

Search



The Times of India



India



Web



Images



GO

[Indiatimes](#) > [The Times of India](#) > [World](#) > [The United States](#) > Article[Home](#)

CLASSIFIEDS

[Matrimonial](#)[Jobs](#)[Real Estate](#)[Automobiles](#)[Post Print Ads](#)[All Classifieds](#)

NEWS

[India](#)[Cities](#)[World](#)▪ [Pakistan](#)▪ [The United States](#)▪ [Neighbours](#)▪ [Americas](#)▪ [Asia-Pacific](#)▪ [Europe](#)▪ [Mideast](#)▪ [Africa](#)[Entertainment](#)[Sports](#)[India Business](#)[Intl Business](#)[Infotech](#)[Health/Science](#)[Photo Gallery](#)[Weather](#)[TOI Headlines](#)[Top Media Headlines](#)[Most Read Articles](#)

OPINION

[Columnists](#)[Editorial](#)[Interview](#)[Letters to Editor](#)

NRI SERVICES

[India on Mobile](#)[Remit2India](#)

SUPPLEMENTS

[Education Times](#)[Financial Times](#)

SUNDAY SPECIALS

[All That Matters](#)[Men & Women](#)[Mind Over Matter](#)[Open Space](#)[Special Report](#)

PRINT EDITION

[Delhi Edition](#)

DAILY DOSE

[Crossword](#)[Horoscope](#)[Jokes](#)[Newsletters](#)

US released al-Qaeda terrorists to Pak: Report

PTI [MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2003 09:00:00 AM]

WASHINGTON: Playing a "losing game", the US allowed many Interservice Intelligence (ISI) agents it had captured during the war on terror in Afghanistan to go back to Pakistan and they took with them thousands of al-Qaeda terrorists, who later spread into Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir, media reports said.

After surrounding ISI operatives and "the cream of the crop" of al-Qaeda near Konduz during the early phase of the war, US allowed the ISI to escape, in order to prop up Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, investigative reporter Seymour Hersh revealed on the Public Broadcasting System network in the weekend.

By letting them go, "the US is playing a losing game, because Musharraf is certainly much more interested in his own survival than ours," Hersh said.

He added that the US military allowed 3,000 to 4,000, perhaps 8,000, ISI and al Qaeda.

The initial plan, said Hersh, was to take out the Pakistani military from the trap in Afghanistan.

"What happened is that they took out al-Qaeda with them. And, we had no way of stopping it. We lost control. Once their planes began to go, thousands of al-Qaeda got out and we were not able to stop it and screen it," he said.

"The intent was not to let al Qaeda out, but to protect the Pakistani military," he added.

"What else can you do? We need the idea of some sort of a country as a bulwark."

He said the reality in Afghanistan today "is that probably from Kandahar to Jalalabad and all of the southern part of Afghanistan is ISI. It is Taliban. Afghanistan is smoking today."

Noting that there aren't many US troops in northern territories, he said, "We are really at square one even in Afghanistan. We have about 8,000 American troops facing some of the heaviest fighting they have seen in a year."

Hersh also said that the Saudis have put a lot of money into Pakistan's religious establishments.

"Saudis are still a supplier of a great deal of funds to Pakistan. We have got a country that is teetering on the edge. We don't want Pakistan to go Islamic. We don't want the (nuclear) weapons to get out of control," he said.

He also estimated that Pakistan at present has up to 40 nuclear warheads.

Asked as to who is in charge of the switch, Hersh said: "Well, we would like to think that the military and Musharraf is in charge of the switch. The issue is making sure and reinforcing Musharraf is in charge of the switch."

[Print this page](#)[Email this page](#)[Comment on this article](#)

COMMENTS ON THIS ARTICLE

▶ [Bush and his dad have lost wars. It is high time...](#) - [jawali](#)

▶ [I for one had read reports on MSNBC after the ini...](#) - [sachin_naik_1](#)

[»» Read all comments](#)

[TOP](#)[About the Publisher](#) | For reprint rights: [Times Syndication Service](#)Copyright ? 2003 Times Internet Limited. All rights reserved. | [Terms of Use](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Sitemap](#)