

Pakistani daily lauds Sushma Swaraj; hopes for Pakistan, India talks

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Islamabad: A leading Pakistani daily on Friday lauded Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj for her belief in the continuation of sub-continental talks, but warned that "another act of terror could sabotage the nascent dialogue".

An editorial "Indian FM's resolve" in the Dawn said: "It doesn't appear to be the same Sushma Swaraj who had issued an ultimatum to Sartaj Aziz in August to scuttle the national security advisers' talks."

On Wednesday in the lower house of Indian parliament, Sushma Swaraj defended her government's decision to have a comprehensive dialogue with Pakistan because "war is not an option".

The "shadow of terrorism", she said, could only be combated by dialogue with Pakistan and one meeting wasn't enough.

She referred several times to "all problems" but implied that those concerned only terrorism.

"Swaraj, of course, couldn't afford to utter the 'K' word while facing a hostile opposition, but she stoutly defended the resumption of talks. Two days earlier, too, she had spoken of her visit to Pakistan before an opposition which seemed to delight in flippancy," said the daily.

It added: "Given New Delhi's hard line since Narendra Modi's assumption of power last year, Swaraj's assertion that she believed in the continuation of the dialogue deserves to be welcomed, with the hope that India will not look for an excuse to wriggle out of the commitment."

The editorial said that given the repercussions of the Mumbai carnage, "there is a need for the two countries to activate the 'anti-terrorism institutional mechanism' set up by former president Pervez Musharraf and former Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh at Havana on September 16, 2006".

"The mechanism never got going and needs to be pulled out of dusty files and resurrected. Another act of terror could sabotage the nascent dialogue, but, as Swaraj said, 'we would like to ensure we are not provoked by saboteurs' to stop the peace process."

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