

T (Contd. from p. 1)

Karzai ...

A runoff could have been held with just one candidate, but commission president Azizullah Lodin said electoral officials decided to cancel the second round of voting for several reasons, including security and money.

The decision was made just a couple of hours before the announcement, according to IEC deputy Zakria Barakzai.

Afghans went to the polls on August 20 in a vote marred by widespread fraud. Karzai had initially claimed victory, but two months after the vote, a U.N.-backed panel of election monitors threw out nearly a third of his votes, citing fraud. When that left Karzai short of a majority, he agreed to the runoff.

Abdullah had called for the resignations of top election officials and politicians to avert electoral fraud in the runoff.

He argued that the commissioners, who are hired by Karzai, cannot be impartial. But that request was not met, Abdullah said Sunday, and he did not believe a transparent election was possible.

"I want this to be an example for the future so that no one again tries to use fraud to abuse the rights of the Afghan people," Abdullah told reporters.

Meanwhile, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon arrived in Kabul on Monday, hours before the commission's announcement.

He issued a statement welcoming the decision, congratulating Karzai, and restating the U.N.'s commitment to supporting the new government.

"This has been a difficult election process for Afghanistan and lessons must be learned," Ban said in the statement. "Afghanistan now faces significant challenges and the new president must move swiftly to form a government that is able to command the support of both the Afghan people and the international community."

On Monday, Ban met with both Karzai and Abdullah, as well as U.N. officials, including Kai Eide, head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul also issued a statement Monday welcoming the commission's decision and congratulating Karzai.

The cancellation of the runoff "puts the election issue behind us," but Karzai has yet to achieve a true victory, according to former U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad.

"Now the key issue is how the Afghan people will react to this, what kind of government will President Karzai put together, and how the international community will react," Khalilzad told CNN's "American Morning."

"We're in a new stage now in Afghanistan."

Khalilzad had predicted last week that Abdullah would quit the race, in an interview for CNN's "Amanpour."

"First, he doesn't have much money left," he said in the interview, which aired on Sunday. "Second, I think that he thinks that given the situation, he's likely to lose, and maybe he'll get less votes than he did in the first round, so that would be embarrassing."

Speaking to CNN following his withdrawal, Abdullah said his decision does not mean he has given up public life.

"I will be available to serve this country," he said. "At this stage, I am in consultation with my followers, with my supporters and a movement for change will be there and I will lead that movement. There is no doubt about it."

Karzai served as acting president following the removal of the Taliban regime in 2001, then secured a victory in the 2004 elections. He begins his second term in office amid a Taliban resurgence.

The militants claimed responsibility for a Wednesday attack that killed five United Nations workers -- two of whom were helping with the vote. Nine others were wounded after attackers stormed a guest house in Kabul. In response, the United Nations ordered nonessential personnel out of the country.

T (Contd. from p. 1)

Pakistan ...

lies who are always keen to make a pilgrimage to Mashhad, Qom and other places in Iran because of their spiritual affiliation.

Since the democratically elected government has come into office in Pakistan, which is now a year and half, you must have noticed that we have taken steps to improve already cordial relations with Iran. You know, our relations go back many many decades -- ever since independence Pakistan and Iran have been burgeoning in close harmony. At the regional level we have been part of a number of agreements and pacts to promote trade and cultural cooperation between the two countries. I'm aware of the fact that there are numbers of Khane-ye Farhang (culture houses) in Pakistan, one is in Multan from where I come from, others are in Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta. They have also played an important role in bringing people together, in connecting with the people of Pakistan. But we are very happy today that this government recognizes that how important Iran and Pakistan's ties are. Besides these strong cultural, religious, brotherly ties we have we feel that we have strong interest in a peaceful stable borders. We feel that we can help each other's social economic development.

I'm happy to learn that our bilateral trade has grown and it is touching a billion dollars today and there is tremendous scope for further growth in it. We have just, the two governments of President Asif Ali Zardari and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad signed an agreement in Tehran. I was party to that. I witnessed that important agreement in which two countries signed the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline agreement, which I think would enhance economic linkages between Iran and Pakistan and we will contribute to each other's economic development; and certainly we are in need of energy.

For us the Iranian option is most viable and most sensible to adopt. Our government is of the view that we should go ahead with this option in our future interests, certainly Iran ... and Pakistan will gain from this.

Besides attempts to improve our bilateral relations we have also incorporated Iran, and wanted to incorporate Iran in regional approach, which we think is very important to establish peace and stability in our region. It has been a pleasure for us of being involved in this trilateral process: Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. Afghanistan being an important neighbor to you, and an important neighbor to Pakistan, has been going through difficult times for so many years. The difficulties Afghanistan is facing have implications for Iran, and have implications for Pakistan. We still are hosting almost three million Afghan refugees in Pakistan. I believe you also have over a million Afghan refugees on your side. You know we both sides get affected when there is flow of weapons and free movement of criminals using the porous borders we have with Afghanistan. We both share concerns of drugs, and the narco-money that is fanning extremism in our region and is being used by terrorist organizations to promote their nefarious designs. So in that trilateral process we feel that we have come to understand each other's concerns. The next round is due in Islamabad. We are waiting for the situation in Afghanistan to settle. ... we'll be able to continue our process from where we have left it. We are also keen to have a regional summit on Afghanistan of its immediate neighbors.

As important regional players we have to understand each other, support each other and develop common objectives.

We are also working in close harmony in the ECO framework. And I have had the pleasure to accompany President Zardari for the

last ECO summit in Tehran, which I think was a great success. I would like to compliment Iranian government for the arrangement, hospitality and productive engagement we had in Tehran. We want to use the ECO platform to promote regional trade and regional connectivity, to improve regional links, road links, and railways. You must have heard that on August 14 we experimented with a cargo train between Islamabad and Istanbul via Tehran. We feel that it is the project that should be looked seriously. You know this cargo train, running through our two countries and then into Turkey, connects us to the European market. These are the positive steps we are taking.

Obviously there are some elements who don't want to see the growth of our relationship. We have to understand those elements. Those elements keep creating little incidents that could affect our good relations. So we should watch them out, and collectively we should see what their designs are, and how we should respond to their activities.

I can assure you that people of Pakistan feel very strongly for people of Iran. And there is history to it. And there's a cultural affinity. There are many families in Pakistan, settled in Pakistan, who have migrated from Iran. We have many great poets who composed their poetry in the Persian language in order to preach deeper philosophical ideas, like Iqbal. You know in Pakistan there are still many people who can speak and read Persian language very well. People here find Persian a very sweet language. And you know we have many common words in Farsi and Urdu. This also shows the connection we have, and that we want to promote. We are a democracy and Iran obviously is a democracy, and we feel that these democratic connections should also be strengthened. There should be greater exchange, not only of intellectuals like you but also of parliamentarians. You have a very active and important Majlis in Iran, and today we also have a very active parliament in Pakistan. And we should engage at the parliamentary level, and there is too much that we can do for each other. And the environment in Pakistan is positive in that direction.

Obviously there would be points where you would have different point of views, and that is respected. But there are lot of commonalities, let us build on that.

Question and answer:

Q: What are your comments on growing Iran-Pakistan trade relations? And what happened to Iran's proposal to supply 1000 megawatts of electricity to Pakistan?

A: We are interested to get electricity from Iran. If you have 1000 megawatts surplus electricity then we are stand to gain. It will help Pakistan. It will help our people. It will help our economy. And you know if your electricity comes to Pakistani areas those are near Iranian border it would help stabilize socio-economic situation there. And we would transfer that much electricity to other areas from our grid like Karachi and Faisalabad, which are industrial hubs of the country. You know because of lack of energy our industry is not producing to its full capacity.

We are also interested in other items of trade. For example, we produce good quality rice. And you import rice. So we feel that Pakistan could be your natural market. We are connected by land, connected by railways; we can easily supply the goods. I remember that in 70s there was a lot of citrus going to Iran, that process still continues. We can supply many food items to Iran. And this way we can get things from Iran. Especially you must have noticed that we have increased the quantity of buying crude oil from Iran. And we are trying to improve bilateral trade.

Secondly, in order to promote economic ties we need economic infrastructure, which was lacking between the two countries. We need that. So we are thinking to improve

this. We are planning better bank relationship between the two countries that is necessary to enhance bilateral trade. We are thinking how to create better economic architecture that will be helpful in economic ties. So hopefully both sides today are conscious of it. We will improve in the days to come.

Q: There is a conception among certain Iranian people that there may be certain elements in Pakistan who support terrorist incidents in Iran especially after the recent vicious act in which a number of IRGC commanders were martyred. What your government is doing to change this opinion?

A: I think you (journalists) can be the instrument in changing the public opinion. You are in Pakistan. You are meeting with people in Pakistan. You are seeing the environment yourself here. You are seeing the feelings of the people of Pakistan yourselves. You are witnessing it. You will play that role. And you should play that role in changing the public opinion to begin with.

Second point is we were equally shocked and horrified when we learned about the tragic incidents in Sistan-Baluchistan on October 18, and of martyrdom of General Nour Ali Shoushtari, deputy commander of the Revolutionary Guard's ground forces. The government of Pakistan immediately condemned the incident. The president of Pakistan immediately called the president of Iran on the sad incident expressed sympathy, offered condolences to the families who lost their near and dear ones, and offered all sorts of cooperation if it is required.

If you look at the pattern of our government you would see that we have been more cooperative than ever before on these issues. Our democratically elected government has taken pains to understand Iran more. We had high-level exchanges. Our minister of interior went to Iran to talk on these issues, Jundullah and other issues. The intelligence chief of Pakistan went to Iran, met his counterpart in Iran, and shared views and information with him. This government is more engaged with your government than the previous government.

What we have said is that we have not supported any organization that creates misunderstanding between Iran and Pakistan. We are ready to help and we have helped. For example we have handed over a number of people to the Iranian authorities. In fact Abdulmalek Rigi's brother was apprehended by us and handed over to you. That shows our intent, our desire to cooperate with you. What we have said, if I can recall correctly, our minister of interior made a statement that Abdulmalek Rigi is not in Pakistan. He said according to his information Rigi is in Afghanistan.

Now we also have to understand the prevailing environment in our region, the Afghan situation, and the effects of the Afghan situation. How criminals and miscreants are coming in and out of Pakistan creating trouble for us. We have been victims of terrorism on a daily basis. You know that.

Terrorists are terrorists. They don't differentiate on cast, class, color, creed or religion. They have no religion.

Islam does not advocate violence but terrorists are using violence as a means (at the name of Islam).

You also have to understand that we are friends, and we are neighbors, and we have to coexist. So, why we would do anything that would destabilize Iran. A destabilized Iran is not in Pakistan's interest or a destabilized Pakistan is not in Iran's interests. What is happening in Afghanistan today is a great concern for both of us. We are concerned you are concerned because of their internal situation, and its implications for you, for us and the region. So let us work in a positive cooperative environment. Let us not doubt each other.

Obviously there would be elements who would create doubts about our goodwill and intention,

and your goodwill and intentions because in such situation they stand to gain. The only way we can protect ourselves is by greater interaction, better understanding, cooperation, and exchange of information, knowledge, and being supported by one another. I can assure you that we can do everything possible to allay the fears that exist in Iran.

And please convey the feelings of people of Pakistan to the people of Iran. Go to the streets and see what people of Pakistan think about people of Iran. And that is the strength of our relationship. Build on that.

Q: What steps is Pakistan ready to take to settle the conflicts over the Kashmir issue which has been hampering economic progress in the subcontinent?

A: Now the question is that what sorts of relations we want with India. We want good neighborly relations with India. That is what we desire. Now how we would achieve that? We can only achieve that when we resolve our outstanding issue. Kashmir is the one. Water is another growing issue between India and Pakistan. Let us not overlook that. So we had issues, we had history. We had clashes in the past. And we want to have good relations.

How do we do it? We sat and developed a mechanism, which we can pursue and that was composite dialogue. We are the government that is pursuing the dialogue.

Mumbai incidents took place, which was very unfortunate, and we condemned that. And we do not support such activities in any way.

Now you (Iran) have excellent relations with India. I know many of the members of your leadership have lived in India, have studied in the Indian universities. Use your good offices and tell India to settle issues with Pakistan. And that is what Pakistan wants because another option is mutually suicidal.

What we have been doing? We at every international forum saying that engage with Iran. You have number of issues with international community. I don't need to spell them out because you know them. We always said, engage with Iran, negotiate with Iran, do not think of using force. We had been advocating for Iran, speaking for Iran. Why? Because we care about Iran. We care about the Iranians. Any disturbance in Iran is not in our interest. Any conflict in the region is not in our interest. So we have been doing that.

I have said it on public forums. I even said it to the United States, the authorities there, engage with Iran. So, use your good offices and tell the Indians to engage with Pakistan. Resume the composite dialogue, and settle the disputes through peaceful ways. Some are easily doable. And by doing this we can change the environment in South Asia.

And when you do that you build confidence, and by building confidence you build bridges for the future. People in Pakistan understand that South Asia has lagged behind in economic growth and in social development because of our tensions. We are aware of that, and we want to create a different environment in the region.

T (Contd. from p. 6)

McMandela? ...

Earlier this month, the president of Congo-Brazzaville, Denis Sassou Nguesso, included a 53-word excerpt from a speech Mandela is said to have given on a visit to Congo-Brazzaville as a foreword to his autobiography, *Straight Speaking for Africa*. In it Mandela praises Nguesso as "not only one of our great African leaders ... but also one of those who gave their unconditional support to our fighters' demand for freedom, and who worked tirelessly to free oppressed peoples from their chains and help restore their dignity and hope."

The Nelson Mandela Founda-

tion, based in Johannesburg, vehemently denied that the former South African leader endorsed the book by Nguesso (who first came to power in 1979, was ousted in an election in 1992 and seized control again in a 1997 coup). "Mr. Mandela has neither read the book nor written a foreword for it," the foundation said in a statement. "We condemn this brazen abuse of Mr. Mandela's name." Officials of Congo-Brazzaville - also known as the Republic of Congo - said the remarks came from a speech Mandela gave at a banquet in 1996, though the foundation says it has no record of it.

Mandela, who will be 91 this year, rarely appears in public and increasingly relies on the managers of his foundation to manage his affairs. Now they're grappling with a tricky issue: At what point does a very famous man become a private brand, a legacy to be protected? And is it possible to copyright history?

So far, the foundation has tackled these difficult questions by trying to stop those who would exploit Mandela's name for commercial or political gain either in ways they don't like or in ways they are able to prevent. In August, the foundation agreed on a code of conduct banning the commercialization of Mandela's name or image by his four official charities - the Mandela Foundation, the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, the Mandela Rhodes Foundation and the Nelson Mandela Institute for Education - and asked the other 44 charities of which Mandela is a patron to sign on as well.

Other charitable causes must get the foundation's consent before using Mandela's name. This week, the foundation reprimanded actress Charlize Theron for auctioning off a package of gifts related to the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, which included a 20-second kiss from her and a meeting with Mandela. "Not even the charity foundations Mandela himself established are allowed to auction off time with him," the foundation said in a statement.

Not everyone agrees with the foundation's new rules. In February, the foundation publicly scolded South Africa's ruling African National Congress (ANC), which Mandela used to head, for whisking him off to an election rally to endorse the party's then-candidate for president, Jacob Zuma. Zuma responded angrily, saying: "Madiba (as Mandela is known) does not belong to a foundation but to the ANC." Nor has the foundation always been successful at stopping people from using his name or likeness. Four years ago, the organization tried to block the Belgravia Gallery in London from selling around 100 lithographs of Robben Island -- the prison off Cape Town where Mandela had been held -- which the gallery said had been made and signed by Mandela. The foundation maintains that the works are unauthorized reproductions and that Mandela's signatures are fakes. But Mandela's team failed to prevent the gallery from currently selling limited editions of several sketches and two handprints for prices starting at more than \$10,600 apiece.

In the business of protecting legacies, the choice of whether to block or back a project is often subjective and a matter of taste. In December, a Clint Eastwood-directed movie, *Invictus* (meaning "unconquered" in Latin), will be released, starring Morgan Freeman as Mandela. The film tells the story of the 1995 Rugby World Cup, which was held in South Africa, and how Mandela skillfully embraced the sport and united (albeit briefly) his divided nation behind a victorious, overwhelmingly white team. The foundation is allowing this project to go forward. Perhaps it's because the movie is based on the book *Playing the Enemy*: Nelson Mandela and the Game That Made a Nation by John Carlin, which portrays Mandela in a positive light. Or maybe Madiba just likes Dirty Harry.