

# US military sharing drone data with Pakistan

Zardari asks Washington for 'ownership' of drones

AFP, Washington

The US military has taken the unprecedented step of sharing with Pakistan surveillance data collected by its drones flying along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, US media reported yesterday.

But "it is not clear" whether that cooperation would continue, The New York Times said, citing US military officials who indicated that Pakistan had abruptly stopped requesting non-combat surveillance missions carried out by US drones along the border in early April.

The officials also refuted a Los Angeles Times report Wednesday that Pakistan had been given joint control of armed US Predator drones, allowing them for the first time to venture beyond the Afghan border into Pakistan.

CIA Predators are regularly flown

covertly in Pakistan, targeting al-Qaeda militants. But The New York Times said no plans were underway for the US military to join the CIA in its armed drones programme inside Pakistan.

Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari acknowledged Wednesday that Islamabad had asked Washington for "ownership" of US drones carrying out attacks in Pakistan.

Zardari, speaking in London, said Pakistan was "negotiating terms" with the United States about the drones, which have killed over 360 people in about 37 attacks since August 2008. Pakistan says the strikes violate its territorial sovereignty and deepen resentment in the nuclear-armed nation.

US intelligence operatives, however, are opposed to joint operations with Pakistan's intelligence services, pointing

to how information shared with Pakistan several years ago about planned Predator attacks had been leaked to militants.

"We're going after terrorists plotting directly against the United States and its interests," a US counterterrorism official told the Times.

"Nobody wants to gamble with those kinds of targets. We tried a joint approach before, and it didn't work. Those are facts that can't be ignored."

Pakistani officials, meanwhile, said Zardari was seeking access to drone technology in part to reduce public outrage at the strikes, which have killed both civilians and militants.

Instead, the US military proposed to increase the amount of sensitive surveillance information shared with Pakistan in a bid to build trust between the two countries' security services.

## Banned group helping out Pak refugees

AP, Peshawar

A banned charity with alleged links to the Mumbai attacks is helping refugees fleeing the fighting between the Pakistani military and the Taliban, a group member said Thursday, raising questions about the government's pledge to crack down on the outfit.

Around 2,000 members of Jamaat-ud-Dawa are handing out food and transporting refugees to three camps, said a member of the group, which has renamed itself the Falah-i-Insaniat Foundation.

The offensive against Taliban insurgents in the Swat Valley area has driven at least 800,000 people from their homes, with 80,000 staying in several camps south of the battle zone. Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani told parliament Thursday that it was the largest internal displacement of Pakistanis since the country's creation in 1947.



PHOTO: AFP

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Antonio Guterres (C rear) meets with an internally displaced Pakistani family, who fled military operations against Taliban militants in troubled Swat Valley and Buner as he visits a makeshift camp in Swabi yesterday.



PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lankan Defence Ministry photo shows yesterday an improvised multi-barrel rocket launcher captured from Tamil Tiger guerrillas in the north-eastern Mullaitivu district. Security forces have found a dismantled light aircraft and several other weapons buried by the Tigers who are facing imminent defeat after 37 years of battling government forces.

## Lanka rejects global call for ceasefire

Thousands of civilians flee war zone

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka rejected international calls to halt its final offensive against Tamil rebels yesterday, hours after the United Nations Security Council called for civilian lives to be spared.

Thousands of civilians were fleeing Sri Lanka's shrinking war zone in the island's northeast on Thursday, the military said, adding that at least four people died in the exodus.

"More than 2,000 people crossed over to government-controlled areas today (Thursday)" and a further 2,000 people were lined up waiting to pour out of the slice of land still under rebel control, a military spokesman said.

At least four people were killed and 14 were injured as they fled when Tamil Tiger rebels fired on them, Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said.

Human rights groups and foreign govern-

ments, including the United States, have become increasingly vocal in their calls for a ceasefire to allow trapped non-combatants to escape, but Colombo remained unmoved.

"We are not going to succumb to international pressure to stop the offensive," said Media Minister Lakshman Yapa Abeywardena, who argued that Sri Lanka was being unfairly targeted.

"In Pakistan and Afghanistan there are similar conflicts but no one is asking them to have a peace agreement or a ceasefire," Abeywardena told reporters.

"There is no international pressure there," he added. "Why only target us?"

His comments followed a statement issued late Wednesday by the UN Security Council urging both the government and the Tamil Tigers to "ensure the safety of civilians" and "respect their obligations under international humanitarian law."

## Pressed by rights groups, UN speaks out on Lanka

AFP, United Nations

Under pressure from rights groups, the UN Security Council agreed for the first time Wednesday to press the warring sides in Sri Lanka to ensure the safety of civilians.

Hours after Amnesty International appealed for urgent UN action and a probe into "the mounting evidence of serious violations of international law," the 15-member body unanimously voiced "grave concern" over "the worsening humanitarian crisis in northeast Sri Lanka."

It endorsed a non-binding text put forward by France, Britain and Austria calling for "urgent action by all parties to ensure the safety of civilians" and to "respect their obligations under international humanitarian law."

Monday, chief diplomats of the three European countries came here to lobby the Security Council to address the "appalling" crisis in Sri Lanka.

France and Britain, whose foreign ministers visited Sri Lanka late last month to press for a humanitarian truce, and Austria directed their UN ambassadors to get the council to speak with one voice.

With China, Russia, Libya and Vietnam among others opposed to putting the Sri Lankan issue on the council agenda, Wednesday's council statement was the best the European sponsors could hope for, diplomats said.

## 40 gangs active in city

FROM PAGE 16

Thieves get twice or thrice the money they used to get before since they now employ brokers for selling stolen cars in the market, AC Mukhlesur said.

Carjacking use several techniques to steal cars and more often than not the drivers of the cars are involved.

Generally carjacking tries to become intimate with a driver when he is waiting alone at a place for the owner. After a period of time they ask the driver to teach him to drive on daily payment basis. When the driver goes to a secluded place to teach driving, the carjacker takes the vehicle away by either removing the driver at gunpoint or drugging him. There are usually other carjackers waiting to ambush the driver at the spot.

Some drivers pick up passengers when going to or

coming from a place without the owner being aware. Carjackers take advantage of this and they as passengers get into a car and snatch it, said Mukhlesur.

He said sometimes criminals use special keys, also known as master keys, to steal cars.

Imrul Kayes Chowdhury an official of The Daily Star told the correspondent that car thieves stole his car from in front of a restaurant at Karwan Bazar in the last week of April when his driver Alampur was away on shopping for only 25 minutes.

Quoting Alampur, he said the driver had locked the car before going to the market.

He suspected master keys were used in stealing his car.

The DB team sources said carjackers change the number plate after stealing a car to

avert police trouble. Criminals find it safe to commit crimes using stolen cars since ditching a stolen vehicle, when it is required, does not cost them money and they cannot be trailed through documents.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab)-10, on April 14 recovered a stolen car and arrested a criminal when he was trying to mug a person at Dayaganj intersection in Sutrapur.

Rab sources said the criminal carjacked the vehicle in the last week of December in Shahbagh area.

On contact, automobile workshop owners in the capital denied any involvement in the trade of stolen cars or stolen parts. They, however, said mechanics who leave workshops mainly get involved in such crimes.

## Dr Wazed's qulhwani

FROM PAGE 1

Separate arrangements were made for men and women attending the prayers.

A large number of women including relatives, ministers and lawmakers joined in prayers for her late husband, Hasina, president of Awami League, recited from the holy Quran and offered special prayers.

Several thousand people including ministers, state ministers, lawmakers, foreign diplomats, high civil and military officials, editors of different newspapers, leaders of different political parties and people from all walks of life attended the doa mahfil where a special munajat was offered.

Meanwhile, a special doa mahfil was also held at Bangabhaban Jam-e-Mosque after Asr prayers yesterday seeking divine blessings for the departed soul.

President Zillur Rahman and officers and staff of Bangabhaban took part in the doa mahfil where a special munajat was offered.

Another Qulhwani was held yesterday at Dr Wazed's Fatehpur village home in Pirganj upazila in Rangpur district, where he was buried on Sunday.

A doa and milad mahfil was organised to pray for the departed soul. Family members, relatives and local AL leaders as well as common people attended the programme.

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