

U.S. may not stop aid to Pakistan

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- U.S. aid to Pakistan may not be affected by Pakistan's political crisis, because of Islamabad's role in the anti-terrorism fight, The New York Times reported. Following Saturday's imposition of emergency rule by President Pervez Musharraf, there have been large-scale detentions of human rights and opposition party leaders -- and rising concerns that elections might not be held as scheduled in January. However, the Times reported Monday, U.S. President George W. Bush's administration has indicated it would probably continue the billions of dollars in aid to Pakistan's military. Privately, there is recognition about the limits of U.S. leverage over Musharraf, one of Bush's critical allies, but officials say the political situation should not interfere with the campaign against al-Qaida and the Taliban holed up in Pakistan's tribal areas. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said in Jerusalem Sunday the United States would "have to review the situation with aid," but she also was quoted as saying three times that Bush's first concern is to protect America and its citizens by continuing to fight against terrorists, which includes assistance to Pakistan. Bush has been urging Musharraf for months to share power with leaders like former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

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