

## Comment | 'India persuading Karzai govt for US attack in tribal areas'

PESHAWAR: The Indian lobby is reported to have intensified its activities behind the scenes to persuade the Karzai government to cry for a US attack in the tribal areas of Pakistan bordering Afghanistan.

It is Washington's long-cherished desire to get the US and NATO forces involved in the tribal areas by physical occupation of the entire tribal belt, but frontline ally President Pervez Musharraf's convincing argument that the US military intervention would be against the American interests in the war on terror is holding the US back.

Though Afghanistan-based US forces had entered Pakistan territory in its tribal areas several times in the past and carried out some military operations, the US officials always apologised to Islamabad after Pakistan's strong protest.

Islamabad convinced Washington that US military intervention would not only weaken its key ally but also strengthen the Taliban. The US has limitations and there are slim chances that it will send its forces in Pakistan to counter militancy.

Of these limitations, Pakistan's sovereignty and its strategic significance stand at the top.

Despite pressure from the Karzai government, the US opted for "do more" policy instead of military intervention. Musharraf toed the 'do more' US line and sacrificed more than 600

Pakistan army officers and soldiers in the two tribal agencies of Waziristan thereby winning over President Bush.

However, of late the US threat of military intervention in Pakistan does not seem to be a Washington initiative but it is the Kabul-based Indian lobby pressing the Karzai government to favour a US attack on Pakistan.

First Karzai began the blame game against Islamabad shifting the entire responsibility of militancy to Pakistan and claiming Osama's presence in the tribal areas of Pakistan. Political analysts viewed it as the reflection of Indian lobbying. Some analysts did not hesitate to go beyond it, coming out with the opinion that all what is being said against Pakistan by Karzai is his master's voice to exert pressure on Islamabad to do more against the militants or for that matter pave the way for military intervention in tribal areas of Pakistan on the pretext of hot pursuits of al Qaeda and Taliban.

Indian army officers and intelligence men planted in the Indian embassy in Kabul and consulates in Jalalabad and other places have developed their contacts in the tribal areas.

Some reports are also emanating from Afghanistan claiming that Indian military officers have been deployed in Afghan military uniform across the Kunar-Bajaur border. When Pakistan came into existence, India funded then Afghan government to raise voice for Pakhtunistan to stir trouble in the tribal and settled areas of NWFP. It resulted in tensed relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan at government level but at people's level there was hardly any move

never there was hardly any move for Pakhtunistan on either side.

The issue of Pakhtunistan itself buried and the two countries came together in Afghan war against the Soviet aggression and occupation of Afghanistan.

Now India has developed its wishful thinking for Pakhtunistan. Keeping in view the countrywide turmoil in Pakistan, it is pressing the Karzai government to call on the US to enter tribal areas.

The Afghan General Mohammad Zahir Azimi, the Defence Ministry spokesman said, "Terrorism is like a spring. It is better to go to the main source than to fight from distance". But the Pakistani side argues with heavy weight that the main source of the spring is Afghanistan where the Taliban emerged and spread out. The main source of terrorism is in Afghanistan and not in Pakistan. Had Pakistan been the main source of terrorism, the US would not have bombed Afghanistan.