

Emergency in Pakistan; Future uncertain

AMITESHWAR SINGH

Pakistan went into a state of emergency on 3rd November, suspending its constitution. The Pakistani General Pervez Musharraf in his declaration has accused the country's judiciary and the extremists for leaving him no alternative. As the situation now stands, most of Musharraf's opponents have been placed under house arrest, the media is gagged. Under the emergency, the following steps have been taken: - Constitutional safeguards on life and liberty curtailed. Police get wide powers of arrest. Suspects can be denied access to lawyers. Freedom of movement restricted. Private TV stations taken off air. New rules curtail media coverage of suicide bombings or militant activity. Chief justice replaced, others made to swear oath of loyalty. Supreme Court banned from rescinding emergency order

In the declaration, Musharraf's most audible complaint has been the anti-government attitude that the judiciary has adopted since March this year. The general had

suspended the country's chief justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry. In the end, he had to reinstate the chief justice. The tension has existed ever since.

Another reason that he has put forth is the recent "ascendancy in the activities of extremists and incidents of terrorist attacks" in Pakistan. In July this year, hundreds of Islamic militants barricaded themselves into Lal Masjid and security forces had to use force to defuse the situation. Many radical clerics have been vocal against the Musharraf's pro-US anti-extremists stance. Terror attacks and bombings have shot up. .

The army is fighting a war with Islamic militants in the north west of Pakistan along the Afghanistan border. Around 300 soldiers surrendered to the extremists in August.

So, General Musharraf has put the country under emergency due

to the above reasons. And what does he do on the first day of the emergency to "solve" the crisis? He takes all private TV channels off-air. The state-run PTV is the only

More than 400 people have been arrested. They include senior judges, lawyers, and leaders of opposition parties, and human rights activists

Imran Khan, the internationally known former cricketer who leads a small opposition party, and the attorney leading the legal challenge to Musharraf's re-election have also been detained. Yet, the biggest threat to Musharraf's political power, leader of Pakistan People's Party former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, has not been detained or put under house arrest although she has openly criticised the government's move.

Many countries have condemned the emergency declaration. They sounded their concern over the future of Pakistan's democracy. They have all expressed their hope that the government will keep its promise

of holding general elections in January next year. Pakistan's Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz's late night announcement yesterday that elections would be held on schedule should provide them some relief.

This is the second time Musharraf has declared an emergency. The last time was in 1999 when he replaced former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in a bloodless coup.

By declaring emergency, Musharraf has certainly avoided a hard ball coming his way. The Supreme Court was to rule on the legality of Musharraf running for president, even though he has been elected president by the parliament last month. He also seems to be getting the security situation back in control as Pakistan has remained largely peaceful on the first day of the emergency, in contrast to the bombing that were happening everyday. But then, a lot of conspiracy theories have already started floating around claiming that the terror attacks were engineered by the administration itself so that it would have an excuse for the emergency.

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source of information for the citizens of the country. According to BBC, strangely, a woman found it rather peaceful as all the cacophony against the government got dumbed down.

Hugo Chavez, nightmare for the White House

ROHAN RAMESH

Bangalore—He is the perhaps the most admired man in Latin America after Fidel Castro. Indeed, as Fidel gets old and feeble, it is the smooth shaven former paratrooper who is the president of Venezuela who seems to be the successor to the Cuban revolutionary as the icon of the South American masses.

Hugo Chavez is brash. Sometimes he lacks the rhetorical polish of old Fidel. But Chavez has guts and won't be afraid to corner the glory. He is the most vitriolic critic of the U.S. anywhere in the world. Even the Iranian leaders are moderate compared to the language that Chavez employs to describe the American leadership. He described Bush as "Cowboy". He has openly dared the U.S. to try and attack Venezuela.

With Venezuela owning the fourth largest deposits of petroleum in the world, and its coffers overflowing with the earnings from the high petroleum prices, Chavez has laid down the gauntlet to the U.S. to "come and get me, if you can." After all, only four years ago, Chavez who then was elected President of Venezuela was forced to step down and call elections in the face of civilian strikes and media hostility inspired by the U.S. Chavez was reelected with the massive majority. The experience changed him. Everyone knows that the U.S. calls the political shots in Latin America, but Chavez, with personal experience knew that the U.S. would not like any leader who wanted to pursue a foreign policy that was not to the liking of the

Americans.

He nationalized the oil industry, controlled till then by the U.S. oil companies. This was an extremely popular move, since the U.S. companies exploited the Venezuelan oil riches leaving the country poor. Next, he introduced a welfare state, with free medical care, free education and near full employment. He joined hands with Castro whom he admires immensely. Chavez' charisma has also influenced political change in the neighborhood in Argentina, Columbia and Chile with the countries electing presidents who succeeded pro-American politicians. Chavez anchors a weekly TV call-in programmer "Allo Presidente" in which he replies to callers' questions, interviews distinguished guests and even sings and plays a guitar. He offers the poor in America, unable to pay fuel bills for heating their homes, subsidized gasoline. For the most powerful country in the world, there can be no greater humiliation.

But there is very little that the U.S. can do. It would dearly like to see Chavez go. But that is just wishful thinking. Chavez' popularity in Venezuela is unprecedented and is unlikely to decline in the immediate future. His popularity in the neighboring Latin America is equally immense. Any move by the White House against the man in Caracas will backfire. South America, the backyard of the U.S. will be up in flames. Already licking its wounds suffered in Iraq, the American Goliath can only look on as "David" Chavez taunts him.

America not Eco-friendly

America refuses to comply with global emission norm

NIKHIL VARGHESE

Bangalore—The Global warming crisis has reached epic proportions, the dire state of our environment has prompted countries all over the world to sit up and take responsibility for their actions. In an effort to curb their carbon Dioxide emissions, (the main culprit for Global warming) industrial nations have pledged to reduce their levels of pollution.

In 1990 the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reported on the problem of climate change. In 1997 a protocol was adopted in Kyoto, Japan under which countries formally agreed to reduce "Green house" gases. The Clinton government signed the pact and hailed the protocol as historic. However in 2001 the bush administration repealed the signature and refused to ratify the pact.

The 2001 debacle drew flak from all corners; America was once at the forefront of matters regarding conservation of the environment, the move therefore shocked many.

So why would America refuse to sign the pact? The reason is because the Kyoto protocol would "hurt" the economic interests of the country. President Bush on the protocol said, "This is the American position because it is right for America"

America houses only 4% of the world's population, yet it is responsible for 27% of the world's pollution in comparison to China's ratio of 21%: 13% respectively. The power hungry nation's decisions regarding the protocol were clearly made by the Oil, Gas

and nuclear companies who have shelled out more than 50 million dollars to get Bush into power. So the Bush administration's vehemence to the protocol is nothing but payback to his benefactors.

In 2004 Russia ratified the Kyoto protocol making it international law, America remains a rogue nation when it comes to issues of global warming. This from a nation that polices the world. Americas frantic bid to hold onto its hyper power status is amusing no one, the message sent out is clear and it reads that the U.S.A does not care about the people or the environment as long as its own selfish interest's are satiated.

According to NASA, the polar ice cap is now melting at the rate of 9 percent per decade. Arctic ice

thickness has decreased 40 percent since the 1960s. The number of Category 4 and 5 hurricanes has almost doubled in the last 30 years. The IPCC 4th Assessment Report said that this trend would likely continue.

The just-released Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Summary for Policy Makers — the first volume of the IPCC's 4th Assessment Report — states that scientists are more than 90% confident that human industrial activity is driving global temperature rises.

Carbon dioxide levels today are nearly 30 percent higher than they were prior to the start of the Industrial Revolution, based on records extending back 650,000 years.



Increasing Green house gases are rapidly melting icebergs

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