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# "CIA worked in tandem with Pak to create Taliban"

LONDON: The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) worked in tandem with Pakistan to create the "monster" that is today Afghanistan's ruling Taliban, a leading US expert on South Asia said here.

"I warned them that we were creating a monster," Selig Harrison from the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars said at the conference here last week on "Terrorism and Regional Security: Managing the Challenges in Asia."

Harrison said: "The CIA made a historic mistake in encouraging Islamic groups from all over the world to come to Afghanistan." The US provided \$3 billion for building up these Islamic groups, and it accepted Pakistan's demand that they should decide how this money should be spent, Harrison said.

Harrison, who spoke before the Taliban assault on the Buddha statues was launched, told the gathering of security experts that he had meetings with CIA leaders at the time when Islamic forces were being strengthened in Afghanistan. "They told me these people were fanatical, and the more fierce they were the more fiercely they would fight the Soviets," he said. "I warned them that we were creating a monster."

Harrison, who has written five books on Asian affairs and US relations with Asia, has had extensive contact with the CIA and political leaders in South Asia. Harrison was a senior associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace between 1974 and 1996.

Harrison who is now senior fellow with The Century Foundation recalled a conversation he had with the late Gen Zia-ul Haq of Pakistan. "Gen Zia spoke to me about expanding Pakistan's sphere of influence to control Afghanistan, then Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and then Iran and Turkey," Harrison said. That design continues, he said. Gen.Mohammed Aziz who was involved in that Zia plan has been elevated now to a

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[Ershad bail order stayed H DHAKA: The bail order of former military dictator, Lt. Gen. Hussain Muhammad Ershad, currently serving a prison term on a graft charge, has been stayed by the Supreme Court Monday till March 18. A bench of the Supreme Court's appellate division stayed the bail order after hearing a petition from the government. Ershad's legal counsel, however, expressed surprise at the order. "This move is unexpected and unprecedented," Ershad's lawyer Khandaker Mahbub Hossain told reporters. Naziur Rahman Manzur, the secretary general of the Jatiya Party, the political party headed by Bangladesh's former military ruler, said the party would continue the](#)

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key position by Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, Harrison said.

The old associations between the intelligence agencies continue, Harrison said. "The CIA still has close links with the ISI (Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence)."

Today that money and those weapons have helped build up the Taliban, Harrison said. "The Taliban are not just recruits from 'madrassas' (Muslim theological schools) but are on the payroll of the ISI (Inter Services Intelligence, the intelligence wing of the Pakistani government)." The Taliban are now "making a living out of terrorism."

Harrison said the UN Security Council resolution number 1333 calls for an embargo on arms to the Taliban. "But it is a resolution without teeth because it does not provide sanctions for non-compliance," he said. "The US is not backing the Russians who want to give more teeth to the resolution."

Now it is Pakistan that "holds the key to the future of Afghanistan," Harrison said. The creation of the Taliban was central to Pakistan's "pan-Islamic vision," Harrison said.

It came after "the CIA made the historic mistake of encouraging Islamic groups from all over the world to come to Afghanistan," he said. The creation of the Taliban had been "actively encouraged by the ISI and the CIA," he said. "Pakistan has been building up Afghan collaborators who will sustain Pakistan," he said. (IANS)

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[legal battle to free Ershad. Ershad, currently serving a prison term, has been stripped of his Parliament seat and barred from contesting elections for a period of five years. Earlier on Sunday, the High Court granted Ershad interim bail and asked the government to show cause as to why a one-month detention order, issued under the Special Power Act, against the country's longest serving military ruler should not be declared illegal. Government lawyers, led by Additional Attorney General Mahbube Alam Monday submitted a petition, seeking a stay on the high court order granting interim bail to Ershad at the residence of Justice Mohammed Ruhul Amin. The government said in its petition that it had information that Ershad's release would aggravate the law and order situation across the country. In his argument, Ershad's legal counsel questioned whether the country's law and order situation had improved over the last three months when Ershad was in jail. Government lawyers also said Ershad was to be produced in court in the case of the alleged murder of Major Abdul Manzur, who was killed in mysterious circumstances in 1981. Ershad was given a five-year jail sentence last year and asked to pay a fine of \\$ 1 million or serve an additional six months in prison if he failed to pay the fine. Since he has completed three months in jail, Ershad had initiated a move to secure his release by paying half the fine. After Ershad's counsel paid a fine of \\$500,000 for his release March 1, the district magistrate issued a one-month detention order against. It followed a move by Ershad's lawyers to obtain bail. \(IANS\)](#)

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