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**The India-Pakistan  
Peace Process**

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With compliments from

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Ayaz Khan', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Major General Jamshed Ayaz Khan (Retd)**  
**President**  
**Institute of Regional Studies**

**IRS  
Regional  
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## **The India-Pakistan Peace Process**

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**Dr Shaheen Akhtar**



The fallout from the Mumbai attacks dominated India-Pakistan relations during the months of January-February 2009. The composite dialogue process remained ‘paused’. Instead, both countries got engaged in a blame game and India tried to maintain maximum diplomatic pressure on Pakistan in a bid to “bring perpetrators of Mumbai attacks to justice.” There was also a shift in India’s position on Pakistan’s complicity in the Mumbai attacks. Initially, India accepted Pakistani position that if there was a Pakistani involvement, it was at the level of “non-state actors”. Now it insisted that the sophistication of the Mumbai attack pointed to the involvement of ‘state actors’ in Pakistan. Pakistan’s acknowledgment of the fact that its soil had been used to stage the Mumbai attack evoked positive response in India, but India continued to insist that Pakistan should punish the Mumbai attackers. The threat of war dissipated but reports of troop mobilization and countermobilization continued pouring in. Meanwhile, on 1 January 2009 both swapped the list of nuclear installations and facilities in accordance with the Article-II of the Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities between Pakistan and India (1988).

### **India keeps the heat on**

The Indian government toughened its position and launched a diplomatic offensive following terror attacks in Mumbai. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee, Defence Minister A. K. Antony, Home Minister P Chidambaram and Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon used strong words against Pakistan and demanded the extradition of the suspects implicated in the Mumbai attacks and contended the attackers had support from elements in Pakistan’s official agencies.

A day before the arrival of US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher in Islamabad, the Indian government upped the ante against Pakistan. On 4 January, Manmohan Singh addressing a press conference in Shillong demanded that terrorists responsible for the Mumbai terror attacks should be handed over to India for trial. Singh, however, made it clear that “war is no solution” to the problems between India and Pakistan and urged that Islamabad listen to the demand of the “civilized” countries for bringing the perpetrators of the “horrible acts” in Mumbai to justice.<sup>(1)</sup>

India also pointed to the involvement of “state actors” in Pakistan, in the attacks. On 4 January, Home Minister P. Chidambaram in an interview to NDTV news channel stated that Pakistan would have to give “cast iron guarantees” that its soil would not be used to launch any terror attack like the Mumbai carnage, and that it would have to pay an “enormous price” if such a strike was repeated. “Guarantees have to come from those who control the levers of power and that means, the elected civilian government, plus the army. These are not guarantees that you can execute on a piece of paper. These are guarantees

that have to be given to the international community.”<sup>(2)</sup> He said: “Somebody who is familiar with intelligence and who is familiar with commando operations has directed this operation.” ...“And that cannot entirely be a non-state actor. In fact, I presume they are state actors or state-assisted actors unless the contrary is proved.” “It was too enormous a crime and required very elaborate planning, communication networks, financial backing. It was a very, very sophisticated operation.” Chidambaram said the evidence was “overwhelming” and “unanswerable” and would be shared with the United States.<sup>(3)</sup> Soon after Indian Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon handed over a dossier to Pakistan’s High Commissioner Shahid Malik, on 5 January, Mukherjee said the material was linked to “elements in Pakistan.” India was expecting Islamabad to “promptly undertake further investigations” in Pakistan and share the result with it. “We would also hope that Pakistan will implement its bilateral, multilateral and international obligations to prevent terrorism in any manner from territory under her control.”

A day after India handed over dossier to Pakistan authorities New Delhi desperately tried to implicate Pakistan's intelligence apparatus in acts of terrorism on its soil. On 6 January, Manmohan Singh speaking at a conference of chief ministers of Indian states on internal security accused Pakistan of acting irresponsibly, saying Mumbai attacks must have had support from some of its official agencies and that Islamabad was using terrorism as an “instrument of state policy.”<sup>(4)</sup> He contended: “there is enough evidence to show that, given the sophistication and military precision of the attack, it must have had the support of some official agencies in Pakistan”.<sup>(5)</sup> Singh adduced no evidence to prove the Pakistani government's active involvement in the Mumbai attacks. He also alleged that cross-border infiltration from Pakistan into the disputed Kashmir region had not stopped.

Pranab Mukherjee and Chidambaram also tried to step up pressure on Pakistan. On 10 January, Mukherjee told CNN-IBN television channel that India had not exhausted its diplomatic options in its attempt to bring the Mumbai attack plotters to justice. “We have not reached the end of the road. What they [Pakistan] have asked for, we have given them. We expect them to act on it,”... “If they do not act on it, then what follow-up steps we will take and in what space of time it will take place, future course will decide.” Although he ruled out any Israeli-type action against Pakistan, he reiterated that all options were still “open”. “When I say all options are open, all options are open. There is no need of picking up option a, option b, option c, option d. No need of that. I am not responding to that. What I am responding to is options are open.”<sup>(6)</sup> India also alluded to breaking off business, transport and tourist links with Pakistan and isolate it from the rest of the world if it fails to help investigate the Mumbai terrorist attacks. On 13 January, Chidambaram in an interview to *The Times* said that Pakistan was doing nothing to assist India in bringing to justice perpetrators of the attacks on the country’s financial capital. “There are many, many links between India and Pakistan, and if Pakistan does not cooperate and does not help in bringing the perpetrators to heel, those ties will become weaker and weaker and one day will be snapped.”<sup>(7)</sup>

On 17 January, Manmohan Singh said India had given enough proof that the terrorists responsible for the 26/11 attacks were from Pakistan and now it was for Islamabad to bring them to book. “Pakistan has admitted that the arrested terrorist is their national. Now, we expect them to take all the consequent

steps against those who planned and executed the horrific crime.”<sup>(8)</sup> “I urge the Pakistani authorities to come out with a full and complete disclosure of all the facts surrounding the case, without attempts at denial, diversion or obfuscation.” He also expected the international community to throw its weight behind the investigations. He said: “Apart from hundreds of Indians, civilians from 21 countries were either killed or injured in the attacks. We expect the international community to use its full weight to see that the investigations are pursued vigorously and brought to a speedy and logical conclusion, and that terror groups operating from Pakistan are completely shut down.”<sup>(9)</sup>

Indian Chief Admiral Sureesh Mehta took a similar line. On 23 January, Mehta said the Mumbai carnage could not have been carried out without indirect support from "professional organisations" in Pakistan. He said that “there is indirect support....some professional organisations could be involved. The admiral asked: "How do you learn to be doing what you are doing? How do you get the infrastructure you need for this kind of thing?"... "Those are all issues where some professional organisations could be involved."<sup>(10)</sup> Mehta, however, said there had been no additional deployment of forces by the Navy in the western sector following the terror strikes.<sup>(11)</sup> "The level of alertness is always high and our forces are always ready," he said, adding there were ships on duty on the western seafront of the country but no orders raising the state of alert had been given.

On 3 February, Defence Minister AK Antony following new official line termed Pakistan as the “epicentre” of global terrorism. Inaugurating the 11th Asian security conference at the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), he said, “Pakistan has become the epicentre of international terrorism.”<sup>(12)</sup> He said the positive gains of the past few years had been “destroyed” by the Mumbai attack. That major attacks of large magnitude can be planned and executed by elements in Pakistan totally undermines the solemn commitments made by its leadership to us that its territory would not be used for terrorism. He said the onus was now on Pakistan “to act with sincerity and decisiveness against the perpetrators and controllers of such attacks.” “It is in the interest of this region and the rest of the world that such perpetrators of wanton violence are brought to justice and the infrastructure of terror is eliminated,” he added. The world community too had a role to play since the "Frankenstein" of terrorism had become a threat to democracy, stability and peace in Afghanistan and to Pakistan itself.

Congress president Sonia Gandhi further upped the ante. On 5 February, vowing to defeat terrorism she warned that any attempt by Pakistan to weaken the country or harm its unity will be given "a befitting reply". Addressing a public rally in Silvasshi, (Dadra & Nagar Haveli) she said: "India's identity is that all religions and communities co-exist in harmony. Our neighbour wants to weaken this strength of ours but they do not know that we can give a befitting reply to their every design." She said, "Terrorism is a big challenge before the country but would be met. We will defeat terrorism."<sup>(13)</sup>

India welcomed Pakistan's response to its dossier. Pranab Mukherjee and P. Chidambaram described it as a “positive” development. However, India kept up pressure on Pakistan to stay committed. In a statement, on 13 February, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) urged Islamabad to take credible action of dismantling the terror infrastructure on its territory. It offered to share “whatever” it can after

examining the issues raised by Pakistan.<sup>(14)</sup> India kept pressing Pakistan to bring the perpetrators to justice and dismantle infrastructure of terrorism on its soil. On 27 February, Mukherjee asked Pakistan to stay firm on its commitment to prosecute all those responsible for the attacks. He said: “The next course of action is very simple. Perpetrators of the attack should be punished and we expect Pakistan will fulfil its bilateral and international obligations.”<sup>(15)</sup>

## **Diplomatic offensive**

Apart from pressing Pakistan to act against Mumbai attackers, India tried to create international pressure on Pakistan to meet its demands. The main thrust of India’s global diplomatic offensive was to convince the world of Pakistani complicity in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks leading to diplomatic isolation of Pakistan. It was also aimed at convincing Washington that it needed to back the Indian demand that Pakistan hand over the suspects to India and that Mumbai attacks warranted international action against Pakistan.

On 3 January, Pranab Mukherjee said that it was the “responsibility of Pakistani government to stop the activities of banned organizations in any form, in any name, in any shape.”<sup>(16)</sup> Referring to several international conventions on combating terror, including the SAARC Convention Against Terrorism of 1987 and the Special Protocol of 2004 of SAARC countries and UN Security Council resolution after the Mumbai terror strikes calling for action against JuD/Lashkar and several of its leaders he asserted: If Pakistan does not comply with the UN ban, it is for the international community to “take appropriate action.”

India used the dossier handed over to Pakistan as a part of the diplomatic offensive to convince the international community to take tangible action against the masterminds of the attacks. Within this context, India organized briefings to all resident heads of missions while Indian ambassadors did the same in their countries of accreditation. Shiv Shankar Menon briefed heads of missions of the countries, whose nationals were among those killed in the Mumbai attack. In the first week of January, Menon briefed about fifty envoys from Europe, Middle East, Africa and Latin America on the attacks. In another briefing Menon addressed 15 envoys from different countries, including the US, the UK, Israel and France. Media reports said he shared the information with them which was given to Pakistan. External Affairs Minister Mukherjee wrote to his counterparts around the world giving them details of the events in Mumbai and describing the progress that India had made in its investigations and the evidence that New Delhi had collected.<sup>(17)</sup> As part of efforts to build pressure on Pakistan, Home Minister P. Chidambaram travelled to the US to share evidence on the Mumbai attacks. India also shared the dossier with visiting Saudi intelligence chief Prince Muqrin bin Abdul Aziz-al-Saud who met National Security Adviser MK Narayanan and the Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister He Yafei. India also gave the dossier to UK, France, Russia, key EU nations and major Islamic and Arab states.

India's high officials issued an array of statements ahead of Richard Holbrooke's visit to South Asia so as to keep the heat on Pakistan by accusing it as an epicentre of global terrorism. India also deftly succeeded in keeping the Kashmir issue out of the purview of the US special envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. New Delhi's also made efforts to convince the world to view the Mumbai attack as part of global terrorism and tried to convince the US and British high officials visiting the region to put pressure on Pakistan to respond to the Indian demands. On 19 January, maintaining the pressure on Pakistan, Pranab Mukherjee asserted that countries found wanting in their commitment to zero tolerance for terrorism must be made to pay a "heavy price" by the international community. Addressing a gathering of international diplomats, foreign dignitaries and industry honchos at the Partnership Summit 2009 in New Delhi, he asserted terrorism was one of the threats that affected all nations. "Countries that sponsor or tolerate terrorism must be left with no choice but to dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism," he said without directly naming Pakistan.<sup>(18)</sup> He underlined: "India has long faced the scourge of terrorist activities. The attacks on Mumbai shocked the world and focused attention on the challenges faced by India in countering cross-border terrorism. International partnerships by way of sharing and analysis of intelligence are crucial components of anti-terrorist operations."<sup>(19)</sup>

On 6 February, Shivshankar Menon in a speech at a foreign affairs conference in an address at the Institute Francais des Relations Internationales (IFRI) in Paris made the most direct accusation of official Pakistani involvement in the Mumbai attacks. He said the organisers of the plot "were and remain clients and creations of the ISI." "The perpetrators planned, trained and launched their attacks from Pakistan, and the organisers were and remain clients and creations of the ISI."<sup>(20)</sup> He accused Pakistan of "prevarication" in investigating the attacks and bringing the perpetrators to justice.<sup>(21)</sup> He described Pakistan as "the epicentre of international terrorism" and that India had directly suffered from "linkages and relationships among terrorist organisations, their support structures official sponsors and funding mechanisms which transcend national borders but operate within them."<sup>(22)</sup> He implicitly urged the international community to stop selling weapons to the Pakistan military. He said arms sales to Pakistan, other than material strictly needed to fight terrorism and extremism, "are like whisky to an alcoholic, a drug reinforcing an addiction, skewing the internal political balance, and making the consolidation of democracy more difficult."<sup>(23)</sup>

## **Mumbai probe**

**India's dossier:** On 5 January India handed over to Pakistan what it termed evidence of the Mumbai terror attacks. The "information dossier" was handed over to Pakistan's High Commissioner Shahid Malik by Indian Secretary for External Affairs Shivshankar Menon in New Delhi and the Indian high commissioner to the Pakistan foreign secretary in Islamabad. The information contained in the dossier included telephonic transcripts between the gunmen and their LeT commanders, decoded skype calls over

the Internet made between the gunmen in the Taj and Oberoi hotels and a Jewish centre with their LeT controllers, weapons recovered after the 26/11 carnage and the interrogation report of Ajmal Kasab.<sup>(24)</sup>

The dossier included [intercepted] telephonic conversation between the Mumbai attackers and two LeT commanders — chief operational commander Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi and his right-hand man Zarrar Shah, who had already been arrested by the Pakistani authorities and were being interrogated. The evidence also included “decoded Skype calls over the Internet that were made between the Mumbai attackers holed up inside the Taj Mahal and Oberoi hotels and a Jewish centre in Mumbai with their LeT controllers, who were allegedly operating from Pakistan and who have been identified as Abu Hamza and Abu Kafa.”<sup>(25)</sup> The dossier also provided a list of items recovered from a motorboat which was hijacked by the attackers to make their way to Mumbai. The list included a bag of flour from Karachi, Medicam toothpaste, tubes of the Touch Me shaving cream, toilet paper manufactured by ‘Zik Brothers, Karachi’ and T-shirts with ‘made in Pakistan’ labels. The ‘evidence’ further talked about a Thuraya satellite phone found on the boat which was used to make several calls to Lahore and Karachi. The phone set was manufactured by a Dubai-based company and purchased from a Karachi-based dealer. The dossier also gave names and photographs of the ten Mumbai attackers. The names mentioned were: Ajmal Amir Kasab, Ismail Khan, Abdul Rehman Bara, Abu Ali, Abu Sohaib, Abu Umer, Babar Imran, Abu Aksa, Fahad Ullah and Abdul Rehman Chhota.

The dossier was accompanied with statements pointing at Pakistan’s involvement in the Mumbai attacks and demand for extradition of the suspects. Indian Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon later told a news conference that New Delhi’s goal was to get the involved terrorists extradited. Menon said: “Our goals are clear. We want the perpetrators to be brought to justice.”... “It is hard to believe that something of this scale that took so long in preparation and of this nature that amounts to a commando attack could occur without anybody, anywhere in the establishment knowing this was happening.”<sup>(26)</sup> He expected Pakistan to promptly undertake its investigations and share the results with New Delhi so as to bring the perpetrators to “Indian” justice.<sup>(27)</sup> Pranab Mukherjee stated that the material was linked to “elements in Pakistan,” and described the attacks as “an unpardonable crime”. He expected Islamabad to “promptly undertake further investigations” in Pakistan and share the result with India. He hoped that Pakistan would “implement its bilateral, multilateral and international obligations to prevent terrorism in any manner from territory under her control.” He asserted that the world will unite to achieve the goal of eliminating the threat of such terrorism.<sup>(28)</sup>

**Extradition of Mumbai attackers:** On the question of extradition, India dropped the distinction between those who had “committed crimes in India and have taken shelter in Pakistan and those “persons who are Pakistani citizens, and are indulging in terrorist activities.” While India has asked for the extradition of its own citizens, it had demanded the latter category to be tried as per Pakistan laws. In subsequent statements, however, Manmohan Singh, Mukherjee, and Shivshankar Menon demanded that the perpetrators of Mumbai attacks must be handed over. Further, India maintained that extradition of terror suspects was allowed under several international conventions. Shivshankar Menon told newsmen : “Our



understanding of the law is quite clear. There are several conventions on terrorism and under them Pakistan is obliged to extradite criminals. If not, it amounts to granting them immunity once they are on Pakistani soil.”<sup>(29)</sup> Mukherjee also insisted that an extradition treaty was not needed for handing over three suspects — Dawood Ibrahim, Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Maulana Masood Azhar and Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi of the Lashkar-e-Taiba that India says staged the Nov 26-29 attacks.

On 15 January, India however, toned down its demand for extradition, apparently due to lack of international support on the issue. Pranab Mukherjee, in an interview told the news channel ‘Aaj Tak’: “We do hope that the material and evidence that we have given, Pakistan will act on it and fugitives violating the Indian laws who have taken shelter in Pakistan will be handed over to India for their proper justice. If not hand over to India, Pakistan must try and convict the suspects.” The statement was widely seen as a major climb-down by India since it had in the past 50 days insisted that Islamabad hand it over the fugitives from the Indian law who are suspected to be involved in the Mumbai attacks and other terrorist incidents in the country.<sup>(30)</sup> However, on 19 January Pranab Mukherjee again raised the extradition demand saying: “We have never given up the demand that perpetrators of terror acts should be extradited to India. There is no question of any climb down.”<sup>(31)</sup> This implied a dramatic U-turn in India’s stand on the issue. In fact, for the first time he pointed out that Pakistan’s Extradition Act of 1972 specifically provided for extradition even when there was no bilateral extradition treaty between the countries. He, however, reiterated that “it is Pakistan’s responsibility that individuals based in Pakistan do not commit criminal acts in other countries and then have immunity simply because they are Pakistani nationals.”

**Mumbai attack charge sheet:** The 11,280- page charge sheet in the 26/11 case was filed against the perpetrators of the Mumbai attack on 25 February. It indicated that a conspiracy was hatched in Pakistan and masterminded by the Lashkar-e-Taiba to hit select targets in Mumbai. The mass of evidence that has gathered to set out an unassailable case included satellite phone intercepts, GPS data, transcripts of telephone conversations, statements from over 2000 witnesses, SIM cards and — of course — the confession of the lone surviving terrorist, Mohammed Ajmal Amir ‘Kasab’. Significantly, the charge sheet did not make any reference to the ISI or suggest that a section of the Pakistan establishment was involved in any way in the attack. That two of the accused are senior Pakistani army personnel is not confirmed. The Indian connection to the conspiracy is limited to Fahim Ansari and Sabauddin Shaikh, who are accused of having scouted the locations for the terrorists to attack and prepared maps to enable them to “reach their assigned targets easily.”<sup>(32)</sup>

**Internal dimension:** India took different steps to counter the challenge of terrorism. P Chidambaram stated that a national investigation agency, headed by a director general, will be formed very soon. It would investigate terrorist offences in the country. Twenty counter-insurgency and anti-terrorism schools will be set up to impart terror-related training besides making a new and mutually beneficial arrangement under which all intelligence agencies share intelligence on a real time basis. The cabinet will also be asked to give approval to establish hubs of National Security Guards in four cities initially and about 20,000



bullet-proof jackets for central paramilitary forces will be procured. He also announced appointing a senior officer as his internal security adviser.<sup>(33)</sup>

**BJP stance:** The Bharatiya Janata Party, the main opposition party keeping an eye on the upcoming elections, urged the government to exert more pressure on Pakistan, as well as criticized the government for not handling the issue properly. On 3 January, BJP General Secretary Arun Jaitley stated that Pakistan must not be allowed to go scot-free. It must be made to realise there was a huge cost involved in allowing its soil for supporting or encouraging any kind of terrorist activity targeting India from territory under its control. His view was that all kinds of diplomatic pressure can be applied: all sporting ties must be severed; no visas should be given; air, road and rail links must be snapped; and all other bilateral ties must be ended.<sup>(34)</sup> On 5 January, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and senior BJP leader L. K. Advani Pakistan told newsmen that Pakistan was badly “exposed” before the world and hoped that international pressure would force it to take steps to dismantle the terror network on its soil.<sup>(35)</sup> BJP parliamentarian Arun Shourie called for covert actions to be carried out in Balochistan, Gilgit and Baltistan. He declared, “Not an eye for an eye; but for an eye, both eyes.”<sup>(36)</sup> On the other hand, criticizing the government, the BJP Chief Minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi, stated that the dossier was hardly “evidence”.

### **Pakistan’s response**

Pakistan reiterated its stance that it would not allow its territory to be used for any terrorist activity and displayed full cooperation in investigating the 26/11 attack. It also urged India to resume the composite dialogue process as soon as possible. This commitment was expressed at the highest level. On 1 January 2009, Chief of the Army Staff General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani met President Zardari and Prime Minister Gilani and discussed the situation prevailing in the region following the Mumbai terror attacks. All the three leaders made it clear that Pakistan’s soil would not be allowed to be used for any terrorist activity. At the same time, the President asserted that war was no solution to any problem and all disputes must be settled in an amicable manner with India. He pointed out that Pakistan itself was a victim of terrorism and called upon the international community to exert pressure on India to cooperate with Pakistan to ease tension rather than augment it.<sup>(37)</sup> The Prime Minister also expressed Pakistan’s desire to solve all issues with India peacefully.

On 2 January, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani reiterated Pakistan’s offer to cooperate with India in investigating the Mumbai terrorist attacks. On 6 January, he told newsmen that “Pakistan will not allow its soil to be used for terrorism” and urged the international community to help resolve the core issue of Kashmir between Pakistan and India.<sup>(38)</sup> In his meeting with US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher, he talked about Pakistan’s efforts to defuse tension with India and reiterated his government’s commitment to take action against any Pakistani national if credible evidence was provided. Gilani hoped that the new US administration would take then up President-elect

Barak Obama's initiative to appoint a special envoy to help resolve the issue of Jammu and Kashmir for lasting peace in the region.<sup>(39)</sup> Boucher agreed with Gilani on the need for an early resolution of the Kashmir dispute. Once the present crisis was defused, he said, the US government would move ahead with its initiative to help Pakistan and India to find a solution to the Kashmir issue.<sup>(40)</sup>

Pakistan resisted India's coercive diplomacy and urged on resumption of composite dialogue. Foreign Office observed that it would not accept any political or military coercion from India and it was ready to defend itself. On 1 January, in a press briefing foreign office spokesman stated: "It will be unfortunate if a military confrontation takes place. A war or any level of military confrontation can have disastrous consequences for the region." He said Pakistan would counsel restraint and an attitude of responsibility.<sup>(41)</sup> The spokesman rejected allegations against Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency and said Pakistan's government and state institutions were committed to the "war against terror." "Therefore, vilifying Pakistan or, for that matter, any of its state institutions on this score is unwarranted and unacceptable."<sup>(42)</sup> The spokesman urged India to resume the composite dialogue. He said Pakistan believed that sustained engagement and dialogue was necessary to allay each other's concerns. "Breakdown of dialogue only works to the advantage of terrorists."

On 5 January, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi emphasized friendly ties with all neighbouring countries — Iran, Afghanistan, China and India, and a regional approach to combat terrorism so as to stop the recurrence of Mumbai-like incidents. He said: "The Mumbai attack was a big incident which caused great damage and we need to get to the bottom of it to work out a strategy so that such incidents do not recur." He said: "We all face the problem of terrorism and need to tackle the menace through a joint struggle."<sup>(43)</sup> He said after mounting tensions in the wake of the Mumbai attacks, the foreign ministry followed a three-point agenda. Firstly to avoid war "for we believe it would bring destruction to both the countries." Secondly, to save Pakistan from isolation, and thirdly to ensure internal stability and "we have reached our objectives."<sup>(44)</sup> Qureshi pointed out that Pakistan succeeded in strongly conveying its message to the United States on two major points: no Pakistani 'state actor' was involved in the Mumbai attacks and that no Pakistani government could afford to hand over Pakistani citizens to India. The political backlash of such an action would be so severe that no government could risk it.

Pakistan reacted strongly to the Indian accusations of any official support to the Mumbai attackers. On 8 January, Prime Minister Gilani in a statement termed Manmohan Singh's remarks alleging involvement of elements in official agencies in Mumbai attacks as "unfortunate" and not helpful for objective investigations into the Mumbai incident. He said: "It could lead to unnecessarily whipping up of tensions in South Asia." "The Indian prime minister instead of reciprocating Pakistan's sincere sentiments to move forward towards establishing good, cooperative and friendly relations, has given a statement and levelled allegations in connection with the Mumbai attacks which is most unfortunate."<sup>(45)</sup> Shah Mahmood Qureshi stated that "Indian politicians have fallen prey to the Mumbai [attacks]".... "If we have to get to the bottom, we have to cooperate and have to keep the communication channels open." He said Pakistan has offered India cooperation in bringing the perpetrators to justice. "How can we cooperate when we

start pointing fingers.”<sup>(46)</sup> “The Indians are not being far-sighted,” he said and added that earlier Indian authorities clearly stated that neither the government of Pakistan nor the state of Pakistan was involved.

Pakistan also stressed on the resolution of the Kashmir dispute which would act as a catalyst for peace in the region. On 6 February Yousuf Raza Gilani addressing a seminar held to mark the Kashmir Solidarity Day *Kashmir Issue: Conflict resolution in Kashmir is the biggest CBM*, reiterated Islamabad’s offer to New Delhi to resume the peace process for engagement and resumption of the composite dialogue to engage constructively to resolve the longstanding disputes, including Kashmir. “We hope that the peace process would resume soon and become result-oriented in addressing all outstanding issues, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir.”<sup>(47)</sup> He said the Kashmir dispute was central to Pakistan-India relations and held the key not only to regional but also to global peace. He said the world powers had, once again, reiterated their concern on the centrality of this festering dispute and urged peace efforts and called for its early resolution. “We fully support and indeed encourage international efforts to this end.” He regretted that “the tragic Mumbai incident has not only led to a pause in the composite dialogue but also cast a dark shadow on Pakistan-India relations and threatened regional peace.” Earlier, addressing the National Solidarity Conference at the Prime Minister House, Gilani lauded positive statements of the new US administration on the Kashmir issue and hoped that President Obama would appoint a special envoy on Kashmir as well. He said the people of Pakistan were disappointed to know that India was not included in the purview of the special envoy, Richard Holbrooke. He also pledged that Pakistan would continue to provide diplomatic, political and moral support for the just cause of the Kashmiri people.<sup>(48)</sup>

## **Mumbai probe**

### **Response to the Indian dossier**

On receiving Indian ‘information dossier’, Foreign Secretary Salman Bashir, in a statement issued by the Foreign Office, said that Pakistan would evaluate the information provided by India so far”. He informed the Indian high commissioner that Pakistan was carrying out its own investigations and was determined to uncover the full facts pertaining to the Mumbai terrorist attacks.<sup>(49)</sup> He underscored the need for the two countries to cooperate in the investigations “with a view to gathering evidence that was legally scrutable.”<sup>(50)</sup> He also expressed Pakistan’s desire to deal effectively with the issue of terrorism, which was a regional phenomenon and required close cooperation.<sup>(51)</sup> He reiterated Pakistan’s proposals for joint investigations and its readiness to send a high-level delegation as well as constituting a joint commission headed by the respective national security advisers.

On 7 January, President Zardari and Prime Minister Gilani gave assurances to carry out a credible investigation on the basis of the information provided by India on Mumbai attacks. The two leaders said that strict action would be taken against any group found involved in the carnage.<sup>(52)</sup> However, Pakistan described the Indian dossier as more a document containing information than evidence. On 14 January, Gilani in a policy statement told the National Assembly that India had only shared the information and not

given any evidence on the Mumbai terrorist attacks yet. “All that has been received from India is some information. I say information because this is not evidence and this information needs to be carefully examined and there should be serious, sustained, and pragmatic cooperation.”<sup>(53)</sup> He said the information provided by New Delhi on 5 January had been sent to the Interior Ministry for necessary inquiry and its result would be shared with India in due course of time. In another statement on 6 February, Gilani assured India that Pakistan was carrying out investigations on the basis of information provided by New Delhi. “After the receipt of final opinion from the Law Ministry, Pakistan would take the world community and India into confidence.” He said Pakistan believed in transparency in the investigations. He said Pakistan was determined not to allow anyone to use its territory for terrorist acts, as the country itself is a victim of terrorism.<sup>(54)</sup>

Pakistan set up a three-member FIA investigation team to scrutinise the Indian dossier. The investigation agency was tasked with conducting an investigation on the basis of the Indian dossier on the attacks and given 10 days to report back with its findings. Adviser on Interior Rehman Malik said the government would try to “convert” the information given by India into evidence so that cases could be registered against the perpetrators in Pakistan, in order to bring them to trial in the country.<sup>(55)</sup> He asked India to come up with more information to help the Pakistani end of the investigations. He said that if any Pakistani was found involved in the attacks, which he described as a “heinous” crime, he would be brought to trial in Pakistan.

**Kasab’s identity issue resolved:** On 7 January, amidst confusing, somewhat conflicting, statements Pakistan acknowledged that a preliminary investigation by Pakistan had established that the lone terrorist captured alive by India was a Pakistani national. Kasab was son of Amir Kasab and Mrs Noor Illahi and a resident of Faridkot. While the Indian television channel CNN-IBN quoted Pakistan’s National Security Adviser Mehmud Ali Durrani as saying that Ajmal Kasab’s identity as a Pakistani had been established, Foreign Secretary Salman Bashir told the same channel that it was premature to say anything because the investigation was continuing. American news agency APTN quoted Information Minister Sherry Rehman as confirming that Ajmal Kasab in fact was a Pakistani national. Similarly, the Foreign Office which at the initial stage appeared either detached from reality or completely out of the loop, admitted by broadcasting through the state-run PTV that Ajmal Kasab was indeed a Pakistani national.<sup>(56)</sup> A top official said the “investigations had started soon after the initial reports had suggested that Ajmal Kasab may possibly be a Pakistani national.” “However, the authorities wanted to be doubly sure of his identity as there existed no record of Kasab and his family in the National Data Base which is maintained by NADRA.”<sup>(57)</sup> The official sources further said that Pakistan would not extend legal aid to Ajmal Kasab despite his request. The identity of other militants killed in Mumbai is yet to be established. Senior security officials, however, said that preliminary investigations had established that the militants were operating on their own and had absolutely no link with any section of the country’s security apparatus.<sup>(58)</sup> In a dramatic turn of events, Prime Minister Gilani however, sacked his NSA Mehmud Ali. Durrani for his “irresponsible

behaviour in not taking Prime Minister and other stakeholders into confidence and lack of coordination on matters of national security.”<sup>(59)</sup>

Pakistan rejected Indian accusation that its agencies were involved in Mumbai attacks. Inter-Services Intelligence Chief Lieutenant-General Ahmed Shujaa Pasha maintained that “there will not be a war.... We are distancing ourselves from conflict with India, both now and in general.” He said this while talking to German magazine *Der Spiegel's* reporter Susanne Koelbl.<sup>(60)</sup> He said, so far the Indians had failed to provide evidence to support their claims that Pakistani groups sponsored by the ISI were behind the Mumbai attacks. “They have given us nothing, no numbers, no connections, no names. This is regrettable.” Pasha insisted that he was willing to travel to New Delhi to help in the investigation.<sup>(61)</sup>

On 19 January, Pakistan briefed India on its probe into the Mumbai terror attacks, including the follow-up steps it had taken or planned to take in the coming days. Interior ministry chief Rehman Malik told Indian High Commissioner Satyabrata Pal about the inquiry being conducted by a three-member team into the information provided by New Delhi on the Mumbai attacks and other aspects of Pakistan's probe, official sources said.<sup>(62)</sup>

On 13 February, Pakistan in its first detailed response to the dossier provided by India acknowledged that the Mumbai attacks were partly planned in Pakistan and that it had arrested six suspects, including the “main operator”. Pakistan said criminal cases had been registered against nine suspects on charges of “abetting, conspiracy and facilitation” of a terrorist act.<sup>(63)</sup> However, it said more evidence was required from India, including DNA samples of Ajmal Kasab, to establish his identity. Addressing a press conference at the interior ministry, Interior Adviser Rehman Malik told the media that FIR No: 01/009 had been lodged with the Special Investigation Group (SIG) in the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) against nine suspects. The Pakistani investigators had identified Hammad Amin Sadiq as the alleged ‘mastermind’ of the whole conspiracy. The cases against nine persons had been registered under the Anti-Terror Act (ATA) and the Cyber Crime Act and they would be tried under these two sets of laws. Malik said six of the nine accused named in the FIR had already been arrested and being interrogated, two had been identified but not arrested so far while investigations were still under way into the possible involvement of the ninth accused. He identified those taken into custody as Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi, a Lashkar-e-Taiba (LT) commander, Javed Iqbal, arrested from Barcelona, Spain, Hammad Amin Sadiq, believed to be the main operator belonging to southern Punjab, Zarar Shah, Mohammad Ashfaq and Abu Hamza. The name of the lone surviving terrorist now in the custody of India, Ajmal Kasab, is not included in the FIR.

The findings were already shared with the Indian government. The Indian high commissioner in Islamabad was called to the foreign office and the report was handed over to him officially. Islamabad also forwarded a set of 30 questions to India which sought evidence needed to support and further the investigation process in Pakistan. In the context of the dossier, Pakistan sought the statement of Ajmal Kassab given to Indian authorities, his fingerprints and accomplices who had taken part in the attack, intercepted conversation, details of seven SIMs used by the attackers, ID cards and photo images of the

nine other terrorists.<sup>(64)</sup> Malik said to make a solid case against all these people arrested or for whose arrest the Pakistani authorities were making all-out efforts, meaningful cooperation from India would be most important.

**Extradition of suspects:** Pakistan outrightly rejected Indian demand for extradition of suspects linked to Mumbai attacks. On 3 January, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi rejected India's demand to hand over terror suspects linked to the Mumbai strikes, pointing out the fact that there was no extradition treaty between the two countries. "We are keen on rebuilding our internal institutions. So if we engage in these issues, it will be harmful for Pakistan." On 5 January, he again turned down India's demand for extradition of the suspects saying: "We have a treaty with the US; we do not have an extradition treaty with India. Please do not compare, every situation is not identical."<sup>(65)</sup> On 11 January, Gilani also ruled out handing over any person to any country in connection with the Mumbai carnage.

He said that Pakistan was carrying out its own investigation and if any Pakistani was found involved, the government would take action against him in accordance with law. "We will not be intimidated by any foreign pressure since our hands are clean. We have our own laws and we will not allow our land to be used for terrorist activities."<sup>(66)</sup>

**Extradition of Lt Col Shrikant Purohit:** On 18 January, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Interior Rehman Malik said Pakistan would ask India to hand over perpetrators of the Samjhauta Express blast, if the Indian government insisted on extradition of "non-state-actors" suspected to be involved in the Mumbai attacks. "If India (keeps) insisting on ... handing over the suspects of the Mumbai attacks, we will also ask it to hand over the accused of the Samjhauta Express blast."<sup>(67)</sup> On 21 January India, however, rejected Pakistan's suggestion for the extradition of Lieutenant Colonel Shrikant Purohit, an accused in the Samjhauta Express train bombing in February 2007. The police filed a charge sheet against Purohit and 10 other members of a Hindu right-wing group in connection with the Malegaon bomb blasts. Indian Defence Minister AK Antony said the cases against Purohit were India's internal matter and were under various stages of investigation. "It is our internal matter. We are investigating it. How can Pakistan be concerned with that?"<sup>(68)</sup>

## **Diplomatic front**

Pakistan condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and assured India and the world that it would not allow its territory to be used for terrorism against any country. It launched transparent investigation in the Mumbai attacks and reassured the international players its full cooperation with India in investigating the incident. Pakistan also urged the international community to persuade India for the resumption of the Indo-Pakistan peace process stalled in the aftermath of the Mumbai attacks.

Pakistan also took international community into confidence on the issue of investigations. A briefing for the 80 ambassadors of different countries including the United States, European nations as well as Asian and African states based in Islamabad was held in the Foreign Office on 20 January. The

briefing was arranged to inform the ambassadors about measures taken by Pakistan to investigate the Mumbai attacks. Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and Adviser to the Prime Minister on Interior Rehman Malik chaired the meeting. Shah Mahmood Qureshi assured the envoys of fair and transparent investigations into the Mumbai terror attacks. He added that India must also cooperate with Pakistan so that the perpetrators of heinous crime could be brought to justice.<sup>(69)</sup> He said the international community should urge India to resume the peace process with Pakistan and stop issuing irresponsible statements. Qureshi said Pakistan wanted peace and was against indulgence in any conflict with India but in case of any aggression Pakistan would be forced to pay back in the same coin. He said Pakistan would not hand over any of the suspects named by India but if they were found involved in Mumbai carnage, they would be dealt with in accordance with the country's law. The Adviser on Interior said that the government of Pakistan had taken several concrete steps that included detention of suspects, launch of formal inquiry, constituting an FIA team comprising experts of Special Investigation Group. He said that terms of reference for the inquiry reflected the government's intent to conduct transparent and legally tenable inquiry and proceed with prosecution in accordance with the law of the land.<sup>(70)</sup> He reiterated Pakistan's full commitment to eradicating terrorism from the region and affirmed the imperative need for cooperation between Pakistan and India to investigate the Mumbai attacks.

On 29 January, Yousuf Raza Gilani, at the World Economic Forum in Davos termed the Mumbai incident as "unfortunate" saying: "We condemn terrorism, whether it is in Mumbai or Islamabad or Karachi." "I assure you and I assure the House that I will never ever allow my soil, Pakistani soil, to be used for terror activities."<sup>(71)</sup> Speaking at a seminar on "Pakistan and its neighbours", he said the government was probing the Mumbai terror attacks on the basis of the information given by India. "Whatever dossier or information has been provided by the government of India, I have already constituted a high-powered committee in the Ministry of Interior. We are probing the incident," he said. "Whatever be the findings from that inquiry, we will provide it to India and to the whole world."

### **Mumbai attack and international community**

While the international community tried to defuse the situation, it also put pressure on Pakistan to cooperate with India in investigating the Mumbai terror attacks. There was also widening international consensus that LeT was involved in the Mumbai blasts. However, international support to Indian demand of extradition of Mumbai attackers weakened as it increased pressure on Pakistan to deal effectively with the outfits such as LeT and Jaish-e Muhammad (JeM).

US, Britain and China were the major actors that made efforts to defuse the tension. On 31 December, 2008 Gordon Johndroe, a White House spokesman, told reporters that US President George W. Bush had separate telephonic conversations with the Indian and Pakistani leaders who agreed to avoid any moves that could escalate tensions between the two neighbours. "All three leaders... agreed that no



one wanted to take any steps that unnecessarily raise tensions.” Bush “urged both... to cooperate with each other in the Mumbai attack investigation as well as on counter-terrorism in general.”<sup>(72)</sup>

On 3 January 2009, US Ambassador Anne W Patterson met President Asif Ali Zardari and conveyed US message of support to Pakistan in resolving tension with India through dialogue.<sup>(73)</sup> President Zardari told the US envoy that Pakistan had no aggressive design against any country and had demonstrated much flexibility after the Mumbai attacks while now India should respond positively. He also pointed out that Pakistan had time and again offered India assistance in conducting the investigation into the terror attacks but no response had been received from the other side.<sup>(74)</sup>

On 5 January, US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher visited Pakistan. His visit coincided with the handing over by India of the Mumbai dossier to Pakistan. He met the Pakistani leadership —President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, National Security Adviser Mehmood Ali Durrani — and urged them to track down and punish the culprits involved in the Mumbai attacks. He welcomed New Delhi’s move to share information with Islamabad as it “would help Pakistan ... track down the culprits” and urged the two sides to cooperate with each other for better information sharing to prevent recurrence of similar attacks. Boucher said: “This is clear: they (the attackers) had links in Pakistan. The attackers had links that lead to Pakistan.”<sup>(75)</sup> He urged India and Pakistan “to work together to investigate the Mumbai attacks and those behind the carnage”.<sup>(76)</sup> Boucher appreciated that Pakistan had taken prompt action against groups accused of being involved in planning and executing the attacks and wanted action against these groups to continue. Boucher said: “There is determination here to follow up and find the groups that are responsible so they never do it again.”<sup>(77)</sup> On the new Indian allegation of involvement of Pakistan’s state or state-assisted actors in the Mumbai attacks, he observed that everyone needed to follow the evidence and not jump to conclusions. He also urged both countries to avoid provocative actions that could lead to hostilities. “We want neither side to take steps that can be misinterpreted.” In New Delhi, Boucher met India’s Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon and Gayatri Kumar, Joint Secretary (America) in the External Affairs ministry, at the South Block. He briefed his Indian interlocutors on the discussions he had held in Islamabad. Boucher told the Indian officials that US was determined to get at the bottom of the crime. He told Menon that a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) team would soon visit Islamabad to carry out its own investigations on the basis of the leads given by India, establishing Pakistani links with the attack. He told reporters that steps taken by Pakistan so far had not eliminated the terror threat. “People responsible for the Mumbai attack have to be brought to justice and (terrorist) organisations closed down.”<sup>(78)</sup> US Vice President-elect Joe Biden also visited Pakistan and made effort to defuse tensions between New Delhi and Islamabad.

On 10 January, the US has contended that the dossier given by India to Pakistan on the Mumbai attacks was “credible” but suggested that New Delhi should allow time to Islamabad to act on it. US ambassador to India David C Mulford said the dossier contains extensive inputs from the Federal Bureau

of Investigation (FBI).<sup>(79)</sup> The US administration urged Pakistan to ensure that those responsible for the Mumbai terror attacks are punished inside the country instead of being extradited to India. This indicated a clear change in the US attitude which previously backed the Indian demand that some of the suspects be extradited to India.<sup>(80)</sup> In their negotiations with US officials on this issue, the Pakistanis insisted that the extradition of Pakistani citizens to India — particularly when the two countries did not have an extradition treaty — would have unpredictable consequences for the government.

British Foreign Secretary David Miliband visited India and Pakistan in mid-January to defuse regional tension. On 13 January, Miliband assured India that President Zardari was sincere in his resolve to fight terrorism and encouraged New Delhi's restraint with Islamabad as a mature way to deal with the fallout of the Mumbai terror attacks. He emphatically disagreed with India's accusations that Pakistan's state institutions were somehow complicit in the Mumbai carnage. "I have said publicly that I do not believe that the attacks were directed by the Pakistani state. And I think it is important to restate that," he told a questioner. "What is relevant is the approach of the Pakistani state to the LeT (Lashkar-e-Taiba) organization and the way the Pakistani state takes on the menace of the LeT organisation."<sup>(81)</sup>

Around same time, Miliband wrote an article in *The Guardian* on "War on Terror", suggesting that resolving the Kashmir dispute would help tackle extremism.<sup>(82)</sup> On 15 January, in an interview, Miliband emphasised that the resolution of the Kashmir issue would "help deny extremists in the region one of their main calls to arms and allow the Pakistani authorities to focus more effectively on tackling the threat on their Western border."<sup>(83)</sup> The Indian Foreign Office strongly reacted to Miliband's comments on Kashmir, and urged him not to intervene in India's internal affairs.

On 16 January, Miliband visited Islamabad and urged Pakistan to take swift action against elements believed to be involved in the Mumbai attacks to address a "searing feeling of injustice" in India. He acknowledged Pakistan's commitment to tackle terrorism, especially to prosecuting perpetrators of the Mumbai attacks, but wanted "actions to go further and ... faster" and detainees prosecuted. He proposed two-track approach that included prosecution of people arrested in connection with the Mumbai attacks and "putting out of business the terrorist infrastructure within Pakistan that is the foundation of the terrorists' ability to launch attacks in neighbouring countries".<sup>(84)</sup> This would go a long way in building the international community's confidence in Pakistan's commitment to "rebut and rebuff attempts by terrorists to use Pakistani soil as a launching pad". He, however, rejected New Delhi's demand for extradition of suspects and their prosecution in India. "They should be prosecuted in Pakistan."<sup>(85)</sup>

China also stepped up its efforts to defuse the crisis and urged both sides to show restraint.

Foreign Minister, He Yafei visited Pakistan and India to help deescalate the situation. In Pakistan he met virtually every civilian and military leader of any note, including the president, the prime minister and the chief of army staff. He praised Pakistan's approach and called its attitude 'constructive'.<sup>(86)</sup> He Yafei visited India and met Indian foreign minister, foreign secretary and National Security Adviser M K Narayanan and briefed them on his discussions with the Pakistani leadership in Islamabad. India shared the dossier with him.

France was appreciative of Indian concerns on the Mumbai attack's investigation. Jean-David Levitte, Diplomatic Adviser of French President Nicolas Sarkozy, speaking to reporters at the end of his visit for the 20th Indo-French Strategic Dialogue referred to President Zardari's words promising cooperation with India and stressed on Pakistan's "full cooperation". He urged on "all agencies of the Pakistani state" to implement those commitments.<sup>(87)</sup> He regarded the Indian dossier credible but rejected the notion that any official agency of Pakistan was involved. He also called on India to show "restraint" and resume the composite dialogue process with Pakistan. Levitte had discussions with both Manmohan Singh and his counterpart, National Security Adviser M.K. Narayanan.

### **War not the option**

The political, and military leadership and top officials on both sides made several statements ruling out war as an option and stressed that the issue should be resolved through closer cooperation. However, at times India talked about keeping all options open, but did not specify the military option as such. On January 1, addressing a press conference Indian Home Minister P Chidambaram ruled out any hot pursuit of "terrorists" in Pakistan on the pattern of Israeli air attacks.<sup>(88)</sup> Anand Sharma, Indian Minister of State for External Affairs, told newsmen India does not want any military action against Pakistan in the wake of Mumbai terror attacks adding, "firm diplomatic initiatives have given results." He asked Pakistan to take effective steps to bring those responsible for attacks to justice.<sup>(89)</sup>

On 3 January 2009, Defence Minister A.K. Antony speaking on the sidelines of a function of *Sainik Samachar*, official journal of the armed forces said India did not escalate tensions and there was "no unusual troop movement" on the borders. The defence exercises being conducted were normal. After the attacks in Mumbai it was natural for the country to prepare for "all eventualities."<sup>(90)</sup> He said: "After 26/11, nobody will [have to] tell us. We must be prepared to meet all eventualities, but these [steps] are not escalation and nobody is making any provocation ... we have to meet any challenge, threats from any quarters," he said. Islamabad, he asserted, should act against terror groups.<sup>(91)</sup> He said: "I do not think there is any noticeable change in the attitude of Pakistan. Statements are not important. Actions are important. They have to prove by their action." However, there was no time limit that India had given Pakistan to act. He pointed out that more than 30 terror outfits are still active in that country.<sup>(92)</sup>

On 7 January, continuing with verbal attacks on Pakistan, Indian Defence Minister AK Antony talking to mediapersons on the sidelines of a function for ex-servicemen in New Delhi again indicated that India was examining 'all possible available options' on dismantling terror outfits operating in Pakistan. He refused to specify the options.<sup>(93)</sup> Antony said, "There is no serious attempt by Pakistan to dismantle terror outfits working across the border. That is our major worry. So we will do everything to prevent this. For this, we are examining all possible available options".<sup>(94)</sup> Asking Pakistan to act, Antony said those persons who gave support and direction to the militants should be booked. Also more than 30 terror outfits across the border should be dismantled. It was the duty of the government of that country.

On 15 January Indian army chief General Deepak Kapoor speaking to the press at his annual press conference on 'Sena Diwas' (61st Army Day) told reporters: "We have kept all options open. If diplomatic and economic options fail, then war is the last resort."<sup>(95)</sup> But whether that has to be used or not would have to be decided by the political leadership. "But if all options fail and means exhaust, then war is certainly the last resort." He maintained that Pakistan indeed shifted some of its troops from the Afghanistan border to the Indian border but regarded the movement of special troops in the Pokharan and Mahajan ranges in Rajasthan, as "routine movements".<sup>(96)</sup> Pakistan's military denied any build-up of forces on the Indian border and said it moved a "limited number" of soldiers off the Afghan border "for defensive measures" as tensions rose with India after the Mumbai attacks.<sup>(97)</sup>

Pakistan clearly ruled out the war option but showed its will to react strongly if attacked. On 6 January, Adviser to Prime Minister for Interior Affairs, Rehman Malik, said there will be no war between Pakistan and India and officials of both countries were mature people.<sup>(98)</sup> On 7 January Pakistan Foreign Secretary Salman Bashir said if India took military action against Pakistan, it would be its "biggest mistake." He was addressing the Committee on Foreign Relations in the National Assembly. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Malik Adam Khan described the situation as "very tense" and said "any military adventure" by India would get a "befitting" response from Pakistan. He said that as India had not pulled back its troops to peacetime positions, Pakistan's forces were on "full alert."<sup>(99)</sup> On 16 January, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani played down the Indian threats of war, saying that there were no looming war threats between Pakistan and India as both were nuclear states.

"I do not see any threat of war as we both are nuclear states and the statements coming from the Indian leadership only reflects the tremendous pressure by their public."<sup>(100)</sup>

### **Civil society response**

On 4 January a large group of civil society organisations including HRCP, SAFMA, SAP, LPP, WWO, WWHL and the concerned citizen of Pakistan called upon the governments of both India and Pakistan to resist any temptation of violating one another's territorial integrity.<sup>(101)</sup> They condemned Mumbai attacks and extended heartfelt condolence and sympathy to victim families. They regretted that the media in both Indian and Pakistan failed to present the Mumbai outrage in a proper context and used the event to fuel hostility between the two countries. HRCP Director I A Rehman said India and Pakistan should have joined hands for fending off terrorism in the region. He pointed out that both the countries were facing numerous problems besides terrorism since both the countries should strive to provide basic amenities to the people like education, social security, electricity and gas.<sup>(102)</sup>

On 9 January, in a statement issued at the end of a roundtable held in New Delhi, under the aegis of the Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation, a group of Indian and Pakistani intellectuals urged their governments not to allow the current standoff to affect people-to-people relations between the two countries. The group shared the anger of people over the Mumbai terrorist attack and stressed the need for

the guilty to be punished. They appreciated the restraint “the Indian government has exercised on those who have advocated reprisal,” and urged “in the strongest possible terms, to refrain from taking any steps, and discourage members of the government from making any statements that will weaken the bonds that have developed between civil societies in our two countries over the past five years.”<sup>(103)</sup>

### **Peace delegation**

Peace missions in India and Pakistan tried to promote peace and harmony between the two countries after the Mumbai attacks. A 23-member Pakistani “Aman Karwan,” (peace delegation) comprising journalists, peace and human rights activists, legislators, political leaders, feminists, journalists and scholars visited India from January 21-24. Organised by South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR) and the South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA), the initiative, was aimed at bringing about a thaw in the strained relations between the neighbours. Delegates said the recent “upheaval” in bilateral relations called for increased involvement of civil society. The peace activists unequivocally criticised the Mumbai attacks and urged Indians to reciprocate their feelings. They pointed out that a peace accord between India and Pakistan was a critical means of securing peace and stability in South Asia.<sup>(104)</sup> The peace mission, while stressing the need to launch joint investigations into the Mumbai terror attacks, urged both the countries to restart the dialogue process to resolve bilateral issues.<sup>(105)</sup>

The visit provided a useful opportunity to civil society groups from both countries to exchange views on terrorism and India-Pakistan relations unhindered by official sensitivities. The delegation met numerous Indian activists, journalists, intellectuals and CSOs, Congress, Communist parties' and Samajwadi Party leaders, Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon, retired diplomats, and not the least, the media. On return, on 30 January, Asma Jehangir, chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), stated at a press conference organized by the peace delegation that Pakistan and India must work together to formulate a strategy over how to deal with terrorism in their midst and work to educate their public. She said no one in India seemed to have an appetite for war, but they remained annoyed over Pakistan’s inability to rein in “terror groups” in the aftermath of the Mumbai attacks.<sup>(106)</sup>

A month later, a 13-member Indian “peace delegation” led by veteran journalist and former diplomat Kuldeep Nayar paid a return visit the Pakistan on 22-25 February. The delegation was composed of political figures, intellectuals, writers and journalists from India and represented a moderate fringe in a generally angry and revengeful environment. The delegates advocated the resumption of the composite Indo-Pak dialogue disrupted by the November 2008 Mumbai attacks and a joint fight against the menace of terrorism.<sup>(107)</sup> On his return to India Kuldeep Nayar said the people in Pakistan were yearning for peace with India and wanted that composite dialogue should be resumed.

### **Water issues**

With the composite dialogue on hold, the Indian government initiated extensive consultations among the relevant ministries to revive the controversial Wullar Barrage/Tulbul navigation project on the

Jhelum river.<sup>(108)</sup> The revival of the project will strike a body blow to the composite dialogue process. India has also decided to construct three dams on the Indus river in Ladakh region to produce 219 megawatt of electricity.<sup>(109)</sup> They include Nimoo Bazgo with a height of 57-metre, Dumkhar of 42 metres height and Chutak Dam of 59 metres height to generate hydropower.<sup>(110)</sup> Construction of these dams would lead to massive decrease in water flows in the Indus. This will adversely affect Pakistan's agriculture and industry turning vast fertile lands barren.

## **Kashmir**

India launched a vigorous propaganda campaign to divert international opinion from Kashmir to terrorism. On 23 January, Pranab Mukherjee addressing a joint press conference with his Afghan counterpart Rangin Dadfar Spanta said the international community should not link the Mumbai attacks to the Kashmir dispute, take the Mumbai attacks as a part of global terrorism. Mukherjee said: "These attacks (on Mumbai) are not related to Jammu and Kashmir and are a part of global terrorism." He claimed Kashmir was an integral part of India and the people of that state had overwhelmingly exercised their voting rights.<sup>(111)</sup> Mukherjee mentioned that it was decided by India and Pakistan in the Simla Agreement (July 1972) that Kashmir is a bilateral issue. Earlier, on 21 January, Defence Minister A K Antony had said that terror acts against India had nothing to do with the Kashmir issue. "Kashmir is an integral part of India and we will not entertain any kind of interference from any source and any quarter."<sup>(112)</sup> He was responding to Lashkar-e-Tayba's offer to put an end to violence against India if the world moved to resolve the Kashmir dispute.

On the other hand, Pakistan asserted that Mumbai will affect its Kashmir policy. On 4 January, Shah Mehmood Qureshi told reporters that after the Mumbai terror attacks Pakistan had stood by its principles and there had been no change in the Kashmir policy.<sup>(113)</sup> On February 5, Pakistan observed Kashmir Solidarity Day. In a message on the eve of the Solidarity Day, President Asif Ali Zardari called for inclusion of the Kashmiris in the dialogue process in the interest of finding a solution that would be acceptable to them.

Meanwhile, in a report Steve Coll in *New Yorker Magazine* wrote that India and Pakistan had "come to semicolons" in their negotiations on Kashmir when the effort lost steam. India and Pakistan were engaged in nearly three years of secret, high-level talks that narrowly missed achieving a historic breakthrough in the countries' decades-old conflict over Kashmir. He observed the negotiations, which began in 2004, produced the outlines of an accord that would have allowed a gradual demilitarisation of the disputed region, a flashpoint between the two countries. The effort was stalled in 2007, and the prospects for a settlement were further undermined by deadly terrorist attacks on Mumbai in November, the report said. The attempt ultimately failed, not because of substantive differences but accord because declining political fortunes left Pakistan's then-president, Pervez Musharraf, without the clout he needed to sell the agreement at home.<sup>(114)</sup> US Ambassador-designate to the United Nations, Susan Rice, during her

testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, identified Kashmir as one of the “hot spots” and bracketed it with conflict-torn regions, including the Balkans and Golan Heights.<sup>(115)</sup>

### **Omar Abdullah forms a coalition government in IHK**

NC and the Congress agreed to form a coalition government in IHK. Before assuming office of chief minister, Omar Abdullah said there was a need for development at the internal level solving the problems of the people who had suffered a lot over the years. He also promised to provide at least one job to every household in the state.

### **Kashmiris & the peace process**

National Conference President Omar Abdullah, before taking over as chief minister of IHK, emphasised the need for friendly relations with Pakistan for paving the way for an amicable resolution of the Kashmir issue through dialogue. Omar held that the resolution of all issues was possible only through dialogue. He, however, cautioned against certain forces which did not want the two neighbours to have good relations and restore peace in the state. Omar said the objective of his government would be to restore peace in the state.<sup>(116)</sup> On January 9, after assuming the office, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah stressed the need for good Indo-Pak ties and said that violence or war was no solution to any problem. Addressing the mediapersons he said: "Our enemy is not Pakistan but it is the forces within Pakistan that are inimical to friendship between the two countries. To say that entire Pakistan is against good relations with India would be unfair." On talks with separatists, Omar said he would like to create conditions conducive for talks between the Centre and the separatists. However, he said the people should not expect overnight developments on this front as with the Lok Sabha polls round the corner, any big initiative would not be possible.<sup>(117)</sup>

On 14 January, Omar Abdullah urged British Foreign Secretary David Miliband to use his influence to make the international community play its role to ease the tension between India and Pakistan.<sup>(118)</sup> In a teleconference with the British foreign secretary, who was on a visit to India, the chief minister emphasised that Indo-Pak relations had a great bearing on Jammu and Kashmir and its people as they were affected by the nature of relations between the two neighbours.

Former chief minister and NC president Farooq Abdullah urged resumption of Indo-Pak peace-talks stalled by New Delhi in the wake of the Mumbai terror attacks. He observed that the NC-Congress regime in the state would not only facilitate Indo-Pak dialogue process but would also become a catalyst between separatists and New Delhi.<sup>(119)</sup>

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) also stressed on the improvement of India-Pakistan relations. On 18 January, former chief minister and PDP patron Mufti Mohammad Sayeed said the atmosphere of confrontation between India and Pakistan after the Mumbai terror attacks did not augur well for the state. Dubbing Mumbai terror attacks as “unfortunate” he said: “Both India and Pakistan are



facing terrorism and therefore, they should formulate a joint mechanism to root out this menace without creating an atmosphere of confrontation.”<sup>(120)</sup> He said the people of the state want cordial relations between India and Pakistan not confrontation and stressed the need to take initiative for de-escalating tension between the two countries. He said the leaders of both countries must keep channels of communication open as dialogue was the only solution to all problems. On 21 January, PDP President Mehbooba Mufti stressed the need for initiating sincere efforts to establish sustainable peace in the state. She cautioned against derailing the peace process and reconciliatory policies adopted by the PDP-led government in the state. She said that it was the outcome of pro-peace policies adopted by her party which helped to improve the situation in the state. She said: "State government should play a crucial role in the resolution process, and involvement of the people of Jammu and Kashmir is a must for securing an acceptable solution of the vexed Kashmir problem."<sup>(121)</sup>

### **Pro-freedom groups**

The Hurriyat Conference and other constituent groups urged the UN to implement its resolution on Kashmir that guaranteed the right of self-determination to the people of the state. Speaking at the seminar organized to commemorate 5 January 1949, senior leaders of both factions of the Hurriyat Conference, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Syed Ali Geelani, reiterated their stand on the resolution of Kashmir issue. A memorandum was also addressed to the UN secretary-general, Ban Ki-moon, drawing his attention towards the resolution of the Kashmir issue in accordance with the UN resolutions.<sup>(122)</sup> The memorandum sought UN intervention to let India and Pakistan know that talks between these two countries be accompanied by practical measures to restore an environment of non-violence. This could be achieved through various measures, it added. The memorandum also sought an end to the military actions against the civilian population. On 5 February, Kashmiri leaders called for the right of self determination for the Kashmiris and resumption of India-Pakistan dialogue.

### **AJK**

On 23 February, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Sardar Yaqoob called for holding dialogue with India for the right of self- determination of the Kashmiris. He said Kashmiris did not want war with India. “We just want our rights”. He observed that India was trying to sabotage the movement of Kashmiris by exploiting the Mumbai incident. He claimed that this conspiracy had been foiled, as the world had rejected Indian claims regarding the Mumbai incident. He said that there were no terrorist training camps in Azad Kashmir.<sup>(123)</sup>

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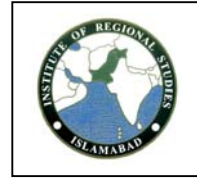
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**IRS  
Regional  
Brief**

**Afghanistan**  
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Arshi Saleem Hashmi



In Afghanistan today, it's not just that the Taliban remains a serious security threat. There is also the failure of the government of President Hamid Karzai to assert its authority over those areas of the country that have been freed from Taliban control. And then there is the continuing refusal of many major European governments to provide combat troops. All have undermined the operation's effectiveness to the extent that Richard Holbrooke, the new US special envoy to Afghanistan, believes a radical overhaul of strategy and objectives is needed to avoid mission failure. The decision to appoint Holbrooke and his British counterpart, Sherard Cowper-Coles, the current British ambassador to Kabul, to handle Afghanistan and Pakistan as a single security issue, rather than separate problems, is also a refreshing new take on how to resolve the crisis. The Taliban's ability to move men and equipment freely between the two countries is one of the main reasons it remains such a threat. Recognizing basic truths such as this will go a long way in helping formulate a strategy for Afghanistan that might actually succeed. However, the fact remains that unless there is an Afghan government capable enough to deal with the problem and handle it properly, the conflict will remain there.

A solution, if there is one, will be maddeningly complicated. It will require a semblance of order on the Afghan-Pakistani border and the Pakistani army's willingness to be trained in counterinsurgency operations by foreign armies or advisers. This, in turn, will require a calming of the border between Pakistan and India—so that the Pakistani military feels secure enough to redeploy troops away from its traditional external rival towards the much more real threats from within. And an Indian-Pakistani settlement will probably require security guarantees from several powers in the region — which will involve the powers negotiating on goals and means as a precondition. Finally, all these steps will have to be taken at roughly the same time; success in each realm will depend, to some degree, on successes in the others.

### **Tri-lateral talks between Afghanistan, Pakistan & the US**

Afghanistan Foreign Minister Dadfar Rangeen Spanta headed a delegation that took part in the tri-lateral meeting between Afghanistan, Pakistan and the United States in Washington, DC. The meeting, aimed at facilitating exchange of views in preparation of the new US Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, took place at the US Department of State.<sup>(1)</sup>

Chaired by Bruce Riedel, Chair of the Joint Strategy Review, the meeting was attended on the US side by Hillary Clinton, Secretary of State; Richard Holbrooke, Special Envoy for Afghanistan; Amb Wendy Chamberlain, former US Envoy to Pakistan; Michelle Flourney, Under-Secretary of Defence for Policy, and General Patraeus, head of Centcom. In his opening remarks, Foreign Minister Spanta alluded

to the “longstanding historic, cultural and traditional ties between Afghanistan and Pakistan” and stated, “both countries faced a common threat in the evil of terrorism.” He welcomed the tri-lateral meeting as a “good opportunity for both countries to engage in open and frank discussions on ways to enhance cooperation for addressing common challenges.” Highlighting the importance of regional cooperation in the fight against terrorism, Spanta noted that without the sustained support of all entities in Pakistan, success in the fight against terrorism would not be possible.<sup>(2)</sup> Further, he welcomed the new and democratically elected government of Pakistan as a great opportunity for Afghanistan in its efforts to defeat terrorism and achieve peace and stability.

On his part, Shah Mehmood Qurashi, Foreign Minister of Pakistan, expressed his government’s determination to combat terrorism. He noted that “greater coordination between the two countries” was essential for success in the fight against terrorism, and that it was necessary “to build a partnership based on trust.” Moreover, the Foreign Minister referred to the upcoming Regional Economic Cooperation conference between Afghanistan and Pakistan, scheduled to take place in Islamabad in April, as well as the creation of a Joint Commission, led by the foreign ministers of both countries.<sup>(3)</sup> US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton expressed her appreciation to the Afghan and Pakistan delegations for their visit to Washington, and noted that the three nations – United States, Afghanistan and Pakistan — “shared a common goal, common threat and a common task.” Reiterating the commitment of the United States to the tri-lateral process, she stated that tri-lateral meetings between the three countries “would take place on a regular basis.” In that regard, she informed them that her government would host the next tri-lateral meeting in late April or early May.

Delegations from the two governments are pressing for a sustained US commitment, more military and development and reconstruction assistance and a say in how the money is spent. They are meeting with members of the U.S. Congress and with officials of the National Security Council and the Defence and State departments.<sup>(4)</sup>

### **SCO regional security group to discuss Afghanistan in Moscow**

The Russian Foreign Ministry said that the regional security group of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is planning to hold a conference on the situation in Afghanistan in Moscow on 27 March 2009. A statement said the meeting would discuss the “situation in Afghanistan and its influence on neighbouring states, boosting joint efforts by the international community to counteract terrorism, illegal drug trade and trans-border organized crime from Afghan territory.”<sup>(5)</sup>

The SCO regional security group comprises Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. Russia took over the presidency of the organization last August 2008. Iran, India, Mongolia and Pakistan have observer status in the SCO. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has already sent invitations to the meeting to his counterparts in the SCO member-states and countries with observer status, as well as leaders of other international organizations, including the United Nations.



Preparations for the event were discussed on 17-18 February at the meeting of a working group of SCO experts in Moscow.

### **Kyrgyzstan takes step towards US air base closure**

Showing independence in their foreign policy, the Kyrgyz parliament has voted to close a key US military supply base for Afghanistan as the United States tries to persuade NATO allies to send more troops to defeat a growing insurgency. Parliament voted overwhelmingly in favour of the bill to close the Manas airbase outside the Kyrgyz capital, with 78 out of 81 lawmakers voting in favour. One MP voted against and two abstained.<sup>(6)</sup> The setback for coalition forces seeking to defeat the Taliban came as US Defence Secretary Robert Gates met other NATO defence ministers in the Polish city of Krakow to pressure them to match US increases in troop numbers. The bill must now be signed by President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, whose announcement last month of the base's closure shocked Washington. The United States will then have 180 days to shut it down. Bakiyev's announcement came after Russia offered more than two billion dollars in aid to the struggling Kyrgyz economy. The government maintains that Moscow did not set the closure as a condition.<sup>(7)</sup>

American officials strongly feel that the Kyrgyz government would like a really good offer from the Americans and it doesn't matter how far the legislation has gone. Senior officials have made it very clear there is no ideology in this case; instead it is a question of funding.

On the other hand, Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Kadyrbek Sarbayev told AFP his government was no longer holding talks with the US over the issue.

Compounding the bad news for the Western military alliance, the government in Pakistan's Punjab province cancelled a private deal for a new NATO supply terminal due to security concerns after Taliban attacks in the northwest. Rana Sanaullah, law minister in the provincial Punjab government, told AFP that the deal stood cancelled.<sup>(8)</sup>

### **US hopes to stay at Kyrgyz base but not at 'any price': Pentagon**

US Defense Department spokesman Bryan Whitman stated that the United States hoped to continue using the air base in Kyrgyzstan to supply forces in Afghanistan but is not prepared to pay “any price” to do so.<sup>(9)</sup> He said that the US would continue to consider “what we might be able to offer the Kyrgyz government but we are not prepared to stay at any price.” Whitman told reporters after the Kyrgyz parliament vote that he continued to look at other options available in the region. The US government was holding “discussions” with the Kyrgyz government and had yet to receive official notification of the decision to close Manas, he said. Whitman added that in the meantime operations would be continuing at the base.

## **US to rely on Central Asia, Russia in Afghan campaign**

Washington will have to come to an accommodation with Russia, whose influence in its own backyard remains strong as US President Barack Obama's decision to deploy an extra 17,000 US troops in Afghanistan has highlighted the key role played by the former Soviet republics of Central Asia in supplying the campaign against a resurgent Taliban. Attacks on the main artery from Pakistan that supplies the more than 70,000 Nato troops already in Afghanistan have compounded US fears that "future disruptions may result in mission failure." In March 2008, the Pentagon's Defense Energy Supply Center (DESC) issued a tender to buy large amounts of jet fuel for the Bagram Air Base up to 2011 with a strict clause that the supplies are not routed via Pakistan.<sup>(10)</sup>

The two main overland routes for supplies — including jet fuel and diesel/gasoline for tanks and other vehicles — are the Termez-Hairaton border crossing in Uzbekistan, which was used by Soviet troops when they invaded Afghanistan in 1979, and the town of Serhetabad (formerly Kushka) in southern Turkmenistan which adjoins the Afghan town of Towraghondi.<sup>(11)</sup>

Currently, the only alternative is through Central Asia, which has several crossing points into northern Afghanistan and is also a key refuelling centre for US aircraft flying in and out of the Bagram base north of Kabul. Given the lucrative nature of the business, there is no shortage of competition to cash in on the trade.

## **US general in Uzbekistan for transit talks**

Top US General David Petraeus held talks with President Islam Karimov in Uzbekistan as coalition forces searched for new supply routes into war-wracked Afghanistan.<sup>(12)</sup> General Petraeus visited Tashkent to listen to Uzbekistan's perspective on key regional security issues and the best approaches to addressing these challenges, particularly Afghanistan. They discussed a broad range of topics, including the security and stability of Afghanistan.

This is the first visit of a representative of the new US administration," he told Uzbekistan's state news agency UzA. "This meeting is a big chance to exchange opinions regarding our partnership and the situation in the region."<sup>(13)</sup> Washington has been seeking agreement with the ex-Soviet states in Central Asia to host supply routes, and Uzbekistan is considered a prime candidate due to its extensive railway links with Afghanistan.

Recent attacks on a supply route from Pakistan together with the loss of the Kyrgyz base have heightened the need for new routes into Afghanistan. Tashkent closed a US air base that helped serve troops stationed in Afghanistan in 2005, following EU and US criticism over the Uzbek government's handling of an armed uprising in the city of Andijan.<sup>(14)</sup> Relations between Washington and Tashkent have warmed again recently and the US army is again using Uzbekistan as a stop-off point for military operations in Afghanistan. German forces have been using the airport at Termez, on the border with Afghanistan, since 2002 and have about 300 troops stationed there, mostly maintenance crews.<sup>(15)</sup>

### **Mini-surge to test out US strategy**

The Afghan provinces of Logar and Wardak would be the key testing ground for the Obama administration's Afghanistan strategy. The 3,000 new American troops which arrived in recent weeks in these provinces, both of which border Kabul, face a formidable challenge: establishing control in areas with little government presence and where insurgents operate freely. For instance, in Band-e-Chak, a district capital in Wardak, gun-toting Taliban fighters regularly come into town on their motorbikes to do some shopping.

Habibullah Rafeh, political analyst with the Afghan Academy of Sciences, says, "Policymakers in Washington will be watching the progress there closely," "If [the US] can turn things around there, they can create the momentum to turn around the whole war."<sup>(16)</sup> Col. David Haight, commander of the newly arrived US troops, states that the US strategy in Logar and Wardak is aiming on pushing the insurgents out of their strongholds and eliminate their contact with locals, and to emphasize development and reconstruction.<sup>(17)</sup> He further says the insurgents' expanding control areas, such as the provinces close to Kabul, were free from a sizeable insurgent presence until the last couple of years. The deteriorating security there mirrors the trends of worsening violence nationwide over the past year, where record numbers of foreign soldiers and civilians were killed.

Parallel governments exist in each of these provinces, in Wardak Province; insurgents control six out of nine districts, according to interviews with locals and government officials. They also control four out of seven districts in Logar Province, locals informed. The Afghan government nominally occupies the district capitals, allowing the Taliban to operate freely.<sup>(18)</sup> Another alarming situation is that the local government of Band-e-Chak, the capital of Chak district, has made an agreement with the Taliban. "They leave each other alone, so there is no fighting between the two sides, sometimes when officials from Kabul visit, the Taliban leave and the [district government] puts a bunch of police in the streets and everyone pretends there is no problem."<sup>(19)</sup>

An important initiative is the creation of an armed paramilitary force in Wardak. US officials are also backing the creation of such a force. It would be known as the Afghan Protection Force. The village elders would nominate the youth groups. These groups would be trained and armed and given uniform by the Ministry of Interior. Though the idea of arming the locals against the insurgent sounds good, yet the negative side is there would certainly be dangers in providing weapons to tribesmen who might be using it against each other to settle score. A Local Council member in Wardak, Janan, however believes that the US should be supporting such initiative instead of sending in more US troops. <sup>(20)</sup>

### **NATO 'can't allow Afghan failure'**

NATO does not believe in military solution to Afghan problem. NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said that failure in Afghanistan was "not an option" but he ruled out a military solution alone.<sup>(21)</sup>

Scheffer was speaking at a meeting of NATO and partner defence ministers in Krakow, Poland. He said that the military effort should go hand in hand with reconstruction and redevelopment work. He further argued that NATO and allies should not be under any illusion there is a military solution.

The NATO chief called for a more "joined-up" international approach. He said that instability in an already highly unstable region, a safe haven for international terrorism and massive suffering for the Afghan people is simply too much to accept. Scheffer said the countries contributing to ISAF (the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan) needed to work together much more closely.<sup>(22)</sup> He said, "there is a need for regional approach because Afghanistan is not an island. There needs to be a greater civilian effort, married up more effectively with our military operations, if we are not to waste precious time and resources. In addition to that, NATO and ISAF need a stronger communications effort to show the good being done and the heinous crimes the extremists are committing."<sup>(23)</sup>

### **Civilians death toll up by 40%: UN reports**

According to a UN report, the number of civilians killed in Afghanistan's war rose by 40 per cent in 2008. It said that 2,118 civilians died as a result of the conflict last year — 55 per cent killed by insurgents, and 39 per cent by Western forces.<sup>(24)</sup> Some 522 civilians died in airstrikes, which has raised a lot of criticism by the Afghan president against the western military operations. The report says that a total of 829 civilians were killed by the Western troops.<sup>(25)</sup> Despite NATO's assurances that greater care was being taken in the face of Afghan public anger over the issue, 31 per cent more civilians were killed in 2008 as compared to 2007. A general increase in violence across Afghanistan claimed a total of 8,600 lives, the UN said, with 38 aid workers killed, double the number in 2007.

On the one hand, the US is sending more troops to Afghanistan, on the other NATO is also looking to raise a temporary deployment of up to 10,000 more from European nations to police the August elections in Afghanistan.<sup>(26)</sup>

The increase in the number of civilian deaths caused by Western forces comes despite measures introduced in September by the commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan, David McKiernan. NATO said that tighter rules of engagement had been introduced too late in the year to have a significant impact on the 2008 figures but their effect would be clear in 2009.<sup>(27)</sup>

### **Karzai expects reduced tensions with US**

Afghan President Hamid Karzai said that he expected a reduction in tensions with the United States. Karzai said US and NATO forces had agreed to improve the coordination of their operations with Afghan authorities to avoid civilian casualties. In a speech in Mahter Lam, east of Kabul, Karzai said that the tension the Afghan government had with the US government was over. "He said that no foreign troop operations would be uncoordinated with Afghan forces."<sup>(28)</sup>

Relations between Washington and Kabul have been undermined both by protests by Karzai over civilian casualties and by US complaints he was not doing enough to fight corruption. Presidential

spokesman Humayun Hamidzada said Obama and Karzai had discussed ways of improving security and the training of the national army along with the troop increase.<sup>(29)</sup> Karzai, however, seemed to hint at an element of doubt on coordination. He said, "If foreign troops do not listen to us, we will call a loya jirga (grand council) and we will also include the Taliban and [militant leader] Gulbuddin Hekmatyar to decide whether foreign troops should stay in Afghanistan."<sup>(30)</sup>

Obama, on the other hand, said the troop increase was "necessary to stabilize a deteriorating situation in Afghanistan." The reinforcements will take US troop numbers to around 55,000, in addition to the 30,000 troops from 40 other mostly NATO countries already operating in Afghanistan. Most of the new US troops, including some 8,000 Marines and 4,000 soldiers from an armoured brigade, will be sent to southern Afghanistan where mostly British, Canadian and Dutch soldiers have not had enough troops to keep effective control of ground they have captured from the Taliban. The Afghan National Army (ANA) is about 80,000 strong now and is due to be increased to 134,000 by 2012.<sup>(31)</sup> Some analysts argue a larger foreign military presence runs the risk of being seen as an occupying force and sucking the United States into an unwinnable war. Problems with bringing supplies in from neighbouring Pakistan due to a Taliban insurgency there have also raised questions about the war, now into its eighth year.

### **NATO commits itself to backing elections**

The Afghan elections due in August are seen as a litmus test of NATO's efforts to help spread security and democracy in Afghanistan, as well as President Hamid Karzai's widely criticized government. NATO defence ministers agreed to make election security in Afghanistan a top priority.

NATO spokesman James Appathurai said that everybody understood with regards to Afghanistan that this is a priority, if not priority number one for 2009. He further said that there was a commitment around the NATO table to provide the forces necessary to allow the elections to go forward in a secure manner, he told reporters. NATO officials have warned that security is likely to be a bigger problem in the coming months. Karzai faces a "constitutional crisis" after his mandate runs out in May and his government has been accused of rampant corruption.<sup>(32)</sup>

### **Iran, Afghanistan to boost trade**

Iran's Vice President Parviz Davoudi offered increased trade and investment to Afghanistan. He said that Iranian businessmen were ready to pour funds into railroads, agriculture and infrastructure projects.<sup>(33)</sup>

According to the Afghan president's office, Parviz Davoudi was visiting Afghanistan with a delegation of government officials and private investors. Davoudi and President Hamid Karzai agreed to work to expand trade and business ties between the two countries. Afghanistan and its neighbour to the west share close cultural and linguistic ties, and many Afghans took refuge in Iran when fleeing the Taliban regime.

Davoudi told reporters after the meeting that the priority of Iranian foreign policy was strong social, economic, cultural and political relations with the neighbours. He further stated that the insecurity and instability of Afghanistan was insecurity and instability of Iran, and progress and development in Afghanistan is Iran's progress and development. Davoudi said Iranian investors were particularly interested in helping build a railway running from the western Afghan city of Herat into Iran.<sup>(34)</sup>

Karzai welcomed Davoudi's message and pledged to work with Iran to increase economic cooperation, the statement said.

### **Pre-empting a progressive split on Afghanistan**

As the Obama administration spends the next two months reviewing strategy options for Afghanistan, a progressive organization is attempting to cobble together a liberal consensus around basic principles for the future of the seven-year-old war — thereby fending off a progressive split over Afghanistan early in the Obama administration's term.

The National Security Network, an organization that seeks to bring together policymakers, experts and Democratic activists, plans to release a document, titled "Principles for an Afghanistan Strategy,"<sup>(35)</sup> Assembled in consultation with Afghanistan experts from the development, diplomatic and defence communities, the document urges the Obama team to create "a comprehensive strategy that recognizes the limits of military power."<sup>(36)</sup> It is sceptical on the question of deploying additional troops for the war, and its drafters hope to reach out to progressives who object to military escalation.

Heather Hurlburt, National Security Network executive director, explained that if a progressive consensus can be reached she planned on taking the consensus document to the Obama team's review committee, which is headed by former CIA official Bruce Riedel, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Michelle Flournoy and Richard Holbrooke, the special administration envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>(37)</sup> Mirroring the stated goals of the Obama team's policy review, the National Security Network document seeks to address Afghanistan policy from the perspective of first-order concerns. It endorses the war, contending that "Afghanistan's continuing deterioration would allow al-Qaeda central, which intelligence agencies identify as the greatest national security threat to the United States, to operate with impunity under a resurgent Taliban." But the document also echoes recent recognitions by members of the Obama team, like Defence Secretary Robert Gates, that the war's humanitarian and governance components "will be better served by a smaller-scale effort which can enable local, regional and non-governmental efforts than a massive one which cannot be sustained."<sup>(38)</sup>

As for the strategy to achieve those goals, the National Security Network urges the US to support an effort to help the Afghanistan government "satisfy baseline economic and security requirements of its citizens" in order to win and hold popular allegiance. It supports "vigorous diplomacy" with all of Afghanistan's allies "from India and Iran to Russia and the other Central Asian states"; tying Pakistan policy to Afghanistan policy; and to supplement military force by cracking down on both government corruption and the "stranglehold of the opium trade" which helps fund the insurgency. Hurlburt explained

that consultations taking place in February with experts rejected a strategy that focused narrowly on counterterrorism activities like specifically targeting al-Qaeda or Taliban leadership, out of fear that a strategy that neglected the concerns of the Afghan people wouldn't work. Hurlburt said that she wanted to work out a sense from the "expert community" of what was achievable and realistic for Afghanistan before taking the document to "progressive advocacy" organizations like Get Afghanistan Right to secure buy in. She conceded that there would be disagreements that probably can't be fully resolved. Get Afghanistan Right released a statement of principles for the war, reacting to President Obama's announced troop increase. The statement, signed by 15 academics, emphasized that without a clear strategy, benchmarks for success, and a plan to bring the US troops home, the escalation would only prolong the American-led occupation, increasing anti-American sentiment throughout the region – while failing to make America any safer.<sup>(39)</sup>

### **Renewed focus on Afghanistan-Pakistan region includes broad policy review**

Richard Holbrooke, US special envoy to Pakistan-Afghanistan, stated that in Afghanistan, the victory, as defined in purely military terms, was not achievable. He said that the US was looking for the definition of vital national security interests. He further asserted that this was the first time since the independence of Pakistan and India, over 60 years ago, that India, Pakistan, and the United States shared a common threat from the terrorists. He said that the people who did 9/11 in the United States, the people who attacked Mumbai, and the people who seized Swat all came from the same roots and all were located in the same area.<sup>(40)</sup>

Holbrook said that the US hoped that India and Pakistan, who have faced off against each other and fought several wars in the last 60 years, were going to find the common cause to reduce this threat by taking it on head on. As everyone knows, the Pakistan army has been focused on India for decades. Most of us believe that they ought to reorient their attention much more to the west. But in order to do that there has to be much more confidence between Pakistan and India, he said.<sup>(41)</sup>

### **Swat deal with the Taliban**

After more than one year of bloody conflict with the Taliban militants in the Swat Valley, the civilian government of Pakistan agreed to the demand of the Taliban for a legal system based on Sharia law. According to leaders of the ruling Awami National Party of the North West Frontier Province (of which Swat Valley is a part), the enforcement of Sharia law in the valley would bring an end to 14 months of conflict between the Pakistani army and pro-Taliban militants led by Maulana Fazlullah, a native religious scholar who over the past year has used terror tactics to enforce his violent and narrow interpretation of Islamic principles on the people of Swat Valley.<sup>(42)</sup>

The provincial government of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) signed the deal for the enforcement of Sharia law in Swat with another influential religious scholar, Maulana Sufi Muhammad, who is Fazlullah's father-in-law. But Sufi Muhammad is on a different path to his son-in-law as he is often



described as a non-violent religious leader. The Pakistani government expects Maulana Sufi Muhammad to convince the militants to lay down their arms in return for the government's decision to accede to their demand to enforce Sharia law in Swat. "Sufi Muhammad has promised the government that he will convince Maulana Fazlullah and his fighters to lay down arms," said a senior official of the NWFP government.

After a meeting in the small town of Timargara, located on the outskirts of Swat Valley, the officials of the NWFP government and Maulana Sufi Muhammad signed the agreement to bring in Sharia law in the valley on 16 February. Within hours of the agreement being signed, the militants also announced a ten-day ceasefire.<sup>(43)</sup>

After the government signed the agreement with the militants, the military withdrew. "This situation afforded the opportunity to militants to regroup and reorganize. They began to reassert themselves in society," said military spokesman Major General Athar Abbas.<sup>(44)</sup> The second phase of the military operation that began mid-2008 lasted until the signing of the most recent deal between Maulana Sufi Muhammad and the NWFP government on 16 February 2009.

The deal has raised serious questions in the country. It appears to some as a breather before a final assault by the security forces on the extremists who have an advantage in the region, but the objective and ground realities about the deal are still not clear, because the region is now considered dangerous for the media especially after the brutal killing on Musa Khankhel. Whether the government is trying to prevent the expansion of the Taliban rule in the rest of the country by surrendering its writ in Swat to the terrorists, or planning a massive offensive, is yet to be seen.

### **Swat pact is a 'local solution to a local problem'**

In an article published by the *USA Today*, Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Husain Haqqani stated about the deal with the Taliban in Swat that it should not be taken as a concession to Taliban. He said that the arrangement in Swat was a local solution to a local problem that was being exploited by Taliban and al-Qaeda supporters from outside the region.<sup>(45)</sup>

Haqqani said that the government was attempting to drive a wedge between al-Qaeda and the Taliban on the one hand, and Swat's indigenous movement that seeks to restore traditional law in the district. This is part of a pragmatic military and political strategy to turn the native populations against the terrorists, to isolate and marginalise the terrorists.<sup>(46)</sup> "Pakistan's attempts to satisfy some of the concerns of local groups are conditional on their commitment to peace and the laying down of arms. Although some technical amendments to existing regulations would allow for some elements of Islamic legal principles practiced locally throughout history, public mandatory education of girls would be guaranteed and protected," the Pakistani envoy said in the article.

## **Militants ‘surrender’ in Bajaur**

Twelve tribal militants have surrendered to the authorities in the Bajaur Agency. Atmankhel tribe held a jirga to hand over the local militants who laid down their arm before the Political Administration. Salarzai and Mamond tribes held separate anti-militant jirgas in Bajaur Agency.<sup>(47)</sup> Important decisions were being expected against the local militants in the two jirga. Strict security arrangements were made by the local administration before the all-important jirga. A large number of levis personnel were deployed. On the other hand, security forces carried out strikes on militants’ positions in Zorbandar and Sabagi areas of Khar. However, there was no report of casualties. Helicopter gunships were doing aerial surveillance in various parts of the volatile agency.

Meanwhile, most of the Afghan refugees were returning to their country on the second day of a three-day deadline given to them for leaving the Mamond tehsil.

## **India warns of danger from resurgent Taliban**

Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee insisted the Taliban was nothing short of a "terrorist organisation". Taliban believe in nothing but destruction and violence, he said.<sup>(48)</sup> Mukherjee said India has warned of the "danger to humanity" posed by the Taliban. The statement came days after Pakistan struck a deal with militants allowing Taliban-style Sharia law in a region bordering Afghanistan. He further said that Taliban was a danger to humanity and civilization.<sup>(49)</sup>

India witnessed a lot of discussion in the media on the deal with the Taliban, the prominent business daily the *Economic Times* titled its commentary “Faustian bargain” and slammed the deal as “nothing short of a pact with the devil.” *The Business Standard* expressed similar views saying that “the battle for the soul of Pakistan” had begun. “Will it be a modern nation-state of the kind that the world would wish or is it going to slip into an Islamist miasma from which nothing will emerge but trouble for neighbours as well as distant powers?” it asked in its editorial. “The trend of recent events suggests the bleaker outcome — starting with the killing of Benazir Bhutto. Underlying all this is the army’s perception of Pakistan’s interests vis-a-vis its neighbours, and its use of the Taliban as a weapon that can be used to regain strategic depth in Afghanistan and to attack targets in India,” it warned.<sup>(50)</sup>

## **US envoy reaches out to Iran in Afghan visit**

President Obama’s top envoy to Afghanistan declared that Iran should play a vital role in helping stabilize the war-torn country. It was the latest statement by an Obama officials signalling a clear shift away from the Bush administration’s policy of avoiding direct engagement with the Tehran.<sup>(51)</sup>

The Obama administration has been very critical of Iran’s suspected pursuit of a nuclear weapon and support for terrorist groups. But the comments by the envoy, Richard C. Holbrooke, appeared to suggest that the new administration might also seek to use discussions with Iran about Afghanistan as one way of establishing a broader dialogue. Holbrooke says it is absolutely clear that Iran plays an important role in Afghanistan. Speaking at an interview with Tolo TV, a private Afghan television network, he says

the Iranians have a legitimate role to play in this region, as do all of Afghanistan's neighbours.<sup>(52)</sup> He also passed up an opportunity to criticize Tehran about allegations, some made by NATO officials, that it has provided help to Taliban guerrillas in Afghanistan.<sup>(53)</sup>

Holbrooke and the Afghan President, Hamid Karzai, appeared at a hastily arranged photo opportunity in Kabul to announce that Afghan officials would participate in a strategic review of American policy in Afghanistan. They also emphasized their commitment to hold Afghan elections in August and applauded an agreement between the American and Afghan militaries aimed at decreasing the civilian toll from American and NATO airstrikes and ground missions.

Karzai, once a favourite of the American government, has said in recent days that President Obama has not spoken to him since the inauguration, a disclosure widely seen to reflect the Afghan leader's diminished stature in Washington. Last week Obama said the Afghan government "seems very detached from what's going on in the surrounding community."

### **Canada wants 'frank' talks on NATO in Afghanistan**

Canada's Defence Minister, Peter MacKay said that the struggling effort to defeat the Taliban and bring security to Afghanistan meant it was time for a "frank discussion" about the future of NATO. He commented that all alliance members needed to pull their weight otherwise the 60-year-old security pact faced an existential crisis.<sup>(54)</sup>

Mackay was speaking at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, known as Chatham House.

While underlining that Canada, a founder member of NATO, remained committed to the organization, he said. "The US re-emphasis on the mission in Afghanistan — with the commitment of more troops, more development, more diplomacy — had brought a predictable sigh of relief from some around the alliance." His comments suggest some members saw it as a chance to sit back and say, "It's okay, the Americans will handle it." MacKay said: "As the United States says, its contribution is designed to reinforce, not to replace. We all need to maintain our collective effort so that we maximize the official contribution from the United States." In the past, criticism like MacKay's has been a veiled reference to the need for Germany, France and other major NATO states to step up contributions, bringing them into line with those made by Britain, Italy, Canada and the United States.

### **Biden will set US tone in European trip**

En route to a security conference in Germany, the Vice-President Joe Biden warned that the United States faced daunting economic and security problems in Afghanistan and would need help from allies to deal with them. Biden told a House Democratic retreat before heading to Munich as the new administration's first envoy to Europe. "We've got to make Afghanistan the world's responsibility, not just the United States' responsibility,"<sup>(55)</sup> Sen. John Kerry, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said "it's important to hear from the US allies and make sure they understand that a very different foreign policy is back and that the United States is prepared to lead ... on issues like global

climate change, nuclear proliferation, arms control, Afghanistan, NATO, in ways that aren't quite as unilateral and provocative as the last administration."<sup>(56)</sup> The US routinely presses NATO and others to contribute more military, economic and other aid to the Afghanistan effort.

### **The road to Kabul runs through Beijing and Tehran**

Parag Khanna of the *American Enterprise*, enquires if the Obama administration has taken notice of the new Great Game on the Silk Road which is already underway.<sup>(57)</sup> He writes that the diplomatic and military surge into South-Central Asia that will define the Obama administration's early years has already begun. Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Adm. Mike Mullen and Centcom head Gen. David Petraeus have become regular visitors to Islamabad and Kabul. Vice-President Joe Biden recently came through for huddled conversations, and veteran Balkan negotiator Richard Holbrooke embarked on his first trip as special envoy to the region.<sup>(58)</sup>

There are other destinations for Congress members, perhaps, China and Iran. It is, however, unclear as Khanna writes, that why Washington is not any closer to understanding the dynamics in South-Central Asia. It is beyond any doubt that to fix its strategy and hence, Afghanistan, the Obama administration will have to go regional. Pakistan is important and its vitality cannot be denied but any strategy lacking regional approach cannot work. Khanna warns Obama team that if the additional 30,000 US troops being deployed in southern and eastern Afghanistan succeed at pushing Taliban fighters into retreat over the border into Pakistan, they could massively destabilize that country's already volatile Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), which is itself almost as populous as Iraq.<sup>(59)</sup>

China, Saudi Arabia, and Iran are also becoming increasingly important — not as neighbours of the chaos, like Pakistan, but meddlers in it.<sup>(60)</sup> Khanna opined that the United States was failing to grasp not only the details of other powers' manoeuvrings in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but the extent to which these dealings could eclipse even the most brilliant US shuttle diplomacy by Holbrooke.

### **Karzai seal on Mumbai proof**

Afghan President Hamid Karzai, during his visit to India, stated that the Mumbai attack evidence was “credible” and “needs to be acted upon quickly”. He backed India's efforts to mount international pressure on Pakistan.<sup>(61)</sup> Karzai also talked about the July attack on the Indian embassy in Kabul and told the Indian prime minister about the “resurgence” of the Taliban and other terror outfits in the region. Karzai and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh issued a joint statement after the meeting and called for “full compliance with bilateral, multilateral and international obligations to prevent terrorism originating from territories under their control.”<sup>(62)</sup> The statement said that since terror often emanated from “sanctuaries” and training camps, there was a need to cut off sustenance and support to terror groups. Afghan president reiterated that many of the region's “resurgent” terror outfits had “sanctuaries” in Pakistan.<sup>(63)</sup>

The Ministry of External Affairs in India described Karzai's visit, the second in less than six months, as symbolic to express Afghanistan's solidarity in the wake of the Mumbai terror attacks. Shortly before the visit, a senior Afghanistan official complained there was little response from Islamabad even though they had "piles of evidence" about Pakistani involvement in several terror attacks in his country.<sup>(64)</sup>

Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh also pledged help on infrastructure, telling Karzai that a power transmission line from Pul-e-Khumri to Kabul and a sub-station at Chimtala in northern Afghanistan would be completed and handed over soon. A road India was building from Zaranj to Delaram in southwest Afghanistan has been completed.<sup>(65)</sup>

### **46 die in Taliban attack on Pakistani troops**

According to Pakistani security officials, hundreds of Taliban militants poured into northwestern Pakistan in a large frontal attack on a paramilitary base that left at least 40 militants and six Pakistani soldiers dead. The attack, on an outpost of the Frontier Corps paramilitary force in the Mohmand district, appeared to be the heaviest assault on Pakistani troops in months. And in a reversal of usual patterns, it involved a large number of Taliban forces from Afghanistan attacking into Pakistan, signalling coordination among militants on both sides of the border.<sup>(66)</sup>

At the same time, a separate and equally deadly battle played out just 60 miles to the south. Gangs of Sunnis and Shiites fought each other, rampaging through the villages of the Hangu district, destroying dozens of homes and leaving at least 40 people dead between the rival groups, according to reports from authorities carried by Pakistani news media and accounts from local residents.<sup>(67)</sup> Hundreds of Taliban fighters rushed in to support Sunni gangs, as government attack helicopters hovered overhead, trying to intimidate gunmen into withdrawing.

The Taliban from Orakzai Agency are under the command of Hakimullah Mehsud, a lieutenant of the warlord Baitullah Mehsud. Most of the Sunnis in Hangu belong to the same tribe as the Orakzai fighters. The Shiites got help from members of the Turi tribe from another adjoining district, Kurram Agency.<sup>(68)</sup>

### **New consensus: Pakistan is the hot spot**

Pakistan is the new hot spot in international politics and there seems to be rapidly developing consensus on that at least in the west and particularly in the US. For instance, the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism states: "Were one to map terrorism and weapons of mass destruction today, all roads would intersect in Pakistan." And "Pakistan is an ally, but there is a grave danger it could also be an unwitting source of a terrorist attack on the United States — possibly with weapons of mass destruction."<sup>(69)</sup>

The Nuclear Threat Initiative's report, "Securing the Bomb 2008," states that: "Pakistani security systems face immense threats, from nuclear insiders, some of whom have a demonstrated willingness to sell practically anything to practically anybody, to armed attack, potentially by scores or hundreds of

jihadis. In at least two cases, serving Pakistani military officers working with al-Qaeda came within a hair's breadth of assassinating former president Musharraf. If the military officers guarding the president cannot be trusted, how much confidence can the world have in the military officers guarding the nuclear weapons?"<sup>(70)</sup>

The Center for American Progress and the Foreign Policy magazine's 2008 Terrorism Index, a poll of top US foreign policy experts, stated that: "For a majority of the experts...instability is making Pakistan a country fraught with risk. A large majority, 69 per cent, of the experts considers Pakistan the country most likely to transfer nuclear technology to terrorists."<sup>(71)</sup>

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