

that "we do not rule out going back to military action." He continued, "We are not at that point yet, but they have to understand that they have to obey the United Nations."

On March 2, Tariq Aziz told the Iraqi press that, as part of his coming mission to the U.N., "We will ask the Security Council, 'Is your aim to destroy Iraqi industry or implement Resolution 687?' If your aim is to carry out 687, you have our approval. But if your objective is to annihilate Iraqi industry and deny Iraq the chance of becoming a prosperous industrial country, that would be a different matter."

On Feb. 23, U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Gordon Sullivan released a statement to the *Washington Post* in which he said that the post-Gulf war, post-Cold War world had defined a new assessment of strategic threats to the United States. "Unfair or governmentally restricted competition" by other states and the proliferation of "modern military technology" to the Third World are two conditions defining a *casus belli*, said the general. The U.S. military destroyed 85% of Iraq's electrical power capacity, among other civilian infrastructure, valued in excess of \$200 billion during the war.

On March 1, the *Dresdner Morgenpost* of Germany reopened the "Islamic bomb" scare story justification for bombing Iraq. The paper claimed that Iraq has recruited more than 50 Russian nuclear scientists who are now working on a nuclear bomb in a complex near Baghdad.

Human rights pretexts

To help prepare the climate for a hit, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on human rights in Iraq, former Dutch Foreign Minister Max van der Stoel, released a report on Feb. 20 which claimed that Iraqi human rights violations are so grave and widespread that few parallels can be found except the Nazis. Van der Stoel, drawing on accounts of the U.S.-funded "Iraqi opposition," claimed that Iraq has tortured "hundreds of thousands" of people in the recent period, and has prevented food from reaching the Shiites in the south and the Kurds in the north. He called for a "resolute effort to save human lives."

Speaking in response to Van der Stoel's claims, British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd warned that the Gulf war allies would "not stand idly by" while this "repression" continues. For such reasons, Hurd said, the U.N. sanctions and embargo against Iraq, which de facto block food and medicine from reaching the country, must continue. The embargo has killed approximately 200,000 children under five years of age since it began in August 1990.

One Iraqi Kurdish leader on the Anglo-American payroll, Massoud Barzani, met British Prime Minister John Major and French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas in a late February-early March tour of Europe. The meetings were intended to build support for a hit on Iraq based upon alleged repression of the Kurds. Dumas told the press that, for the French, the issue was a "sacred cause."

Pakistan

Is Sharif government running out of time?

by Susan B. Maitra and Ramtanu Maitra

There are strong indications that Pakistan's 15-month-old government, headed by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, has about reached the end of its rope. Pressured by Washington to open up its nuclear installations and support the United Nations Plan on Afghanistan, and pushed by London, through the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, for self-determination of Jammu and Kashmir, Prime Minister Sharif has made vital concessions, and these are coming back to haunt him.

By making the concessions, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has stepped on a hornet's nest—otherwise known as Jamaat-e-Islami, the orthodox Sunni political grouping which has brought down a number of duly elected governments in Pakistan and which is an active, now estranged member of the Islamic Democratic Alliance (IJI) team that won the November 1990 elections.

Prime Minister Sharif's trouble with the Jamaat began in the early days of his administration in the Sindh province, where he, without a political base of his own, began to court the powerful Mohajir Qaum Movement (MQM) to keep the Pakistani People's Party (PPP) away from office.

It was evident that the IJI needed all the help it could get in Sindh, and the MQM was willing to give it. But the Jamaat considers the MQM as its mortal enemy, and fights it physically and politically in Karachi and other major Sindh towns. Thus Prime Minister Sharif's move to get closer to the MQM was taken as an affront by the Jamaat-e-Islami.

While Nawaz Sharif's pro-U.S. position on the Gulf war was disliked by the Jamaat, it did not create any major fracas. However, the United States did figure as a major issue of conflict between the two following the Gulf war, when U.S. pressure on Pakistan to open up its nuclear installations and sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty increased multifold. Sen. Larry Pressler's January visit further aggravated the situation, as the South Dakota senator claimed that Pakistan possesses nuclear weapons and is also involved in putting together an Islamic fundamentalist bloc of nations by bringing the nuclear weapons-possessing Central Asian republics into the fold. Pressler, author of the notorious

amendment which demands that the United States certify that Third World countries have no nuclear weapons capability before they are given any aid, said that "there is fear of an Islamic bomb here and in some states in the Soviet Union [sic]. . . . A bloc or confederation of some sort, if two or three countries in it have nuclear weapons—that would be a great concern to my countrymen and many others."

Because of the Pressler amendment, U.S. aid to Pakistan has been suspended since 1990. The *Hindustan Times* reported on Jan. 30 that not only has Washington decided to deny economic and military aid to Pakistan for the third year in a row, but \$500 million worth of assistance already "in the pipeline" has now also been frozen, leaving only \$50 million in "humanitarian aid." Last year, the United States allocated over \$200 million, including \$100 million in military aid, to a "trust fund."

When Pakistani Chief of Armed Services Gen. Asif Nawaz Janjua went to Washington to explain the Pakistani position and implore Washington to resume military and economic aid, it became clear that Washington wants Pakistan to give up its nuclear ambitions and follow the United Nations solution of the Afghan imbroglio.

Policy on Afghanistan

Pakistan's Afghan policy, put in place by the late President Mohammed Zia ul-Haq during the Cold War days, was to extend Pakistan's influence over Afghanistan through installation of the Sunni-fundamentalist mujahideen in Kabul. The United States supported the policy until the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan in 1990. However, Saudi Arabia, another major proponent of Sunni fundamentalist rule in Kabul, has continued to support Pakistan on this issue.

But, the U.S.-U.S.S.R. rapprochement, the eventual collapse of the U.S.S.R., President Bush's war in the Gulf and drive for a "new world order," implied that a consensus solution had to emerge on the Afghanistan issue. Pakistan's government, backed by the Saudis, a pro-Islamic faction within the Army, and the Jamaat, resisted the new policy line, notwithstanding the resignation of the suave Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan.

Now, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, under growing pressure from Washington, has agreed to go along with the United Nations plan, which means a secularization of Afghanistan. The agreement was signaled in various ways. In February, a major player in the Afghan mujahideen "jihad" against the Najibullah regime in Kabul, Lt. Gen. Hamid Gul, was retired from the Army, a year before his normal retirement date. Before the rumors could die out in the barracks, Major General Durrani, the chief of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), who was chiefly responsible for implementing Pakistan's Afghan policy, was sacked. Not many were surprised and not many doubted that the orders came from Washington and that Prime Minister Sharif had merely carried them out.

The crisis in Jammu and Kashmir

But before Durranti's sacking, Prime Minister Sharif committed yet another blunder. Under pressure from Britain to accede to the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) demand for the self-determination of Jammu and Kashmir, which means providing the Kashmiris with the option of forming an independent Kashmir, Sharif, in an interview with the BBC from Teheran, Iran, said that the right of self-determination for the Kashmiri people included the right to opt for an independent state. Although two days later, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Siddique Kanju categorically denied any change in policy, saying "I am not for an independent Kashmir at all," the prime minister was still subjected to some of the severest criticism he has faced, mainly from the Azad Kashmiris and the Jamaat. Jamaat chief Qazi Hussain Ahmed, who considers himself the chief guardian of the nation's ideological frontiers, spared no venom.

As things grew hot, an attempt was made to reconcile the Jamaat with the prime minister. A conciliation meeting was called at the prime minister's home in Lahore to discuss matters face to face. The outcome was a disaster. Jamaat chief Qazi Hussain Ahmed got into a verbal mud-slinging match with the prime minister and, reportedly, the prime minister's father came to the rescue just in time to prevent an exchange of blows.

Showdown looms

The Jamaat's claim that the IJI government is not living up to its election promise of a truly Islamic Pakistan may not have many takers, but there are ambitious people around who would like to bring down the IJI government and Prime Minister Sharif in particular.

Among them is the son of the late President Zia ul-Haq, Ejazul Haq, a banker-turned-politician, who promoted his father's Afghan policy. Another ambitious dissident is Zahid Sarfraz, reportedly close to President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, who accuses the Sharif government of massive corruption and kickbacks. The latest to join the fray is the old Sindhi politician and former prime minister Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi. In all likelihood, when the chips are down against Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, another former prime minister, Mohammad Khan Junejo, will step in to seal his fate.

The showdown is going to take place soon. The Jamaat is demanding an early election for the post of IJI party chief. If such an election does not take place, the Jamaat will quit the grouping and actively join others to bring the prime minister down. Meanwhile, there are rumors that the dissidents may bring a no-confidence motion against the prime minister soon. If that ends the Nawaz Sharif tenure, the proposed March 30 march across the India-Pakistan borders announced by JKLF chief Amanullah Khan will push the situation into a tight corner. Although General Janjua has been warned by Washington to keep his hands off politics, no one can tell how much chaos the Army will tolerate.