Fight against terrorism

India urges world to shed 'selective approach'

Indian President K.R. Narayanan Thursday urged the world not to adopt a "selective approach" in its fight against terrorism.

"I sincerely hope that in the effort to smoke out the enemy, let not the international coalition adopt a selective approach," he told a conference on

international law in New Delhi "Terrorists who pose a threat to civilian populations and elected governments must be eliminated, wherever they be," he said.

Media reports have suggested that Indian policy makers and officials feel the United States has not come out strongly enough against militant groups

involved in an armed insurgency in Indian-controlled Kashmir. US Secretary of State Colin Powell on Wednesday acknowledged having to walk a fine diplomatic line with India and Pakistan as Washington manoeuvres for the support of the nuclear rivals in an anti-terrorism coalition aimed at Osama bin Laden, the main suspect behind the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington who is believed to be in Afghanistan.

India and Pakistan have been enlisted in the coalition formed in the wake of the attacks but they have a history of mutual animosity, particularly regarding the disputed region of Kashmir, over which they have fought two

Pakistan is crucial to the success of the coalition because of its ties with the ruling Taliban in Afghanistan and shared border but, in addition to tension with India over Kashmir, faces domestic opposition to the campaign

India, meanwhile, may also play a critical role in the anti-terrorism fight

out wants the struggle to also focus on separatists in Kashmir whom i brands "terrorists" and claims are trained and supported by Pakistan.

On Tuesday, Powell condemned a suicide attack on the state legislature in Indian-administered Kashmir, which killed 38 people, as "terrorism" and assured visiting Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh that the coalition would not ignore such acts.

Powell said his condemnation of Monday's attack in Srinagar was not intended to label all Kashmiri separatists as "terrorists" but said when acts of terror occurred they would be identified as such and fought

India has accused Pakistan of harbouring the group believed to have carried out the attack

The president said terrorism had emerged as a sinister phenomenon threatening "our civilised existence," which India had learnt at the cost of thousands of lives of its own people

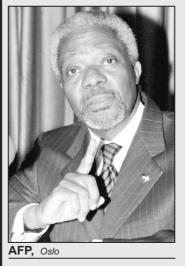
"We were using every forum available in the world to voice our concerns and remind the world that this scourge must be wiped out before it overwhelms us." he said.

"Nobody paid much heed to us. Now a global coalition is formed to smoke out the enemy.

Narayanan said it was unfair to say that the terrorist attacks on America represented a so-called clash of civilisations "Every effort must be made to drive home the point that it is not civilisations which clash, but barbarism,

"Civilisations give rise to dialogue, cross-fertilisation of ideas and the confluence of different streams of mankind," the president added

Annan tipped to win Nobel Peace Prize



One week before the winner of the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize is announced, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan is tipped as favorite with observers citing his consensus building talents and the symbolic value of his nomination on the 100th anniversary of the prize.

be a tightly-guarded secret until it is announced on October 12. But observers are practically unanimous in their belief that it will go either to Annan, the United Nations

"My personal feeling is that it will definitely be Kofi Annan," Stein Toennesson, the head of the Oslo Peace Research Institute (PRIO)

Toennesson suggested that the Nobel Committee, which announced on September 28 that it had made its choice, had likely chosen a symbolic winner who "pulls together" a century of Nobels.

He said Annan could receive the prize either alone or together with the UN organization, "mostly for his personal qualities but also because of the current international crisis and because the Nobel Prizes are celebrating their centenary this Toennesson described Annan,

who hails from Ghana, as "a discreet person with charisma but who is also convincing and who has

Musharraf against imposing

'New Afghan govt must be broad-based, multi-ethnic'

Afghan govt from abroad

Rumsfeld, Blair on tour to bolster support

The US-led anti-terror campaign gained momentum Thursday as top Western leaders toured key countries to rally more support and the pressure mounted on Afghanistan, the prime target of the global offen-

US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, in Saudi Arabia, was to head on to Oman, Egypt and Uzbekistan, while British Prime Minister Tony Blair was scheduled to go to Moscow, with possible later stops in Oman and Pakistan.

US and British forces around South Asia were being reinforced, while the UN Security Council and NATO upped diplomatic and military preparations for the multi-pronged anti-terror action.

A senior US diplomat was to meet former Afghan king Mohammed Zahir Shah in Rome to discuss an eventual post-Taliban government, the State Department said, while Pakistan began to mobilise civil defence volunteers countrywide.

"I don't think there is any doubt" that military action is looming, Rumsfeld said in Riyadh, after

Pakistan's longtime Afghan clients.

and those who provide sanctuary to terrorists.

convincing his hosts that no Arab countries would be targeted in retaliation for the September 11 terror attacks that claimed 5,500

lives in the United States. Washington holds the Saudiborn Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda network, who are being sheltered by the Taliban, responsi-

ble for the attacks. It provided allies this week with what NATO chief George Robertson described as "clear and compelling

evidence" of their guilt. As a result, NATO on Wednesday activated Article Five of its charter, meaning that the September 11 attack on the United States is now considered an attack on all 19 members of the alliance.

The Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz, saic after talks with Rumsfeld that he was convinced Washington would not strike at any Arab country.

"We are sure that the United States is not thinking of undertaking such an action." Prince Sultan said but stressed that Rivadh "could not demand guarantees from the United States ... about any action it will

Plane hijack turns out to be a hoax

Amid jitters over last month's terrorist attacks in the United States, commandos stormed an Indian airliner here on Thursday after receiving what turned out to be a false alarm that the plane had been Civil Aviation Minister

Shahnawaz Hussain said the reported hijacking of the Alliance Air Boeing 737 was a "false alarm" triggered by a call to air traffic controllers (ATC) that a plane had been The Alliance Air plane, which was carrying 46 passengers and a six-

Security Guard commandos on its arrival at New Delhi's Indira Gandhi airport shortly after midnight. "Following the alert from the ATC, the pilots thought the hijackers were in the passenger cabin and the passengers thought the hijackers

member crew on a Bombay to Delhi

flight, was surrounded by National

were in the cockpit," Hussain said. "In the confusion, the pilots took all precautions and locked the cockpit doors and landed in New Delhi. The commandos stormed the plane and they then said it did not

appear to be a hijacking," he added. One passenger, identified only as Sharma, was later arrested.



Prakash Dixit (C) speaks to a reporter on Thursday at the domestic airport in New Delhi, as his wife (L) who was waiting for him breaks down in tears after his arrival. Dixit was a passenger on a plane from Bombay, which was incorrectly believed to have been hijacked, after a "false alarm". The plane landed in New Delhi and was stormed by commandos after air traffic controllers received a threat that turned out to be false

Taliban to put **UK** reporter on trial

REUTERS, Islamabad

Afghanistan's ruling Taliban plan to put British journalist Yvonne Ridley on trial for illegally entering the country, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) said yesterday

"She will be tried because she broke the laws of our land and entered our country without permission," AIP quoted Taliban Deputy Foreign Minister Mullah Abdur Rahman Zahid as saying.

"Right now the investigation of the British iournalist is under way and then her case will be sent to the courts for a trial," he said quoted as saying, adding that it was irrelevant whether she was a journalist.

Ridley, 41, who works for Britain's Sunday Express newspaper, was picked up along with her two guides close to the eastern city of Jalalabad last Friday while dressed in an all-enveloping Afghan

Lucky escape for Duchess of York

AP, London

The Duchess of York, who was due to be in the World Trade Center on the day of the terrorist attack, has described the unique spirit of New Yorkers in dealing with the tragedy.

"The spirit of New York, I've never

seen anything like it," the duchess told ITV television in an interview to be broadcast later Thursday. "The linking and gluing together

of community, it's really unique. It's a worldwide example for people." The duchess was scheduled to

visit her charity, Chances for Children, which had been given space on the 101st floor of the north tower by bond trading firm Cantor Fitzgerald. Of the company's 1.000 employees, 700 are still missing. "As usual I was getting up early

not really thinking about how lucky we were to have a lovely, sunny day," she said. "We were going to go there later for meetings. It's just

The duchess attended a memorial service this week for Cantor Fitzgerald employees in New York's

"I'm so determined to keep smiling," she told ITV television. "I think we can fight terrorism by showing courage and strength."

Israel, PA to hold truce talks

Despite a bloody exchange that left eight Palestinians and two Israelis dead, Israel and the Palestinians agreed to resume high-level truce talks at the urging of a senior European envoy, officials said Thursday.

However, there was little expectation that a meeting between Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and two senior Palestinian negotiators, Ahmed Quria and Saeb Erekat, would help stabilize the brittle cease-fire.

Each side accuses the other of violating the truce. Israel insists that the Palestinian Authority arrest suspected militants, while the Palestinians say they cannot go ahead until Israel eases its stringent blockades of Palestinian towns.

Truce talks were tentatively planned for later Thursday, said a senior Palestinian official who spoke on condition of anonymity. Dore Gold, an Israeli government spokesman, confirmed that a meeting was planned "to see if there is any way to make a cease fire work,

but that a time has not been set.

Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer said Israel was stopping talks with the Palestinians "until the Palestinian Authority has taken control and stop

The European Union envoy in the Middle East, Miguel Moratinos, met separately Wednesday with Peres and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, and urged them to resume truce talks, said a European diplomat, who spoke on condition of

In New York, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan called on both sides to "exercise maximum restraint." Deploring the latest round of violence, he said it underlines "the urgent need to return to the negotiating table."

US officials said they were not involved in arranging new truce

The United States wants to restore calm in the region as it tries to win Arab and Muslim support for possible military action against slamic militants suspected of

carrying out the terror attacks in On Wednesday, Israeli Defense New York and Washington las

However, violence persisted despite the truce deal affirmed last week by Peres and Arafat. On Tuesday, two Islamic militants attacked the Jewish settlement of Elei Sinai in the northern Gaza Strip, killing a young Israeli couple and wounding 15 people, including seven soldiers. The assailants were killed by Israeli snipers.

In retaliation, Israeli tanks destroyed Palestinian farmland and shelled seven police stations Wednesday. Six Palestinians were killed by Israeli fire.

The militant Hamas took responsibility for attacking the settlement.

The Palestinian Authority denounced the infiltration, calling it a violation of the cease-fire. But Palestinian Cabinet Secretary Ahmed Abdel Rahman charged that Israel is carrying out a contradictory policy, calling on Palestinian police to arrest militants and then attacking the same police.

Laden warned of 'major operation' against US

Pakistan's president says any new Afghan government must be "broad-

President Gen. Pervez Musharraf outlined his position Wednesday as

US Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld was travelling through the

Saudi officials expressed concern Wednesday that a war on terrorism

Musharraf has also expressed concern about the long-term effects of

American military action against Afghanistan to destroy the al-Qaida terror-

Middle East preparing allies for possible military strikes in Afghanistan.

based" and "multi-ethnic" -- and not imposed from abroad

could create harmful "secondary effects" in the Muslim world.

ist network of exiled Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden.

fundamentalist Muslim group seized power in 1996

Osama bin Laden warned his associates that a "major operation" was in preparation against the United States shortly before the devastating September 11 terrorist attacks, British Prime Minister Tony Blair said Thursday.

The evidence against bin Laden for the attacks was absolutely beyond doubt, he told parliament in an emergency statement.

"A range of people were warned to return to Afghanistan because of action on or around September 11, the prime minister added.

"Most importantly, one of bin Laden's closest lieutenants has said clearly that he helped with the planning of the September 11 attacks and has admitted the involvement of the al-Qaeda organi-

Blair said at least three of the hijackers involved in the suicide plane attacks in New York and Washington, which killed thousands of people, had been "positively identified" as known associates of

Moreover, one had played a "key role" in the deadly bombings of two US embassies in East Africa in 1998, and an attack on the USS Cole last vear. He also said there was evidence

"of a more direct nature" which it was not possible to disclose because it came from intelligence agencies and other sensitive "For myself, and all the other government ministers who have

studied the full information, we have

absolutely no doubt that bin Laden and his network are responsible for the attacks on September 11." The prime minister also warned that if Afghanistan's ruling Taliban regime did not end its support for

"international terrorism." it may be necessary for a change of regime. "If they will not comply with this objective, we must bring about a change in that regime to ensure that Afghanistan's links with interna-

"The Taliban must vield them (bin Laden's network) up or become our enemy also," he said

tional terrorism is broken."

ethnic realities" could succeed in Afghanistan Afghanistan's other ethnic groups, including Uzbeks, Hazaris and others However, Musharraf has also promised full support to the US campaign have complained that the Taliban trampled their rights. against bin Laden, who Washington suspects was behind the Sept. 11 In Kabul, the Taliban information minister, Qatradullah Jamal, refused to attacks which destroyed the World Trade Center and damaged the comment on Musharraf's remarks about a multiethnic Afghanistan, but he accused Western broadcasters such as the Voice of America and British Pakistan has not officially commented on evidence provided by the Broadcasting Corp of waging a propaganda war against the Afghan leader-United States this week linking bin Laden to the attacks. However, a senior Pakistani official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the American "The BBC and VOA have started a cold war campaign against the evidence "is enough to actually provide justification for action against bin Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan," he said Thursday. "Every night in their Pashtu and Dari service broadcast are talking about different options to the Bin Laden lives in Afghanistan under the protection of the ruling Taliban Taliban," referring to two of them major Afghan languages militia, with whom Pakistan had maintained close ties since before the During a joint meeting Wednesday of his National Security Council and Federal Cabinet, Musharraf seemed to be preparing his 140 million people others for the northern Afghanistan-based alliance of anti-Taliban forces. for American military action and explaining why he was abandoning

Pakistan's population is heavily Muslim and the prospect of the govern-

According to a summary of the president's remarks provided by the

He told the Security Council and Cabinet that "Pakistan believed that only

government information service, Musharraf said any retaliatory attack would

not be aimed at Afghanistan and its 21 million people but "against terrorists

a broad-based, multiethnic political" arrangement "with full consideration for

ment here joining in an alliance with non-Muslims to attack another Islamic

state has angered the country's small but politically active Muslim parties

According to the summary, Musharraf also "emphasized that any mposed political solution in Afghanistan could not succeed." That referred to Pakistan's concerns about support by the United States, Russia and



File picture dated March 2, 2000 shows former US president Jimmy Carter (R) shaking hands with Saudi businessman Yahya bin Laden (2nd L) during his visit to Al-Hikmeh University in the Red Sea port of Jeddah. Yahya, the representative of the Saudi Bin Laden Group company, is a brother of Saudiborn dissident Osama bin Laden. He told the press on Wednesday that five of Osama bin Laden's children currently live as normal citizens in Saudi Arabia, the eldest being 20 years old. Earlier, the kingdom announced that it would protect the relatives of the prime terror suspect just the same as all other

Taliban rulers profit from

'Afghan children caught between life & death' vears of internal conflict, drought

Hundreds of thousands, if not millions of children, will die of hunger and cold this winter in Afghanistan if emergency aid does not reach them in the next few weeks, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) special representative for Afghanistan Appealing in Berlin for aid dona-

tions, Nigel Fisher said UNICEF was preparing for a "worst-case scenario" in the event of international action against the Taliban Camps have been planned for up

to 1.5 million more refugees beyond the country's borders, in addition to the millions of Afghan refugees already in Pakistan, Iran and other countries. That would already be a humanitarian disaster, Fisher said. "But we in UNICEF believe an

even greater tragedy would result

from the inability of the international

community to obtain humanitarian

access before winter starts to mil-

lions of women and children within

Afghanistan already acutely vulner-

able to the cumulative effects of

September 11. Fisher explained. "Most of these women and children are without the means or the capacity to reach the borders. and their own coping mechanisms are very near exhaustion

hunger and cold, and now renewed

the country's borders, UNICEF is

also planning for a further 1.25

million internally-displaced people

on top of one million people already

internally-displaced before

In addition to refugees reaching

displacement," he said.

"So it's essential today to pursue all possibilities for immediate surface access to towns, to communities, and to concentrations of people displaced inside Afghanistan, and to provide support to Afghan organisations which are still able to operate inside Afghanistan today.

"Hundreds of thousands of children, if not millions, need the most simple items to survive: blankets, winter clothing, shelter, food

including special therapeutic food

for malnourished children, because

there is widespread malnutrition

drug trade: US AFP, Washington

Despite their public denunciations of drug trafficking, Taliban rulers in Afghanistan are directly profiting from opium trade and may even be trying to manipulate the market to maximise their gains, according to intelligence data released by the US government Wednesday.

"Credible DEA source information indicates ties between the Taliban and the drug trade," said Asa Hutchinson, head of the Drug Enforcement Administration, appearing before the House Government Reform Committee.

"The Taliban directly taxes and derives financial benefits from the opium trade," he stressed. Last year, Afghanistan produced

over 70 percent of the world's supply of illicit opium, according to the DEA.

In an apparent bid to secure UN anti-drug aid, Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar issued a decree in July 2000 banning opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan in the 2001 growing season.

The measure resulted in Afghanistan's opium output falling to only 74 metric tonnes so far this year from 3,656 metric tonnes

produced in 2000, according to the At the same time, the price of a

kilogram of opium skyrocketed in the region from 44 US dollars last vear to 400 dollars before the terrorist attacks and 746 dollars after, the agency said. But according to US law enforce-

ment officials, the price shock was not felt outside Southwest and Central Asia where many clandestine processing plants are located. That led the officials to conclude

that previously accumulated stockpiles of opium mass were being fed to the market from Afghanistan at new prices, with middlemen absorbing the loss

"The price increase, which was limited to the immediate region and did not resonate to international markets, appeared to be a means for the Taliban to capitalise on a rise in the price of a commodity over which they exercise nearly total control," Hutchinson pointed. Such crop hoarding is typical for

Afghanistan where up to 60 percent of the annual opium crop is traditionally stored for future sales, according to the DEA, which cited UN data.



Sihanouk on October 1 at the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh. King Sihanouk warmly welcomed the new envoy and expressed his optimism that the friendly relations between the two states would be strengthened further in future.