

US senator asks PPP, PML-N to 'accept' Musharraf

US Senator Russ Feingold met Pakistan's top leadership Monday and conveyed the desire of his country's establishment that President Pervez Musharraf be allowed to continue with ceremonial powers and not be 'humiliated', sources here said.

Senator Feingold, a Democrat from Wisconsin who serves on the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, held separate meetings with Musharraf, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gillani and the leadership of ruling coalition - Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

The senator expressed his country's 'strong desire' that members of the ruling coalition should work together and should give 'some acceptance to President Musharraf', a government official privy to talks told IANS.

'It has been conveyed to the PPP that Musharraf is ready to accept the presidency with reduced rather ceremonial powers, but he may be allowed to complete his tenure,' the official said.

The official said the US President George W. Bush is trying to play mediatory role between the PPP and the president.

'The visiting US Senator has called upon all the stake-holders to cooperate with each other for strengthening democracy and curbing the root cause of terrorism,' the source said.

A note issued by the government said that the prime minister and the president, in their separate meetings with Feingold, reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve to fight terrorism to ensure peace and stability in the country and the region.

The note also said that the visiting US Senator was told the government wants peace on all its borders.

The prime minister particularly mentioned about the recent talks between India and Pakistan and said that both countries were fast moving towards establishing long lasting peace.

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