

THE HINDU

TODAY'S PAPER

Published: December 7, 2008 00:00 IST | Updated: February 11, 2011 13:56 IST December 7, 2008

McCain warns Pakistan of Indian air strikes



Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani (right) with U.S. Senator John McCain (second left) and Senator Joe Lieberman during a meeting in Islamabad on Saturday. Mr. McCain was on a daylong visit to Pakistan.

Nirupama Subramanian

ISLAMABAD: United States Senator John McCain has said there is enough evidence of the involvement of former Inter-Services Intelligence officers in the planning and execution of the Mumbai attacks.

If Pakistan did not act swiftly to arrest the people involved, the Senator said, India would be left with no option but to conduct aerial operations against select targets in Pakistan.

Senator McCain, the Republican presidential candidate who lost to Barack Obama, told a select group of Pakistanis at an informal lunch in Lahore on Saturday that this was conveyed to him by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in New Delhi.

Ejaz Haider, a senior editor at the Daily Times, who was at the lunch said Mr. McCain told the group that Washington would not be able to do much to stop India, as the Mumbai attacks were its “9/11.”

“The democratic government of India is under pressure and it will be a matter of days after they have given the evidence to Pakistan [that they decide] to use the option of force if Islamabad fails to act against the terrorists,” Mr. Haider quoted the Senator as saying.

Mr. McCain, who arrived in Pakistan from New Delhi on Friday and met Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani in Islamabad in the evening, told the group that Dr. Singh was “visibly angry and reeling from the shock of the attacks.”

He said if Pakistan did not act to get the “bad guys,” India would have no option but to use force.

“We were angry after 9/11. This is India’s 9/11. We cannot tell India not to act when that is what we did, asking the Taliban to hand over Osama Bin Laden to avoid a war and waging one when they refused to do so,” Mr. McCain said.

An official statement of Mr. Gilani’s meeting with the Senator said he had assured him that his government was determined to fight terrorism and had offered India all help in the Mumbai attacks.

He reiterated that Pakistan wanted good relations with its neighbours.

U.S. will act: Rice

IANS reports:

A report quoting the Dawn newspaper said U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was understood to have told Pakistan that there was “irrefutable evidence” of involvement of elements in the country in the Mumbai attacks and that it needed to act urgently and effectively to avert a strong international response.

Contrary to the formal statements issued by Pakistani authorities and her own statement at the Chaklala Airbase before her departure, sources said she “pushed the Pakistani leaders to take care of perpetrators, otherwise the U.S. will act.”

MORE FROM THE HINDU