

21 September 2006

By: Ruxandra Adam, News Editor



Bush Vows to Hunt bin Laden Down in Pakistan, if Necessary

Musharraf opposes such military action

During a televised interview with Cable News Network on Wednesday, United States President George Bush insisted on the idea that US troops would search for Osama bin Laden, as well as other major terrorists, in Afghanistan and cross the border into Pakistan to hunt them down, if necessary, while both Afghani President Hamid Karzai and his Pakistani counterpart, Pervez Musharraf, accused each other for the potential deadlock in operations related to a crackdown on terrorist-related activities. "We would take the action necessary to bring them to justice", Bush highlighted, adding that US soldiers deployed in Afghanistan would even go over to Pakistan if intelligence data indicated that Osama was hiding there, alongside some of his commanders. In the meantime, Karzai and Musharraf, who are expected to meet with Bush on September 27th in Washington to talk about the joint fight against terrorism, traded mutual accusations at the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Wednesday, both highlighting that his counterpart should strive more in order to approach viable strategies of containing al-Qaeda and Taliban-related activities. As far as Bush was concerned, when asked about his personal opinion regarding Musharraf and the measures the latter adopted in catching terrorists within his country, he expressed his optimistic belief that the leader of Pakistan is "somebody who would like to bring al-Qaeda to justice". "There is no question there is a kind of a hostile territory in the remote regions of Pakistan that makes it easier for somebody to hide", he concluded. However, Bush's potential military drive into Pakistan may stop only at the verbal level, since Musharraf, who has been challenged by Islamist groups for backing US policy in the war against terrorism on numerous occasions, highlighted that he and his government would oppose any US military intervention in Pakistan, even though it would be related to counterattacking terrorism. "We wouldn't like to allow that at all. We will do it ourselves", he stated. "The problem lies in Afghanistan. Military action is required against him and his commanders," Musharraf added, referring to Osama bin Laden, while Afghani President replied: "We must look beyond Afghanistan to the sources of terrorism. We must destroy terrorism sanctuaries beyond Afghanistan, dismantle the elaborate networks in the region that recruit, indoctrinate, train, finance and deploy terrorists".