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EU GEN Belgium Pakistan Nuclear

By RAF CASERT Associated Press Writer

(AP) - BRUSSELS, Belgium-A senior Pakistani general said Thursday the United States should extend civilian nuclear cooperation beyond India and include Pakistan, arguing the economic growth it would spur would help defeat extremism and terrorism.

Gen. Ihsahn ul-Haq said Washington was discriminatory in its approach when it offered New Delhi a wide-ranging agreement on civilian nuclear cooperation.

Instead of considering such cooperation with specific countries, the general said it should be open to all countries that meet specific standards.

"There should be a criteria approach. And if any country fulfills the criteria, it should have access to those technologies," the chairman of the joint chief of staffs and the top military officer behind President Gen. Pervez Musharraf said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Both India and Pakistan are military nuclear powers but Washington has said it will not discuss nuclear cooperation with Pakistan.

Ul-Haq said his country badly needed nuclear energy to feed the surging economy. He said the Pakistani government was targeting a 20-fold increase in nuclear energy output over the next 25 years.

The economy currently grows at some 7 percent per year and ul-Haq said he hopes boosting that growth through nuclear power will reduce poverty and, hence, extremism which can lead to terrorism.

If there is no cooperation on civilian nuclear energy, "it will seriously impact on our economic development and ... undermine our abilities to address the issues of extremism which thrives on economic



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depravation."

Pakistan has had close cooperation with China on nuclear energy but ul-Haq said it might not suffice. "We feel they may not be able to fill all of our requirements."

China has already provided one reactor and is building a second. Yet, ul-Haq said, there is a need to look to Washington, too.

"Any holding back on the economic front, or the creation of barriers on the nuclear energy front, will be counterproductive and disastrous for us on many counts," ul-Haq said earlier at a conference organized by the British-based South Asian Strategic Stability Institute.

Washington has said it would only help the impoverished country pursue natural gas, water, coal and solar power generation, including by promoting private investment.

Ul-Haq believes in the potential of Pakistan also becoming another Asian economic giant, much like India, and deserves equal treatment from the United States. "We feel discrimination will be counterproductive," he told the conference.

Under a civilian nuclear accord signed in March, India plans to open 14 of its 22 reactors to international inspections in exchange for American nuclear know-how and fuel.

The deal has already been approved by the U.S. House of Representatives, and enjoys broad support from both Republicans and Democrats.

The deal flies in the face of decades of American anti-proliferation policy that has rejected providing atomic aid to countries - like India - that don't have U.N.-approved safeguards on all reactors.

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