

## Lawmakers weigh emergency aid to Pakistan

*by UPI*

WASHINGTON -- U.S. congressional Democrats are considering sending hundreds of millions of dollars in emergency aid to Pakistan, sources told The Wall Street Journal.

The money would be used to help stabilize the country, sources said.

It could either be viewed as a "downpayment" on \$1.4 billion included for Pakistan in U.S. President Barack Obama's proposed \$83.4 billion war spending bill, which is on track for consideration this summer, or it may be moved separately "using "executive branch mechanisms," unnamed sources told Tuesday's Wall Street Journal.

The exact amount is reportedly still unclear, but momentum for an emergency aid package for Islamabad is gathering momentum in Congress after Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. special representative for Pakistan and Afghanistan, met with top House Democrats last week to brief them on gains by Taliban militants in Pakistan's restive northwest, the Journal said.

Although the move could be politically risky with many U.S. lawmakers skeptical about aiding Pakistan, they are also alarmed by the perceived growing threat the Taliban is posing to the country. The package may be ready by the time Pakistani President Ali Asif Zardari visits Washington May 6 and 7, the newspaper reported.

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