



## Interview by CNN Islamabad Bureau Chief Ash-har Quraishi

**Richard Armitage, Deputy Secretary of State**

At the Residence of the U.S. Ambassador  
Islamabad, Pakistan  
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**QUESTION:** We're going to start with the war on terror. How satisfied is the United States with Pakistan's efforts to root out al-Qaeda and the Taliban, particularly in the northwest, in the tribal areas?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE:** It was with great sorrow that I've learned that as many as 75 Pakistani soldiers have died in the activities in Waziristan, in the tribal areas. In our view, they really, rigorously, are going after Al Qaeda. On the question of the Talibs, perhaps there's a little more activity, Taliban activity in Pakistan than we think is necessary, but I have no doubt that the authorities in Pakistan will deal with the Taliban, push them back to Afghanistan, where they can be dealt with by the transitional government of Afghanistan.

**QUESTION:** Now is there any reason to believe at this point from an intelligence standpoint between Washington and Islamabad that we know any more today than we do from the beginning of the war on terror as to the whereabouts Osama bin Laden?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE:** Well I certainly don't know where he is, and I don't think that our friends here in Pakistan know. I would note that a colleague of Osama bin Laden's has just been returned to Saudi Arabia, and we'll be obviously interested to learn what he knows. I have no doubt equally that someday, at one point in time, that Osama bin Laden will be found out and will be brought to justice.

**QUESTION:** Is there renewed specific pressure on Pakistan by the United States to capture Osama bin Laden before the U.S. elections in November?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE:** No, it's been steady. I think it's as much in Pakistan's interest as the United States'. I think jointly we believe that this fellow has to be brought to justice. But there hasn't been any association with the election.

**QUESTION:** Let's turn to Iraq. How prominently did the situation in Iraq figure in your talks so far here in South Asia?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE:** Well I certainly, both in India and here in Pakistan, have briefed our view of the situation in Iraq to include the popularity of the interim Iraqi government, to include the full turnover of sovereignty. And I made no request of either state, but I pointed out just where I thought we were in Iraq and where the coalition was.

**QUESTION:** Is there anything specific that you'll be looking for from the Pakistani government in terms of troops, in terms of the reconstruction in Iraq?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE:** These are decisions they're going to have to make. All I did was point out to them the picture as I saw it. They'll have their own views. There has been a communication from Prime Minister Allawi to the Government of Pakistan, and I'm sure they're considering it.

**QUESTION:** Now on the troops issue, your reaction to the pullout by the Philippines of their troops in Iraq?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE:** Well I regret this in the face of terrorism. But I would note that others have indicated a willingness to come in. The Australian government made a decision to have 30 more soldiers to the 850 they already have, and King Abdullah of Jordan has indicated he's willing to put Jordanian troops at the behest of the UN. So, I regret the Filipino decision, but there are others who are stepping up.

**QUESTION:** Now on to the current atmosphere here in India and Pakistan. You've been here before during times of crisis. How have you found the atmosphere on your trip this time to South Asia?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE:** I found it much better. I think on both sides there's the developing of confidence through the various meetings that have been held, the announcements a couple of days ago of the working group meetings upcoming, the SAARC meeting and the ministerial meeting which will take place on the sidelines of that. So, I think there's a confidence coming, that there's a process started and sooner or later it will really start delving into the core issues.

**QUESTION:** Now, in terms of Washington's role in trying to establish peace and stability in South Asia, what role is Washington willing to take on? Facilitator, possible?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE:** Oh, I think we're a friend of both parties is probably the way I'd describe the role. Sometimes we are able to carry a message or two, but we're not going to get in the middle of this. This is a problem that exists between Pakistan and India, and those two parties have to resolve them.

**QUESTION:** Now the Kashmiri people. Any sort of view on whether or not they should be included in these talks?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE:** Well, I think right now, as I understood it while I was in Delhi, the government indicated that they were going to be inviting all the parties, the Kashmiri parties, for a discussion. After all, it is their equities that are being discussed. But I think there is a way to go before that happens.

**QUESTION:** Now, in light of the nuclear situation here in South Asia, particularly the issue of proliferation as we saw earlier in the year, the scandal from the Pakistani side. What is the United States looking for in terms of more transparency possibly from the Pakistani government with regards to their nuclear program or safeguards? Are there any safeguards?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE:** We've worked very rigorously with the Government of Pakistan with their willing cooperation to talk about safeguarding measures. We've had discussions both here and in Washington and we're quite satisfied. We're on a good track.

**QUESTION:** Now, is the United States at all concerned about the prospect of nuclear technology, particularly from Pakistan, falling into the hands of terrorists?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE:** Well, we're concerned about the possibility of nuclear technology from any country falling into the hands of terrorists. But I would

note the efforts of the Government of Pakistan in the A.Q. Khan situation. The Government of Pakistan has been quite transparent with us and is cooperating with us fully, and we're quite satisfied.

**QUESTION:** So is there any reason to believe, though, that there are any concrete measures that have been taken here in Pakistan to safeguard those assets?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE:** Oh I believe that, as I said, we've had discussions with our colleagues from Pakistan, and our level of confidence is up quite a bit.

**QUESTION:** Now, there's a question we've got about Charles Jenkins.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE:** Charles Jenkins?

**QUESTION:** Charles Jenkins. He's expected to travel to Japan. Will the United States seek extradition?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE:** I think it's an open question. Mr. Jenkins met with his wife and daughter in Indonesia. My understanding is he will be going to Japan. I'm sure that the U.S. military authorities will be discussing this with the Japanese. Charles Jenkins, as I recall, is 65 years of age or older, and not in great health. So, we'll have to see what happens.

**QUESTION:** One final QUESTION: Your name has come up in terms of a possible director of the CIA. Are you interested in the position?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE:** Well, I've never accepted or declined a job which hasn't been offered. I think I'll stay with that position.

**QUESTION:** OK. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE:** Thank you.

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