

## **LOCAL PAKISTANIS SAY TV IMAGES FROM HOMELAND ARE MISLEADING**

### **Relatives from overseas fear a civil war**

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A few people who settled in Appalachia from Pakistan say their relatives back home are worried about war in nearby Afghanistan, and about civil war in their own country.

Pakistan has been in the news in recent weeks as the United States and other western countries try to gather allies to fight terrorism. In particular, the United States has identified wealthy Saudi Arabian Osama bin Laden, who has been living in Afghanistan.

Television news accounts and pictures have shown demonstrators in Pakistan burning an American flag and protesting Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's decision to cooperate with Western countries.

Those images make demonstrations look worse than they really are, some residents here say.

Dr. Raheel Khan, a pediatrician at CAMC Women and Children's Hospital, spoke to his father, who still lives in Karachi, near the Indian Ocean.

"The biggest, silent majority is with the government siding with the U.S.," Khan said. "Generally, people have a lot of sympathy and understanding with the government."

Naveed Zaman, a math professor at West Virginia State College, heard the same thing from his family when he spoke to them.

They still live in Pakistan's Punjab region, between the cities of Lahore and Islamabad.

"It's probably not as many people, but when you show it on camera, it seems big," Zaman said.

People in regions of Afghanistan and in regions of Pakistan speak the same language and have similar cultures, Zaman said. Both countries are Islamic.

But most people do not follow extreme forms of the religion dictated by the Taliban in Afghanistan.

People in Pakistan, however, are worried that civil war could erupt in their country, Khan said.

For the past decade, Pakistan has taken in millions of refugees from Afghanistan - people who fled first a war with the former Soviet Union, and then civil war after the Soviets pulled out.

In Pakistan, many refugees worked their way up to own textile and transportation businesses, Khan said. Some have remained separate, hiring only fellow Afghans.

Relatives back in Pakistan have heard Afghan people say they would take up arms, even against Pakistani people, whose country they now share, Khan said.

"The biggest concern they have is the country might go toward a civil war," he said. "There are over 5 million refugees in Pakistan. These are people who are well supplied with ammunition and guns."

Mohammad Tufail, an environmental engineer in Lexington, Ky., was so worried by what he saw on TV, he called his family in Peshawar.

His relatives said the same thing - most Pakistanis agreed with the government, not with protesters.

Tufail is frustrated by the traditions of TV news and newspapers that show only explosions and flag burnings from Pakistan during times of trouble.

His native region is home of the Himalayas, the largest mountain range in the world, he said.

"It's beautiful, but the only thing you see on the news is a bomb explosion."

Tufail said he does not agree with anti-American demonstrators in Pakistan. Like many people in the Western world, he has grieved over the events of Sept. 11. The Taliban do not speak for most Afghan people either, he said.

But at the same time, Afghan people have been fighting for a long time to keep from being ruled by someone else.

Tufail, who grew up in Peshawar near the Afghan border, said his relatives share many cultural traits with the Afghan people, including the language, Poshto.

"I do have quite a good understanding of where they are coming from. They've been victims of international politics," Tufail said.

"People of Afghanistan have a culture and civilization. They've never been ruled by anybody," he said.

"They have hospitality and courage and have always stood up for their rights.

"I feel bad for the actual Afghan people, who were in war and have been since the Russians were gone in 1989. When they really needed the world, no one was there to support them."

He said he is also saddened at changes Americans may undergo. He hopes Americans do not become fearful and suspicious.

"It has changed a lot of things in this country," Tufail said. "Life was so easy. I love this country."