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Fernandes rules out nuclear war

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NEW DELHI (Online): There will be no nuclear war between New Delhi and Islamabad, but Pakistan will be wiped out if one does break out, warns Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes.

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“Those who deal with (nuclear) weapons are sensible.

Pakistan can’t think of using nuclear weapons despite the fact they are not committed to the doctrine of no first use like we are,” Fernandes told the Hindustan Times.“We could take a (nuclear) strike, survive and then hit back.

Pakistan would be finished.

I do not really fear that the nuclear issue would figure in a conflict.” Fernandes’ comments come amid mounting tensions between India and Pakistan following the December 13 terrorist attack on Indian Parliament here that have fuelled fears of a war between them.

New Delhi blamed Pakistani terrorists for the Parliament storming.

Although India hopes that its diplomatic efforts would bring pressure on Pakistan and force it stop aiding terrorism, Islamabad is showing no “desire” to make amends, the minister said.

Fernandes, who returned to the cabinet in October after being kept out for nearly seven months following a bribery scandal, indicated that New Delhi was still away from deciding on war against Pakistan.

“The government is hoping that something emerges out of the diplomatic efforts, but Pakistan has to make amends,” Fernandes said.

“As of now, there seems to be no desire on their (Pakistan’s) part to do so.

War is a decision that will have to be taken at the appropriate time.

We have yet not taken a decision of that nature.” War clouds have been massing in South Asia with India and Pakistan moving troops to their winding border.

Fernandes, a frequent visitor to border outposts, said Indian troops at the border were “raring to go” and wage war against Pakistan.

Fernandes fumed at the U.S. for not putting enough pressure on Pakistan to give up its support to terrorists.

“How can they (U.S.) see Pakistan as an ally? You (U.S.) are a big power therefore you will decide what is acceptable and what is not acceptable,” he said.

The minister pointed out that Pakistan's complicity in terrorism was an open secret and yet the U.S. was not forcing it to back off.

“The resolution adopted by the U.N. Security Council explicitly stated that countries could not harbour terrorists.

“But what about the fact that Pakistan sent its units to fight alongside the Taliban even when the war on terrorism began? So, at the end of it all, what does the U.N. resolution mean to the U.S.? My anger and concern is rooted in this.” Fernandes admitted that Indian military preparedness was not complete.

“As things stand we are vulnerable in Rajasthan (state) as it is a long march for us.

Logistics are a problem.

Pakistan can just drive into the area.”

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