



## Gorbachev: Nato's Afghan victory impossible

BBC ONLINE

The former leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, has warned Nato that victory in Afghanistan is impossible.

Gorbachev said that the US had no alternative but to withdraw its forces if it wanted to avoid another Vietnam.

As Soviet leader, he pulled his troops out of Afghanistan more than 20 years ago after a 10-year war.

He praised President Barack Obama for his decision to begin withdrawing troops next year, but said the US would struggle to get out of the situation.

"Victory is impossible in Afghanistan. Obama is right to pull the troops out. No matter how difficult it will be," Gorbachev said in an interview with the BBC's Moscow correspondent Steve Rosenberg.

He said before the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan, an agreement had been reached with Iran, India, Pakistan and the US.

"We had hoped America would abide by the agreement that we reached that Afghanistan should be a neutral, democratic country, that would have good relations with its neighbours and with both the US and the USSR."

"The Americans always said they supported this, but at the same time they were training militants - the same ones who today are terrorising Afghanistan and more and more of Pakistan," Gorbachev said.

Because of this, it would be more difficult for the US to get out of the situation.

"But what's the alternative - another Vietnam? Sending in half-a-million troops? That wouldn't work."

## NOBEL SUMMIT Ex-Tiananmen leader to represent Nobel Peace laureate

AFP, Tokyo

Former Chinese student leader Wuer Kaixi will represent imprisoned Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo at a meeting of Nobel Peace Prize laureates in Hiroshima next month, a press report said yesterday.

Wuer, 42, a leader of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests in Beijing who once studied with Liu, will read a message on Liu's behalf at the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates, to be held from November 12-14, Kyodo news agency said.

Liu, who was sentenced to 11 years in prison last December, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on October 8-enraging China's rulers.

## ON OBAMA'S VISIT IN NOVEMBER

# India fears militant attack

REUTERS, New Delhi

The Indian government fears separatists in Kashmir could stage attacks during the visit of US President Barack Obama to draw global attention to a region where a two-decade old revolt against New Delhi has revived this year.

Home Secretary Gopal Pillai yesterday told CNN-IBN television on Wednesday that the country was on alert to prevent attacks, such as the killing of 35 Sikhs in Kashmir by militants in 2000, when then-US President Bill Clinton visited India.

"That's the type of fear we have, that innocent civilians will be killed," said Pillai, the top internal security official.

"Definitely they (separatists) will like to see if they can have any spectacular event where they can get worldwide attention."

Obama is due to visit India in early November, at a time when India has voiced its disappointment the United States is not fully forthcoming on sharing intelligence linked to the 2008 militant attack on Mumbai that killed 166 people.

Pillai said Washington had not passed on information early enough on David Headley, a US citizen linked with the Mumbai attacks, despite intelligence available with the United States that he had been in India on a reconnaissance trip.

"I think they have shared, but I would appreciate if it had been much more than what they have

been doing," Pillai said.

"We could say that we were disappointed that the name of David Headley was not provided, if not pre-26/11 at least post 26/11. So that when he came subsequently in March 2009 to India at least at that time we could have nabbed him here."

Headley pleaded guilty in March to a dozen US terrorism charges related to the Mumbai attacks.

The US ambassador to India discounted any notion that Washington was withholding information from New Delhi.

"India is our strategic partner and our friend and someone whom with we share intelligence on a regular basis," Timothy Roemer told reporters.

New Delhi's rule in Kashmir, India's only majority-Muslim region, is a lightning rod for Islamist militants, who have launched several strikes in India and Indian interests abroad.

The Himalayan region is claimed in full by India and Pakistan but ruled by the nuclear-armed rivals in parts.

India says Pakistan backs the militants and provides support for attacks. Pakistan denies the charges.

On Wednesday, Pakistani soldiers shot for the second time in three days at Indian military posts across the line that divides the region. India says these firings are to provide cover fire for militants trying to infiltrate Kashmir.

## Japan vows \$2b to save ecosystems

ALJAZEERA ONLINE

Japan will provide two billion dollars over three years to help developing countries save their ecosystems, the country's prime minister has announced.

Naoto Kan made the pledge at a UN biodiversity summit in the central Japanese city of Nagoya yesterday.

"We will launch a 'life in harmony initiative' to support developing countries' efforts to compile and update their national strategies and implement them," he said.

Kan was addressing delegates from more than 190 countries, who were gathered to map out a strategy to save the world's plant and animal species from extinction.

The 12-day event is due to end on Friday with the UN aiming for a 10-year strategy that would set targets for protecting ecosystems and ending the loss of biodiversity that scientists say is threatening humans' lives.

## India signs nuke liability pact

REUTERS, Vienna

India signed an international treaty governing global nuclear liability yesterday, a step sought by Washington to reassure US suppliers entering the country's fledgling \$150 billion atomic power market.

The signing took place at the headquarters of the UN nuclear watchdog in Vienna days before US President Barack Obama visits India next month, when he will meet US business leaders in Asia's third-largest economy.

India's parliament passed legislation in August to open up the domestic nuclear market. But its nuclear liability law also gives the right to seek damages from plant suppliers if there is an accident. India is the only country to have such a provision, which was added after wide political pressure.

The entry of firms like General Electric and Westinghouse Electric, a US-based unit of Toshiba, is seen as uncertain unless India provides more clarity on compensation liability for private operators.

The United States has pressed India to accede to the multilateral Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage (CSC) to assure its suppliers that any liabilities would be in line with international norms.

There is some fear in India, which needs investment to fuel its rapidly growing economy, that signing up to the treaty could dilute its domestic provisions for supplier responsibility.

But most commentators say it will help reassure American firms that India is part of a global grid on nuclear commerce.

"The CSC is silent on the right to recourse or on the limitations. By itself the CSC does not help American companies," said Indian political commentator Praful Biwai.

"So the Americans won't be very happy and will continue to press for some exceptions (in the domestic law)."

## Obama, Zardari urge more action against terror groups

AFP, Washington

US President Barack Obama and Pakistani counterpart Asif Ali Zardari agreed in a phone call Tuesday that more needs to be done to combat terror groups in Pakistan, the White House said.

"Both President Obama and President Zardari acknowledged that more work needed to be done to address the direct threat to our countries posed by terrorist groups in Pakistan," the statement said.

Obama, who has already announced he will travel to Pakistan in 2011 and will host Zardari at the White House, "emphasized the United States' commitment and support for democracy and transparency in Pakistan," the statement added.

Obama "also acknowledged Pakistan's economic difficulties, and encouraged President Zardari to work to pass key economic reforms, such as tax reform and containing energy subsidies," the White House said.

The US president "concluded the call by conveying his intention to visit Pakistan in 2011 and personally welcomed President Zardari to visit the United States in the coming year."

The leaders' talks came after three days of strategic dialogue between the two nations. The United States last week offered Pakistan a two-billion-dollar arms package but warned it will not tolerate human rights abuses.

On Friday Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the US administration would ask Congress to approve two billion dollars in military aid from 2012 to 2016, replacing an earlier five-year package that expired.

The five-year assistance plan satisfies a key request of Pakistan's influential military, which assists the US military in Afghanistan and was initially uneasy about a US shift to civilian assistance.

## Osama bin Laden's tape threatens France

CNN ONLINE

A man purporting to be Osama Bin Laden warned France to get its troops out of Afghanistan and not to oppress Muslims at home in a tape broadcast by the Al-Jazeera network yesterday.

"If you want to oppress us and thought that it was your right to ban the free women to wear the burqa, isn't it our right to expel your occupying forces, your men from our lands?" the speaker demands, in reference to recently passed French legislation barring women from covering their faces in public.

"The only way to safeguard your nation and maintain your security is to withdraw your forces from Bush's despicable war," the speaker says, an apparent reference to the Afghanistan.

The tape is audio only. The speaker does not appear. CNN was not immediately able to confirm that it is really Osama Bin Laden, the head of al Qaeda.



Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (L) inspects a guard of honour at the prime minister's office in Putrajaya yesterday. Malaysia and India announced that a long delayed trade accord between the two countries would take effect by July 2011, increasing two-way trade to 15 billion USD by 2015.

PHOTO: AFP

## World has enough space for India, China to grow: Manmohan

THE INDIAN EXPRESS ONLINE

Setting a positive tone ahead of his meeting with Premier Wen Jiabao, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said yesterday there is "enormous" possibility of India and China working together as the world has enough space to accommodate the growth ambitions of both countries.

Singh, while replying to a question on India-China relations after delivering a lecture on 'India's Development Experience', kept aside controversial issues like stapled visas over which the two countries had a war of words yesterday.

"India and China are both fast growing economies. China happens to be the largest trading partner of India even though there is imbalance (in China's favour)," he said.

Singh said he was often asked whether India and China were competitors and he responded by saying that there are "enormous possibilities" for the two countries to work together.

"The world is large enough to accommodate the growth ambitions of both India and China," he said, adding his government was approaching the relations with China with this approach.

The Prime Minister skirted the controversial issues that plague the bilateral relations like issuance of stapled visas by China to people from Jammu and Kashmir over which India is angry as it sees the action amounting to questioning its sovereignty.

China started the practice of issuing the stapled visas about two years back and the issue triggered a major row in July this year when Beijing wanted to give such a visa to India's Northern Area Commander Lt Gen BS Jaswal.

## Karzai delays ban on pvt security firms

AP, Kabul

The Afghan president said yesterday that he will extend a Dec 17 deadline for private security firms to disband by at least two extra months.

In a statement released by his office, Hamid Karzai said that he will set up a committee of officials to review the decree to ban private guards. Security companies may have longer than two months to disband, depending on how quickly the timetable submitted on Nov. 15 takes to be approved.

It is also unclear whether different organizations will be given different deadlines.

The private security firms were supposed to shut by Dec. 17, but with only seven weeks to go until the deadline, officials said it was still unclear where the government would draw the extra police and army troops from to replace them. Most of the country's armed forces are busy fighting the insurgency.

There are an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 private security guards working in Afghanistan.

The review committee will be led by the Afghan interior minister and will have members from Nato forces and major donors.

The ban had threatened Nato security convoys and development and reconstruction work worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Agencies have said they would be unable to insure their workers if they had to replace private security contractors with Afghanistan's largely poorly trained and undisciplined armed forces.

"Recognizing the importance of maintaining the continuous delivery of critical development projects and programs funded by the international community, the Committee will prepare a timetable for the disbandment," the statement from Karzai's office said.

## US lost link with 50 nuke warheads for 45 minutes

IANS, Washington

The US military lost communication with 50 of its nuclear missiles last week for about 45 minutes due to an engineering failure, the Wall Street Journal said.

A defence official said the failure disrupted communications between a control centre and the missiles at FE Warren Air Force Base in Wyoming, making it difficult to launch them and sending the military scrambling to determine the cause of the incident.

There was no danger of an accidental launch, the official said.

President Barack Obama was briefed about the incident this week, the Journal added. The incident took place Saturday

and was first reported by the Atlantic on its website Tuesday.

The Atlantic reported that the squadron of inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBM) was in 'LF Down' status, which means the airmen in the missile bunkers could not communicate with the missiles.

The missiles still could be launched, but only by airborne command and control platforms, the report said.

Although the missiles at Warren air force base represent a large proportion of the ICBM arsenal, the defence official said that at no time was President Obama without a nuclear-launch capability.

The Wyoming based arsenal is nearly one-ninth of the country's nuclear stockpile, the Atlantic said.

The report comes days after a senior military official admitted in a book that former president Bill Clinton's White House lost the codes needed to launch nuclear missiles.

Retired General Hugh Shelton writes in his memoir, 'Without Hesitation: The Odyssey of an American Warrior', that the card containing the codes was missing for months before an aide finally admitted it was misplaced.

The card, known as the 'biscuit', holds the code required to open the briefcase holding another set of codes needed to launch nuclear missiles. The briefcase is commonly referred to as the 'football' and is always accompanied by a military officer and kept close to the president.

## Bike-riding stalker

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of a Nature college teacher, Mizanur Rashid, who was similarly killed by stalkers riding on a bike on October 12.

Soma, one of her daughters, said Rony, aged about 21, ran her mother down near their house around 4:45pm when she came up to the road to see off some guests.

She succumbed to her injuries at Faridpur Medical College Hospital around 6:00pm.

The death of Chanpa Rani once again exposes the vulnerability of those protesting harassment of women.

Arun Kumar Bhowmik, Chanpa's brother, filed a murder case with Madhukhali Police Station in this connection yesterday. The case statement said Rony had been stalking and harassing his twin nieces - Hira and Mukta - for the last one year.

Faridpur Superintendent of Police Awlad Ali Fakir said the case was recorded as a murder case, since Rony ran over Chanpa.

Police, however, have yet to arrest the culprit, as he has gone into hiding. His step-

mother told The Daily Star that he has not returned home since the incident.

Rony's father Ratan Saha, a liquor trader at west Garakhola in Modhukhali, is also hiding, locals said.

Faridpur Sugar Mill High School headmaster Shahid Hasan Md Atikul Haque said Hira and Mukta, candidates of the upcoming SSC examination, are very meritorious students. A few months ago Chanpa told him that Rony had been stalking her twin daughters and waylaying them with his bike.

Konok Hasan Masud, convener of an anti-stalking committee of the school, said Rony threatened Chanpa and her husband Swapna Biswas to pick up Hira to teach them a good lesson for their complaints and protest against him.

Swapan said Rony also threatened over the phone to kill him a few days ago.

Meanwhile, workers and employees of Faridpur Sugar Mill and students of Faridpur Sugar Mill High School blocked the Dhaka-Khulna

highway for nearly half an hour protesting the death and demanding punishment of the "killer".

They also demonstrated in front of the Madhukhali Upazila Parishad and formed a human chain in front of the sugar mill.

Workers and employees of the mill have threatened to go on a strike if Rony is not arrested within 24 hours.

Stalking of women has taken a turn for the worse with a growing number of people being killed for trying to resist the menace.

In last nine months, at least 25 women killed themselves to escape the horror of abuse, while nine males lost their lives for standing up against stalkers, says a report of rights group Ain O Salish Kendra.

During the same period, a father committed suicide, unable to withstand watching her daughter being humiliated.

## France adopts pension reform bill

BBC ONLINE

France's National Assembly has voted to raise pension age by two years after weeks of industrial action across the country.

The bill will now face legal challenges before President Nicolas Sarkozy can sign it off next month.

While the protest movement has lost steam, a new day of action has been declared for Thursday.

Aviation officials predict half of flights at Paris Orly airport will be cancelled and 30% at other airports.

Union leaders say they will also pursue the protest in other ways.

Sarkozy is hoping that Wednesday's vote will extinguish any further appetite for confrontation, the BBC's Christian Fraser reports from Paris.

It is expected that he will be in a position to sign off the bill, which raises the minimum retirement age from 60 to 62, by the middle of November.

Opinion polls suggest that Sarkozy's approval ratings have plummeted to record lows of below 30%, 18 months before the next presidential election.



Israeli riot and undercover police arrest an Arab-Israeli protestor in Umm Al-Fahm yesterday, after clashes broke out as extreme rightwing Israelis marching under heavy police escort through this Arab town in northern Israel were met by scores of stone-throwing residents.

PHOTO: AFP