

Nepal's leaders battle to avert fresh crisis

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's ruling parties were locked in 11th-hour negotiations to try to avert a fresh political crisis yesterday, with hours to go before parliament's term expires. Nepal's parliament, or Constituent Assembly (CA), was elected in 2008 with a two-year mandate to fulfil the terms of the peace agreement that followed a long civil war and write a new constitution for the world's youngest republic. It has been unable to complete either task, despite being given an extra 12 months in 2010, and unless a fresh extension can be agreed its term will expire at midnight yesterday, leaving the country in legal limbo. The main opposition Nepali Congress (NC) party is refusing to back a proposal

to give parliament more time unless the Maoists, who waged a decade-long insurgency against the state before winning 2008 elections, give up their arms. NC leader Ram Chandra Poudel told parliament this week the new constitution, aimed at building a peaceful democratic state following years of violence, could not be written "under the shadow of the gun." But the Maoist party has so far refused to surrender its weapons to the government, resulting in a tense stand-off in the troubled Himalayan nation. Party spokesman Dinanath Sharma said such to do so would be to "humiliate" the Maoist soldiers who had battled successfully for the downfall of Nepal's widely disliked former king. "We have asked the Nepali Congress

to review their demands," he said. "If the CA is dissolved, they will be responsible for the consequences." The widespread hope that followed the end of the war in 2006 and the abolition of the monarchy two years later has been replaced by a growing sense of anger and frustration in Nepal, one of the world's poorest countries. Political instability -- Nepal was without a government for seven months before the current prime minister was elected in February -- has stifled economic growth, forcing many Nepalese to seek work overseas. Thousands of people have taken to the streets in recent weeks in protest at the slow pace of progress since the 2008 elections and politicians' failure to complete the constitution.

Pakistan must desert terror camps

Says Indian Defence Minister

PTI, Kannur

Defence Minister AK Antony said it would be difficult to have "permanent cooperation" in IndoPak relations without Islamabad dismantling terrorist camps functioning in Pakistan. India's grievance with Pakistan is that about 42 terrorist camps are functioning in that country, Mr. Antony told reporters here. "Without destroying these terrorist camps, it would be difficult to achieve permanent cooperation in IndoPak relations," he said.

Pak army chief worried about Islamist infiltration

AFP, Washington

Top Pakistani military officials are concerned that their ranks have been penetrated by Islamists aiding militants in a campaign against the state, The Washington Post reported late Friday.

The top Pakistani military commander, General Ashfaq Kayani, was shaken by the discovery of al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden close to a Pakistani military academy, the newspaper said.

He told US officials in a recent meeting that his first priority was "bringing our house in order," the paper reported, citing an unnamed senior Pakistani intelligence official.

"We are under attack, and the attackers are getting highly confidential information about their targets," The Post quotes the official as saying.



General Ashfaq Kayani

Western officials have long accused Pakistan's intelligence services of playing a double game by fighting Islamist militants who pose a domestic threat, but protecting those fighting American troops in Afghanistan.

Some doubt Kayani or Lieutenant General Ahmed Shuja Pasha, head of the military's Inter Services Intelligence agency, had direct knowledge, the report said.

Others however, find it hard to believe that. Kayani was head of the ISI in 2005 when bin Laden is believed to have taken refuge in Abbottabad, the paper noted.

US Navy commandos killed bin Laden there on May 2 in a raid that angered Islamabad because of US incursion on to their territory without prior notice.

Mullah Omar reluctant

FROM PAGE 1

few people in media know that neither the top leaders of Afghan Taliban nor the Pakistani Taliban are interested in talks right now with Kabul or Islamabad because they think that summer is not a "talking season". This hot weather is always a "fighting season" for them. Afghan Taliban killed many US soldiers in last few days but US administration is still running after some people who can facilitate their peace talks with Taliban.

US media is claiming about secret direct and indirect contacts between Taliban and Washington from a long time. Last year there were reports that Saudi Arabia is facilitating Americans for establishing their contacts with Taliban but Saudi authorities dismissed these reports. Hilary Clinton supported talks with Taliban in Afghanistan On January 28, 2010 in London Conference and said "you have to be willing to engage with your enemies if you want to create a situation that ends the insurgency". Few weeks back Voice of America (VOA) reported that Turkey will allow Taliban to open their office in Ankara for making direct contacts with NATO. Then German magazine Der Spiegel claimed that Germany is helping US to talk with Mullah Omar through his former spokesman Tayyab Agha but German officials have not confirmed this report yet.

Now New York Times claimed that US officials have met Tayyab Agha at least three times in last couple of weeks. There are reports in Islamabad that Pakistan also persuaded Tayyab Agha to

speak with US officials but there was no breakthrough because Agha is no more close to Mullah Omar since last 8 years. All the credible Taliban sources close to Mullah Omar are denying these media reports appearing in Western press. They say that Americans are approaching us from right and left but their approaches do not mean Taliban are ready for talks. Taliban spokesperson Zabehullah Mujahid told me on phone from Afghanistan "this is just US disinformation they want to create differences within our ranks, on one side they spread the baseless rumor about the death of Ameerul Momineen (Mullah Omar) last week and on the other side they say Taliban are meeting US officials, this is not true if they want negotiations then Obama must make a public statement first and accept that US invasion of Afghanistan was wrong." He further said "we know Americans have established a \$500 million dollars fund to break our foot soldiers, they organized many dramas of our soldiers surrendering weapons in Kandhar but when this drama was failed they are now begging for talks with our leaders".

Can US buy Afghan Taliban for \$500 million dollars? Why Taliban are not ready for talks right now? Answer is very simple. They do not trust anyone in Kabul, Islamabad and Washington. Interestingly Afghan President Hamid Karzai thinks that if Pakistan exerts some pressure on Afghan Taliban then they will definitely start talking. He is completely mistaken. Helacks information and understanding of Afghan Taliban. Yes

Pakistan enjoys considerable influence on Haqqani network which is active in some parts of Eastern Afghanistan but Pakistani strategists have not much influence on the Taliban leaders belonging to South and West of Afghanistan. The close relationship between so-called "Quetta Shura" and ISI is just a myth not reality. The fact is that Taliban supreme leader Mullah Omar does not trust ISI. He recently told one of his close associates that "ISI is sending messages to start talks with Americans because this is the desire of Americans, when Americans ordered ISI to provide them bases against us in 2001 they said yes to them, now Americans want talks with us and ISI again says yes to them but we say no to ISI because we don't trust them".

Why Mullah Omar is angry with ISI? First of all Mullah Omar is sure that ISI is responsible for helping CIA for the killing of many top Afghan Taliban commanders like Mullah Dadullah. Secondly ISI arrested his deputy Mullah Abdul Ghani Bradar in February 2010 from Karachi and then spread rumors that Bradar was in the contact of CIA and he was trying to establish direct contacts between Taliban and US. Now Mullah Bradar is in the custody of ISI and they try to use him for opening some channels with different Taliban leaders but the status of Bradar is not different from the status of Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef who was in the custody of US in Kabul for a long time but now lives in Kabul like a bird in cage. His movement is restricted. Mullah Zaeef was the Taliban ambassador in Pakistan in

2001. Karzai met him many times recently and wanted him to facilitate talks with Mullah Omar but Zaeef regretted. He clearly told Karzai that "Americans are invaders, they occupied our country and killed innocent Afghans, they must apologize and leave Afghanistan, and there could be no talks with them".

Mullah Zaeef is highly respected in Taliban circles because he refused to become minister in Karzai government. Zaeef represented those Taliban who hate not only Washington and Kabul but also dislikes the policy makers sitting in Islamabad. Mullah Zaeef harshly criticized policies of Kabul, Washington and Islamabad in his autobiography published recently. He accused Pakistan for handing over its air bases to Americans in 2001 so they could kill Afghans. He said "Pakistanis can get milk even from a bull. They have two tongues in one mouth, and two faces on one head so they can speak everybody's language; they use everybody, deceive everybody. They deceive the Arabs by using the name of Islam, they milk America in war against terrorism and they have been deceiving Pakistanis in the name of Kashmiris, but behind the curtain they have been betraying everyone".

Karzai is not ready to understand that he is sitting in Kabul with the help of Northern Alliance. He appointed a Northern Alliance Tajik leader Burhanuddin Rabbani as the head of the peace council responsible for talks with Pashtun Taliban. Many in Taliban

believe that there is no use of talks with US because US will demand to share power with Karzai and Rabbani. US forced Afghan militants to share power with pro-Moscow Dr. Najibullah in 1989 which resulted a bloody civil war and now US desire to make a coalition of Karzai and Rabbani with Taliban could inflame a new civil war bigger than 90's because this time Gulbadin Hikmatyar will not support Rabbani.

Thinking of Pakistani Taliban about Islamabad is not different from Afghan Taliban. They know that American drone are coming from Pakistani air bases so they have started attacking Pakistani bases. Pakistani Taliban are much dangerous than Afghan Taliban. These Pakistanis are not fighting against any foreign invaders. They are fighting against their own country. They are not fighting for a noble cause of liberation. Their ultimate objective is just to take revenge. Some of them are taking revenge because their homes were bombed in tribal areas and some are fighting because they feel betrayed by Pakistan Army. Ilyas Kashmiri is one example. He was part of the Kashmir resistance but then he was arrested in 2003 and he was brutally tortured for conspiring the assassination attempt on the life of Pervez Musharraf. After his release he is on a deadly revenge mission against Pakistani Armed Forces. Afghan Taliban are united under one leadership but Pakistani Taliban have no chain of command. Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was created in December 2007 after the Lal Masjid operation in Islamabad under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud. Before the creation of TTP these militants tested many peace deals with Pakistan Army. US drones sabotaged all the major peace deals. Pakistan Army signed first peace deal with Maulvi Nek Muhammad in South Waziristan on March 27th, 2004. Within few months Maulvi Nek Muhammad was killed in the first ever drone attack by US in Pakistan on June 18, 2004. That was the beginning of a new bloody war in Pakistan. His killing gave rise to Abdullah Mehsud who announced revenge against Pakistan Army. Pakistan Army supported Baitullah Mehsud against Abdullah Mehsud. A peace deal was done with Baitullah Mehsud on February 22, 2005 and it was decided that Baitullah

Mehsud will not provide shelter to foreign militants but there was another drone attack on May 14, 2005. Despite these drone attacks Pakistan Army convinced some major Taliban commanders to make a peace deal with them in North Waziristan on September 5, 2006. Another major peace deal was also underway in Bajour but there was a US drone attack on October 30, 2006 on a religious school in Bajour. More than 80 boys were killed including the family members of many militants of South and North Waziristan. The attacks created new militant groups all over the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan. Finally the July 2007 military operation in Lal Masjid Islamabad further fumed the militancy and Pakistanis started facing suicide bombings every day.

Pakistani parliament adopted a resolution in October 2008 which said that we will not allow our territory to be used against any other country and we will start dialogue with all those who accept the law of the land. Unfortunately this resolution was not implemented. Pakistan government wanted a peace deal with Taliban in Swat but they refused. On the other hand US also opposed any peace with Taliban. Finally this deal was signed by a pro-Taliban cleric Sufi Muhammad but later it was proved that he never had any influence on Taliban and the deal was again crashed. Pakistani parliament again passed another resolution on May 13, 2011. This resolution not only asked the government to revisit and reconsider its relations with US but also supported the 2008 resolution which suggested dialogue with all the stakeholders including Baluch insurgents. US have no objections on talks with Baluch insurgents but they will not allow Pakistan to start talks with Taliban according to the parliament resolutions until Pakistan provide Afghan Taliban in a plate to US for a "peace meal".

Majority of Pakistanis want to get rid of the US war against terror. This war made Pakistan the most dangerous country in the world. Pakistan faced more bomb blasts and suicide attacks than Iraq and Afghanistan in last three years. Pakistan is under attack from both Taliban and US.

Pakistan suffered around 68 billion US dollars loss and received not more than 15 billion US dollars in aid from Washington in last 9 years. The gap between loss and

profit is huge while the human loss is unbelievable. Pakistan lost more than 35000 human lives in bomb blasts and suicide attacks after 9/11 while US casualties in Afghanistan are not more than 1500 in last 9 years. Pakistan needs peace with Taliban but they don't trust Islamabad. If they don't agree to talk then what to do? Only solution is to make national consensus for a final and

grand operation against Taliban in tribal areas which is their base of training. Pakistan cannot have a national consensus until it is a so-called ally of US war. Pakistan can at least stop US for using Pakistani air bases for drone attacks. It will make US angry but Pakistanis have no other choice. Pakistanis have to choose one between US and Pakistan.



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