous border, but recent intermittent clashes and accusations of intrusions have seriously strained relations.

Protests have erupted in

Afghanistan and a mob attacked the Pakistani embassy last week.

A meeting in Kabul between Afghan, Pakistani and US security officials ended with an agreement to send a three-party team to the border to investigate the reported incursions.

"The sub-committee will carry out ground verifications within a week to address each other's concerns and submit its findings as soon as possible," the countries said in a statement.

Afghanistan's latest allegations came during a brief operation by US-led forces on Afghan soil, and by Pakistani troops on their side of the border, to prevent movement of ousted Taliban fighters and their al Qaida allies.

The US government's special envoy to Afghanistan and Iraq, Zalmay Khalilzad, said Washington wanted to see cooperation between the neighbours, both of which back the US-led war on terror.

India's decision puts Pak. in a fix

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JULY 14. India's decision not to send troops to Iraq has put the Pervez Musharraf-Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali Government in a dilemma.

In the course of his recent high-profile tour of Europe and the United States, the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, had in "principle" agreed to send two brigades to Iraq.

Following sharp criticism of his announcement on foreign soil, Gen. Musharraf modified his statement on his return home and said a decision on whether or not to send troops would be made after a "national consensus" was reached.

Political and diplomatic observers believe that Gen. Musharraf made the commitment during his tete-a-tete with the U.S. President, George W. Bush, at Camp David on June 24. However when he realised the depth of the political resentment, he chose to soften the stand. However, the understanding is that he had given an assurance to Mr. Bush.

"The Indian decision is bound to complicate matters of the Pakistani establishment. It is caught on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, it is committed to the U.S. in public to send troops and, on the other, it would find it difficult to sell the decision to domestic opinion, particularly after the categorical rejection by New Delhi", a senior Western diplomat observed.

Now the only option left for Islamabad is to tell Washington to provide it a respectable umbrella under which it could send its troops. Before he made his commitment to

the U.S. on sending two brigades, Gen. Musharraf had said that since the United Nations was not willing to take the responsibility, options such as involvement of the Organisation of Islamic Conference and the Gulf Cooperation Council should be explored.

This would be one of the main items on the agenda of Gen. Musharraf who left on a three-nation African tour today. In the course of his six-day visit to Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, he is expected to broach the subject of the U.S. request and probe the mind of the leadership of these countries.

The political consensus within Pakistan is that India's announcement that it could consider commitment of any force in Iraq only under the U.N. umbrella is bound to increase pressure on Islamabad to reverse its earlier commitment. Of course, it would have an adverse impact on Pakistan-U.S. relations but the ground realities in Iraq are such that if Pakistan goes ahead with deployment, it could prove to be costly to the Government on the domestic front.

The Opposition parties have already said that it is wrong for Gen. Musharraf to announce deployment without consulting the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, Parliament or even his own creation — the National Security Council.

The Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) alliance of religious parties has said that it would actively resist any decision to send troops in Iraq.

The Pakistan People's Party noted that Pakistan played a vanguard role in peace-keeping efforts in Bosnia and in Somalia. It was also aware that Washington had made

a similar offer to India to send troops to Iraq.

"However, since the U.S. went into Iraq without the sanction of the U.N., it would have been appropriate for Islamabad to take a decision after necessary debate and discussion weighing what would be gained and what would be lost," the PPP said.

A party spokesperson said that this was a time when solidarity in South Asia could have been promoted by taking other countries in the region into confidence before taking a decision. "Unfortunately, Gen. Musharraf was not trained in politics and foreign policy and his fondness for one-upmanship resulted in erratic decisions without the necessary consensus and detrimental to the national interest."

He noted that the "commando style, go-it-alone" approach of the General had alienated Pakistan's friends and well-wishers as well as made a mockery of Parliament and the Cabinet.

The spokesperson noted that both Iran and UAE had both signed defence pacts with New Delhi. Indian leaders had visited China in a high-profile visit and the Indian Government was closer to the Karzai Government in Kabul than Islamabad. The growing international isolation of Pakistan in its own neighbourhood was detrimental to the well-being of the country.

The PPP said that to announce the decision to send troops to Baghdad on a foreign television channel was "insulting" to the people of Pakistan and their elected representatives.

The people of Pakistan wanted to see tangible benefits for actions taken.

THE HINDU

15 JUL 2003

Pak, Kabul troops continue to clash

Islamabad, July 10

PAKISTANI TROOPS exchanged heavy fire with Afghan militia on Wednesday even as the Presidents of both countries held telephonic talks to defuse the tension.

In Kandahar, about 1,000 people gathered on Thursday at the main mosque to protest against the alleged incursions by Pakistani troops into Afghan territory.

Demonstrators, including tribal and religious leaders and provincial officials, packed into the Kharqa mosque for a three-hour meeting.

Reports from the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and the Muhammad Tribal Agency along with Afghanistan said that Afghanistan and Pakistan forces exchanged firing on Wednesday.

The two sides have been firing intermittently at each

other for several days.

Reports of clashes also came in from the Yaqubi Kandao area of Mohmand Agency, *The News* said on Thursday.

The incidents of firing, which began ever since Pakistan moved its troops to Muhammad tribal agency few weeks ago continued even after Musharraf and Karzai spoke over the phone to discuss the situation arising out of the attack on the Pakistan Embassy in Kabul by an irate mob two days ago.

According to official media reports here, Karzai has apologised for the attack on the embassy and agreed to pay compensation as most of the equipment and furniture was destroyed in the attack.

As Pakistan moves troops, Afghanistan alleged that Pakistani troops moved 46 km deep into Afghan territory.

Agencies

Pak closes embassy in Kabul 9/7

ISLAMABAD, July 8. — Islamabad today closed its embassy in Kabul, summoned Afghanistan's Charge d'Affaires here and protested against the attack on the embassy.

Pakistan demanded an apology and payment of compensation for the loss of property and equipment in the attack, an official statement said here.

Terming the attack as a "deliberate" failure on the part of Afghan force, the statement said the Pakistan government lodged a strong protest with the Afghan government over the attack to the Afghan Charge d'Affaires, who was summoned to the foreign office. Later, Pakistan foreign minister Mr Khurishid Mehmood Kasuri said he spoke to Afghan acting

foreign minister Mr Rahim Sherzoi over phone and told him that incidents like this were "unhelpful" to the efforts of both governments to have a model relationship.

"It's unfortunate that this happened. Minister Sherzoi expressed deep regrets and apologies and assured me that action would be taken against those who perpetrated this attack," Mr Kasuri said. He said Pakistan attached great importance to its relations with Afghanistan. Earlier, in Kabul, Pakistan's ambassador to Afghanistan Rustom Shah Mohammad said he was closing down the mission till the Afghan government gave adequate protection, apologised and compensated the damage. — PTI

'Musharraf may remove Jamali'

ISLAMABAD, July 8. — Amidst continuing political deadlock with opposition over his constitutional amendments, Pakistan President Mr Musharraf is mulling major changes in the government including the removal of Prime Minister Mr Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, according to Newsline magazine's latest issue released today. "The President's men are already exploring a way out of the present standoff that has paralysed the new political setup", the magazine said. — PTI

THE STATESMAN

9 JUL 2003

PAK (10)

22/6

H.T. 6

Democracy in question

FOR ALL the warm words which George W. Bush had for Pervez Musharraf, the end result of the visit cannot be too heartening for Pakistan. For a start, the \$ 3 billion package deal has come with three inconvenient preconditions — cooperation on terrorism, keeping a check on nuclear weapons and steps towards the restoration of full democracy. While the Pakistan establishment may be able to get away with some amount of pretence on the first two counts, it's the third which can prove problematic. The hint that democracy hasn't been fully restored in Pakistan is a snub of sorts, for General Musharraf must have presumed that his formal adherence to the three-year deadline set by the Pakistan judiciary to restore civilian rule has been recognised by the US. But like the Commonwealth, which is yet to accept that Pakistan is a democracy, the US, too, apparently hasn't been deceived by the flawed elections and the appointment of a puppet as prime minister.

General Musharraf's insistence on wearing two hats — those of the president and army chief — must have also convinced the US that Pakistan is

not yet a full-fledged democracy. More doubts may have been raised by General Musharraf's attempt to seek legitimacy for the so-called Legal Framework Order (LFO) which enabled him to tinker with the Constitution. The opposition members of Pakistan's National Assembly are refusing to accept either the fact of his wearing two hats or the LFO. Unless this problem is sorted out, the dollars may not start flowing.

As if to add salt to the wounds, two former prime ministers have chosen this very moment to come out with their castigation of General Musharraf for his Kargil misadventure. Nawaz Sharif made the same allegation about the general sabotaging the Lahore summit earlier, too. But a repetition of the charge that the Kashmir problem might have been nearer a solution but for the general's antics in Kargil must be embarrassing for a man so concerned about the 'core' issue. So is Benazir Bhutto's revelation suggesting that Kargil has been a bee in the general's bonnet for quite some time. For Pakistan's dictator-in-all-but-name, the return journey will probably be less satisfying than the trip to Camp David.

Pervez bags trade concession, Bush praise for capturing terrorists

Funds for the general, not fighters

K.P. NAVAR

Washington, June 24: George W. Bush today refused Pervez Musharraf's request for F-16 planes, but publicly praised Pakistan's President for not being "afraid" to bring up the issue of the 28 aircraft, which Pakistan once paid for in full.

The refusal is, however, cold comfort for India. Half of a \$3-billion package which Bush announced at a joint news conference with the Pakistani general will go for military supplies.

Musharraf also bagged a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) with the US, which, the general claimed at the press conference, is a precursor to a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). If it, indeed, turns out to be so, it would be a major gain for Pakistan. An FTA with India has been talked about for almost three years, but has made no progress.

In direct negation of India's portrayal of Pakistan as an epicentre of terrorism, Bush praised Musharraf for capturing more than 500 terrorists and handing them over to the US. He said Pakistan, like the US, is a victim of global terrorism.

"President Musharraf is a courageous leader and a friend of the United States. America has a strong relationship with Pakistan. Pakistan's support was essential in our campaign against the Taliban," Bush said.

The effusive welcome for Musharraf in an oak-shaded log cabin at Camp David, the presidential retreat which nestles in

the Catoctin mountains in Maryland, near Washington, hid simmering tensions in Washington's relations with the junta which rules Islamabad.

America desperately needs Pakistan and Bush acknowledged it in so many words in the context of the war against al Qaeda. But the White House is also worried that Musharraf and his government are duplicious in their fight against Islamic extremism.

Musharraf today tried to allay some of those suspicions when he told reporters at Camp David that his army and police were hunting for terrorists in the Federal Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of the country, where no government forces had entered for over a century.

HITS & MISSES

- **Musharraf gets the cash:** \$3 bn, half of it for defence equipment and security
- **Does not get the F-16s:** Bush says no, though the general was insistent
- **Finans trade pact:** A framework for economic partnership is called a step towards a free trade agreement
- **Reminded of homework:** Progress at home, Bush says, will require movement towards democracy
- **And of another small thing:** Osama bin Laden is still free
- **Musharraf replies:** Maybe, bin Laden is in Afghanistan; maybe, in Pakistan



George W. Bush and Pervez Musharraf set off to address the joint news conference at Camp David. (AFP)

Osama bin Laden is widely believed to be hiding in FATA and crossing the border with Afghanistan. "The possibility of his, maybe, shifting sides on the border is very much there," Musharraf said in an effort to raise his worth with the White House in America's hunt for bin Laden.

Bush said it could take days, months or years before the US and its allies complete the search for the al Qaeda leadership. "We're just on the hunt. It doesn't matter how long it takes, Mr. President," Bush said, nodding to Musharraf.

Bush acknowledged that he and Musharraf spent "a lot of time" discussing India, clearly in the context of the F-16s, India's arms purchases and Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's recent peace initiative.

But Bush made it clear that the decision-makers on a settlement in South Asia, including Kashmir, were the leaders of

India and Pakistan, notwithstanding Musharraf's praise for Bush for his "untiring efforts" to bring India and Pakistan to the negotiating table. Bush said: "We discussed the need to address extremism and cross-border infiltration".

The disagreements between the US and Pakistan also surfaced when Bush said in his opening statement that realisation of Musharraf's "vision of moderation and progress will require movement toward democracy in Pakistan.... This country is committed to democracy, and we are committed to freedom".

It was clear that Musharraf had come under pressure from Bush to accommodate political elements in Pakistan's scheme of things when the general acknowledged in his reply that today's summit had agreed on "close interaction between the parliaments of the two countries to promote the cause of democracy".

BUSH NOT TO DISCUSS JETS: WASHINGTON Musharraf to push for F-16 delivery

Dawn/ ANN & PTI

ISLAMABAD, June 20. — F-16 jetfighters and total debt forgiveness are shaping up to be Pakistan's price for US demands that it rein in fighters along its borders with Afghanistan and India, analysts and reports said as President Musharraf arrived at USA today. Gen. Musharraf is scheduled to meet President George W Bush at Camp David on 24 June.

Washington's "tight" war on terrorism, as Mr Bush calls Gen. Musharraf, will seek the write off of Islamabad's remaining \$1.8 billion debt to the USA, a new trade pact giving Pakistani exporters greater market access, and an end to military sanctions, officials have said. The release of F-16s paid for by Pakistan more than a decade ago would be a top priority.

However, US officials today said President Bush does not intend to

discuss the release of advanced F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan with Gen. Musharraf.

Media reports in the USA have said Washington planned to release advanced versions of F-16 fighter jets that were sold to Pakistan in late 1980s

but were never delivered because of Islamabad's nuclear arms programme.

On a press report about Mr Donald Rumsfeld having briefed Mr LK Advani on the delivery

of F-16s to Pakistan, an official said: "USA has not provided any such information to Mr Advani." It is learnt that this "guidance" has been sent by the State Department to embassies in both Islamabad and New Delhi.

The Pentagon press office referred all queries on the issue to the State Department, which was in keeping with Mr Rumsfeld's public comment at a press conference that he does not deal with such issues and that these are matters for the President.

'Sport ties must resume'

LONDON, June 20. — Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf today favoured resumption of cricket ties between India and Pakistan saying the game was the loser in the absence of this. "It was unfortunate that the two countries are not playing cricket and it is game which is the loser. Not only cricket, the two countries should also play hockey which adds to the charm of the game," he said when asked to comment on Indo-Pak cricket contacts. — PTI

21 JUN 2003

THE STATESMAN

Putin, Bush bridge gap on Iraq

Moscow: Burying the 'hatchet' over Iraq, Russian President Vladimir Putin and his US counterpart George W Bush on Sunday agreed to a 'vital' UN role in post-war reconstruction of the country and vowed to strengthen their partnership as "there was no other alternative."

"The UN should play a vital role in Iraq reconstruction," Mr Bush said at a joint press conference with Mr Putin here after his first summit meeting with him since the US-led Iraq war and thanked Russia for backing the UN Security Council resolution, lifting the 13-year-old sanctions on Baghdad.

"Moving forward, we have shown to the world that friends from time to time may not agree. But now we are not talking about disagreements, but are working constructively and closely for the welfare of the world," Mr Bush was quoted as saying by Itar-Tass.

Mr Putin noted that Russia neither abstained nor voted against the US-sponsored resolution on Iraq, but voted for it, since it is a 'serious step' for closer US-Russian interaction on the Iraq issue.

Mr Bush arrived here on Saturday to attend the 300th anniversary of St Petersburg along with 44 foreign heads of states and government, including Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

At the start of their summit, Mr Bush and Mr Putin signed the protocol on the ratification of a treaty on strategic offensive reductions (SOR) by the Russian federal assembly and the US Senate. The treaty provides for radical cuts in the nuclear arsenals of two former cold war foes.

Mr Putin said he and Mr Bush had exchanged the ratification instruments on this treaty and it has entered into force, which shows qualitatively new relations between the two countries.

"We are again demonstrating Rus-

sia's and the United States' commitments to a qualitatively new nature of partnership on the principles of mutual security, cooperation, openness, and predictability," Mr Putin said.

This cooperation "also serves to strengthen strategic stability and international security," he said.

"Having committed itself to cut its strategic nuclear arsenals by two thirds, our countries have confirmed devotion to the nuclear disarmament process," Mr Putin said.

"The SOR treaty is also making a real contribution to improving the regime of nuclear non-proliferation. This is especially important in the light of our common job to counter international terrorism, which is aiming to acquire, particularly, weapons of mass destruction in pursuing its criminal ends," Mr Putin said.

Commenting on Iran President, Mr Bush urged Teheran to fulfill its obligations under the nuclear proliferation treaty.

Further boosting their strategic interaction, Mr Bush announced that



Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President George W. Bush shake hands following a joint news conference at the Konstantin Palace in St Petersburg on Sunday.

Washington would strengthen cooperation with Russia in missile defence.

"The cooperation in missile defence is a critically important factor in ensuring the security of our two nations," Mr Bush declared. He also invited Mr Putin to visit the Camp David Retreat outside Washington in September. PTI

MASOOD AZHAR STOPPED FROM ADDRESSING MEETING

Militant groups in PoK asked to 'close camps'

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

40-1
27/15

ISLAMABAD, MAY 30. In what is perceived as yet another move to meet the Indian condition to "dismantle the terrorism infrastructure", the Pakistan Government is said to have asked all the militant groups operating from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) to close their offices and militant camps if any.

Contrary to reports circulated by a Pakistani news agency that the Pervez Musharraf-Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali Government had set May 31 as the deadline for the 'jehadi' outfits to wind up their operations, no time frame was laid down.

A senior Pakistani official who did not wish to be identified told *The Hindu* that "we are at the moment engaged in the process of negotiations with representatives of some of these outfits. It is a fact that the move

is linked to the India-Pakistan peace process".

Of course, there is no way any Government representative would concede on record that any directive has been issued to the militant outfits to shift out of Pakistan or the territory under its control (PoK). The reason is simple. It would amount to admitting the existence of offices and camps of these outfits that Pakistan has all along vehemently denied.

When contacted, the PoK chief secretary, Shahid Rafi, said, "there are no offices or militant camps of jehadi outfits in PoK. So the question of we asking them to wind up operations does not arise."

Since the April 17/18 peace initiative and the visit of the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, to the sub-continent in the second week of May, there has been a conscious

effort on the part of Pakistan to prove that it is indeed serious in not allowing militant outfits, engaged in operations in Kashmir, to operate from its soil.

The day Mr. Jamali picked up the phone and congratulated his Indian counterpart, Atal Behari Vajpayee (April 28), the Interior Minister, Faisal Saleh Hayat, presided over an inter-provincial meeting on law and order where he declared that banned militant outfits under new names would not be allowed to function and that the writ of the state would prevail. He reiterated the resolve of the President, Pervez Musharraf, made on January 12, 2002, not to allow anyone to misuse the soil of Pakistan even in the name of Kashmir for violent activities.

Subsequently, the former PoK Prime Minister and President, Sardar Qayyum Khan,

confirmed that his party in PoK would not allow the banned organisations to operate in the name of the "Kashmir cause".

A few days later, Mr. Hayat said that Pakistan had decided not to allow the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen to carry out any "illegal activities" in the country. Soon afterwards, police detained three lieutenants of the Hizb chief on charges of displaying weapons in public.

In a related development, police in Peshawar are said to have prevented the leader of the proscribed outfit, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Maulana Masood Azhar, from addressing a Friday congregation. It is the second time in less than a month that authorities have restricted the movements of Azhar. The latest decision comes amid growing pressure on Islamabad to take tougher action against militant groups in Kashmir to prove its commitment to a peaceful dialogue with New Delhi.

The Jaish was one of five militant organisations banned by Gen. Musharraf in January 2002 along with the Lashkar-e-Taiba. However unlike Azhar, the former Lashkar chief, Hafiz Saeed, has been conducting a high profile lecture tour across Pakistan.

Prof. Saeed was allowed to address a rally in PoK around the same time that Azhar was stopped. The former LeT chief blasted the peace moves as a trap by India.

Azhar was to address a conference in Peshawar organised by a Muslim group called Khudamul Islam. Police say the group is a new version of the Jaish.

THE HINDU

3 1 MAY 2003

Pak. remains suspended from C'wealth

By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, MAY 20. Pakistan would remain suspended from the Commonwealth until the deadlock over the status of President Pervez Musharraf's controversial constitutional amendments is resolved.

This was decided by the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) after a two-day meeting which, according to the Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon, had a "long and hard debate" on the issue of Pakistan's readmission.

He said a "wide range" of views were expressed during the discussion but declined to disclose the details. The External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, who had led the opposition to Pakistan's reinstatement at the last meeting of CMAG, was clearly pleased with the outcome and, in answer to a question, said: "I agree with it".

It is well-known that there is considerable opinion in the Commonwealth in favour of readmitting Pakistan and even Mr. McKinnon did not pretend that it was a unanimous decision. But in their public remarks, the CMAG members sought to put up a united face.

The Group welcomed the "progress" made by Pakistan in the establishment of democratic institutions including the elections to the National Assembly, the Senate and Provincial Assemblies and the formation of "democratic governments at the national and provincial levels." It also pointedly welcomed the "positive measures" taken by Pakistan for representation to women and the minorities in Parliament, and Islamabad's "determination" to increase public accountability and end corruption.

But Pakistan's case was spoilt by the "deadlock" over the status of Gen. Musharraf's Legal Framework Orders (LFO), a series of contentious Constitutional amendments which give him sweeping powers over democratically elected representatives.

Pervez dangles fresh
confidence booster

Pak shuts Azhar out of PoK

15/5
OUR BUREAU

May 14: Islamabad has banned the entry of most-wanted militant Masood Azhar into Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in a measure aimed at winning New Delhi's confidence.

India has been very sensitive about Azhar, who it freed during the Kandahar hijack and holds responsible for the attack on Parliament. The Jaish-e-Mohammad leader was to address a rally in PoK tomorrow.

In Muzaffarabad, the capital of PoK, senior security official Mohammed Nawaz Khan confirmed Islamabad's move. "We have banned his entry," he said.

Last week, Pervez Musharraf had eased out Rasheed Qureshi, who was functioning in effect as the spokesman of the President. Qureshi, a hardliner, was present at the failed Agra summit. Delhi was privately thrilled about his removal but would not show it.

Today, senior foreign ministry officials described the ban on Azhar as a "significant" step but hurriedly added that follow-up action was necessary to see if there has been any shift in Islamabad's policy on terror.

Azhar, speaking from his Bahawalpur home in Pakistan's Punjab province, said the move was aimed at appeasing India. "It is unjustified to stop me from going to (Pakistan-occupied) Kashmir to express solidarity with the freedom struggle in Indian-held Kashmir."

Intercepts by the Indian in-

telligence reveal that Pakistan has closed down some terrorist camps in PoK and asked militants to deposit their arms with the authorities. While these moves were seen as encouraging by some sections in the establishment, others said they could have been prompted by infighting between rival Jaish factions.

The restriction on Azhar could be a measure to ensure the infighting does not get out of hand. But it could also be one of the confidence-building measures that Islamabad has been talking about to create a conducive atmosphere for resuming talks with Delhi.

Foreign minister Yashwant Sinha, who met US secretary of state Colin Powell in Moscow, "stressed the importance of ensuring that the process of re-engagement is not disrupted by terrorist attacks in India".

"Secretary Powell mentioned the US would continue to stress upon Pakistan the need to take action on cross-border terrorist activities," foreign ministry spokesperson Navtej Sarna said.



Azhar

Musharraf assures Armitage on camps

Pak pledge for clean tomorrow

IDREES BAKHTIAR AND
OUR BUREAU

Islamabad/New Delhi, May 8: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf today promised the US that any terrorist camps would be "gone tomorrow" and Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee asserted that the neighbours would have to live with each other.

"President Musharraf gave absolute assurance that there was nothing happening across the Line of Control, there were no camps in Azad Kashmir (Islamabad's name for Pakistan-occupied Kashmir) and if there were camps, they would be gone tomorrow," US deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage said in Islamabad, after meeting the President, Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali and other top leaders.

In Parliament, Vajpayee kept up the peace tempo: "I have told our Pakistani friends that friends can be changed but not neighbours. We have to live here. We either live as friends or we keep fighting, making ourselves a butt of ridicule before the world."

Armitage denied there was pressure from the US to resume talks. "There is no pressure," he said. "It is not the position of the US to pressure Pakistan or to pressure India." Speculation has been rife in both capitals that the peace overtures were connected to Armitage's visit.

Hours before the US official touched down in Delhi, Vajpayee rebutted Opposition charges that the government was jumping into talks unprepared. "India has not yet begun talks with Pakistan. Only the preparatory work is on," he said in the Lok Sabha.

The Prime Minister broadly outlined three factors for his offer of friendship to Islamabad — the "overwhelming" response to his public meeting in Kashmir last month, the size and capacity of India and the US war on Iraq. The way Iraq was at-

tacked without UN sanction, Vajpayee said, it was felt that developing and small countries needed to ponder about their future.

While asserting that cross-border terrorism would have to end, the Prime Minister observed that terrorists are not under the control of any one entity and that they, too, were divided. These considerations needed to be factored in, he said.

Vajpayee rejected Islamabad's proposal to de-nuclearise South Asia, arguing that India's nuclear programme was not Pakistan-centric. The reverse was true for Islamabad's programme, he said.

Armitage, who said he saw "a nascent beginning of a dialogue", felt the issue of arms race between the two countries could be taken up at a later stage. "What you are seeing, I hope, is the beginning of a process and I am cautiously optimistic that is exactly what we see," he said, meeting journalists with Pakistan foreign minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri before leaving for Delhi.

Kasuri said Islamabad would like to go into tiered dialogue and hoped it would be meaningful, addressing all issues including the Kashmir dispute. However, he said, "it stands to reason that any solution that does not take into consideration the aspirations of the people of Kashmir is not likely to last".

Vajpayee iterated that the neighbours should concentrate on resolving outstanding issues other than Kashmir. An opportunity for friendship should not be lost, he stressed.

But the Prime Minister accepted the Opposition's advice for caution in the peace initiative. "*Hum doodh ke jale hain, chaach bhi phook-phook kar piyenge* (Having burnt our fingers once, we will be extra careful now)," he said, adding that friendship should be maintained "to the extent possible". ■ What Armitage told Pervez, Page 7

QUOTE

President Musharraf gave absolute assurance that...if there were camps, they would be gone tomorrow

RICHARD ARMITAGE

- 9 MAY 2003

9 MAY 2003

THE TELEGRAPH

Karzai denies rift with Pak

Islamabad, April 22 (Reuters): Afghan President Hamid Karzai today played down recent clashes along the Pakistani border as well as talk of a rift over support for Taliban remnants, and vowed that ties between the two nations remain close.

Karzai was addressing a joint news conference with Pakistani Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali during a state visit to Pakistan.

Some Afghan officials say the fundamentalist Taliban militia, ousted late in 2001 by US-backed opposition groups, is trying to regroup on Pakistani soil, helped by some Pakistani officials. There was also an ex-

change of shell and rocket fire along the border last week, and an Afghan military commander accused Pakistani militia of occupying a village in the eastern province of Khost. "Things like that are bound to occur between people at all times," Karzai said, when asked about the border clashes. "It is not something we have taken seriously, it is not something we have noticed. I did not even raise it with Prime Minister Jamali."

Karzai said Pakistan's government had assured him of its full cooperation in the hunt for former leaders of the Taliban.

"Pakistan is a brother of ours and as a brother Pakistan would

do all to help Afghanistan attain the best levels of safety and security," he said.

Pakistan was the main backer of the Taliban until the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US.

Diplomats in Kabul say the Afghan government is extremely worried some Pakistani officials could be supporting remnants of the Taliban.

In January, Afghan foreign minister Abdullah Abdullah said Pakistan could do more to help round up Taliban leaders on its soil, and said "rogue elements" within the Pakistani intelligence network could be helping them.

Kargil was a 'misadventure', Musharraf told Sharif

✓ 11-9 1999
Islamabad: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, who was the army chief during the Kargil conflict, had admitted to the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif that the conflict was a "misadventure" and had urged him to initiate steps to save the country from an embarrassment, a top leader of Mr Sharif's party was quoted as saying on Monday.

Blaming Pakistan's generals for the 1999 Kargil "fiasco", the acting president and parliamentary leader of Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) said that after the bloody clashes with the Indian army, the three services chiefs sought an emergency meeting with Mr Sharif at the governor's house in Lahore and admitted that they had committed a "misadventure". After the meeting with the service chiefs, Mr Sharif took all necessary steps to save them from the impending embarrassment and finalised his plans to visit Washington, where he finally agreed for a ceasefire. Hashmi, a former minister, said on Sunday.

On Mr Sharif's return from the US, Gen

Musharraf called on him and saluted him for achieving a ceasefire. Mr Hashmi told a seminar.

The PML leader also charged that the present regime headed by Gen Musharraf has agreed to share command and control system of Pakistan's nuclear weapons

with the United States which, he said, would gravely hurt Pakistan's interest and army's prestige. On the possibility of the United States targeting Pakistan after its war in Iraq, Mr Hashmi said there was no chance of it as the US has complete knowl-

edge of Pakistan's nuclear assets.

"Now a dual security system (of nuclear weapons) is in place. So why would the Americans attack Pakistan when they already know about the location of our nuclear assets?" he said.

* Referring to the statement of pre-emptive attack made by Indian ministers, Mr Hashmi claimed "these war threats by India were being hurled at the behest of United States which had made a triangle with Israel and India in the region." on



P. Musharraf



N. Sharif

1 5 APR 2003

Gen told Sharif Kargil was a 'misadventure'

PTI
9/4/03
ISIA
6
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD, APRIL 14

PAKISTAN President Pervez Musharraf, who was the Army chief during the Kargil conflict, had admitted to the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif that the conflict was a "misadventure" and had urged him to initiate steps to save the country from an embarrassment, a top leader of Sharif's party was quoted as saying today.



Blaming Pakistan's generals for the 1999 Kargil fiasco, the acting President and Parliamentary leader of Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), Javed Hashmi said that after the bloody clashes with the Indian Army, the three services chiefs sought an emergency meeting with Sharif at the Governor's House in Lahore and admitted that they had committed a "misadventure".

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15 APR 2003

INDIAN EXPRESS

HD-15
23/3

Pak. calls for halt to war

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MARCH 28. As political parties and civil society stepped up pressure to 'do more' for an end to the Iraq war and help the beleaguered people, Pakistan today called for a halt to war and announced that it was exploring all avenues to send humanitarian relief as soon as possible.

Pakistan Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, deemed it necessary to issue a statement placing on record that the People and Government of Pakistan are 'deeply concerned about the plight of the Iraqi people and the emerging humanitarian crisis in Iraq.

Mr. Jamali made it known that the military action initiated by the United States in Iraq has 'compounded' the problems of the already suffering Iraqi people who have lived under sanctions for over a decade.

"While our prime objective is the restoration of peace in Iraq, Pakistan has also in all its bilateral contacts as well as in the discussions in the Security Council stressed on the need to address the humanitarian dimensions of the Iraqi situation", he said.

Pakistan Government has been under attack from the opposition particularly the religious parties for not

'condemning' the military action and taking a 'pro-active' approach in various international forums like the United Nation Security Council (UNSC). Islamabad has 'deplored' the military action and called upon the international community to ensure immediate halt to the war.

It has been tight rope walk for the Pakistan Government in the last few weeks vis-...-vis the Iraq crisis. On one hand it was faced with enormous pressure from Washington whose support is crucial for economic and defence needs and on the other the overwhelming anti-war sentiments within the country.

Mr. Jamali said the primary responsibility for addressing the immediate and long-term needs of the Iraqi people rested with the parties involved in the military conflict.

The Government of Pakistan in an expression of 'solidarity' with the people of Iraq intended to provide assistance for the Iraqi people, as soon as possible.

He said Pakistan has decided to offer humanitarian assistance for the Iraqi people. This relief will include rice, wheat, tents, ground tarpaulin, blankets, medicines and surgical equipment.

Also medical teams may be sent to Iraq to assist in address-

ing immediate medical needs.

"We are exploring all avenues for sending such humanitarian relief, including contacting all parties to the conflict. The modalities for the provision of this assistance are being worked out.

The decision to send relief assistance is an expression of the solidarity of the people and Government of Pakistan with the Iraqi people in these difficult times in their history", Mr. Jamali said.

The decision to explore avenues for sending humanitarian relief came amidst strike in different parts of the country against the war.

It was organised by Mutahidda Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) and the response was modest. It is for the second time that the alliance of six religious parties has made an appeal to people to show solidarity with Iraq.

By all accounts anti-war sentiments in Pakistan are running high though there is no danger of it spilling on to the streets. Decision of the Government to 'deplore' the military action has to some extent taken sting out of the MMA campaign.

Besides the Government is letting the political parties and organisations take steam out on the Iraq crisis by letting them hold demonstrations and mar-

ches. This is in contrast to the marches in protest against the U.S. led military action in Afghanistan in October 2001. Of course the two situations can not be compared.

On Afghanistan the Government was entirely behind America and only religious parties and groups opposed it.

That the Government is looking the other way on the anti-American rhetoric is evident from a number of programmes even on the state run Pakistan Television.

There is no effort to curtail or control the nature of discussions and debates. The newly born private television channels are going whole hog against the U.S.

One channel actually had a survey on the 'grand designs' of the U.S. after Iraq and results are astounding.

Nearly 70 per cent of the people, interviewed by a Pakistan private television channel, believe that the U.S. could target either Iran or Pakistan after the Iraq war. The survey reflects the widespread apprehensions about the American intentions in the region and mirrors the prevailing anti-American sentiments. Conducted by Geo Television the survey process, is once again an indication of the response of the media to the U.S. led military attack on Iraq.

THE HINDU

29 MAR 2003

Pak. not to expel Iraqi diplomats

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MARCH 24. Amidst growing anti-war sentiments in the country, Pakistan today categorically declared that it has no plans to either expel Iraqi diplomats or sever diplomatic ties with the regime of Saddam Hussein.

The Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman, Aziz Ahmed Khan made this clarification in response to a question on the world-wide request by the United States for expulsion of Iraqi diplomats.

The 40-minute-long weekly press briefing turned out to be a battle of wits between Mr. Khan and journalists with the latter insisting on knowing as to why Pakistan was shy of condemning the American war on Iraq. The stock reply of the spokesman was "we have deplored the initiation of military action". At least one journalist went to extent of asking if Pakistan would do the same if it came under such an attack.

Expulsion of Iraqi diplomats was not only the subject on which Mr. Khan had to clarify matters. He was asked if the U.S. was using any Pakistani military bases for the Iraq war. Mr. Khan said that it had not provided any facility to the U.S.-led forces for military action in Iraq.

To a volley of questions on provision of facilities to the U.S.-led coalition forces, he said Pakistan had provided its air bases for use of rescue operations only vis-a-vis military action in Afghanistan in the war against terrorism. On withdrawal of these facilities, the spokesman stated that no decision has so far been taken. He reiterated Pakistan's call for an early end to the hostilities in Iraq to avoid any human disaster. "We think that peace still has a chance," he said and added, "the military action should be stopped as quickly as possible".

Replying to a question, the spokesman said Pakistan does not support unilateralism and is for the supremacy of the UN Charter to resolve international disputes. To another question on whether Islamabad supported regime change, he said Pakistan felt that the Iraqi regime should be changed by the Iraqi people themselves.

Asked to elaborate on the reasons that prompted Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali to put off his visit to the U.S., Mr. Khan said it was "in deference to the sentiments of the people over the military action in Iraq". At the same time, he said U.S. 'understood' the position of Pakistan.

When a correspondent wanted to know if the Government was worried about the 'anti-American sentiments' Mr. Khan said these 'anti-war sentiments' were not confined to Pakistan and were being expressed worldwide. The spokesman said Pakistan had long-standing relations with the United States and the anti-war feelings being expressed by the people would not affect Pakistan-U.S. ties.

About the Prime Minister's visit to China (which commenced today), the spokesman said Pakistan has been consulting Beijing on important issues and it was the first visit of any head of the Government after a new leadership in China.

Asked if Pakistan was contemplating any initiative to halt the war, Mr. Khan said the U.N. Security Council was fully seized of the situation in Iraq and Pakistan was actively playing its role. However he declined to elaborate on the role when a journalist persisted with the question.

THE HINDU

25 MAR 2003

A tight-rope walk

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

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2/2

ISLAMABAD, MARCH 1. Reflecting the dilemma on Iraq confronting Islamabad, the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, has said that "peace ought to be given the best chance through a diplomatic solution".

As a non-permanent member on the United Nations Security Council, Pakistan finds itself in a predicament on the issue. Besides the 'anti-American' sentiment on the home front, Pakistan is being vociferously wooed by the pro and anti-war camps.

This was evident on Friday when the Iraqi Information Minister, Mohammad Saeed Al Sahaf called on Gen. Musharraf hours after the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, Christina Rocca, met him and sought support for the second resolution in the United Nations.

Gen. Musharraf had to do the tight-rope walk. He took somewhat a middle course counselling Washington not to rush for war and at the same time telling Baghdad to come clean and fast on inspections for Weapons of Mass Destruction.

It is the second time in recent days that Gen. Musharraf has advised the U.S. against war. A fortnight back when the U.S. President, George W. Bush, telephoned him, Gen. Musharraf conveyed that 'war is not a good option'. Implied in the statement was the suggestion that Mr. Bush had sought Pakistan's support for a conflict in the Gulf. In his conversation with Ms. Rocca, he underlined Iraq's responsibility for 'complete, immediate and verifiable' disarmament under the U.N. Security Council resolution 1441.

The U.S. Assistant Secretary gave him a briefing on the issue, particularly regarding the draft resolution of February 24 by the U.S., U.K. and Spain, and the U.N. inspections regime under Dr. Hans Blix. She is believed to have told Gen. Musharraf that the 'conflict' in Iraq, a major area of concern for Pakistan, would be short. The Iraqi Minister of Information, who is visiting Islamabad as special envoy of the President, Saddam Hussein, briefed Gen. Musharraf on Iraq's efforts to comply with the U.N. resolutions.

2 MAR 2003

HINDU

India, Pakistan trade expulsions

Udayan Namboodiri
New Delhi, February 8

IT WAS Black Saturday in the history of Indo-Pakistan diplomatic relations. First, India expelled the Pakistani charge d'affaires (CDA) Jalil Abbas Gilani following Thursday's arrests that "exposed" his hand in the funding of separatist activity in Kashmir. The Pakistani tit-for-tat came within hours when Indian CDA Sudhir Vyas was asked to leave.

Along with the CDA, India ordered out four non-diplomatic staffers — Habibur Rehman, Aftab Ahmed, Abdur Razzak and Mohammad Nazir — for "involvement in activities incompatible with their official position".

In response, the Pakistani foreign ministry asked an equal

number of Indian high commission officials to leave — first secretary Rahul Rasgotra, staffers S Balu, Ranbir Singh and S.R. Anand — within 48 hours.

A statement by the Pakistan foreign office said: "Reciprocating the Indian decision to further cut down the strength of the Pakistani high commission in New Delhi from 51 to 47 personnel, the Government of Pakistan has also decided to apply the same staff ceiling on the Indian high commission in Islamabad."

Reacting sharply to Pakistan's decision, external affairs ministry spokesman Navtej Sarina said: "We see it as a pure and simple act of unmerited retaliation."

Both sides justified their positions and condemned the other side. But by initiating the chain of events that led to the show-

Aligned Summit that begins in Kuala Lumpur on February 20. New Delhi has scored an additional point by stating its willingness to accept a replacement for Jilani. Pakistan has not reciprocated this offer unequivocally.

India claims to have spent a long night weighing the unprecedented step of expelling a diplomat of the deputy high commissioner level. "We considered all aspects. But seldom do you come across such concrete evidence of Pakistani support to separatism. It is unfortunate that the Pakistani government could allow a senior diplomat like Jilani to get involved in all this," an Indian source said.

Jilani had been named by Anjum Zamrud Habib, a Hurriyat activist, and Hurriyat spokesman Shabir Ahmed Dar, who were arrested as they

emerged from the Pakistani mission late on Thursday with cash that was given to them by Jilani. Though New Delhi was aware of Pakistani monetary support for the Hurriyat all along, this was the "clinching evidence".

The highest official now left in the Pakistani mission is Syed Ibne Abbas, a political counselor. In Islamabad, the Indian high commission will now be administered by Vikram Misri, a first secretary. The two missions are without high commissioners since December 2001 following India's decision to downgrade ties in the aftermath of the Parliament attack.

The spate of expulsions since last year has brought down the staff strength from 120 in each of the missions to 47 members.

Related reports on Page 5

Bhat in line of fire

THE CENTRE is considering tough measures against the Hurriyat, especially its chief, Abdul Ghani Bhat, after the terrorist conduit controversy. Delhi is consulting with the Mufti government in Srinagar how to proceed against Bhat, who is popular in the Kashmir valley.

Details on Page 5

down, New Delhi considers itself entitled to the perception that it was the wronged party and Pakistan the vengeful avenger.

The face-off has substantially damaged Pervez Musharraf's image ahead of the 13th. Non-

Pak will seek Putin's help to solve Kashmir problem

Moscow: Ahead of his visit to Russia, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf has charged India with "deliberately obstructing" efforts to resolve the Kashmir issue and said Moscow can play an important role in facilitating an early solution to the dispute.



P. Musharraf

"I would brief the Russian leadership on the genesis of the (Kashmir) dispute and our efforts towards finding an early solution of the dispute in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiris. I would also ask for their support in these efforts," he told Russian news agencies on the eve of his three-day Russia visit which begins on Tuesday.

He said Kashmir issue has been at the heart of tensions and conflict in South Asia since 1947 and accused India for "deliberately obstructing all efforts for an early solution of the dispute as envisaged in UN security council resolutions".

"The Russian federation as a global power and a close friend of India can play an im-

portant role in facilitating an early solution of the dispute," he said.

In an obvious reference to Moscow's repeated calls to stop cross-border terrorism and dismantle terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, he said his country is totally opposed to terrorism and is committed to combating the menace in all its forms.

"We are co-operating actively with all countries, including Russia, in this regard, in accordance with our international commitments under the UN resolutions and the international instruments on terrorism to which Pakistan is a party," Mr Musharraf said.

Noting Russia's traditionally strong political, economic and military links with India, Mr Musharraf said development of a stronger relationship with Pakistan, "not directed against the interests of any third country", would assist in maintaining a balance of power in South Asia.

He also sought Moscow's support for joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). India has also expressed desire to join this group in which China and Russia are the main players. PTI

Pak. seeks role in Gulf diplomacy

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), JAN. 27. The Pakistani Prime Minister, Zafarullah Khan Jamali, arrived in Kuwait on Monday on the second leg of a regional visit aimed at pushing Islamabad into the inner circle of countries in the region that are engaged in averting a United States-led war against Iraq.

Iraq's neighbours — Turkey, Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Jordan along with the regional heavy weight Egypt — have recently evolved a collective mechanism that aims to prevent a war. The Foreign Ministers of these countries met in Istanbul last week to begin a "process" to bring the Iraqi crisis to a peaceful end. Analysts

point out that Pakistan does not appear to have sufficient leverage with Iraq's neighbours to find a place in a collective regional mechanism revolving around Iraq. But on the other hand, regional countries may not find it in their interests to keep Pakistan marginalised from the Iraq debate. This is because Pakistan has recently become a non-permanent rotational member of the U.N. Security Council, which enables it to influence the Council deliberations on Iraq.

The chances are that Iraq's neighbours may enhance their consultations with Pakistan on Iraq, without incorporating it in a collective regional forum, observers say. Diplomatic sources point out that Pakistan's effort

to focus on Iraq may have been somewhat overshadowed by the parallel weekend visit to the Gulf countries by the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak.

Developments in Iraq have been the main subject of discussion during Mr. Mubarak's visit to the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait.

Mr. Jamali, who has already concluded a visit of the UAE, has played on two main themes that support Pakistan's deeper engagement with the region on the question of Iraq.

First, he has emphasised that Pakistan has the credentials for special relations with the Arab countries, as it is also part and parcel of the pan-Islamic "Ummah."

At a press conference in the

UAE, he pointed out, "Though we are at some distance but we can't remain distant from Ummah."

Second, Mr. Jamali has indicated that like the regional countries, Pakistan, by virtue of its being the backyard of the Gulf states, would also have to endure the fall-out of a possible war on Iraq.

"It is also the focus of my consultations with Gulf leaders to keep the damage as less as possible if the military strike becomes inevitable.

We cannot stay away from any eventuality that takes place in this region", he said.

Mr. Jamali will also visit Bahrain and moves are afoot to include Oman in his itinerary.

THE HINDU

28 JAN 2003

Part 11
51-8

Thug of war

25/1

What explains Pakistan's gross misbehaviour?

India could not ignore the official Pakistani harassment of its charge d'affaires in Islamabad. The first Indian protests over subjecting Sudhir Vyas to comical but dangerous intimidatory tactics having been ignored, a diplomatic retaliation was called for. Even countries in a state of permanent mutual hostility must observe the norms and niceties of diplomatic conduct. That means surveillance, a common practice of security agencies in most countries, must not degenerate to thuggery. Indian security officials, for example, closely watch Pakistani diplomats in New Delhi. The latter's movements are undoubtedly tailed, their Indian contacts checked out. This is necessary from India's point of view.

Just as reciprocal suspicions are considered vital by Pakistani security agencies. But Indian Intelligence officials to date have not rolled out a menacing version of Keystone Cops in discharging their duties. Their Pakistani counterparts have, although it is not clear to what end, unless it was designed to extract an angry response from India, to which Pakistan can respond at leisure — Islamabad's expulsion of Indian diplomats in retaliation to New Delhi's throwing out Pakistani ones. All this will muddy subcontinental waters further and probably hide certain Pakistani anxieties.

General Musharraf, it should be noted, recently observed that the next target, after Iraq, of Western (meaning American) regime-changing crusade could be Pakistan. This is an extraordinary observation from a head of state and it underscores how potentially unstable the US's steadfast ally has become. Pakistan has also been unnerved and insulted by the American authorities' inclusion of Pakistani nationals in listing compulsory registration with immigration authorities. For Islamabad this must have been the first serious indication that the rhetoric of being a frontline ally may not be enough to hide realities of Pakistani society, not to mention the establishment's, support systems for terrorism. When things look bleak on the domestic front, it is an accepted policy in Islamabad that a spat with New Delhi can divert attention.

If the current diplomatic kaffuffle is a result of that kind of strategy it will die down soon. But New Delhi must necessarily prepare for other contingencies — a prolonged period of bad to atrocious behaviour and possibly a sharp jump in terrorist activities in India to match. Political and diplomatic leadership must be clear that India has few options left bar condemnation and diplomatic action. Even the latter cannot be exercised too readily since it will not be in India's advantage to initiate the process of full diplomatic rupture.

Therefore, hard as it is to swallow, India will have to do precisely that if Pakistan strengthens its mischief. Ministers therefore should not make statements that Islamabad can identify as empty threats. The rhetoric must be consistently tough only on one point — talks with Pakistan. India must not and cannot talk to a country that more than occasionally seems to forget even the basics of international conduct. Thugs don't have a place at a negotiation table.

After Iraq, it could be Pak.: Musharraf

By B. Muralidhar Reddy
ISLAMABAD, JAN. 19. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, has talked about the need for efforts by Pakistan to avoid a situation whereby the country becomes a target of war after Iraq.

Addressing a gathering of industrialists, businessmen, farmers and the elite in Lahore on Saturday, Gen. Musharraf referred to speculations that Pakistan could be the next target of Western forces after Iraq.

"We will have to work on our own to stave off the impending danger. Nobody will come to our rescue, not even the Islamic world. We will have to depend on our own muscle."

The comments of Gen. Musharraf appear to be an admission of "guilt" either on

the count of spreading 'jihad' or nuclear proliferation. But a closer scrutiny shows that it is far from that. They are directed at "irresponsible" elements from among the religious parties and organisations.

For instance, Gen. Musharraf made a specific reference to slogans of 'jihad' being raised by certain elements among the religious organisations in the context of Iraq and wanted them to introspect what good it did for the image of Pakistan abroad.

A few days ago in the run up to the campaign for the byelections, the Pakistan Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, had similarly lashed out at the leaders of the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) for "unnecessarily" running down the United States and the Western

countries. He had gone one step further and justified the new immigration laws for the Pakistanis in the U.S. as a direct result of the anti-West propaganda being indulged in by the religious elements.

Mr. Jamali had chided that MMA leaders should not consider themselves to be the sole champions of Islam and should be mindful of their actions on Pakistanis abroad.

In his address to the gathering at Lahore, Gen. Musharraf complained that some extremists from abroad had taken refuge in Pakistan and were scheming to harm the interests of the U.S. Urging people not to support such elements, Gen. Musharraf said that "some foreigners in Pakistan are harming U.S. interests here, though we take them as brothers".

Gen. Musharraf appealed to people to shun extremists, urging them to embrace more moderate views.

"Muslims are suffering everywhere but in the hour of need no Muslim state will help us because everyone has his own interests. We will have to a moderate country, not with a confrontationalist approach, but with a liberal mind."

Talking to troops on his visit to Lahore Garrison, Gen. Musharraf said courage, determination and operational preparedness had provided deterrence to the armed forces and made the defence of the country impregnable.

Gen. Musharraf told them that there was no substitute for peacetime training and urged them to concentrate fully on upgrading tactical skills and enhancing professional capability.

Reports link Khan to weapons programme in N. Korea

Cloud on Pak nuke father

MIKE COLLETT-WHITE

Islamabad, Jan. 8 (Reuters): Pakistan today rushed to the defence of Abdul Qadeer Khan, revered by many as the father of its nuclear bomb, after reports implied he had links to nuclear weapons programmes in countries including North Korea.

Islamabad is sensitive to suggestions it has traded nuclear technology or equipment with the reclusive Communist state, which has triggered a diplomatic standoff with Washington by threatening to reactivate a nuclear facility mothballed in 1994 and expelling UN inspectors.

The Dawn newspaper, in a story from Washington, said it had received a copy of a pamphlet distributed by the secretive Khan Research Laboratories (KRL) at Kahuta, southeast of Islamabad, offering vacuum technology for sale.

The pamphlet has a Rawalpindi address, PO Box 502, and has pictures of the equip-

needed for a nuclear arms project in return for missile parts.

Today, it turned its attention to Khan, who before his retirement in 2001 had headed the KRL, credited with making the nuclear bomb.

"The spokesman dismissed (newspaper reports about Khan) as absolutely false, baseless and motivated," said a statement from Pakistan's foreign ministry. "Concocted and fabricated speculation, devoid of any actual fact, cannot in any matter affect the credibility of Dr Khan, his contribution to Pakistan's defence, or his country."

Khan broke his silence over Pakistan's nuclear security, telling reporters in Lahore: "This is a totally baseless allegation against Pakistan that it has transferred its nuclear technology to any other country."

Pakistan's foreign ministry called Khan a "distinguished scientist and national icon" in a sharp attack on the newspaper reports.



A friend greets Lahore-based jeweller Muhammad Asghar (right) after the FBI cleared his name from its most-wanted list. (AFP)

ment it was promoting. It also has a picture of Dr Khan wearing medals awarded by the government of Pakistan.

A message distributed with the pamphlet said: "Besides manufacturing of vacuum components and systems, our vacuum constancy services are also

available for system design, operational troubleshooting, quality assurance, maintenance, system development and human resource training."

A key US ally in the war on terror, Pakistan has denied reports it helped Pyongyang with equipment to make materials

PKR
HP 15

Pakistan Prime Minister satisfied with nuclear command structures

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JAN. 6. The Pakistan Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, today 'attended' a meeting of the National Command Authority (NCA), the body entrusted with the task of development and deployment of nuclear weapons, and expressed "complete satisfaction with the effectiveness of the country's Command and Control Structures."

The meeting was clearly a response to the announcement made by New Delhi on January 4, establishing a chain of nuclear command under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee.

The Pakistan command was established in February 2000 and it functioned under the leadership of the President, Pervez Musharraf, who at the time of the establishment of the Authority was the Chief Executive.

A significant aspect of today's meeting was that Gen. Musharraf convened it. The implication is that it is he in his capacity

as Pakistan's President and the Chief of the Army Staff would function as its Chairman though the structure envisaged talks about the head of the Government (Prime Minister) as the Chairman.

The dilemma faced by Pakistan, after the so-called transfer of power from the military to a civilian set-up, as to who controls the nuclear button was evident at the regular Foreign Office briefing. In response to a specific question on the subject, the spokesman, Aziz Ahmed Khan, initially said that Pakistan's nuclear command and control structure was in "safe hands."

However, when a reporter persisted on knowing whether it was safe in the hands of Gen. Musharraf or Mr. Jamali, the spokesman said that "I would get back to you on the specific query at a later date." Mr. Khan once again sought to emphasise that there was no question of the nuclear weapons falling into the wrong hands.

The official statement and the cautious response of the spokesman clearly suggest that Islamabad has second thoughts about the structure.

At the meeting Mr. Jamali was quoted as saying that the structure was well-conceived, elaborate and had matured. "The National Command Authority has ensured that while our nuclear assets and strategic forces were completely safe and secure, they continue to develop as per our minimum deterrence needs," he told the meeting. An official announcement said that Mr. Jamali was given a detailed briefing at a special session of the NCA.

The Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and the Services Chiefs were present.

In an obvious reference to the Pakistan-North Korea nuclear collaboration controversy, Mr. Jamali dismissed as "mischievous, motivated and highly irresponsible" the recent spate of media allegations of leakage. He said Pakistan was a responsible nuclear power with "an impeccable record of safety and security." Though Pakistan was not in any arms race with anyone, retention of "minimum deterrence" was a cornerstone of Pakistan's National Security Policy.

STRENGTH

7 JAN 2003