

01/07/1999

Pakistan seeks our help to defuse tension with India

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Pakistan is seeking Malaysia's support to defuse the escalating tension with India over Kashmir and help find a solution to the dispute, Special Envoy to Prime Minister Nawaz Shariff said today.

Mian Abdul Waheed said his mission was to enlist the support of Malaysia to ask India to use restraint, reduce tension and find a solution in accordance with the Kashmiri people.

He hoped Malaysia would give its support for a "very reasonable request to ensure peace" in a place which stands on the threshold of a nuclear confrontation.

He was speaking to reporters at the Pakistan High Commission here.

India and Pakistan became nuclear-capable countries last year and both are currently working on delivery systems for nuclear warheads.

He said Pakistan had sent envoys to several countries including those in Europe, North and South America, Africa and Asia to garner support, adding that India would have to respect international pressure and opinion.

"We have tried to solve the problem bilaterally but we have had no results. Pakistan would welcome international, third-party or United Nations mediation."

India has consistently refused any mediation by outside parties, maintaining that the Kashmir dispute is between the two countries.

Abdul Waheed said he was carrying a letter from Shariff for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. He believed that Malaysia, as a well-respected member of the international community, could influence India to find a peaceful solution.

Meanwhile, Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia called on India and Pakistan to exercise restraint to avoid a war.

(END)