

Musharraf relinquishes military role

by UPI

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan -- Pervez Musharraf relinquished his role as head of Pakistan's military Wednesday, one day before he is to be sworn in for a third term as president. In marking the end of his military career and eight years of military rule, Musharraf expressed sadness at leaving the army, CNN reported. "This army is my life. This army is my passion," he said during a farewell ceremony at army headquarters in Rawalpindi. "From tomorrow morning, this relationship will change, and I will no longer be in uniform." Gen. Ashfaq Kiyani, until recently head of Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence agency, took over as head of Pakistan's military. Pakistan's Supreme Court cleared the way for Musharraf to serve another five years as president. However, facing increased unrest, he set elections for Jan. 8. So far he has refused to lift the national state of emergency he invoked Nov. 3. Meanwhile, the Indian newspaper Dawn quoted a U.S. State Department official as saying his country played no role in the return of exiled former Premier Nawaz Sharif. A Times of India report, however, suggested U.S. officials are concerned Sharif's return may preclude an alliance between Musharraf and Benazir Bhutto, another former premier who also returned to Pakistan.

Copyright © 2007, by United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

Musharraf relinquishes military role by UPI