

US to curb drone attacks on Pakistani soil

\$7bn anti-terror aid, new strategy with PPP-led govt worked out

THE DAILY TIMES, Lahore

The United States has promised to curb airstrikes by drones against suspected militants in Pakistan, as part of a joint counter-terrorism strategy agreed with the new civilian government led by the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in Islamabad, according to a report published in the *Guardian* on Thursday.

The British daily reported that the strategy would be supported by an aid package potentially worth more than \$7 billion, which is due to go before Congress for approval in the next few months.

The package would triple the amount of American non-military aid to Pakistan, and is aimed at "redefining" the bilateral relationship, US officials say.

Pakistan will also be given a "de-

mocracy dividend" of up to \$1 billion a "reward" for holding peaceful elections and forming a coalition government. Of that, \$200 million could be approved in the next few days, it added.

The aid package being put together by Democratic Senator Joseph Biden will mark a decisive break in US policy on Pakistan, which for much of the past nine years focused on President Pervez Musharraf and the Pakistani military as Washington's primary partners in the "war on terror". Officials in Washington said on Wednesday that the shift had already been made.

"Senator Biden wants to show the relationship is much broader than a military one, and that we are willing to sustain it over time," one of the senator's senior aides said.

The subsequent increase in Predator strikes estimates of the

US administration official said, "Each day Musharraf's influence becomes less and less. Civilians are in control. People aren't meeting with Musharraf anymore... we are very pleased with the new civilian government."

Civilian institutions: Pakistani officials say much of the new counter-terrorism aid will be spent on civilian law enforcement institutions, such as the Interior Ministry, the Intelligence Bureau and the Federal Investigation Agency, rather than being channelled almost exclusively through the army and the military-run Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).

The new understanding on airstrikes by US Predator drones is seen in Islamabad as a critical benchmark for the new relationship.

The subsequent increase in Predator strikes estimates of the

number range up to eight caused outrage in Pakistan.

Pakistani officials say they have been given assurances by Washington that there will be close consultation with the civilian government, not with Musharraf, before any future strikes. However, because the use of Predators is held as a closely guarded secret and US intelligence is reluctant to share information about targets, there is some scepticism in Islamabad over whether the deal will stick.

"We'll have to take them at their word, won't we," Information Minister Sherry Rehman said in an interview in Islamabad. She added that Washington's previous emphasis on ties with Musharraf and the Pakistani military "hasn't provided the results that were supposed to happen on the ground."



Supporters and members of Myanmar's detained Nobel Peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's party National League for Democracy (NLD) pray at the party headquarter in Yangon on Thursday. NLD members marked Buddhist New Year with a vow to continue their struggle for democracy in this military-run nation.

6 British Muslims found guilty in terror trial

PTI, London

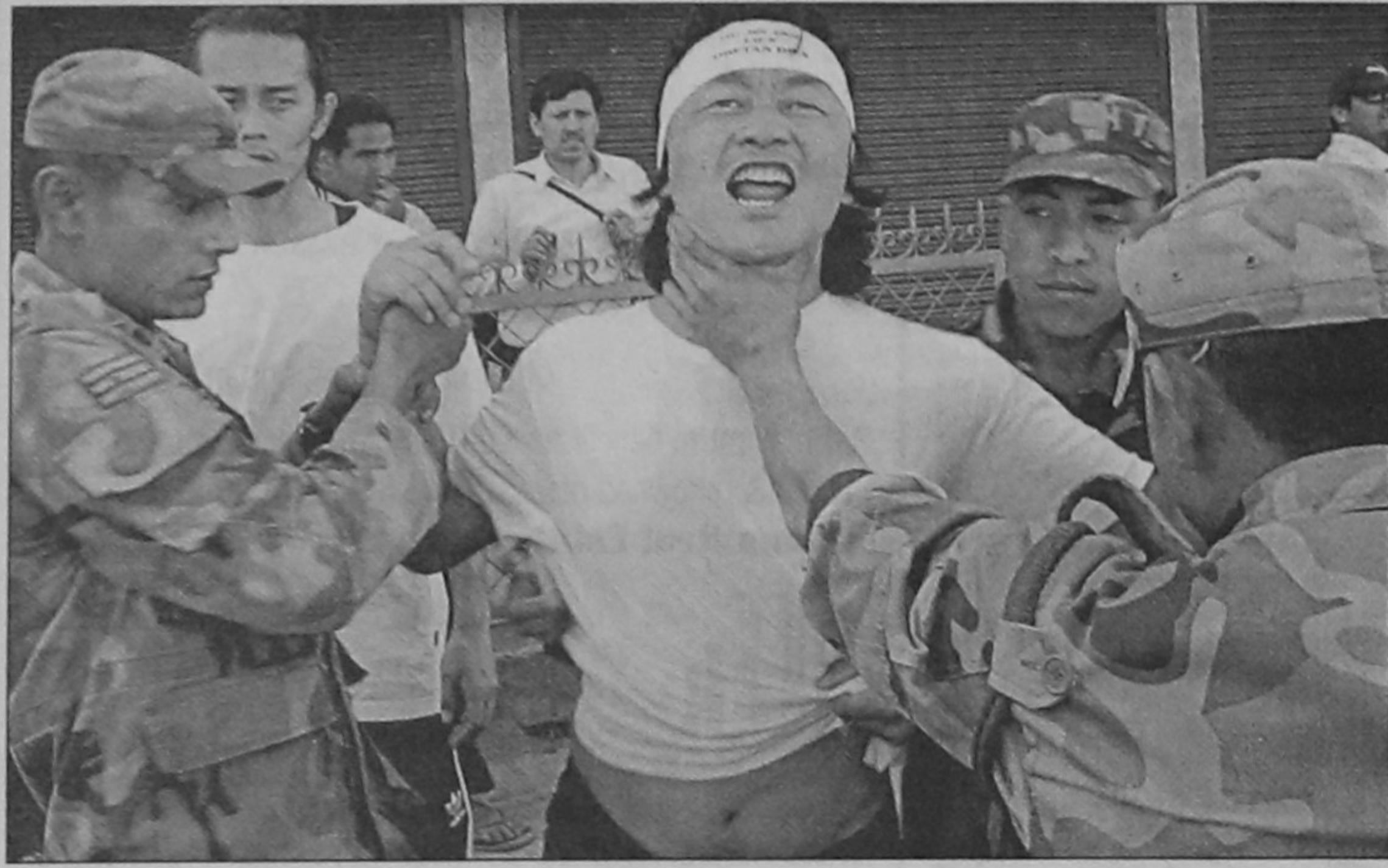
Six British Muslims, including Abu Izzadeen who heckled the then Home Secretary John Reid live on television, have been convicted of terrorist fund-raising and inciting terrorism overseas.

The guilty verdicts at the Kingston Crown Court follow a three-and-a-half-month trial.

Prosecutor Jonathan Laidlaw said the men had delivered or contributed to a series of "emotive and inflammatory" speeches that made appeals for money and volunteers to join the fight against US-led troops in Iraq.

The defendants were all members of the militant group Al-Muhajiroun. The group, led by the preacher Omar Bakri Mohammed who has since left the country, believed in the creation of an Islamic state.

Izzadeen (32), born Trevor Brooks to a Christian Jamaican family in London, repeatedly disrupted Reid at a speech in city in September 2006, calling him "an enemy of Islam" and "a tyrant" in an event broadcast live on television.



Nepalese policemen detain protesting Tibetans in exile during an anti-Chinese demonstration in front of the Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu yesterday. Police detained around 100 Tibetan protesters who had gathered outside a building housing China's consular and trade offices as well as Xinhua, the country's official news agency.

New Tibet protest erupts in northwestern China

AFP, Beijing

Tibetan monks staged a protest in northwest China that led to arrests and heightened security, two activist groups and a local hotel receptionist said yesterday, in the latest sign of unrest.

More than 140 Tibetans, including monks, were arrested Thursday by Chinese security forces for protesting in Tongren County in Qinghai province, according to the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD).

It was the latest in a series of recent demonstrations in Tibet and in neighbouring regions.

Riots erupted in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa on March 14 following four days of peaceful protests against 57 years of Chinese rule over the region, and unrest soon spread to neighbouring Tibetan-populated regions.

The TCHRD, citing unnamed sources, said 22 monks from

Longwu monastery in Tongren on Thursday staged a demonstration in a local market calling for the release of three monks arrested by Chinese forces on April 13.

The protest became large and loud, according to the centre, which is located in the northern Indian town of Dharmsala, the base of the Tibetan government-in-exile.

Matt Whitticase of the London-based Free Tibet Campaign said some monks came in to try and calm the situation, but police started to beat people severely, and arrested and took them away.

"The figures we have is that more than 140 Tibetans were arrested, including a senior lama (lama)," Whitticase said, citing a local monk.

"All the temples within the monastery were besieged by armed police and the monks quarters were all being watched by the armed police."

No US plan to fight terror in Pak tribal belt

Says watchdog

AFP, Washington

More than six years after the September 11 attacks, the United States still does not have a coherent plan to destroy a key staging area for terrorist attacks into the country, according to an independent government watchdog.

There is "no comprehensive plan" to destroy the terrorist threat and close down the safe haven in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), said the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

The vast, impoverished, moun-

tainous and unpoliced FATA belt shares a border with Afghanistan and is regarded by Washington as a key sanctuary for top terrorists who masterminded the Sept 11, 2001 attacks.

US officials have said that al-Qaeda supreme Osama Bin Laden and Taliban chief Mullah Mohammad Omar are believed seeking refuge in the tribal areas, a charge vehemently denied by Pakistan, a key US ally in the "war on terror."

The FATA is also seen as a staging area for al-Qaeda attacks in support of the Taliban in Afghanistan, where

US and Nato troops have suffered heavy casualties battling a long drawn insurgency.

In addition, the report said the area was serving as a training centre for new terrorist operatives to stage attacks in such areas as the Middle East, Africa and Europe.

Officials from both the United States and Pakistan agreed that "al-Qaeda had regenerated its ability to attack the United States and had succeeded in establishing a safe haven in Pakistan's FATA," said the report from GAO, the audit and investigative arm of the US Congress.

8 killed in fresh Lanka fighting

AFP, Colombo

At least six Tamil Tiger guerrillas and two soldiers were killed in fresh fighting in northern Sri Lanka, the defence ministry said on Friday.

Two members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were killed in the Mannar district while four others were killed in nearby Weli Oya district on Thursday, the ministry said.

The fighting also claimed the lives of two government soldiers, the ministry said. There was no immediate reaction from the Tigers.

The government says it has killed at least 2,875 rebels in ground battles since the start of the year while it says 174 government soldiers have died.



Indian President Pratibha Patil (front) waves to schoolchildren as Mexican first lady Margarita Zabala (behind) watches during a ceremony at Los Pinos presidential residence in Mexico City, on Thursday. Patil is in a four-day official visit.

Consulting Opportunity

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society seeks to recruit a health consultant for a Swiss Red Cross sponsored project in the Chittagong District where this position will be based. The following tasks are to be fulfilled within a six month period and with the full participation of implementing personnel and community members, using gender sensitive methods. People living in absolute poverty are to be prioritised.

- An assessment of community health concerns and needs, health seeking behaviour, health spending within the project area. Developing strategies and tools to address them within the project framework.
- Identification of barriers to access and uptake of health services from the providers and users' perspective; designing and implementing strategies to address them within the project framework.
- A capacity assessment of government and non-government health service delivery within the project area developing strategies to link communities to service provider within the project framework.
- A funding proposal with clear exit strategy for Integrated MCH services prepared for the Chittagong project with BDRCS.
- Gender sensitive techniques and tools to support the strategies identified developed and the field implementation team trained in their use and review.
- Health behaviour monitoring tools developed and the field team able to use them.

Bangladeshi nationals having MBBS or equivalent and post graduate degree in Public Health (DPH, MPH or equivalent) with minimum five years of working experience in the related field and project proposal writing may apply for the position. The detailed TOR can be collected from the BDRCS HQ. A pay order/ Bank draft of Taka 100 (non refundable) in favour of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society should be included with the application.

Application must include a letter explaining candidates' suitability, a current CV and related certificates, names and addresses of three referees, two passport size photographs and should reach the Secretary General, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, 684-686 Bara Maghbazar, Dhaka 1217 by 30th April 2007. For those short listed candidates a recruitment day that includes English language test, a computer competency test, a communication exercise and a viva voce, will be organised.

SENA KALYAN SANGSTA

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Tender Notice for 350 KVA Diesel Generator

Sealed tenders are invited from genuine Manufacturers / Suppliers/ Indenters for Supply, Installation, Commissioning and Trial Run of One 350 KVA Diesel Generator Set for Fauji Flour Mill Chittagong.

Tender schedule will be available in the Accounts Division, Sena Kalyan Sangsta, Sena Kalyan Bhavan (21st Floor), 195, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 on payment of Tk. 500/- (five hundred). The earnest money @ 1% of quoted amount in the form of Pay Order/ Demand Draft/ Bank Guarantee in favor of Sena Kalyan Sangsta, Dhaka from any schedule bank of Bangladesh is to be enclosed along with the offer. Without Earnest Money, the offer will not be accepted for scrutiny/ vetting.

The tender in double envelop system will be received in the Tender Box kept in the office of the Procurement & Development Directorate, Sena Kalyan Sangsta, Sena Kalyan Bhavan (21st Floor), 195, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 up to 12:00 noon on 15 May 2008. Tender will be opened on the same day i.e. on 15 May 2008 at 1400 hours in presence of available bidders. Sena Kalyan Sangsta reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

Director
Procurement & Development

India pitches for civilian nuclear cooperation with various countries

PTI, New Delhi

Amid a deadlock on the Indo-US nuclear deal, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee today pitched for civilian nuclear cooperation with various countries to achieve energy security.

"Civilian nuclear cooperation with various countries will also help in achieving our energy security objectives," he said at the India-Arab Investment Projects Conclave here.

Mukherjee listed guaranteeing energy security among the most important macro-economic challenges faced by India and said the country was exploring avenues for bilateral as well as multilateral cooperation with petroleum-rich countries.

He noted that India has to import fuels for meeting its energy needs, which will grow in keeping with the country's projected growth.

"High oil prices, now averaging more than 100 dollars a barrel, are a drag on our resources that could otherwise have gone for more productive purposes," Mukherjee said.

"We are looking for opportunities to diversify our energy mix," he said.

He said India had to import 80% of its oil requirements and 60% of its natural gas.

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