

ISI placed under Mol solely for greater cooperation: Rabbani

ISLAMABAD, Aug 5 (APP): The Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) was placed under the Ministry of Interior (Mol) solely for greater cooperation between the Ministry of Interior and ISI on internal and external fronts, Leader of the House Raza Rabbani told the House during the debate on internal and external security in the country. He said the decision to place the ISI under the Ministry of Interior was deemed necessary for greater cooperation between both the institutions on internal and external fronts. He added that ISI was dealing with external affairs and Interior Ministry with internal affairs so ISI was placed under the civil control. As far as the withdrawal of notification is concerned, Rabbani said it was categorically stated by the Prime Minister Secretariat that ISI would continue working under the Prime Minister so there should not be any doubt in this regard. He assured the House that a notification to this effect will be issued soon. Taking part in the debate Javed Ashraf Qazi, the former Director General of ISI, said Pakistan has been receiving serious threats of destabilization since 1971 war. He said it is part of destabilization conspiracy by the foreign powers and elements that Karzai is threatening strike inside Pakistan, firing on Line of Control by Indian forces and unrest in NWFP province.

"They all have joined hands against us and we, instead of blaming each other should sit together for solidarity and integrity of the country."

Qazi said the suicide bombers are misled people who are misguided and sent here by Afghan militants, they are not Jihadies, he added.

The Senator said that ANP government in NWFP believes in peace and they made all efforts for maintaining peace and order in the province but the militant and foreign elements are sabotaging the government's efforts only to destabilize the country. He said people do not know about the working of ISI. It works for safeguarding integrity and solidarity of the country. There is no political cell in ISI, he added. "The previous government would have abolished it if there had been any political cell operating in the agency." There is lack of understanding regarding the role of ISI. 90 percent of its operation is based on foreign intelligence, the Senator said. He said the Prime Minister has power to sack the DG ISI and in past three DGs were sacked for their involvement in politics. He said enemies wanted to destroy the agency. US had always propagated against it without any proof. He questioned what had convinced India to set up as many as 14 consulates in Afghanistan despite the fact that there weren't any trade activity in Afghanistan. The people have been blaming ISI for its link with Jihadis in Afghanistan, he said, adding "let me make it very clear that these are not those Jihadis who fought during Soviet Union invasion in Afghanistan."

Qazi said that the Prime Minister is a capable person who knows the functioning of ISI and the agency can better work under him. The Senator said that late Benazir Bhutto in her book appreciated the functioning of ISI especially its role in Madrassa reforms. He urged the government to denotify the placement of ISI under Ministry of Interior and issue a formal notification to annul the previous notification. The threats confronting the country could only be countered through reforming the ISI, he added. Taking part in the debate Senator Dr. Kausar Firdaus said FBI has admitted that Dr. Afiya Siddiqi, a Karachi-based doctor, was in its custody and asked the government to tell the House as to why the previous government handed her over to the US. Firdaus said operation is being carried out in the NWFP on suspicion of the presence of Taliban, adding that the policy needs to be reviewed. She said criminals involved in disturbing

the peace of Swat should be punished under the law but the government should avoid use of force in the area and adopt the way of peaceful talks. Senator Abdul Malik said that for last sixty years, the United States has been having its influence over Pakistan, but in current scenario, the latter is facing threats from the former. He said the prolonged US stay in Afghanistan is not aimed at eliminating Taliban rather it wants to get hold of the energy reserves of Central Asia. He also asked the government to tell the House as to why the operation is still going on in Balochistan. The Senate will resume the debate on Tuesday.

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