

Musharraf emergency assailed

by UPI

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan -- A group of former Pakistani Foreign Ministry officials said that President Pervez Musharraf's emergency rule has "dangerously destabilized the country." In their warning, 23 former ambassadors and foreign secretaries urged Musharraf to immediately restore the constitution and restore senior judges who were suspended after the Nov. 3 emergency decree, the Dawn newspaper reported. The group said the emergency steps amounted to an unconstitutional and illegal imposition of martial law, the report said. "Besides undermining the rule of law and delivering a severe blow to the independence of judiciary, they have dangerously destabilized the country. They also have incurred international opprobrium and badly tarnished Pakistan's image," a statement from the group said. Musharraf has promised to end the emergency by next week. Other demands made by the former diplomats included the setting up of neutral caretaker groups at all levels of government, reconstitution of the election commission to ensure free and fair elections, immediate release of all people detained under the emergency, including judges, lawyers, journalists and students, and strict adherence by the armed forces to their oath and constitutional role, the report said.

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