INTERNÂTIONAL

US call to end Kashmir US, UK weigh compromise incursion irks Pakistan

Pakistan, a key supporter of the USled war on terror, fumed Friday over a blunt warning from the United States to end terrorism on its soil and stem rebel incursions into Indian Kashmir.

"We are one of the top supporters of anti-terrorism." Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said in comments carried by the

Associated Press of Pakistan. "We are neither infiltrating, nor

Hundreds of

by quake in

Indonesia

AFP, Jakarta

bldgs damaged

An earthquake on the eastern

Indonesian island of Sumbawa has

damaged more than 500 buildings,

the state Antara news agency said

Dompu district, was quoted as

saying that 504 buildings had been

damaged according to preliminary

quake struck a fishing and farming

district south of the town just after

8:00am Thursday (0100 GMT

Wednesday) and slightly wounded

two people. They had no first-hand

The meteorology and geophys-

ics bureau in Bali said the quake

measured 5.0 on the Richter Scale

It was centred in the Flores Sea

Heavily-armed Manipur insurgents

on Friday allegedly ambushed state agriculture minister K Ranjit and

Deputy Inspector General of Police

(DÌG-range II) Jathang at

Tingkhanphai area in the Chande district bordering Myanmar, official

Casualty, if any, was not immedi-

The insurgents, who were hiding in the thick hilly roadside, opened

fire at the police convoy accompa-

nying Ranjit and Jathang who were returning here after attending a function at Tingkanphai area, about 115 km South-east of here, at

around 1215 hours, sources said

One killed, more

feared trapped

in Mumbai bldg

One person died and 22 were

injured, five seriously, when a build-

ing collapsed Friday in a business

district of India's western commer-

could be trapped under the rubble of

the collapsed five-storied building in

evacuated but we fear that some could still be trapped," said police inspector Mirza Beg, as about 60

rescuers hunted through the rubble. "The interior part of the building just caved in," Beg told AFP. "The

staircase also caved in, which

increases the chances that people

2 Palestinians

Two Palestinians, including a

woman, were killed in an attack

Fridav on an Israeli army post near

the West Bank town of Nablus,

hours after three soldiers were

gunned down, in an upsurge of

violence ahead of Israel's elections.

Palestinians attacked the army

position near the Jewish settlement

of Homesh in the northern West

Bank, and soldiers returned fire,

killing two and wounding one, while

out suicide attacks but Friday's

operation, for which there was no

immediate claim, was a rare case of

a woman involved in an anti-Israeli

Palestinian women have carried

the fourth assailant escaped.

A group of four armed

killed near

Nablus

AFP, Jerusalem

Police said a woman had been killed in the mid-morning building

Rescuers fear more people

"Most of the people have been

cial hub Mumbai, police said.

the city's Fort district.

still could be trapped."

collapse

AFP, Mumbai

Minister, DIG

ambushed in

figures for damage

Manipur

sources said.

ately known, they said.

Police on the island told AFP the

Abu Bakar Ahmad, the head of

patronising (the Kashmir fight). suggestions that the UN should authorize using force against Iraq. France is US ambassador to Pakistan Nancy Powell on Thursday said urging giving UN inspectors more time.

Russian President Vladimir Putin telephoned his US counterpart George Pakistan had to live up to its promises W. Bush on Thursday urging him to consider Blix's upcoming report as the "to prevent infiltration across the Line of Control and end the use of

key to deciding future action on Irag. In exchange for giving the UN inspectors more time to do their work in Pakistan as a platform for terrorism." Iraq, The Los Angeles Times said, US allies would have to give assurances

Los Angeles Times reported on Friday.

that the inspections would not drag on indefinitely. 'You need space to show that the policy is working and to convince public

opinion that you have let this process take its course. There's no need to go to war in February, for example," said a British official speaking on condition

go ahead without allies: Washington

The United States and Britain are considering giving UN inspectors more

time in Iraq, in an effort to appease concerned allies and public opinion, The

reached Thursday during a meeting in Washington between US Secretary of

State Colin Powell and visiting British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, accord-

UN weapons inspector Hans Blix on Iraq's compliance with a UN resolution

ing to unnamed US and British officials quoted by the daily.

that it disclose all its weapons of mass destruction.

The compromise the daily said was being "seriously considered" was

The UN Security Council is due to meet Monday to hear a report by chief

US allies, principally Germany and France, have voiced opposition to US

Bush seeks to impose 'logic of war' on world: Iraq, War can

Meanwhile, the United States is trying to impose "the logic of war" on the world, Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz charged Friday, vowing Baghdad's readiness to retaliate to any US-led attack.

"The US military buildup continues despite growing world opposition to the logic of aggression and war that the US administration is trying to impose on the world," he said while receiving a Canadian parliamentary delegation. Aziz asserted "the readiness of Iraq, its government and people, to defend Iraq and retaliate to the US attack, should it happen," the official INA

Moreover, the United States battled Thursday to maintain international unity in the campaign against Iraq while launching new accusations against

In the face of mounting international and domestic opposition to an immediate conflict, Secretary of State Colin Powell said divisions with France and Germany did not mean the UN Security Council could not agree

The White House expressed confidence that a coalition could be assemoled for any war on Iraq, even without France and Germany. But President George W. Bush's spokesman also said a new UN resolution could be sought to give approval for military action. The administration also put the case for tougher action against Saddam, with a top official saving the Iraq leader had ordered the killing of any Iragi scientist who cooperates with UN



Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi (R) speaks to Turkish Foreign Minister Yasar Yakis as Jordanian Foreign Ministe Marwan Moasher (2nd L) and Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shara listen on during a joint press conference at the end of their meeting in Istanbul's Ciragan Palace on Thursday. Six leading Muslim nations urged Iraq to show "more active" cooperation with

Neighbours ask Iraq to

cooperate with UN

Another clone is born

The Clonaid group, run by the controversial Raelian sect, said Thursday a third cloned baby has been born to a Japanese couple, but as with its previous announcements offered no proof

'The third baby was born in Japan on the 22nd in the morning," Clonaid president Brigitte Boisselier said at a news conference here from which some reporters were barred for critical coverage of the sect.

"This baby was a baby boy. He was carried by a surrogate mother. He's the baby of a couple in their

"He's the clone of a baby boy who died at the age of two about 18 months ago. This baby died after an accident. We had the time to preserve cells before his death," she said, noting the dead baby had been the couple's child.

The so-called cloned baby, who weighted seven pounds (3.2 kilos) at birth and whose name was not released, "is doing fine as well," Boisselier said, noting that a surrogate mother was used because the mother was 41 and her age could make a miscarriage more likely.

Clonaid has refused to give evidence for its claims to have produced three human clones, and international scientists have pressed widespread skepticism.



Clonaide President Brigitte Boisselier addresses a press conference on Thursday in Toronto, Canada, saying a third cloned baby has been born to a Japanese couple.

Boisselier said the previous two babies -- both girls -- were born to North American and European

When asked about proof of the group's claims, she said the lesbian couple who are the parents of the second baby girl are considering introducing her to the public.

"In a few days, the mothers will make themselves public." Boisselier

'Elite Iraqi troops issued with new chemical warfare suits'

Elite Iraqi troops have been issued BBC reported Friday, suggesting that Baghdad may be preparing to use chemical weapons against Western troops in the event of war.

The BBC cited documents passed to it by an opposition group, the Iraqi National Coalition, which claims to have received the information from serving members of Baghdad's military.

The hand-written Arabiclanguage notes also said the Republican Guard and Special Republican Guard, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's most loyal military units, had been issued with supplies of the drug atropine, which protects against the nerve gases sarin and VX.

The documents were brought out of Iraq in the last month and have been verified by three different experts, the BBC reported.

They suggest that the chemical suits and anti-nerve gas drugs have been smuggled into Iraq from neighbouring countries, according to the British broadcaster.

The BBC added that the notes included details of testing of unmanned submarines designed to attack ships in the Gulf, information on fibre-optic radar systems, and plans of the layout of Saddam's presidential palaces.

The Secretary General of the Iraqi National Coalition, Tawfik al-Yassiri, is a former Brigadier-General in the Iraqi army who claims that his organisation has extensive contacts within Saddam's military.

He told BBC radio: "We received the documents from inside Iraq, passed by people who left Iraq. "We have checked the informa-

tion in other ways. We have members in our organisation in most of the camps and cities in Iraq, from soldiers to generals.' Bill Tierney, a former United

Nations weapons inspector, told BBC radio: "The key point is that the Republican Guard have been issued this new equipment. "During inspections, I have seen

and not very good at all

"We call solemnly on the Iragi leadership to move irreversibly and their standard decontamination sincerely towards assuming its equipment is 1960s Soviet-model responsibilities in restoring peace and stability in the region," read a

opposite

Six key Muslim nations urged Iraq to

show greater cooperation with UN

weapons inspectors, as the United

States issued a sharp indictment

that Baghdad was doing just the

Washington struggled Thursday to

maintain international unity towards

Iraq as opposition to an immediate

conflict grows, Iraqi President

Saddam Hussein in Baghdad said

that his people "are not afraid" of US

are not afraid of pressure and

threats." the Iraqi leader told a

cabinet meeting, according to the

However, it was the foreign

ministers of Iran, Syria, Saudi

Arabia, Jordan, Egypt and Turkey

who pressured Saddam to improve

Iraq's cooperation with the United

Nations weapons inspectors.

"Our enemies know well that we

threats of an invasion.

state INA news agency.

And while US officials in

Iraq to "demonstrate a more active approach in providing Irag's inventory of information and material concerning her capabilities of engaged in "a shell game played on weapons of mass destruction."

It also urged Baghdad "to embark on a policy that will unambiguously inspire confidence to Iraq's neighbors" and "to take firm steps towards national reconciliation" in order to preserve the country's unity and territorial integrity.

Meanwhile in New York, Deputy US Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz said Saddam had ordered scientists who cooperate with the United Nations inspectors killed along with their families.

"Today, we know from multiple sources that Saddam has ordered that any scientist who cooperates during interviews will be killed, as well as their families," Wolfowitz said in a speech to the Council on Foreign Affairs.

He said the United States had learned Iraq had acquired the technical know-how to hack into UN and International Atomic Energy Agency computers, had blocked surveillance flights by U-2 spy planes, and was hiding documents

areas, private homes and beneath mosques and hospitals. Wolfowitz said Saddam was

a grand scale with deadly serious weapons" to thwart disarmament efforts in defiance of UN Security Council resolutions Wolfowitz also said Iraqi scien tists were also being coached on

what to say, and Iraqi intelligence officers were posing as scientists to be interviewed by the inspectors. Wolfowitz gave no details to support his charges beyond saying that it came from satellites and

communications intercepts and from brave people who told the truth at the risk of their lives." France, Germany and Russia

meanwhile expressed opposition to immediate US military action against Iraq, saying UN inspectors should be given more time. Russian President Vladimir Putin

told US leader George W. Bush that Monday's inspection report to the UN Security Council should be the key to deciding future action.

Peace talks with NSCN end without accord

Two weeks of breakthrough talks between New Delhi and ethnic Naga separatists ended with mutual statements against violence but little tangible progress towards resolving India's longest-running insurgency

The talks closed Thursday with pledges to hold more talks -- and angry denunciations from separatists and pro-India forces alike who see a potential threat in a peace

More than 25,000 people have died in Nagaland, a hilly state bordering Myanmar that is about half the size of Belgium, in incessant fighting since India's independence from Britain in 1947

The leaders of the rebel National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) came to India on January 9 from their Amsterdam base for the first time in more than three decades. In heavy symbolism, they travelled on Indian passports Behari Vajpayee

In a joint statement Thursday with Indian negotiators, NSCN-IM leaders Isak Chishi Swu and Thuingaleng Muivah agreed to resume talks within two months and "to maintain a peaceful and vioence-free environment until then."

But it was more a declaration of goodwill than a policy shift, as the NSCN-IM has been in a ceasefire with the Indian government since

The statement shed no light on any progress over the NSCN-IM's key demand, the "reunification" of some 1.6 million ethnic Nagas scattered across India's northeast, including in states other than Nagaland

"I don't see any evidence of either party to the negotiations having shifted its stance, at least publicly," said Ajai Sahni, executive director of the Institute of Conflict Management in New Delhi.



A January 21 photo shows London-based filmmaker Gurinder Chadda (L) and Bollywood actress and former Miss World Aishwarya Rai posing for photographers at a press conference in Mumbai. Chaddha said on Thursday that she would soon start filming a Bollywood version of Jane Austen's 18th century novel Pride and Prejudice starring Rai. The filming of "Bride and Prejudice" will begin around July in England and the film was expected to be released by late 2004.

ROK launches diplomatic drive to solve nuke crisis

Seoul seeks summit meet with Pyongyang

South Korean leaders launched a new diplomatic drive with North Korea on Friday that raised hopes of a breakthrough in the nuclear crisis, as Russia pushed for more time for the stand-off to be resolved through dialogue.

The developments came just hours after the Stalinist state promised to work towards ending the fourmonth stand-off peacefully, although it flatly rejected demands by South Korea to abandon its nuclear pro-

And in a sobering statement amid the rare positive developments, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Losvukov warned the crisis could lead to war if North Korea did not achieve its goal of holding

direct negotiations with the United "You cannot rule out the situation.

degenerating into a military conflict," Losvukov, who held a surpise sixhour meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong-II in Pyongyang on Monday, said. The biggest plank in South

Korea's diplomatic offensive was the announcement that President Kim Dae-Jung's special envoy, Lim Dong-Won, would travel to Pyongyang on Monday for three days of talks. Lim is the architect of the govern-

ment's "sunshine" policy of engagement with Pyongyang and has met North Korean leader Kim Jong-II at least twice previously for official talks.

A presidential office spokesman told AFP Lim would try to meet North Korea's Kim during the talks but this

Meanwhile, South Korean presi-

dent-elect Roh Moo-Hyun said in an interview with CNN Friday he would propose a meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong-II in a bid to solve the nuclear crisis.

"Normally a political leader of a country is very cautious in asking the other leader to meet because of the possibility that he might be rejected, Roh said in televised excerpts of the interview that will run in full on Saturday

"But that notwithstanding, I will propose to meet with Chairman Kim Jong-II even if I lose face in the eves of my people because I value dialogue and I think dialogue is the key.

'Diplomatic row keeps attention on Kashmir'

AFP, Islamabad

Tit-for-tat diplomatic expulsions by nuclear enemies India and Pakistan are symptomatic of a bid to keep world attention on the Kashmir dispute as the focus swings to Iraq, according to Pakistani analysts.

India threw out four Pakistan High Commission (embassy) officials on Wednesday on charges of spying, prompting a reciprocal expulsion by Pakistan the following

The expulsions followed mutual accusations of harassment of each others' diplomats. Such claims are frequent and their diplomatic history is riddled with expulsions.

The latest spat tops three weeks aggressive sabre-rattling from India that has seen it test-fire three missiles, water down the "no first use" clause of its nuclear doctrine, and accuse Pakistan of helping Islamic militants regroup in

Pakistani-controlled Kashmir. Analysts note the rise in heat came after President Pervez Musharraf revealed he had threat-

ened India with unconventional war when the neighbours were close to full confrontation last year. Few in Pakistan accept Musharraf's claim that he was referring to guerrilla and not nuclear warfare. Despite the hostile posturing,

Pakistani analysts did not see a road back to the war-precipice the South Asia giants teetered on for most of last year, when they lined their border with hundreds of thousands of troops in offensive posi-

"They're in no mood to talk, but nor are they in the mood to wage war despite the belligerence of their statements," said Najam Sethi, editor of the Friday Times weekly.

"India doesn't want to let Pakistan off the hook so they are keeping the pressure on and that's paying dividends at home." Islamabad-based political ana-

lyst Aqil Shah said India was worried about losing United States' attention to preparations for possible war on

"Basically there's a strategy to keep the pressure on Pakistan as

US attention shifts to Iraq

"India has successfully leveraged the whole issue of crossborder terrorism onto the international scene and it does not want it to fall off the radar," he said, referring to the flow of Islamic rebels from the Pakistani-controlled zone of Kashmir into the Indian zone, where they have waging a bloody insurgency since 1989.

"It's imperative for India to keep the temperature high, keep the pressure on. They've seen Musharraf promise to ban militants at the LoC, but American pressure shifts and these guys slip in."

India has for months accused Musharraf of reneging on his pledge to the US in June to permanently halt the flow of rebels over the Line of Control, the de facto border dividing Kashmir.

"It's aggressive and it's working," said Shah, pointing to statements from both Washington's envoys in South Asia telling Pakistan to stop

India, France ink extradition treaty

In a significant steps towards bilateral cooperation in fighting terrorism, India and France on Friday signed an extradition treaty that takes care of the European nation's sensitivity not to award death sentence to those extradited

The Treaty was signed by Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani and French Justice Minister Dominique Perben at the Justice Ministry here.

Both hailed the bilateral agreement as a step forward in enhancing mutual cooperation in matters of justice and crime.

Replying to a question by reporters, Advani said that India had encountered a problem in getting a wanted criminal extradited from Portugal, a reference to underworld don Abu Salem.

He said government had the

authority to give an undertaking that criminals wanted in India would not be awarded death sentence upon "That approach would remain in

case of France also", he said.