



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on May 15, 2011

Fall Out From Bin Laden Troubles Relations With Pakistan

The vote came in a marathon session of the parliament in which several lawmakers warned the United States against "unilateral actions" in their country, including CIA drone attacks. Some also suggested the government consider cutting the NATO supply line that runs through the Khyber Pass from Afghanistan into Pakistan, the [Guardian](#) of London reported Saturday. The 10-hour session also included apologies amidst admissions of failure by the top brass of the nation's military and the offer of a resignation by its top intelligence official.



"We're not trying to find a way to break the relationship apart, we're trying to find a way to build it," Kerry told reporters during a stop in Kabul, Afghanistan on Saturday. The Massachusetts Senator and 2004 Democratic nominee for President is Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and is acting as the envoy of the Obama administration to try to alleviate tensions in the current crisis. The mission comes at a time when renewed terrorist attacks in Pakistan indicate an increased effort on the part of militants to avenge the May 2 killing of bin Laden. Two bombs detonated in a double suicide attack in Shabqadar in northwest Pakistan on Friday killed at least 80, including 66 recruits at a security training center, the Associated Press [reported](#) Saturday, citing a statement by Taliban spokesman Ashanula Ahshan that the attack was in retaliation for the slaying of Bin Laden.

The fallout from the May 1 raid is not all on the Pakistan side. U.S. officials have not hidden their suspicions of duplicity between the Pakistan government and Bin Laden ever since it became known that the al-Qaeda leader had been residing and directing the terrorist organization a short distance from the nation's military academy. Kerry, who has been on previous diplomatic missions to the country, acknowledged the awkwardness of the situation and the tensions it has placed on U.S.-Pakistan relations,

"I have had some of these conversations with Pakistan before," he said, "but never in the context of the world's No. 1 terrorist being found 35 miles from the capital, next door to Pakistan's West Point, and with the discovery he was fully, fully operational."

Kerry is also expected to raise the issue of Pakistan's expansion of nuclear fuel production for its arsenal of 100 or more nuclear weapons, the *New York Times* [reported](#) Saturday. The expansion, should it continue, will put in jeopardy the \$3 billion in military aid Pakistan receives from the United States each year, Kerry said. Senator Carl Levin, a Michigan Democrat who heads the Senate Armed Services Committee, has said he would be in favor of cutting off the additional \$1.5 billion annually in nonmilitary aid unless Pakistan can come up with a credible explanation of how it was unaware of Bin Laden's whereabouts.

The nuclear weapons question is bound to be sensitive, one that also touches on both Pakistan's cooperation with the U.S. and NATO and its independence as a sovereign nation. The *Times* quoted an unnamed U.S. official's concern that the nuclear arsenal, considered the fastest growing in the world,



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"could be vulnerable to seizure," which could lead the government to disperse them, the official said. "It's a significant worry because the more they spread it around, the higher the risk something gets loose."

But the Pakistani Parliament apparently had the United States in mind when it included in the resolution it passed on Saturday the warning of a "strong national response" if any nation tried to seize or immobilize its arsenal of nuclear weapons. Lawmakers on Capitol Hill, meanwhile, have been calling this past week for stricter accountability by Pakistan of its role as an ally of the United States in the war on terrorism.

"It's time to look the Pakistanis in the eye and get a commitment that they are fully onboard with us," said Speaker of the House John Boehner, an Ohio Republican. "If we're going to continue to provide aid and strengthen this relationship, I think we need to have a clearer understanding."

Photo: Sen. John Kerry



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