

# Pak battles Baluchis in hidden war for oil

By Carlotta Gall

**Dera Bugti (Pakistan):** Explosions at gas pipelines and railroad tracks are common in this remote desert region. Now, roadside bombs and artillery shells are, too. More than 100 civilians have been killed in recent months, along with dozens of government security forces, according to local residents and Pakistan's Human Rights Commission. This is the other front of Pakistan's

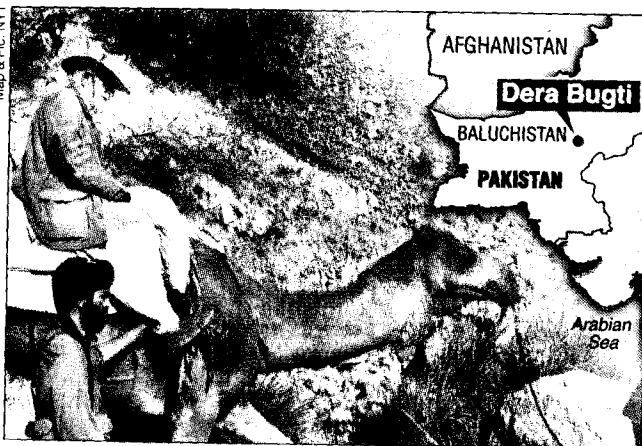
itary jets and surveillance planes flew over the area, and long-range artillery lighted up the distant night sky. This fight is altogether separate from the Taliban insurgency on Pak-Afghan border or the Shiite-Sunni violence that sporadically flares in and around the provincial capital, Quetta, and it threatens to dwarf the nation's other conflicts. It is about the ethnic rights and self-rule of the Baluch people.

Tensions have been aggravated by Pakistan President Gen Pervez Musharraf's determination to develop the area's oil and gas fields, the largest in the country, as well as his aim to build a pipeline across the region to carry oil from Iran and a strategic deep sea port to expand trade with China, local residents say. They charge that Musharraf has shown little regard for their concerns and that for years their province has received paltry royalties on its resources, while remaining one of the country's poorest regions.

The government has branded two rebel leaders, Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, nearly 80, and Balach Marri, 40, "miscreants", outlaws who oppose economic development to retain a hold over their tribes. Bugti and Marri dismissed the charges. They are not opposed to economic development, they said, but rather to the government's military campaign to suppress them.

"The military government has imposed military rule and this has forced the Baluch to defend their land and resources against the... forces of Pakistan assembled in our area," Bugti said. "The dispute is about the national rights of the Baluch, and if the government accepted these rights then there would be no dispute."

Bugti and others said that the government was using its US-supplied jets and helicopter gunships against them. They said they had found bomb fragments with 'Made in USA' stamped on them. NYT News Service



Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, a tribal leader, travels by camel with one of his guerrilla fighters in Dera Bugti, Baluchistan

widening civil unrest, not the tribal areas along the Afghan border where the US would like Pakistan to press a campaign against Islamic militants, but the restive province of Baluchistan, home to an intensifying insurgency.

It is here, say local leaders and opposition politicians, that Pakistan, an ally in the US war on terror, has diverted troops from the fight against Al Qaida and the Taliban to settle old scores as it seeks to develop the region's oil and gas reserves. One visit makes it clear that, despite official denials, the government is waging a full-scale military campaign here. Rebel chiefs say they have thousands of men under arms, fighting what they estimate are 23,000 Pakistani troops.

During a 24-hour trek on camel, horse and foot across the rugged, stony terrain in early March, the fighting was plain to see. Mil-

02 APR 2006

THE TIMES OF INDIA

## শাহিন ২-এর সফল উৎক্ষেপণ

ইসলামাবাদ, ২৯ এপ্রিল: পরমাণু বৈঠক শুরু করেছে পাকিস্তান। অল্পবাহী দূরপাল্লার ব্যালিস্টিক উদ্দেশ্যে, অসামরিক পরমাণু চুক্তির ক্ষেপণাস্ত্রের সফল পরীক্ষামূলক কৌশলগত দিকগুলি নিয়ে ফের এক উৎক্ষেপণ করল পাকিস্তান। এর নাম বার আলোচনা করা। তার পরের দিনই দেওয়া হয়েছে হাতফ ৬ (শাহিন ২)। এই উৎক্ষেপণ নিঃসন্দেহে দু'দেশের এ যাবৎ তৈরি পাক ক্ষেপণাস্ত্রগুলির কাছেই বিশেষ ভাবে তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ।

পাক প্রধানমন্ত্রী শওকত আজিজ মধ্য এটি সব থেকে দূরপাল্লার। এর আজ এক বিবৃতিতে বলেছেন, পরমাণু পাল্লা প্রায় দুই থেকে আড়াই হাজার শক্তি সঞ্চয়ের ব্যাপারে পক্ষপাতিত্বই কিলোমিটার। অর্থাৎ এই ক্ষেপণাস্ত্রের বরদাস্ত করবে না পাকিস্তান। জাতীয় আওতার মধ্যে পড়বে ভারতের নিরাপত্তা সুরক্ষিত করতে এবং দেশের অধিকাংশ বড় শহর। শক্তি ক্ষেত্রে যাবতীয় ঘাটতি পূরণ করতে পাকিস্তান অবশ্যই পরমাণু শক্তির সাহায্য নেবে। এতে দেশীয় বা আন্তর্জাতিক শান্তিভঙ্গের কোনও প্রশ্ন উদারপন্থাকে মোটেই ভাল চোখে ওঠে না। এই উপলক্ষে এই প্রকল্পের দেখেনি পাক সরকার। সম্ভবত তার সঙ্গে যুক্ত সমস্ত বিজ্ঞানী, প্রযুক্তিবিদ উচিত জবাব দিতেই এই পরীক্ষামূলক এবং কারিগরদের শুভেচ্ছা জানান উৎক্ষেপণের সিদ্ধান্ত। উল্লেখ্য, গত প্রধানমন্ত্রী। শুভেচ্ছা জানান প্রেসিডেন্ট কালই আমেরিকার সঙ্গে দু'দিনের পারভেজ মুশারফও।

ভারত-মার্কিন পরমাণু চুক্তি নিয়ে পাকিস্তানে বেশ কিছু দিন ধরেই হাওয়া বেশ গরম। ভারতের অসামরিক পরমাণু শক্তি সঞ্চয়ের ক্ষেত্রে মার্কিন উদারপন্থাকে মোটেই ভাল চোখে দেখেনি পাক সরকার। সম্ভবত তার উচিত জবাব দিতেই এই পরীক্ষামূলক উৎক্ষেপণের সিদ্ধান্ত। উল্লেখ্য, গত কালই আমেরিকার সঙ্গে দু'দিনের

# Pak rejects 'outside advice' on elections

Islamabad: Pakistan has said it does not need outside advice on its democratic process following comments by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on elections due next year.

The foreign ministry issued a statement late on Wednesday following Rice's visit to Islamabad where she met President Pervez Musharraf, a key ally in the US 'war on terror'.

Although Washington has previously said that it wants free and fair parliamentary polls in Pakistan, the Foreign Ministry statement said Rice didn't raise the issue during her talks with Pakistani officials. "Such a subject was not discussed during Secretary Rice's call on the president," it said.

"On the democratic processes in Pakistan, we do not require advice from outside... these matters essentially concern the people of Pakistan," the statement said.

"There should be no doubt in anyone's mind that the elections will be free and fair. This is the commitment of the leadership and government of Pakistan."

However, Rice told reporters on board her flight to

## RICE SNUBBED



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Foreign Ministry |  
PAKISTAN

Islamabad that she would raise the issue of elections when she met Musharraf, who seized power in a bloodless coup in 1999.

"The important thing is the world expects there to be democratic, free and fair elec-

tions in Pakistan in 2007," she said. She did not mention the issue at a press conference after the meeting.

Democracy is a sensitive issue in Pakistan, especially as since becoming president, Musharraf has refused to abandon his role as chief of the powerful army.

Pakistan's parliament chooses the president, but it is unclear if that vote will occur before or after the upcoming legislative elections.

Musharraf's ruling Pakistan Muslim League has indicated, however, that it may call for the presidential vote to be held before the parliamentary polls.

Such a move seems aimed at blocking opposition attempts to win more gains at the parliamentary elections and, in turn, stop Musharraf from winning another term.

The country's opposition, which is negotiating on forming an alliance, want Musharraf to stop wearing his military uniform, a symbol of the president's power and close relationship with the ruling armed forces. Musharraf has said he will take a decision on his uniform at an appropriate time. AGENCIES

# Car bomb kills 6 Pak soldiers

**Miran Shah (Pakistan):** A suicide car bomber attacked a military check point in tribal-dominated northwestern Pakistan on Monday, killing at least six soldiers and wounding 10 others, officials said.

The attack happened near Miran Shah, the main town in North Waziristan tribal region, where Al Qaida and Taliban-linked militants have been routinely targeting Pakistani forces, said Pakistan's chief army spokesman, Major General Shaukat Sultan.

The bomb-packed car was a Toyota Corolla hatchback, which is commonly used as taxi in the region, and it rammed a three-room building housing troops at the check point, called Isha, an intelligence official said.

Sultan said six Pakistani soldiers were killed and 10 wounded in the attack, which happened at about 3 pm in the village of Isha, about six kilometres east of Miran Shah.

Earlier, an intelligence official in Miran Shah said seven soldiers were killed. The official declined to be identified further because of the sensitive nature of his work.

The bombing came a day after a purported militant spokesman in North Waziristan announced that fighters will observe a month-long ceasefire if authorities withdraw soldiers from roadside checkpoints

## UNREST IN TRIBAL LAND

back to their barracks.

Suicide attacks have been rarely used in this volatile region, where militants have tended to detonate explosives near Pakistani troop positions by remote control or launch ambushes using small-arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades.

The last suicide attack occurred June 2 when two militants rammed their explosives-packed car into a mil-

itary convoy in North Waziristan, killing four Pakistani soldiers and wounding seven. "This is not a welcome trend we are starting to see," Sultan said of the suicide bombings.

Military officials have said that hundreds of Arab, Afghan and Central Asian militants with Al Qaida links, along with local pro-Taliban fighters, operate in North and the adjoining South Waziristan tribal regions. The rugged area borders Afghanistan and militants are believed to cross relatively freely between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

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Pakistan a key ally of the US in the war against terrorism has deployed some 80,000 troops along its Afghan border to track down militants. At least 75 Pakistani soldiers have been killed in the tribal regions since January. AGENCIES

# Pakistan In Crisis

91-16  
28/6

*The rich have fun while  
the ship sinks*

**Benazir Bhutto**

Pakistan is witnessing a worrying economic and social divide. There is a growing disparity between the rich and the poor and between the powerful and the powerless.

For the rich, the military dictatorship's high economic growth is a major boon. It means bullish stock markets, booming property prices and easier bank loans. For the assetless poor, the recent surge in economic growth is a bane. Prices of essential goods are higher and purchasing power lower in real terms. Pakistan, in the words of economist Mahbub ul Haq, is like a Titanic where the rich are having fun but the ship is sinking.

This story of growth and inequality, stark poverty amidst obscene luxury, is reminiscent of the 1960s and the so-called "decade of development" under General Ayub Khan.

The divisive economic policies of General Ayub's era sparked a nationwide protest and ultimately culminated in Pakistan's dismemberment in 1971. Now another military dictator follows similar policies of economic exploitation of the poor and disempowerment of citizens.

The military dictatorship's economic mismanagement resulted in record increases in the prices of edible items including pulses, sugar, vegetables and cooking oil. Soaring prices played havoc with the monthly budget of fixed income groups. In the developed world, food prices remained constant. In the United Kingdom, there was no significant increase in the price of milk, oil, poultry, sugar and other items of daily consumption over the last six years.

The Pakistani media rightly highlighted the dramatic increase in food prices. Such price rises lead to children going hungry. Ensuring price stability requires good governance. It requires steps to stop hoarding, improve supply networks, reduce the role of middlemen, and control business cartels.

Sugar prices nearly doubled in the last six months. The Public Accounts Committee held select sugar mills responsible, involving influential sugar barons in the federal cabinet. However, when it comes to nabbing sugar hoarders and business cartels, there is a criminal silence.

The country's entire accountability apparatus is geared towards keeping one unelected leader in office. The regime claims to increase pro-poor expenditures through increased subsidies and higher development spending. Greater allocations for development are welcome, but who will finance these expenditures and how will they reach the poor?

First, there is a distinction between allocations and actual expenditures. The Musharraf regime regularly failed to utilise amounts allo-



ated for development. One chief minister left 70 per cent of development expenditure unutilised.

Second, the relationship between expenditures and outcomes is not automatic. Examples abound of hospitals without doctors, ghost schools, missing teachers, political patronage, centralised management structures and widespread corruption in education and health departments. In fact, when public resources are channelled through dysfunctional public institutions they rarely reach intended beneficiaries.

The poor need a level playing field that ensures socio-economic justice to all. Despite promises of "enlightened moderation", the military regime's managers refuse to change an unequal and unjust system that locks peo-

ple in a perpetual cycle of poverty.

Employment comes through revival of the industrial sector and a fundamental change in national priorities. While masses of young people look for a remunerative job, retired military officers take over civilian positions.

Social protection in Pakistan is grossly inadequate, even as the system taxes the poor and subsidises the rich. The country spends less than one per cent of GDP on social protection. Last year, expenses of both the prime minister's house and president's house exceeded their annual budgetary allocation. The prime minister's house spent twice as much as originally allocated. The new army general headquarters in Islamabad, including mansions and luxury clubs for top military bureaucrats, will cost a whopping \$2.4

billion. To balance the budget, the increase in development expenditures should have been offset by cutting non-development expenditures. Instead, a raise of about Rs 27 billion in defence spending was announced. Moreover, the Public Accounts Committee found last month that over Rs 35 billion in military pensions were paid from the civilian budget. This is strategic fudging to prevent the ratio of defence expenditures to GDP from rising.

At a time when 60 per cent of the people live on \$2 or less a day, when poverty, hunger and unemployment is rising, solidarity with the people could have been demonstrated by reducing

perks for the top military brass. This was not done.

The democratic political parties have a record of strong commitment to defence requirements. But there is a difference between defence requirement and financing lavish lifestyles for the top brass. The charter of democracy signed on May 14, 2006 calls for transparency in defence spending. It is therefore important that the military regime allows a healthy parliamentary discussion on the uses for defence allocations.

Children go hungry and parents cannot find work — the harsh reality of life under the military dictatorship reflects the inability of unrepresentative systems to deliver economic emancipation to their people.

*The writer is chairperson, Pakistan People's Party.*

# Nawaz Sharif says he will soon reveal the truth about Kargil

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DUBAI, JUNE 4

EXILED former Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif has said he had accepted responsibility for the "mess-up" by some generals in Kargil in the "best interest" of the nation and that he would soon reveal what actually happened there.

"I will reveal the truth soon—but in in-camera proceeding," Sharif said in an interview to daily *Gulf News*. The Pakistani leader had earlier claimed he came to know about the intrusion in Kargil by Pakistani troops only after the then Indian prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee phoned him to ask why.

General Pervez Musharraf had been the army chief when the episode took place. "Musharraf breached his oath as army chief when he had my government overthrown through a military coup in October 1999," Sharif said.



Former Pakistan prime minister  
Nawaz Sharif

The former prime minister, who is chief of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), and Pakistan People's Party leader Benazir Bhutto met in Dubai on Friday to discuss strategies to involve other political parties in

their historic 'Charter of Democracy' they signed in London last month to oust the military from politics in Pakistan.

"We got together again ... to discuss the current political situation and to finetune the agenda for meeting of the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD) scheduled to be held in London on July 2," Sharif said. "We are looking forward to having the charter endorsed by allies in the ARD at the meeting," added Bhutto.

Sharif said President Musharraf could not stop him from coming back to the country before the 2007 elections. He met former Pakistan President Rafiq Tarrar and former Justice Mohammad Qayyum in Dubai to discuss legal issues regarding his return to Pakistan.

The government says that if the former PMs try to return, Bhutto would be arrested while Sharif would be sent back.

## Abbas' referendum call rejected

IBRAHIM BARZAK

GAZA CITY, JUNE 4

THE Hamas-led Palestinian government on Sunday effectively rejected a deadline to accept a proposal that implicitly recognises Israel, saying President Mahmoud Abbas' plan for a referendum on the matter is illegal.

The statement by Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh was a sign that Hamas will not give in to Abbas' ultimatum to accept the plan, which calls for a compromise with Israel. Abbas has given Hamas until Tuesday to decide or face a national referendum that he is expected to win. "The advice which we got from experts in international law say that referendums are not permitted on the Palestinian land," said Haniyeh. —AP

INDIAN EXPRESS

05 JUN 2004

WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 2006

## Pakistan's jihadi problems

**W**hile Pakistan claims to have lost more than 600 of the 80,000 troops it has committed to the campaign against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, Afghanistan and the United States remain unimpressed. In the most recent round of acrimonious exchange, the U.S. State Department's Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Henry Crumpton, suggested that Osama bin Laden and other leaders of the extremist outfits had taken shelter on the eastern side of the Durand Line. In parallel, Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Rangeen Dadfar Spanta has asked the Musharraf government to do more to fight terrorism. Islamabad has maintained that these allegations were baseless, asserting that it would have certainly tried to apprehend Osama and the others if only it knew their whereabouts. The truth is likely to remain elusive, since independent monitors are not allowed to enter the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. The Pakistan authorities have failed to convince anyone that they are waging a sustained and intense campaign against the Osama-led jihad. Given the nature of the terrain in the tribal areas, it is understandable that clashes between the Pakistan army and the extremists take place sporadically. However, hardly any information on the campaign is provided in the long intervals between specific operations. In such a situation, it is natural for the world to conclude that Islamabad is not serious about eliminating Taliban and Al-Qaeda sanctuaries within Pakistan.

A less charitable, and perhaps more accurate assessment, is that powerful forces in the establishment, including the military, have not yet cleared the cobwebs in their minds — in thinking through, and operationalising, a policy of no tolerance towards jihadis. It is well known that operatives and partisans of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban move about with ease and propagate their ideology even in those parts of Pakistan where the federal government exercises real control. These organisations apparently face little difficulty in recruiting cadres or raising funds. President Pervez Musharraf has yet to deliver meaningfully on his promise of reforming madrassas so that none of them can function as training schools for jihadis. From the beginning of the U.S.-led war on Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, it has been clear that Islamabad would not be able to compartmentalise the jihadi groups. India expects the Pakistan government to be more earnest about delivering on the promise of ending cross-border terrorism. The strategy of keeping the Kashmir terrorist groups active while clamping down on outfits operating in Afghanistan was never going to work, for the simple reason there was no question of those who believed they were fighting a holy war of terror accepting a diktat that they should cross only one national border or fight only one enemy. While the positive steps taken by President Musharraf deserve appreciation, it is clearly in Pakistan's interests to get more serious about rooting out the sources of terrorist jihad.

10 MAY 2006

# Bhutto claims she vetoed plan by generals to attack US

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
ISLAMABAD, MAY 11

IN A startling revelation, former Pakistan PM Benazir Bhutto has claimed that during her tenure some Arab militant leaders and Pakistani generals had planned to start a war against the US in association with Osama bin Laden but she vetoed it.

Following the disintegration of the USSR, some Arab militant leaders and Pakistani generals planned to start war against the US. "However, I vetoed this plan. Thereafter, Osama started his endeavours to pull down my government. Ramzi Yusuf tried to assassinate me," Bhutto said.

Two Army generals, Army chief Aslam Baig and Director General ISI Gen Hamid Gul who turned out to be bitter critics of US and defenders of militant group, served during Bhutto's second tenure.



In an interview, she said the Saudi King had told her in 1989 that he declined to provide money to destabilise her government. "The adviser to the Saudi King told one of my ministers that Osama provided \$10 million for toppling my government," she said.

She said Ramzi Yusuf has toyed with the idea of attacking World Trade Towers in 1990s and US then sought co-operation of her government. "I offered to US authorities to set up the FBI office in Pakistan in 1993 so that effective action could be launched to eliminate terrorism. As a result

Ramzi Yousuf was arrested."

Bhutto also said that President Pervez Musharraf will not apprehend Osama as it would amount to a "political suicide" and deprive himself of justification for his continuation.

"If General Pervez Musharraf catches Osama, he will this way cease to have the justification of his rule. Musharraf will not give up his leadership. He cannot want to commit political suicide by arresting Osama," said Bhutto adding Musharraf "failed" to keep his promise he made to the international community.

During the Tora Bora operation, Musharraf had told the US to leave the chase of bin Laden to him, saying the Pakistan Army would arrest the Al-Qaeda chief, but he did not do so, she said. Bhutto said that after the dissolution of her government in 1996, bin Laden re-established camps and started recruiting people.

12 MAY 2005

INDIAN EXPRESS



# Bhutto-Sharif democracy deal means nothing: Pakistan

SADAQAT JAN

ISLAMABAD, MAY 15

A DEAL struck in London on Sunday between exiled former premiers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif vowing to return to Pakistan to contest elections in 2007 and fight the military rule of President Gen Pervez Musharraf will have no impact, a government spokesman said on Monday.

"It's not a threat at all because whatever impact they could have, the government is already facing it. There is nothing new in this," Information Minister Mohammed Ali Durrani said.

Durrani reiterated the government's stance that Sharif



File photo of Nawaz Sharif with Benazir Bhutto

would not be allowed back to Pakistan. He said there was no bar, however, on Bhutto returning, he gave no indication that the corruption charges against her would be lifted.

Despite holding parliamentary elections in 2002, Musharraf still dominates this Islamic nation and has repeat-

edly said that Sharif and Bhutto have no role to play in Pakistani politics.

Fresh elections are due in 2007 and pressure is growing on Musharraf to make clear whether he will step down as the Army chief.

Bhutto was prime minister between 1988-1990 and 1993-1996. She was dismissed each time over allegations of corruption and mismanagement. She left Pakistan in 1999 to avoid arrest in corruption cases.

While Sharif was prime minister between 1990-93 and 1997-99. He went into exile in Saudi Arabia in 2000 along with family members after Musharraf's coup. —AP

18 MAY 2006

INDIAN EXPRESS

# Benazir, Nawaz Sharif sign "charter of democracy"

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Former Pakistan Prime Ministers say they will return home

Hasan Suroor

**LONDON:** Former Pakistan Prime Ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif signed a "charter of democracy" here on Sunday as they stepped up their joint campaign against President Pervez Musharraf ahead of next year's elections in Pakistan.

They also vowed to return home to take part in the election campaign and rejected speculation about a possible "deal" with President Musharraf.

The charter, the second such agreement to be signed by two former political rivals in recent months, commits Ms. Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Mr. Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (N) to restoring democracy in Pakistan and strengthening the parliamentary system. The charter also calls for setting up a commission to inquire into the Kargil conflict and seeks a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue.

"Peaceful relations with India

and Afghanistan will be pursued without prejudice to outstanding disputes," it said.

Describing it as a "historic" accord, the two leaders said that they had decided to work together in the "larger interest of the nation."

"It's true that there were major differences between the two parties in the past. But we have both been victims of military dictatorship and so we have an understanding of the larger picture," Ms Bhutto said. Their prime objective was to ensure

Pakistan's political stability and peace in the region. She said Pakistan had been declared as a "failed" state by European analysts. "I and Nawaz Sharif don't want to see Pakistan as a failed state," she declared.

Mr. Sharif called the agreement a "milestone" in the struggle against "dictatorship."

"We've signed this historic agreement in the best interest of the country... I have found Benazir very sincere in waging a joint struggle for the revival of genuine democracy in the country," he said.

Both leaders gifted to each the pens with which they signed the accord. Ms. Bhutto, who faces arrest on corruption charges if she returns to Pakistan, insisted that she intended to go back. "I will definitely go back before 2007 polls," she said dismissing the corruption cases against her. Mr. Sharif, who risks breaking the terms of his exile if he returned to Pakistan, said: "I and Benazir will go back together."

## Unethical pact, says Islamabad

B. Muralidhar Reddy

**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan Government on Monday maintained that the "charter of democracy" pact between the two former Prime Ministers, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif was "an unnatural and unethical agreement aimed at grabbing power by hook or crook."

Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, Tariq Azeem

claimed that people have become sane and wise to discern between right and wrong and cannot be hoodwinked by new gimmicks like signing the charter of democracy.

"Both leaders have different thinking and mindsets, have no common thing except wish for power. We have already experienced their two terms. It is obvious that they are only trying to create media hype," he said.

# People's Pakistan

*The long hard road  
to democracy*

Long-time rivals Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif getting together in London to sign a 'charter for democracy' for their country is an interesting development in Pakistani politics. The significance of the charter, hammered out by Pakistan's two main political parties, lies in its having taken the most comprehensive stance till date against the overweening position the army and intelligence apparatus occupy in Pakistan's polity. The charter envisages bringing the military under civilian command, disbanding the National Security Council, bringing the defence budget under parliamentary oversight, and throwing out army officers who occupy civilian posts. Polls would be conducted by an independent election commission, and independence of the judiciary restored. It is impressive that such a blueprint for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan exists. What would be even more impressive is if Sharif and Bhutto were to bury past political differences and act upon such a blueprint.

The last is by no means certain. It would require, at the very least, that Sharif and Bhutto return to Pakistan sometime before elections that are scheduled to be held next year. Of course the present government could clap one or both of them in jail. But jail can be a good place to lead political campaigns from — if they are willing to take the risk. What they would have going for them is that General Musharraf's position has eroded considerably since his coup in October 1999 — he is no longer seen as a knight on a white charger, on a mission to rid Pakistan of corrupt politicians. Nowadays he is seen more as a stooge of the unpopular President Bush, and the army is perceived as presiding over institutionalised corruption, such as the pervasive system whereby the military procures land ostensibly for defence housing and then sells it at free market rates. The charter's demand for an independent election commission appears to preclude the Pakistan People's Party and the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) from participating in elections under the present dispensation. A boycott would be a powerful means of drawing attention to the system's irregularities and, perhaps, changing the rules under which elections are conducted. But do PPP and PML(N) have the gumption to see this through? The only certainty is that their future behaviour will need to be very different from the past for this to happen.

17 MAY 2005

THE TIMES OF INDIA

# Musharraf bids for a second term

**REUTERS**  
Islamabad, May 18

PAKISTAN'S PRESIDENT Pervez Musharraf said he could be voted in for a second five-year term by the current parliament and provincial assemblies before their dissolution for general elections due by the beginning of 2008.

Analysts said Musharraf, who came to power in a military coup more than six years ago, appeared to be paving the way for his re-election by lawmakers he can rely on rather than risk a new assembly at a time when his popularity is waning.

Musharraf's current term expires in mid-November next year, as does parliament's, and a debate has been going on in the media over whether the president could get another five years in power from the outgoing assemblies.

In an interview with Avt Khyber Television, parts of which were aired on Thursday, Musharraf spelt out that under the terms of the constitution he should seek re-election up to two months before his term ends.

"There are no ifs or buts in the constitution," Musharraf told the private Pashto-language channel, which will air the interview in full on Friday.

A senior government official said it meant the outgoing assemblies would have to elect the president as a general election would take place later.

Analysts said seeking re-election from the present assemblies could be seen as a sign of weakness, coming on the heels of moves by mainstream opposition parties to strengthen alliances ahead of the polls.

Two exiled former prime ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif on Sunday vowed to work together by signing a "charter of democracy" in London, and said they would return to Pakistan together before the elections.

"He thinks it will be safe for him to get re-elected from the current parliament because nobody knows about the composition of the new parliament," said Lahore-based analyst Hasan Askari Rizvi.

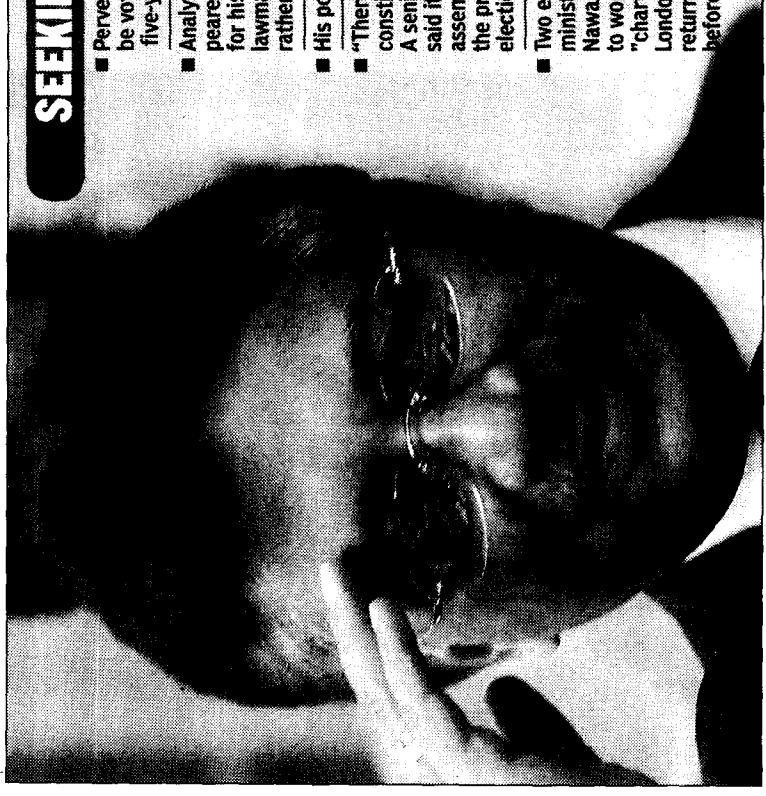
Musharraf recently admitted his popularity had ebbed. Religious parties used the

furore caused in the Islamic world over Danish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad to criticise Musharraf for befriending the West. At the same time there has been a perception in Pakistan that Musharraf may have lost some support from Washington, which has regarded him as a crucial Muslim ally against al-Qaeda and the Taliban since the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US.

The US is encouraging Musharraf to strengthen democratic institutions in Pakistan and US officials have said Washington wants to see "free and fair elections" take place.

Sherry Rehman, an aide to Bhutto, said Musharraf's remarks reduced chances of reconciliation with the mainstream progressive political parties that he has marginalised despite portraying himself as a bulwark against religious extremism.

She also believed Musharraf was seeking to hold onto his dual role as president and army chief, which he retained through a controversial amendment to the constitution three years ago.



## SEEKING OFFICE

- Pervez Musharraf said he could be voted in for a second five-year term
- Analysts said Musharraf appeared to be paving the way for his re-election by lawmakers he can rely on rather than risk new assembly
- His popularity is on the wane
- "There are no ifs or buts in the constitution," Musharraf said. A senior government official said it meant the outgoing assemblies would have to elect the president as a general election would take place later.
- Two exiled former prime ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif on Sunday vowed to work together by signing a "charter of democracy" in London. They said they'd return to Pakistan together before the elections.

# Pakistan debates democracy

The recent London meeting between Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif has charged the political scene in Pakistan.

Nirupama Subramanian

ELECTIONS IN Pakistan are not due until November 2007 but the air is already a thick mixture of anticipation, speculation, and rumour of political developments to come.

President George Bush started it all off on his Islamabad visit in March with his comments about the United States encouraging President Pervez Musharraf towards a return to democracy. Soon after, the Pakistan leader said he would hold free and fair elections next year.

The democracy debate intensified last week when two old adversaries, Benazir Bhutto, leader of the Pakistan People's Party, and Nawaz Sharif, who heads the Pakistan Muslim League (N), buried the hatchet and pledged to work together for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan.

In London where they met, the two signed a "Charter for Democracy," a manifesto that promises sweeping changes in Pakistan. It envisages a virtual restructuring of the country, starting from clipping the wings of the military and intelligence agencies to all other aspects of governance.

But to implement this ambitious plan — it means changing big chunks of the Constitution — the two parties have to at least win the next election, either separately or together. In the 2002 National Assembly elections, both Ms. Bhutto and Mr. Sharif — the former living in London since 1999 and unable to return for fear of being arrested on arrival on corruption charges, and the latter self-exiled in Saudi Arabia after President Musharraf ousted him — could only watch as large sections of their parties deserted them and joined hands with the military dispensation.

A faction of Mr. Sharif's party, the Pakistan Muslim League (Qaid-e-Azam), which won the largest number of seats in the election, and a faction of the PPP called Patriots now form the ruling coalition along with the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, an alliance of religious parties.

What chance do either Ms. Bhutto's PPP or Mr. Sharif's PML stand this time around? Exulting in the euphoria of the London agreement, both parties assert they have what it takes. But at the moment, their pronouncements have more bravado than confidence.

In the office of the PPP in Islamabad, the old faithful gather everyday to keep the party flag flying in the absence of their leader.

"We believe we can win, provided the elections are free and fair," said Farahtullah Babar, a former senator and spokesman for Ms. Bhutto.

The bottom line for a free and fair election, according to Mr. Babar, is a neutral caretaker government, none of whose members should be allowed to contest the election. It must not be appointed by President



JOINING FORCES? Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif. — PHOTO: REUTERS

Musharraf but through a consensus among all political parties. Equally important is an overhaul of the Election Commission.

"But the most important is that the leadership of the parties must be allowed to return to the country," said Mr. Babar.

That means the Pakistan Government must guarantee that Ms. Bhutto will not be arrested on arrival, and Mr. Sharif will not be either arrested or put on a plane back. Even without this assurance, the two former Prime Ministers have already said they will return, but while many are sceptical about whether they actually will, or if they will be permitted to, it has injected some life into party workers holding the fort by themselves all these years.

"The moment they land in Pakistan, the whole atmosphere will change," said Raja Zafrullah Haq, a Minister in Mr. Sharif's government and chairman of PML(N). Quoting Article 15 of the Constitution, he said no citizen could be prevented from returning to Pakistan.

Both parties believe that by holding the U.S. and other Western countries to their pronouncements on democracy, they can generate enough pressure on President Musharraf to create the right conditions for transparent elections. But will the West oblige?

"We know that on the global strategic chessboard, the U.S. is supporting General Musharraf because it needs Pakistan. Our

immediate goal is to tell the West and the democratic world that the fight on terror can be won and stability in Pakistan guaranteed best by a democratic set-up. And a genuine democracy is best achieved by a free and fair election," said Mr. Babar.

President Musharraf, meanwhile, has derided the Bhutto-Sharif pact as "ironic" coming from two leaders who were "enemies of democracy" during their two terms each. Still, the President, who recently admitted in an interview to *The Guardian* newspaper that his popularity was waning and asserted he was "not a poodle" of the U.S., has not been able to shrug off the pact entirely.

Days after the London pact, he announced that he would seek a second term from the existing electoral college. Under the Constitution, the President has to be elected by the National Assembly and the provincial assemblies.

President Musharraf's first term came through a controversial referendum in April 2002, 18 months after he took power in a coup. The assemblies formed after the November 2002 elections endorsed the referendum. His tenure ends on November 15, 2007, and the next presidential elections are due between September 15 and October 15, ahead of the national and provincial elections. With the existing electoral college, the President is assured of a second term and should he choose to go down this path, he

can avoid the uncertainty of re-election through the newly elected assemblies.

Some of his opponents have reacted angrily. "There will be a lot of tension in the country if he again tries to bulldoze his way. It may be very easy to take over a country but it will be difficult if he tries to look for legitimacy again. The people are sick and tired of him," said Mr. Haq.

In the coming weeks, the PPP and the PML(N) will appeal to other parties to join hands with them in order to force the kind of election they want. The MMA, a restive partner of the ruling coalition, is their primary target because of its discontent with President Musharraf for many reasons. He broke his promise to the MMA that he would shed his uniform at the end of 2004. It is also hard put to explain to its constituents, mainly of the religious right, its support for a President who is increasingly defined by his alliance with the U.S. But the MMA, a coalition of five parties, does not speak in one voice, and it is not clear if this alliance, which was egged on by President Musharraf to fill the political vacuum post-1999, will join hands with his opponents.

Ms. Bhutto and Mr. Sharif have one last weapon if their conditions for elections are not met — a boycott, on the ground that they are not free and fair. Whether or not this has the desired effect on President Musharraf, at the very least it can severely embarrass his democratic Western allies.

25 MAY 2006

THE HINDU

## Learning democratic lessons

**B**enazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, who served as Prime Ministers of Pakistan through much of the 1990s, were equally guilty of breaching the political principle that forbids seeking the aid of undemocratic forces to capture power. That they both suffered as a consequence does not absolve them of the responsibility for the incalculable harm they inflicted on their country's constitutional order. Now at last, they appear to have learnt the lesson they should have done a long time ago. While declaring their intent to restore democracy and strengthen the parliamentary system, the two leaders promised that they would not make separate deals with the military-dominated establishment. In the past, army chiefs and indirectly elected Presidents dismissed governments without facing much protest from the political class as a whole. To the contrary, opposition parties made a habit of praising the military for overthrowing the elected government. For this reason among others, the democratic principle that governments should be changed only through the electoral process failed to strike roots in Pakistan. Such behaviour on the part of the opposition parties was perhaps nothing to be surprised about. After all, the elected leaders, taking their cue from the military dictators who ruled off and on, had hounded their political rivals without compunction. The agreement between Ms. Bhutto and Mr. Sharif will be all the more wholesome if it binds them to the other important principle – that adequate political space should be provided to the opposition.

This agreement, which bears the rather grandiloquent name "Charter of Democracy," will have little practical value if the two leaders do not return to Pakistan, which is the critical first step towards implementing it. While Ms. Bhutto and Mr. Sharif have promised to do so well before the election in 2007, it is far from certain that they will. The Pakistan Peoples Party leader is very likely to be detained on corruption charges the moment she sets foot on Pakistani soil. Mr. Sharif will also lose the immunity granted to him when he went into exile. But they must run these risks if they are to honour their promise of restoring democracy. They are still arguably the politicians with the widest bases of support in Pakistan. There are indications that the intelligentsia, the masses, and even sections of officialdom are disillusioned with the dyarchic system in place. The other secular formations in the country appear ready to endorse the agreement that was unveiled in London on May 15. These forces need to be reinvigorated so that the Islamic Right can be stopped in its tracks. However, as and when they live up to their word, Ms. Bhutto and Mr. Sharif need to avoid the temptation of seeking help from forces outside Pakistan.

# Zawahri calls for Musharraf ouster

REUTERS  
Dubai, April 29

In his latest video posted on the internet, al-Qaida's deputy leader Ayman al-Zawahri claimed victory in Iraq, but he breathed fire on Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and called for his ouster.

Hundreds of suicide bombers had "broken America's back" in three years of war, Zawahri said. The release of the video came just days after the broadcast of an audio tape from al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden and a rare video from Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the group's leader in Iraq.

Zawahri urged the Pakistani people to rise up against Musharraf, who has survived several al-Qaida-inspired assassination attempts since allying himself with Washington. Pakistan has captured or killed hundreds of al-Qaida members. "I call on the people to stand with Islam against the Zionist-Crusader assault... and topple this bribe-taking treacherous criminal," he added.

Zawahri also condemned Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia as "traitors" for their close ties with the West.

On Iraq, however, the terror mastermind was extremely optimistic. "The al-Qaida in Iraq alone has carried out 800 martyrdom operations in

three years, besides the victories of the other mujahideen. And this is what has broken the back of America in Iraq," Zawahri said in the video.

Thousands of Iraqis have been killed in a relentless insurgent campaign of bombings that mostly target US soldiers and Iraq's fledgling security forces. Nearly 2,400 US soldiers have died in Iraq since the US-led invasion in 2003, many by roadside bombs, and April has been the bloodiest month of the year so far for US forces.

"America, Britain and their allies have achieved nothing but losses, disasters and misfortunes," the Egyptian militant leader said in the video.

30 APR 2006

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# Benazir, Sharif to talk democracy strategy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON, APRIL 24

FORMER Pakistan prime ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif today planned to build a strategy to restore democracy in the country and revive the constitution in their joint efforts to end the military dictatorship of Pervez Musharraf.

"The meeting with Mian Nawaz Sharif today is aimed at discussing a joint drive for the revival of constitution and democ-



File photo of Bhutto and Sharif at their Jeddah meeting last year

told newsmen ahead of their meeting here.

"We did have differences in the past but we feel the well-being of Pakistan is far more important than any differences that our parties may have had. And we are determined to make a common united agenda to restore democracy to Pakistan," she said.

Bhutto said there would not be any tie-up with the Islamist alliance Mutahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) but her party would extend every possible cooperation

with Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (N) and other political parties in the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy.

She said, "The Indian people, and Sri Lankans have great achievements in terms of rule of law, constitution and human rights that unfortunately my country has lagged behind. Sharif and I would like to change that."

Bhutto and Sharif, who have lived abroad for several years, would discuss a host of issues including their return to Islamabad.

25 APR 2006

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# Serious threat to Pakistan's civil society

Praveen Swami

**P**AKISTAN'S RELIGIOUS right is at war with itself, with clerics locked in a mortal combat that could have more fateful consequences for the future of the nation than any of the several crises that have enveloped it since 2001.

Last week, a massive explosion at a Karachi congregation, held to celebrate the birthday of Prophet Muhammad, claimed 57 lives and left over 200 injured. The congregation was organised by the Jamaat Ahl-e-Sunnat, a body of the Barelvi religious sect that is opposed to Islamist groups affiliated to the Deobandi and Salafi traditions such as the Jamaat-ud-Dawa, the Tablighi Jamaat and the Jamaat Ahl-e-Hadis.

Experts believe that the bombers targeted Abbas Qadri, Amir or supreme leader of the Sunni Tehreek, a Barelvi organisation fighting since 1992 to regain mosques which it claims were usurped by the sect's opponents. Sunni Tehreek leaders claim to have seized at least 62 Deobandi and Salafi mosques between 1992 and 2002 in ways that have on occasion sparked violence.

To those familiar with Pakistan's ugly history of sectarian conflict, the signs are ominous. In May 2001, murderous sectarian riots broke out after Sunni Tehreek leader Saleem Qadri was assassinated by the Sipah Sahaba Pakistan, a Deoband-affiliated terrorist group. His successor, Abbas Qadri, charged President Pervez Musharraf's regime with "patronising terrorists" and "standing between us and the murderers."

After Abbas Qadri's death, one thing is clear: someone, sooner rather than later, will seek to settle the Sunni Tehreek's unfinished business with his murderers.

Shia and Sunni sectarian organisations have long been locked in murderous conflict. Last week's bombing though was executed by a Sunni terrorist organisation, targeting other Sunnis. What is this conflict all about?

Set up at Karachi in 1956, the Jamaat Ahl-e-Sunnat, or Organisation of the Followers of the

## Last week's terror bombing in Karachi points to one of the least-examined faultlines in Pakistan: the war for power between Barelvi and Deobandi clerics.

Scripture, rapidly emerged as one of the largest organisations of the Barelvi faith. According to Mohammad Amir Rana's encyclopaedic *A-Z of Jihadi Organisations in Pakistan*, the Jamaat Ahl-e-Sunnat is raising upwards of Rs. 400,000,000 to build educational and social service institutions and even a bank.

Barelvi organisations such as the Jamaat Ahl-e-Sunnat represent the mainstream of popular Islam in South Asia, drawing on theologian Raza Ahmad Khan (1856-1921). In the Barelvi tradition, the Prophet is an immanent presence, not flesh [*bashar*] but rather light [*nur*]. For followers of the high traditions that emerged from the Dar-ul-Uloom seminary in Deoband, the Prophet is a perfect human [*insan-i-kamil*] but a mortal nonetheless.

In practice, the Barelvis believe in intercession between humans and the divine through Pirs or holy personages who are bound in a chain that reaches, eventually, to the Prophet. The Barelvis venerate the tombs of Pirs and holy relics. Deobandi groups, such as the West Asia-based Salafi school, argue that these practices — which include celebration of the Prophet's birthday — are heretical deviations from scripture.

While the Pakistan Movement drew much of its support from the Barelvis, the Indian National Congress had the support of Deoband. In the years after the creation of Pakistan though the elite rallied behind the high-church practices of Deoband. The Tablighi Jamaat and the Jamaat Ahl-e-Hadis flourished, making significant inroads into Pakistan's most important institution — army.

After the Iranian revolution of 1979, President

Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq threw the resources of the state behind Deobandi-Salafi clerics, hoping to contain Shia radicals. However, this course of action had two unanticipated consequences. First, the emergence of anti-Shia terror groups provoked a backlash from the minority. Secondly, the Barelvi groups also began to mobilise against the growing influence of their Deobandi radicals.

Put simply, the Barelvi tradition might have been concerned more with personal piety than political power but the clerics who represent it were not about to sit back and watch the state destroy their authority. By the time of the assassination of Saleem Qadri in 2001, these tensions were coming to a head. Now with the terror bombing of the Karachi congregation, they threaten to tear Pakistan apart.

### Competitive communalism

Do Pakistan's Barelvi clerics, as some in India argue, represent a benign traditionalist piety, hostile to the *jihad*-enthusiasm of Deoband? Not quite. Like its Deobandi counterparts, the Jamaat Ahl-e-Sunnat has been associated with Islamist causes across the world. A manifesto published after its April 2000 convention in Multan commits the Jamaat Ahl-e-Sunnat to expressly political causes such as preparing "a plan of action to help all the oppressed Muslims in the world, particularly the Kashmiri mujahideen," and to "protect and publicise the concept of Pakistan."

Several major terrorist groups active in Jammu and Kashmir, notably the Jammu and Kashmir Islamic Front, the Tehreek-i-Jihad and the

al-Barq have emerged with support from the Barelvi clerical establishment. While none is as large as the Hizb ul-Mujahideen or the Lashkar-e-Taiba, the groups have demonstrated their capabilities more than once: the JKIF, for example, was responsible for the bombing of a crowded New Delhi market in 1996.

Several Barelvi organisations have taken even more expressly Islamist postures than the Jamaat Ahl-e-Sunnat. For example, Pir Mohammad Afzal Qadri's Aalami Tanzim Ahl-e-Sunnat, or the World Movement of the Followers of the Scripture, which was set up in May 1998, responded to the growth of the Tablighi Jamaat by campaigning for the creation of an Islamic state.

Aalami Tanzim leaders initiated their activities with a 1999 demonstration in Rawalpindi, followed in quick time by a protest at the Army's General Headquarters. Its cadre held up placards that demanded: "Rulers, implement the Nizam-e-Mustafa [Order of the Prophet] upon yourself." The organisation's literature attacked rival Islamist groups for creating "a soft corner for false religions and thus causing great damage."

Like both the Jamaat Ahl-e-Sunnat and the Deobandi organisations it opposed, the Aalami Tanzim was also not opposed to Islamist terrorism. Amongst its other front organisations is the Lashkar Ahl-e-Sunnat, which funnelled both funds and cadre to terrorist groups such as the Tehreek-i-Jihad. Led by Ghulam Farid Usmani, the Lashkar Ahl-e-Sunnat is committed to a "jihad for Allah and the supremacy of Islam."

At the heart of the conflict then is competition among clerics for retaining and expanding their power. The massive flow of funds from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states to organisations such as the Ahl-e-Hadith and the Tablighi Jamaat brought the traditional authority of Barelvi clerics under siege, provoking them to respond by creating their own *jihadi* groups, political fronts and institutions of patronage.

### A troubled future

It is no coincidence that the Karachi bombing came in the midst of a renewed mobilisation by religious right, aimed at taking power in Pakistan through the 2007 elections.

With the military allowing little space for mainstream political organisations such as the former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party or the deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League, the clerics grouped together in the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal are sensing real opportunity. Organisations such as the Jamaat Ahl-e-Sunnat undermine their claim to speak for Islam — hence, it seems likely, the Karachi attack.

Little noticed, competition amongst the Barelvis' rivals has also been escalating. Last year, Pakistani journalist Khalid Ahmad pointed to intense fighting within the ranks of the Jamaat Ahl-e-Hadith, the sect from which the Lashkar was born, with at least 17 separate organisations scrambling for space. On more than one occasion, intra-sect invective has been at least as acid as anything directed at supposed heretics.

For example, after the Lashkar chief, Hafiz Mohammad Saeed, criticised the Markazi Jamaat Ahl-e-Hadith for its lack of support for armed *jihad*, he promptly faced retaliatory allegations. The head of the Markazi Jamaat Ahl-e-Hadith, Qari Abdul Hafeez, charged Saeed with authorising the detention of kidnapped women slaves, bank robbery, and misappropriation of funds.

Under other circumstances, scurrilous polemic traded among clerics would be little more than public entertainment. But the fact that clerics on all sides of the ideological divide have access to formidable military resources — the wages of the use of *jihad* as an instrument of state policy — means that theocratic disputes pose a real threat to the fabric of civil society in Pakistan.

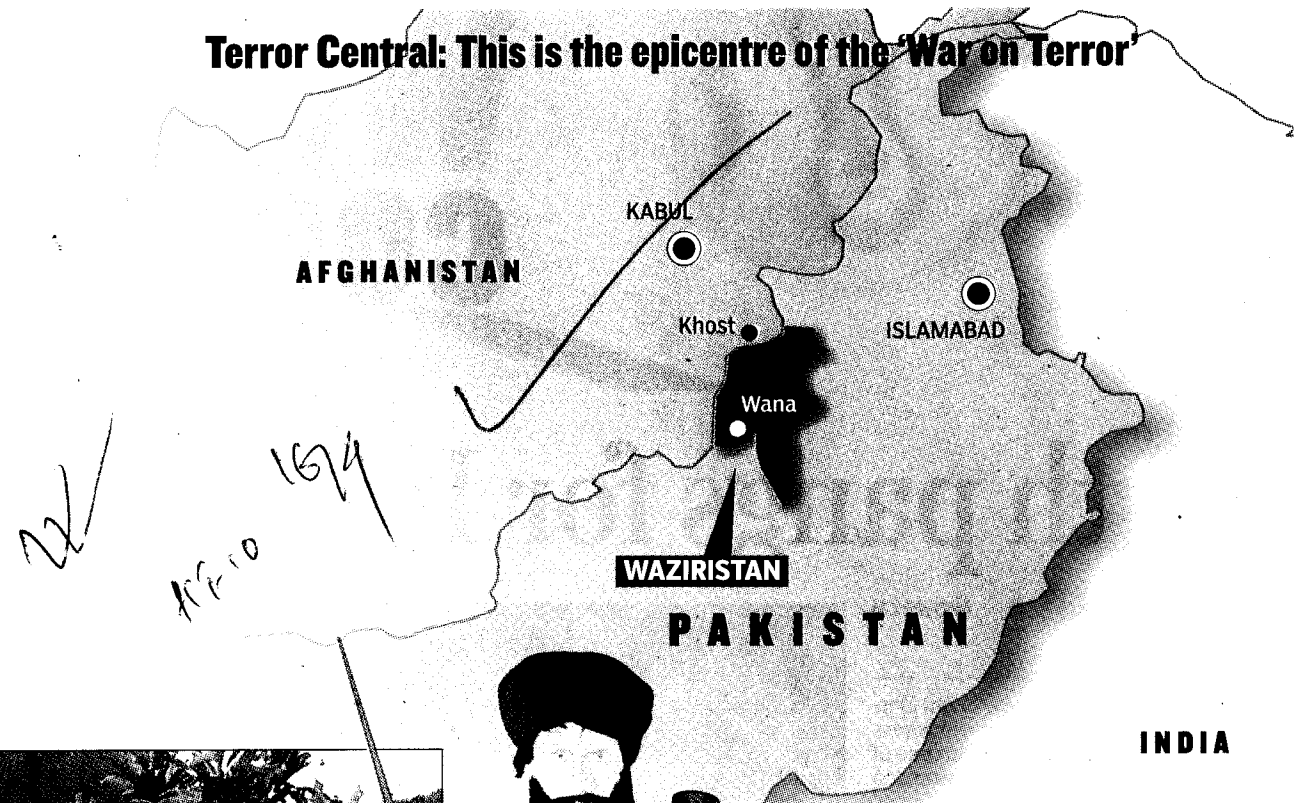
Despite repeated demonstrations that the costs of the *jihad* in Jammu and Kashmir are at least as high for Pakistan itself, President Musharraf's regime has shown few signs that it is willing to break with the past. Unless it finds the courage and good sense to do so, the only real question emerging from the unimaginable horror in Karachi is just when and where it will repeat itself.

## CARTOONSCAPE



# WAR IN WAZIRISTAN

Terror Central: This is the epicentre of the 'War on Terror'



MISSILE HIT: A tribesman stands in the compound which was hit by Cobra gunship helicopters in Nagar, 6 km south of Miranshah, on April 13. REUTERS

## FATA FACTS

Waziristan — located between the Durand line and NWFP — is about 11,585 sq km, a swathe of mountainous tract between the Tochi and Gomal rivers. Located on the cultural fault-line of two Afghan cultures, the Kandahar and Peshawar

- SIZE 27,220 sq km (about 3 per cent of Pakistan)
- Population: 3.5 million (1998 census)
- TRIBES
  - Malakand and Bajaur
  - Yusufzais
  - Mohamand
  - Mohmands
  - Khyber
  - Afridis and Shinwaris
  - Kurram
  - Turis and Bangash
  - Orakzai
  - Orakzais
  - North Waziristan
  - Wazirs
  - South Waziristan
  - Mehsuds
- SOCIAL INDICATORS
  - FATA is Pakistan's most underdeveloped area. A 2001 WHO report says:
  - 50% live in abject poverty
  - 75% have no access to clean drinking water
  - 3.9% population growth rate; National average 1.9 per cent
  - 17% literacy (female literacy: 3 per cent); National average is 44 per cent
  - 8,189: Population per doctor
  - 83.3 per 100 Infant mortality rate
  - 7.3% of total area is cultivated
  - 6.3% of total area is cultivable wasteland
  - 80% of tribals depend on agriculture
  - 30% is engaged in livestock activities
  - 0.16 km of road per square km (national average 0.31 km)

## Blood ties to Afghanistan

WITH PUSHTUNS straddling the Durand line, there are close ethnic, cultural and religious ties; nine Afghan clans have close links to Waziristan, the largest being the Zalikhel sub-tribe. So events in Afghanistan affect them. And Afghanistan has always felt the Pushtuns should be united under their country, so Afghan relations with Pakistan had always been strained. Afghanistan even opposed Pakistan's entry to the UN, saying it could not recognise the NWFP as part of Pakistan if the people weren't given the right to self-determination.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 left a deep impact on FATA. The influx of refugees and modern weapons led to the 'Kalashnikov culture'. AK assault rifles are said to number in the millions in FATA. Drug-trafficking also became widespread; it is well-known that heroin was introduced to finance the jihad against the USSR.

The jihad radicalised FATA; hundreds of madrassas were set up with aid from Saudi Arabia. One estimate says there were 16,000-18,000 fresh recruits annually for the jihad against the USSR.

Under Taliban rule, FATA tribals joined in the fight against the Northern Alliance. And after 9/11, with the USA's war on terrorism, most al Qaeda and Taliban officials slipped into FATA, especially Waziristan, for refuge. South Waziristan became the hub of al Qaeda/Taliban activity.

# Coming soon? The Taliban's new country

ADITYA Sinha  
New Delhi

LAST MONDAY, the Taliban offered Islamabad peace — from within Pakistani territory. From Waziristan, a mountainous tribal area on the Afghanistan border that's just a bit bigger than Tripura but that has become the epicentre of the USA's war on terror. It's also become another war against the Pakistani State from within, joining Balochistan, Gilgit, and Karachi. And despite Islamabad having sent six divisions of the Pakistan army — pulling several from the India border and equipping them with helicopter gunships, jet fighters and heavy artillery — to fight the Taliban and al Qaeda, Waziristan continues to slip out of its grasp. Another six months, say government sources in New Delhi, and the War in Waziristan would have a momentum of its own. "Azad Qabaili" (Free Tribals) would become a reality, and the Taliban would have found a new country of their own.

North and South Waziristan are two of seven Pushtun regions known as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). No one has ever subjugated FATA, from Alexander of Macedonia to the Imperial British. The Pakistanis kept a 'hands off' policy, but did not hesitate to use the Waziristan tribals to invade Kashmir in 1947, or help in the anti-USSR jihad in the 1980s. The tribal DNA is the same as that of the Pushtuns in Afghanistan, so they became as radicalised as the Taliban government. And when the US invaded Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks — especially after December 2001 when the US nearly nabbed Osama bin Laden at Tora Bora — Waziristan was a natural refuge for the Islamists.

Under pressure from the Americans, the



KEEPING THEIR OWN COUNSEL: A jirga in progress in Waziristan in Mir Ali on April 10

Pakistanis have run several operations in Waziristan since 2002, each successive one growing in lethality, and achieving nothing more than driving the local population deeper into the Taliban embrace. Despite deploying nearly 80,000 troops — a bulk of them drawn from the border with India, evidence of Pakistani desperation — and 80 check posts (to keep an eye on the border) in the area, there have been no gains for Islamabad. Partly this is because of Pakistan's approach to the US "hammer and anvil" strategy, wherein Pakistan is supposed to push Taliban/jihadis across the border for the US-Afghan forces to neutralise; on the ground, very little US-Pak coordination appears to be happening.

It's also because the Pakistan state's reach is limited (a consequence of the 'hands off' policy); the army is comfortable only in the main towns

of South Waziristan. It does not venture into the remaining two-thirds of Waziristan, rural and mountainous. This has partly to do with the migration of the Taliban and al Qaeda into FATA; in 2002, they went first to the Ahmedzai Wazir area of South Waziristan, and their 2003 operation in Angoor Adda was a bloody one.

So the jihadis moved to North Waziristan, and major army thrusts in 2004 around Azam Warsak and Shakai, made heroes out of tribals like Baitullah Mehsud. That 2004 operation (which began while India resumed cricketing ties with a tour) was planned as a quick surgical strike; it has stretched far beyond the anticipated timeframe and territorial limits.

The latest offensive in that operation was on March 29, when the Pakistan army's Special Services Group reportedly killed 41 jihadis in North Waziristan. What galled the locals is that

just six days earlier, the North West Frontier Provinces (NWFP) Governor, Khalil-ur-Rehman, announced that the government had halted all operations to let the tribals take a shot at peace. The Islamists accused the government of timing the offensive with the visit of US President George Bush (and after he landed, clashes broke out in North Waziristan's main town Miranshah, which left nearly 100 people dead).

In all, during 2005, 300 civilians were killed while 250 army personnel lost their lives in the region. And whenever Pakistan has slackened in its fight, the US has stepped in: missile strikes by unmanned Predator drones have been regular since 2004. In January this year, the US launched a missile strike on a house at a Bajaur village abutting Waziristan, where Osama's deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, was supposed to be dining. Zawahiri got away, and the strike brought into the open what the tribals know and what Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf has been denying — US military activity within his country's territory.

The US-Pervez nexus has allowed the Islamists to gain ground, and last month the Taliban opened an office in South Waziristan's Wana town; they also announced the imposition of Shariat laws in the region. Consequently, girls schools and barber shops have been shut down; local thugs have been beheaded and their headless corpses displayed on the roadside. The fact that throughout Waziristan's history, the legends have all been clerics provides a clue to how the locals feel about this radicalisation.

The irony, of late, is that with a war waging, the Taliban is offering Musharraf a truce. The terms are a bit difficult: withdrawal of all troops, and release of all prisoners. The Americans won't allow it. Things are going to get worse in Waziristan before they get better, and it will take a long, long time to settle.

## The Unconquered: Throughout history, these wild mountain tribes have always been free

FATA has been repeatedly invaded since Alexander of Macedonia (4th century BCE). But conquerors could only take the plains; the hill tribes defied the Persians, the Greeks, the Turks, the Mughals, the Sikhs, the British — and now the Pakistanis. The tribals have never paid taxes. Those who have tried to subdue them have had to compromise and give them at least semi-independent status. So the tribal society has persisted.

### Under the British

The British lost the First Afghan war (1838-42), and realised that the tribes could not be ruled over. When the British conquered Punjab in 1849, they again ran up against the Pushtun tribes. The plains were handed over to the Punjab administration, which followed a policy of guarding the frontier

to minimise frontier raids; raids were met with military reprisals by the Punjab Irregular Frontier Force (which merged with the Indian Army in 1886). An infrastructure of posts and forts was set up.

At the same time, agreements were made for peace and order in exchange for subsidies and allowances. The agreements were broken often, leading to fines and blockades. There were 62 expeditions by the Punjab government in 1849-1899.

Till the Second Afghan war, the British followed a policy of 'masterly inactivity' which left the tribes and Afghans alone. This turned into a "closed border" policy which meant holding the administrative boundary. This was abandoned by British strategists con-



Afghan warrior from 19th Century

cerned about the advance of Russian armies in Turkestan, close to the Afghan border. This led to the Second

war in 1878.

In 1877, the administration went from Punjab to the central government, which started the system of political agencies in the tribal belt. A political agent liaised with the tribes and administered the area, without interfering in their internal affairs.

The Second Afghan war led to a debate over the frontier. The 'backward group' wanted it shifted to the Indus saying tribals wouldn't tolerate interference and it was too expensive to establish cantonments.

The 'forward group' advocated the Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar axis as the frontier. Lord Lansdowne reached a compromise in 1888-94, which was the Durand Line between Afghanistan and India. This is Pakistan's current western border.

### Under Pakistan

With independence, the tribal areas theoretically became independent. Pakistan had to make fresh agreements with the tribal maliks, which a jirga in 1947 accepted as necessary, declaring the tribal areas as part of Pakistan. In June 1947, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan proposed to M.A. Jinnah the merging of the tribal areas with the NWFP, but Jinnah sidestepped the issue.

At the tribal jirga in Peshawar in April 1948, Jinnah said "Pakistan had no desire to interfere in their internal freedom, rather it wanted to put them on their legs through educational, economic and social uplift". He reaffirmed continuing allowances though said he did not want the tribes to be permanently on the dole. His wishes

remained on paper, as Pakistan continues the British policy.

The tribal areas were reorganised in 1970, with some areas going to NWFP, some going to Balochistan, and the rest declared as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). FATA was to be administered by the centre through the NWFP Governor.

But under the 1973 Constitution, FATA got the short end of the stick. No Pakistani higher court has jurisdiction over FATA; equality of all citizens does not extend to FATA; and they are subject to the arbitrary Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR). It features "collective responsibility"; thus, in February 2004, when the Pakistan army was attacked by Taliban and al Qaeda, the Ahmadzais (a sub-tribe of Wazirs) was collectively fined Rs 5.4 million.

# PRAYER MEET TARGETED 55 killed in Pak explosion

**Press Trust of India**

KARACHI, April 11: At least 55 people were killed, and scores injured when a powerful blast ripped through a stage erected in a park where Pakistani religious leaders and hundreds of faithful were offering evening prayers on the occasion of Prophet Mohammad's birth anniversary.

The bomb, planted under a stage erected in the crowded Nishtar Park in Pakistan's port city Karachi, tore through scattering bodies dressed in ceremonial white outfits and limbs across the area. Interior minister Mr Aftab Sherpao told reporters in Islamabad that police were not sure if it was a suicide attack but television reports said though the blast took place on the stage, there was no crater beneath suggesting it could be one.

While 51 deaths were confirmed by officials here, television channels reported that 55 were killed in the explosion. Those killed in the bomb attack included head of Islamic group Tehrik Awam Ahli-Sunnat, (TAAS) Haji Hanif Bilal and his son Hafiz Bilal. TAAS organised today's congre-

## Afghan blast

ASADABAD, April 11: A rocket exploded in a packed school and sent shrapnel tearing through students sitting outside, killing six children and wounding 34 other people in eastern Afghanistan today, police said. The rocket landed in the yard of Salabagh School in Asadabad, close to a US-led coalition base, said a police commander. ■ AP

gation at the park in Karachi. The condition of number of TAAS leaders who were injured in the blast was stated to be serious. Local Geo TV reported said some of the leaders of the banned Sunni outfit, Sunni *Tehrik*, who took part in the meeting were injured in the explosion. A number of television journalists were also injured in the attack. "Human remains are scattered all over the place. Injured are being rushed to local hospitals. It was a powerful bomb blast and we fear a very high casualty list," a spokesman of the local administration said. Nearly 125 injured have been shifted to nearby hospitals. Emergency has been declared in hospitals.

THE STATESMAN

# 47 killed in Karachi park blast



A person injured in the blast being taken to hospital in Karachi on Tuesday. — PHOTO: AFP

## Explosion at Id Milan prayer gathering

B. Muralidhar Reddy

**ISLAMABAD:** At least 47 persons were killed and scores injured in a massive bomb explosion in Karachi on Tuesday evening.

According to Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Sherpao, the explosion occurred very close to a stage erected in connection with the Id Milan celebrations. The stage was reduced to pieces. A large gathering was at the venue organised by Jamat Ahl-e-Sunnat and it was mayhem once the bomb went off.

Enraged onlookers vented their anger at the paramilitary forces present even as dozens of ambulances shifted the injured to hospitals.

Karachi has been the centre of several incidents of terrorism and sectarian violence for several years now.

The last high profile terrorism incident in the city occurred a day before U.S. President George

W. Bush arrived in Pakistan.

AP reports:

The bomb was planted under the stage erected by a Sunn Muslim group for the prayer gathering, said area police chief Shah Nawaz.

"It is a very unfortunate incident," Mr. Sherpao told AP.

"I can confirm that 40 people have died in the bomb blast."

Scores of men wearing long white robes clambered onto the stage to assist victims.

Police officers fired into the air to disperse crowds that massed at the scene.

An angry mob burned cars and pelted police with stones after the blast, said witness Mohammed Asif.

"I saw body parts everywhere. I saw people collecting body parts and putting them in ambulances," he said.

Police had no immediate details on who may have been behind the attack.

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# Army-insurgent fighting escalates in Balochistan

We will not throw down our arms, says Baloch leader

Praveen Swami

**NEW DELHI:** Baloch insurgent forces and Pakistan's armed forces have clashed at least four times since Saturday, in what appears to be an escalation in hostilities in the strategically-vital province.

Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, the head of the powerful Bugti clan and one of the key leaders of the insurgent campaign in Balochistan, told *The Hindu* that large-scale fighting had taken place at Biam Shahi and Tilli Mat, both in the gas-rich Sui valley. Pakistan military positions at Gori and Bardoze, north-east of the town of Dera Bugti, were also ambushed, he said.

Speaking on satellite phone from his mountain hideout, Nawab Bugti said Baloch insurgents had been able to capture two armoured Frontier Corps vehicles and encircle troops around Biam Shahi. However, Baloch forces were compelled to withdraw after several hours of attacks executed by at least six helicopter gunships, which were called in to provide fire support to the encircled Pakistani troops.

Baloch forces also claim to have shot dead four men of Pakistan's Punjab Regiment in a sniper attack. Another sniper attack near Bardoze, Nawab Bugti said, had left one soldier dead. Pakistan is thought to

• **Escalation in hostilities in strategically-vital province**

• **Baloch forces claim to have killed soldiers in sniper attacks**

• **Bombings cripple surface transport, disrupt gas supplies**

have committed some 23,000 troops to the troubled province, mainly from the paramilitary Frontier Corps and Rangers, the Army's Punjab and Sindh Regiments, and the crack Special Services Group.

The casualty claims could not be confirmed, although Pakistani newspapers had reported that two insurgents and a soldier had been killed in a March 26 skirmish near Dera Bugti. The fighting was provoked by Army-backed resettlement of 1,500 members of the Rahija clan, who dispute Nawab Bugti's authority, in Dera Bugti. Rahija clan leaders had been expelled from the area after intra-tribal clashes in 1997.

In recent weeks, Baloch insurgents have succeeded in executing a series of successful bombings that have crippled surface transport in the region, and disrupted gas supplies from the Sui, Loti and Pir Koh gas fields. Pakistan's plans to devel-

op the port of Gwadar as a free-trade zone to rival the West Asian centres such as Dubai and Sharjah have also been hit hard by the continuing violence.

Unlike these bombings, though, the latest fighting has consisted of classic insurgent hit-and-run combat, directed in the main at troops. Although little credible reportage of the conflict is available because of restrictions on media operations in the area, experts say the renewed fighting suggests Pakistani attacks on Baloch training camps and weapons caches have so far had no real effect on their combat capabilities.

Pakistani authorities have, however, shown little willingness to find a negotiated compromise that would allow the fighting in the resource-rich region to end. In a recent speech, President Pervez Musharraf said the influence of Balochistan's tribal sardars, or tribal chieftains, was approaching an end, and that Pakistan would not succumb to what he characterised as blackmail.

"What President Musharraf wants," Nawab Bugti said, "is for us to throw down our arms, and crawl before him. This we will never do. The Baloch will fight on." The Baloch leader also denied media speculation that he had fled to Iran. "It is true that I am not on Pakistani soil," he said, "but I am still on the soil of my nation, Balochistan."

28 MAR 2006

# Four killed as rebels clash with troops in Baluchistan

**Quetta:** Suspected rebel tribesmen attacked a mountaintop military post on Sunday in southwestern Pakistan, triggering a gunbattle with security forces that left two attackers and a soldier dead, an official said.

Another attacker was killed in a land-mine explosion as he tried to escape on a motorcycle after the shootout near Sui, a tribal town southeast of Quetta, the capital of southwestern Baluchistan, local government official Abdul Samad Lasi said. Two soldiers were injured in the gun fight, he said.

The roadside post was attacked before more than a thousand tribal people were to travel along there to Dera Bugti, another town near Sui, Lasi said. The former refugees were returning to their homeland in a government-sponsored programme aimed at restoring their lives in the ancestral region they left more than a decade ago because of tribal feuding.

Hundreds of heavily armed troops accompanied by helicopter gunships were guarding the 1,500 people on the journey from Kashmir, a town in the neighbouring Sindh province.

An army official in the convoy said on condition of anonymity in line with policy that helicopters opened fire at the armed men who attacked the military post. But he could not confirm any casualties among the attackers. Meanwhile, police have arrested 57 tribesmen in connection with a string of bomb and rocket attacks in southwest Pakistan that have killed more than 250 people in just over a year, a senior police official said.

The arrests began on Friday and the suspects were being held for questioning, senior police investigator Mujeeb Rahman told reporters in Quetta, the capital of insurgency-wracked

Baluchistan province. "We arrested these 57 suspects from different parts of Quetta in connection with recent acts of terrorism," he said, adding some were also involved in crimes such as robbery and car theft.

Rahman said most of the detainees belonged to the Marri and Bugti tribes, whose top leaders have been accused by authorities of targeting security forces, government officials and key gas installations to press their demands for more royalties on resources extracted in their territories.

More than 250 people have been killed since the beginning of last year in scores of rocket, bomb and land mine attacks in Quetta and elsewhere in the province, Rahman said.

He said the Bugti and Marri tribes were behind the attacks, but gave no further details. The arrests came after two farmers were killed late on Friday when their motorcycle ran over a land-mine on a dirt road near Sui, a town about 340 km east of Quetta where authorities have deployed troops to guard gas facilities, said Abdul Samad Lasi, the district chief.

He accused fighters of a local tribal militant chief, Nawab Akbar Bugti, of laying mines. But he offered no evidence to back up his claim. Two bombs also exploded late on Friday outside the homes of junior government officials in towns in Baluchistan, shattering windows but causing no casualties, police said.

The first bomb exploded under a vehicle parked outside the home of Mohammed Shafi in Mach, about 50 km southeast of Quetta, police said. The

**A Pakistani man carries an injured girl after an anti-tank mine blast in Rakhni, about 300 km east of Quetta**

second bomb went off in the nearby town of Mastung, police said.

Separately, some 200 protesters attended a rally in Quetta on Saturday, throwing stones at the Afghan Consulate in anger over the killing of 16 Pakistani tribesmen by Afghanistan security forces on Tuesday. Agencies



## Low-intensity war in Balochistan

**“D**on’t push us,” President Pervez Musharraf warned in January last year, after an attack by Baloch insurgents on a gas refinery in Sui disrupted steel and fertiliser production across Pakistan for more than a month. “It isn’t the 1970s when you could hit and run and hide in the mountains. This time you won’t even know what hit you.” A year on, it is becoming clear the Baloch war is not unfolding in line with General Musharraf’s script. A wave of attacks on the Loti and Pir Koh gasfields last month damaged at least six wells and several pipelines, forcing the closure of production for several days and hitting supplies to the towns of Multan and Bahawalpur. Power transmission systems, railway lines, and even the provincial optic-fibre network have been targets of sabotage. Pakistan’s armed forces have sought to contain the escalating violence with air strikes and artillery bombardment, which have killed dozens of civilians. Baloch forces have fought back with considerable success, using weapons pumped into the region by the United States during the anti-Soviet *jihad* in Afghanistan. General Musharraf’s regime, however, seems determined not to concede the Baloch tribes their principal demand — a greater share of revenues from the region’s gasfields. It believes that, aside from the loss of face, such a deal will strengthen irredentist movements in Pakistan.

Should the fighting drag on, there will be costs for the entire region. It might prove impossible, for example, to build the pipelines from Iran and Afghanistan that are needed to meet India’s long-term energy requirements. What is going on in Balochistan offers not a little illumination on the perils of subverting democracy. Ever since Pakistan persuaded the Khan of Kalat to join its territories by the simple expedient of having two combat jets strafe his palace, Balochistan has seen nothing resembling popular rule. During the early decades of independence, the Pakistan state propped up autocratic tribal chieftains who shared its interest in stifling the growth of democratic voices. In 1973, soon after a provincial government opposed to President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s regime took power, it was dismissed. War broke out. Led by the left-wing Balochi People’s Liberation Front and Balochi Students’ Organisation, some 10,000 guerrillas took on six divisions of the Pakistan Army until an accommodation was reached in 1978. Increasing gas production brought new prosperity to some in Balochistan but it remained one of Pakistan’s most backward regions. General Musharraf’s regime sought to contain the discontent by foisting the Islamist Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal government on Balochistan’s peoples in 2002. This sparked off fighting that has now escalated into a costly low-intensity war. General Musharraf is right: we no longer live in the 1970s. Too many of South Asia’s leaders seem unable to appreciate that the dictum applies to them — not just to the people they rule.

# Imran under house arrest as stir peaks

Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD March 4. — Cricketer-turned politician Mr Imran Khan was today put under house arrest by Pakistan police which detained hundreds of Islamist leaders and opposition activists across the country to thwart protests against US President Mr George W Bush's visit.

Mr Khan was detained at his home here in the early hours as he was preparing to take out a march from Rawalpindi to Islamabad, said leaders of his Tehrik-e-Insaf party. Besides Mr Khan, 26 of his associates were also taken into preventive custody by authorities. Police used batons to disperse party activists who gathered in central Rawalpindi shouting slogans like "Killer Bush go back." Some of the party cadres were also arrested.

Mr Khan, who had been

## School comes to Laura

ISLAMABAD, March 4. — When American first lady mS Laura Bush wants to visit school children, she usually goes to a classroom. But not in Pakistan. Because of security concerns, the children had to come to Ms Bush on today when she wanted to see how US aid was being spent in Pakistani schools. A class of 22 fourth graders met her at the fortress-like US embassy, where they tried to recreate their classroom atmosphere. The American First Lady, a former librarian and teacher, beamed as the lesson ended with a class photograph. PTI

detained last week also for attempting a similar rally in Lahore, said that his house arrest was "just to appease Mr Bush".

Opposition parties had pledged to observe 'Black Day' and take out demonstrations to protest the American leader's visit. To prevent any major rallies, police detained from across the country some 350 activists of the Islamic alliance Muttahida Majlis-e Amal (MMA) and opposition parties including some local leaders. mR Hanif Ab-

basi of MMA was detained at his home in Rawalpindi. while the alliance's leader Qazi Hussain Ahmed, detained a few days ago, remained in house arrest in Lahore. Despite the crackdown, around 500 protesters gathered in the eastern city of Multan and took out a peaceful rally, while nearly 50 Islamists held a march in Lahore. Police blocked a key bridge to prevent any protestors from entering Islamabad from the northwest, which is dominated by Islamist parties.



# বুশ-বিরোধিতার দায়ে নিজভূমে গৃহবন্দি ইমরান

ইসলামাবাদ, ৪ মার্চ: মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্ট জর্জ বুশের পাক সফরের বিরুদ্ধে বিক্ষোভ চলছে অনেক জায়গাতেই। কিন্তু বিক্ষোভকারীদের সারিতে যখন ইমরান খানের নাম ওঠে, তখন তা আলাদা মাত্রা পায়। আর আলাদা মাত্রা পায় বলেই সাবধানতার খাতিরে তেহরিক-ই-ইনসাফের প্রধান ইমরানকে আজ গৃহবন্দি করতে সিদ্ধা করল না পাক প্রশাসন।



এবং অন্যান্য বিরোধী দল পাকিস্তান জুড়ে আজ 'কালা দিবস' পালন করে। গত কাল তারা বনফেরও ডাক দিয়েছিল। আজ প্রশাসন নানা ভাবে বিক্ষোভ ঠেকাতে চেষ্টা করলেও মূলতান শহরে প্রায় ৫০০ বিক্ষোভকারী জমা হয়ে আমেরিকা ও বুশ বিরোধী শ্লোগান দেন। তাঁরা বাঙ্গাচিৎ্র বিতর্ক নিয়েও আমেরিকা-সহ

গণতন্ত্রের আদর্শে বিশ্বাসী, আসলে তিনি স্বৈরাচারী শাসক হুজা কিছুই নন। না হলে আমাকে এ ভাবে গৃহবন্দি করা হত না। ভারতে হাজার হাজার লোক তো বুশের বিরুদ্ধে বিক্ষোভ করেছেন। তাঁদের তো প্রশাসন আটকায়নি। অথচ আমরা একটা মিছিল করব বলাতেই আমাদের এ ভাবে আটকানো হল। এটা গণতন্ত্রের পরিপন্থী।”

ইমরানের দলের পক্ষ থেকে দিন দুয়েক আগে ঘোষণা করা হয়েছিল, বুশের পাক সফরের বিরোধিতা করে আজ রাওয়ালপিন্ডি থেকে ইসলামাবাদ পর্যন্ত একটি মিছিলের আয়োজন করা হবে। সেই মিছিল ঠেকাতে তেহরিক-ই-ইনসাফের অন্তত ২৬ জন কর্মীকে আজ আটক করে পাক পুলিশ। আর তাঁদের প্রধান নেতা ইমরানকে গৃহবন্দি করে রাখা হয়। এ ছাড়াও বুশ বিরোধী

আগে মুশারফের সমর্থক হিসাবে পরিচিত ইমরান সম্প্রতি মুশারফ-বিরোধী মুত্তাহিদা মজলিস-ই-আমাল (এম এম এ) দলের সঙ্গে যোগে ঘনিষ্ঠ। বুশের সফরকে কেন্দ্র করে এম এম এ

পশ্চিমী দেশগুলির বিরুদ্ধে সরব হন। প্রাক্তন ক্রিকেট অধিনায়ক ইমরান খান আজ বলেছেন, “বুশকে খুশি করতেই বিরোধীদের আটকে রাখা হল। মুশারফ যতই দাবি করুন তিনি

পক্ষপাতমূলক প্রশাসনের আচরণের নিন্দা করে ইমরান অভিযোগ করেন, “বুশ যতই বলুন মুশারফ এ দেশে নিরপেক্ষ নির্বাচন চালান, ঘটনা তা নয়। মুশারফ ক্রমাগত নিজের সেনাসুলভ স্বৈরাচারিতা ও ক্ষমতা বাড়িয়ে চলেছেন। আর বুশ তাতে প্রাঙ্কর মদত দিচ্ছেন। আমাদের বোকা বানিয়ে এ দেশে গণতন্ত্রের টুটি চেপে ধরতে মুশারফকেই সাহায্য করে চলেছেন বুশ।”

বুশ-বিরোধী মিছিলে ইমরানের দলের মহিলারাও — রয়টার্স

# Imran under house arrest for protests



US President George Bush and wife Laura with their Pakistan counterparts, General Pervez Musharraf and Saheba, in Islamabad on Saturday.

## PRESS Trust of India Islamabad, March 4

CRICKETER-TURNED POLITICIAN Imran Khan was on Saturday put under house arrest and over two dozens of his associates were taken into preventive custody ahead of their planned rally to protest against US President George Bush's visit to Pakistan.

Khan was detained at his home in Islamabad as he prepared to take out a march from Rawalpindi to Islamabad, which he had announced a couple of days back, according to leaders of his Tehrik-e-Insaf party.

Imran Khan's house arrest came as the Islamic alliance Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) and opposition parties observed a "black day" to protest against the American President's visit.

Khan wanted to take out the rally to protest against Bush's backing to President Pervez Musharraf, which he charged had "seriously undermined" Pakistan's political parties' efforts to restore democracy in the country. Khan was also detained in Lahore



## If generals make such good leaders, Bush should propose a military general for Presidency in America

last week for attempting a similar rally. Besides Khan, 26 of his associates were taken into preventive custody by authorities ahead of the rally, the party leaders said.

Prior to his visit to Pakistan, Bush referred to Musharraf as his "buddy" and praised the General's "vision of democracy" in a media interview. "I believe that he is committed to having a reform process come to fruition and I believe he is committed to free and open elections," Bush had said.

Khan, who earlier used to be a supporter of Musharraf, has aligned closely with the

MMA in carrying out anti-Musharraf and anti-US demonstrations.

"The reason why I am protesting against Bush policies is his endorsement of Musharraf's so called vision for democracy which is making us a fool. If Generals make such good leaders, he should propose a military general for presidency in America", Khan had earlier said.

Khan also condemned the government's efforts to prevent political parties from holding demonstrations against Bush's visit, while tens of thousands of people organ-

ised rallies in India during the US President's just concluded visit there.

Khan claimed that Musharraf was once again strengthening his image as a military dictator in the world. He said he did not know how blocking peaceful protests would serve Musharraf's agenda of promoting soft image of Pakistan.

Besides Khan, Pakistan's beleaguered opposition parties agitating against Musharraf's military rule have decided to boycott the US President's visit.

The MMA, which is apparently capitalising on the enraged sentiments over the publication of Prophet Muhammad in European newspapers, called a general strike on Friday and observed a "black day" on Saturday.

While the moderate opposition parties like Pakistan People's Party (PPP) declined to join MMA protests, they agreed to boycott the dinner being hosted by Musharraf for Bush. The Opposition boycott would be headed by Leader of the Opposition and MMA general secretary Maulana Fazlur Rehman.

# US lawmakers await details

S. Rajagopalan  
Washington, March 4

SEVERAL INFLUENTIAL lawmakers have opted to reserve their opinion on the Indo-US nuke deal until the Bush Administration delivers details of Thursday's agreement in New Delhi and comes up with its draft legislative package.

While broadly welcoming the forging of a strategic partnership with India, the lawmakers have signalled they will closely look at the deal's implications for the non-proliferation regime before making up their mind.

The heads of the two committees that will have the principal say in the approval process — the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Inter-

national Relations Committee — have indicated that, as of now, they are awaiting details of the agreement. Aides said on Friday that Richard Lugar, chairman of the powerful Senate panel, will be "looking forward to learning more about the details of the progress made on the nuclear power agreement with India and getting a piece of draft legislation from the Bush Administration".

Indian cockles, however, will be warmed by a fuller statement of Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, now made available — as also the remarks by senior Congressman Tom Lantos, ranking Democrat on the House International Relations Committee, and Senator John Warner, chairman of the Armed Forces Committee. Terming it a "historic" and "bold" agreement to forge a strategic partnership, Frist said, "Although India is not a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, it has not proliferated nuclear technology. I'm encouraged that this agreement will, for the first time, require a majority of India's N-reactors to be placed under international safeguards".

Republican Ed Royce, a former co-chair of India Caucus, spoke of the "enthusiastic support on Capitol Hill for growing US-India ties" and then going on to say that the nuke deal's implications go beyond these relations. Royce, who heads the subcommittee on international terrorism and non-proliferation, said: "In this process, the goal of curbing nuclear proliferation should be paramount".

## NUKE DEAL WITH INDIA

# Foreign militants killed in raid: Pak

IMTIAZ GUL

Islamabad, March 1: Two days ahead of President George W. Bush's visit to Islamabad, Pakistani security forces attacked and killed at least 25 local and foreign militants, including a Chechen commander, in the troubled North Waziristan region today.

The suspected al Qaida militants were hiding in a compound in Dandagae Saidgai village, 15 km west of the regional administrative centre Miranshah.

The attack coincided with the surprise visit of President George W. Bush to Kabul, where, he said, the continued cross-border infiltration (by Taliban and al Qaida operatives) would be "one of the topics of discussion with the Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf".

The private Pakistani TV channel Geo quoted an unnamed security official as saying that a Chechen commander was also gunned down while fleeing from the village.

Reports also suggested that at least 10 security personnel were seriously injured in the operation and one of them died later.



Pakistani soldiers at a patrol in Miranshah, North Waziristan. (AFP)

The day-long operation, supported by helicopter gunships, set off ripples in Miranshah, which borders Afghanistan's Khost province, and forced inhabitants to flee to nearby safer places.

Local residents said that the firing has stopped but security forces are still surrounding the area spread over 5 to 7 km.

The political administrator of North Waziristan, Sayed Zaheer-ul-Islam, said 25 to 30 suspected terrorists were killed in the attack. Islam claimed that the security

forces also seized an arms depot there.

Chief military spokesman Major General Shaukat Sultan said security forces have mounted a search for "miscreants" present in the area.

He also did not disclose the exact number of fatalities and identity of the militants, saying this is possible only after the completion of the operation. Pakistan has deployed over 80,000 troops on its border with Afghanistan to check cross border movements by Taliban and al Qaida operatives.

07 Mar 2002

# ASSASSINATION BID ON GEN 11 sentenced to death in Pakistan

**Associated Press**

KARACHI, Feb. 21. — Eleven Islamic militants were sentenced to death today for an assassination attempt on a Pakistani General that killed 10 people in 2004, a judge said in an anti-terrorist court.

“The prosecution has proved its charges against you and the court is convinced,” Judge Feroz Mahmood Bhatti said in a crowded courtroom here.

After the sentence was announced, the 11 defendants raised their handcuffed hands and said together, “God is great!” They also said: “This sentence cannot put us down. We are in higher spirits.” Defence lawyer Mushtaq Ahmed said his clients would appeal.

The attackers used assault rifles and bombs on 10 June, 2004 to ambush the motorcade of Lt-Gen Ahsan Saleem Hayat.

They missed their target but killed 10 people — six soldiers, three police and one passerby.

Mr Hayat was later promoted to Vice-Chief of the Army Staff, the second highest position in Pakistan’s military.

Karachi, Pakistan’s largest city with 14 million people, has been hit by a string of terrorist attacks, most blamed on domestic Islamic militants who want President General Pervez Musharraf to end support for the US war on terror.

After today’s sentencing, the chief suspect, Atta-ur Rahman, told reporters he was not surprised by the verdict and that court decisions would not stop the jihad, or holy war.

“If one Atta-ur Rahman dies, many more will come to replace me in this way of jihad,” said Rahman, the alleged chief of Jundallah, a domestic Islamic extremist group.

1106 THE STATESMAN

# More die in Pakistan protest

16/2/14 PAKD  
NWFP Chief Minister Durrani blames riots on "troublemakers"

B. Muralidhar Reddy

**ISLAMABAD:** Three more persons were killed in protests, for the second consecutive day, against cartoons of the Prophet Muhammed in different parts of Pakistan on Wednesday.

Peshawar, capital of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), reported maximum trouble. Two persons died in the city when police fired tear gas shells and fired in the air to quell disturbances involving an estimated 50,000 demonstrators. Offices of multinational compa-

nies and foreign food chain outlets were the target of the mob.

In Lahore, a youth died in crossfire between police and protesters in Punjab University's New Campus area after rioters started hurling stones at security forces and passing vehicles. On Tuesday, two persons were killed in the city when a security guard of a bank opened fire to stop the advancing crowd.

Frontier Chief Minister Akram Durrani blamed the riots on "troublemakers" but maintained that his Government would not ban rallies against the

offensive cartoons. He appealed to the protesters to remain peaceful.

According to local media reports trouble spread to Tank, a remote town south of Peshawar, where a policeman was wounded by a pistol shot as a mob torched some 25 video and music shops.

## Surprise over outbursts

In nearby Dera Ismail Khan, some 3,000 demonstrators attacked a Pakistani bank and smashed the windows of the offices of Norwegian mobile phone company Telenor before dis-

persing. Diplomatic and political observers here are surprised at the street outbursts. Most protests in recent weeks have passed off peacefully.

The sudden upsurge in anger has left observers wondering if some interested parties are trying to make political capital of the people's mood ahead of the scheduled visit of U.S. President George W. Bush. The religious parties conglomerate has given a call for national strike on March 3 on the cartoons issue when Mr. Bush is expected to be in this part of the world.

THE LANCET

# Protests turn violent in Pakistan

Two die in Lahore firing; 40 vehicles damaged in Islamabad

B. Muralidhar Reddy

**ISLAMABAD:** At least 40 vehicles of the Government and diplomatic missions, including a car of the Indian High Commission, were damaged here on Tuesday by angry crowds protesting against derogatory cartoons published in European newspapers.

The Indian mission car, parked outside a five-star hotel, along with several other vehicles, became the target of the retreating protesters after they were chased away by the police from the heavily guarded diplomatic enclave.

Authorities here appeared caught unawares as 200-odd students from local schools and colleges descended around noon in the high security zone and managed to break through the

police barricades at the entrance of the diplomatic enclave.

Given the frenzy among the crowd the situation could have taken a serious turn but for the success of the police in forcing them back. The protesters managed to reach the entrance of the Indian High Commission, the first diplomatic mission in the enclave.

## Pitched battle

The protesters fought pitched battles with the policemen in a drama which went on for over 45 minutes. They dispersed only after a lathi-charge and firing of several rounds of tear gas but not before damaging several vehicles.

According to eye witness accounts, the crowd was on the look out for the mission of a par-

ticular Western country which has been the focus of world attention ever since the publication of the offensive cartoons in September last year.

Sensing trouble outside, Indian mission officials sealed all the entrances to the building and mounted extra security to ensure that there was untoward incident.

The mission officials believe that the mission car was not targeted deliberately by the crowd and it could be a case of "collateral damage".

In Lahore, at least two persons were killed and several others injured in protests against the cartoons.

The deaths occurred as a security guard opened fire to quell an angry crowd which was about to attack a bank. There were re-

ports of agitated people attacking and torching Western fast food outlets as well as company offices in the city.

The building of Punjab Provincial Assembly also became the target of mob anger.

A portion of the Assembly building caught fire after the crowd reportedly threw a cracker inside. Elsewhere in the city, the stick-wielding protesters attacked and damaged two McDonald's restaurants and a Pizza Hut, before pelting the Holiday Inn Hotel and some government buildings with stones.

In Peshawar, capital of North West Frontier province, around 1,500 persons gathered at several separate rallies and police tear-gassed around 200 students who burned tyres to block the main road out of the city.

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# 22 killed in Pak suicide bomber attack

RIAZ KHAN

USTARZAI (PAKISTAN), FEB 9

A SUICIDE bombing ripped through a Shi'ite procession Thursday in north-western Pakistan, sparking riots during the Muslim sect's most important holiday. At least 22 people were killed and dozens injured, officials said.

The explosion hit a procession of hundreds of people in a bazaar soon after it emerged from the main Shi'ite mosque in the mid-morning.

Army troops took control of the area and a curfew was imposed as Shi'ites vented their anger by burning shops and cars in Hangu, 200 km south-west of Islamabad, district police chief Ayub Khan said.

Ghani ur Rehman, the district administrator, said 22 people were reported killed and over 50 wounded. He said more than 60 per cent of the town bazaar had been burned



Authorities beefed up security after a suicide bombing ripped through a Shi'ite procession in Pakistan on Thursday. AP

down in the violence that followed the bombing. In Islamabad, Interior Minister Aftab Khan Sherpao said he could confirm only 12 deaths.

Akram Durrani, the top elected official in the province, said a preliminary investigation showed the attack was a suicide bombing. He announced a judicial inquiry.

Durrani also announced that the government would

pay Rs 100,000 (\$1,670) to the families of each of the dead.

Mir Faisal, a local government chief in Hangu, said smoke was hanging over the town because of fires in the bazaar and he could hear gunfire. He said that army and paramilitary troops had arrived but it was still too dangerous to go outside.

Rahman, however, said the situation was under control by

early afternoon, and that Sunni and Shi'ite leaders were helping to calm the situation.

An Interior Ministry official said the attack sparked fighting, and emotional Shi'ites attacked police vehicles. Sunni and Shi'ite clerics in Hangu used mosque loudspeakers to urge the faithful to calm down and avoid further violence, which could spread to other processions across Pakistan.

Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said, "I condemn this attack in the strongest terms. This is a conspiracy to trigger clashes between Sunnis and Shi'ites. No Muslim can do this thing. Whoever has done this thing is a terrorist."

The attack targeted Shi'ites observing Ashoura, the most revered religious holiday in their faith. The event marks the 7th century death of Imam Hussain, a grandson of the Prophet Muhammad. —AP

1996

INDIAN EXPRESS

# Benazir on Interpol warrant list

REUTERS

ISLAMABAD, JANUARY 26

**A**T THE request of Pakistan's military-led government, Interpol has issued notices confirming that bona fide warrants exist for the arrest of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and her husband Asif Ali Zardari.

The International Police Organisation stressed that the "red notices" it had issued for the couple were not international arrest warrants.

In response to questions on Thursday, Interpol said they were notifications that "bona fide" arrest warrants existed in one of the organisation's 184 member states. It said the notifications were issued following a request from the Pakistani authorities.

Interpol said many of the 184 members considered Red notices valid requests for provisional arrest, especially if they were linked to a bilateral extradition treaty. But it noted that member states could challenge their validity if they believed they contravened

Interpol rules forbidding political, religious, military or racial intervention.

Bhutto, who served twice as Pakistani PM, has been living in self-imposed exile in Dubai and Britain

for the past six years. She is currently in the US and faces a raft of charges of corruption and misrule should she ever return to Pakistan, charges she says are politically motivated.

Both face charges of corruption. The accusations date back to the '90s that the two accepted cuts for awarding contracts to Swiss firms to do business in Pakistan.



INDIAN EXPRESS

27 JAN 2006



# UN, Pakistan offer to jointly host Mukhtar Mai's press conference

DHARAM SHOURIE

UNITED NATIONS, JAN 26

**U**NDER fire from NGOs, the United Nations and Pakistan have begun a damage control exercise by offering to jointly host press briefing by Mukhtar Mai, whose defiant response to gangrape on orders of a village council in Pakistan has made her champion of women's causes.

The UN had blocked her briefing on January 20, the day Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz addressed the press conference after a meeting with Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The world body had said it had told the non governmental organisations, which were organising the briefing, that it had to be postponed on the urging of the Pakistan mission to the UN.

But as the incident backfired, both the UN and the Pakistani mission sought to put blame on junior officials, saying seniors were not consulted on the matter. The question seeking the reason for the Pakistani



Mukhtar Mai. Reuters

action at the press conference embarrassed Aziz who said he had no idea that her briefing was blocked.

Mai, who postponed her departure, was still in New York yesterday when the UN spokesman admitted that it was a "very unfortunate" incident and said the world body together with the Pakistani mission was contacting the NGO which had sponsored her and "see how we can bring her back here to give her a platform from which to speak in this house." "and from what I understand that would be an event co-sponsored by both UN and the Pakistani mission," he said.

The spokesman said the decision to cancel the event was taken within the Non Governmental Organisation section of the department of economic and social affairs.

"Senior management was unaware of the event and it is a pity that we weren't, so that we could have found a forum at an appropriate date to speak in this house. She should be able to speak in this house," the spokesman said.

When questioned at Aziz's press conference why the United Nations bowed to the Pakistani protest, Shashi Tharoor, the under secretary general for communications, said he could not comment on this specific case.

"As a general principle, indeed there are written instructions guiding the holding of any event on UN premises in which we are obliged to take into account views formally expressed by member states. This is a building and an organisation that belongs to the member states," he said. —PTI

INDIAN EXPRESS

27 JAN 2006

# Pak dissimulation

Are missiles targeting Indian cities? <sup>Sir &</sup>

**F**rom within days of its own genesis 58 years ago, <sup>1947</sup> Pakistan's Government has engaged in a vast dissimulation — albeit one that has included large doses of plain factual ignorance and self-deception as well. “We are not responsible” is what they said at the UN and everywhere else when their own army undertook “Operation Gulmarg” on 22 October 1947 attacking the erstwhile “Native State” known as Jammu & Kashmir — an entity that had had a continuous existence in international law from the Treaty of Amritsar of 16 March 1846 until it was attacked. Operation Gulmarg failed because it failed to predict its participants would also come to cause the Rape of Baramulla — evil deeds which prompted the lawful accession of the State to the new Dominion of India, not merely by its pretentious Hindu potentate but by its secular democratic Muslim leadership led by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his then-loyal deputy, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad. In 1965, Pakistan's self-styled Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan initiated “Operation GrandSlam” against India — again starting off with a mendacious “We are not responsible” refrain. Even the entire loss of East Pakistan to Bangladeshi nationalism in 1969-1972 came to be met with a “We-are-not-responsible; RAW-is-responsible” refrain from the Pakistan Army. (The self-deception extends to some still believing General Niazi's surrender at Dhaka Stadium to General Arora was not really a surrender at all, just a kind of tactical retreat.) As for General Musharraf's Kargil misadventure, “We are not responsible” said Nawaz Sharif, his then-boss — the dissimulation this time being that the ISI's foreign mercenaries and soldiers dressed in “Northern Light Infantry” uniforms did the attacking. And of course Pakistan has denied always that it is the source of terrorism against India. Hence, when Musharraf has now blurted out words to the effect “You withdraw from three districts in the Valley and I will ensure there is no terrorism there”, he has finally exposed his wolfishness and shed his sheep's clothing. Candour is progress of sorts.

Ever since taking power in his coup d'état against Sharif in 1999, Musharraf has sought respectability by seeking to transform himself into the benevolent dictator indispensable to Pakistan's destiny. J&K-for-Pakistan by any means was and remains his sole measure of self-worth. He said as much in January 2002, when he led the official Pakistani state to make the U-turn forced by America to now start seeming to cooperate against the Islamist protégés of the unofficial Pakistani state. In 1998-99, shortly before Musharraf's Kargil misadventure, Ayub Khan's son, Gohar Ayub Khan, as Pakistani Foreign Minister, implicitly threatened an immediate missile attack on India's cities when he said the next India-Pakistan war would be over within two or three hours with an Indian surrender. Manmohan Singh's Government has shown itself remarkably inept in foreign policy. If it wishes to be seen changing that, it needs to tell the Pakistanis plainly if quietly that so long as they have that kind of aggressive intent and are targeting Indian cities with nuclear or non-nuclear missiles even as we speak, peace is not realistically possible. The first steps in the USA-USSR peace process involved each side inspecting the missile-silos of the other.

# Baloch leader slams Musharraf

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## Says rebellion a consequence of tribal anger, not Indian support

Praveen Swami

**NEW DELHI:** Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, the powerful tribal chieftain whose followers have been engaged in full-blown warfare with Pakistani troops in the province of Balochistan, on Wednesday slammed President Pervez Musharraf's claims that India was providing support to the rebellion.

"President Musharraf is using his favourite weapon — lies," Nawab Bugti said in a satellite-phone interview to *The Hindu*, his first to an Indian publication. "His objective is to defame the legitimate demands of the people of Balochistan." He spoke from the traditional seat of the Bugti tribe, Dera Bugti, which has been besieged by Pakistani troops.

In a recent interview to the television channel CNN-IBN, Gen. Musharraf claimed there was proof that India was providing support to the Baloch nationalist forces, who he described as "anti-government and anti-me." Indian involvement in Balochistan included "financial support" and "support in kind."

Nawab Bugti, however, denied that Baloch fighters had received any assistance from India. "What is the need for us to take anything from anyone," he asked. "The weapons we are now using flowed into this region when the United States financed the jihad in Afghanistan. It was the Inter-Services Intelligence which distributed them to Afghanistan,

Iran, Jammu and Kashmir — and to us in Balochistan."

Pointing to the easy availability of small arms in northern and western Pakistan, he said the cost of acquiring weapons was minimal. Both media and scholarly investigation have repeatedly shown that even heavy machine guns and air-defence weapons are widely available for just a few thousand rupees.

### Strategic equities

India has considerable strategic equities in Balochistan, through which the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline will pass. Nawab Bugti made it clear that Baloch insurgents would continue attacks on both existing and future pipelines. "India-Pakistan peace is something for them to deal with, not us. We want our rights — a fair share of the revenues from our country's resources."

Full-scale fighting broke out in Balochistan last month after years of low-grade attacks on pipelines by tribal groups.

In his interview, Nawab Bugti provided a graphic account of the carnage in the Sui valley, a region to which journalists have had little access. Overnight shelling in and around Dera Bugti had claimed 16 lives, bringing the total number of civilian casualties to 43 dead and 161 injured.

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A background: Page 12

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