

Pakistani troops move back

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) — Pakistani troops began moving back from the Indian border yesterday, making good on a pledge by the new military regime to thin its forces to ease border tensions, an official said.

India responded coolly to the gesture, which was part of a sweeping policy statement by Pakistan coup leader Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

Pakistan army spokesperson Col. Saulat Raza said reinforcements that were sent to the border during fighting over the disputed territory of Kashmir last summer were packing their gear and moving out.

In London, a committee of Commonwealth foreign ministers today took a first step toward suspending Pakistan from the association of Britain and its ex-colonies.

Musharraf, who deposed the government of Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif last Tuesday, said he was ordering the troops back as a "meaningful confidence-building measure" with the new Indian government.

Pakistan inches toward stability

General Pervez Musharraf, who deposed the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif last Tuesday, promises to restore order.



Pakistani troops began moving back from the 450-mile-long Indian border Monday, making good on a pledge by the military to thin its forces to ease border tensions. The withdrawal did not apply to the cease-fire line in Kashmir, a territory split between the rival countries.

The general announced the formation of a National Security Council to govern Pakistan, saying it would be made of army officers and experts in legal, foreign and national affairs. He did not specify whether the experts would be military or civilian.

Last year, Pakistan followed India in testing nuclear devices and proclaiming itself a nuclear weapons state. But Sunday, Musharraf left the door open to signing a global test ban treaty.

U.S. satellites launched on Russian rocket

MOSCOW (AP) — A Russian Soyuz rocket carried four U.S. communication satellites into orbit yesterday after blasting off from a rented government launch pad in a former Soviet republic.

The satellites, built by a New York-based telecommunications company, blasted off from the Baikonur launch pad in Kazakhstan, the Interfax news agency said.

The Globalstar satellites join a global mobile phone network. Four previous launches this year put 16 other Globalstar satellites into orbit. Two more launches were planned for later this year — one from Baikonur and one from the United States.

Indonesian presidential elections decide leader for next five years

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Despite widespread criticism of his government, Indonesian President B.J. Habibie said yesterday he is determined to win this week's presidential election.

He also told students to stop staging violent, anti-government protests.

Thousands of students have taken to the streets in a series of demonstrations over the past week, protesting everything from Habibie's presidential candidacy to Australia's role in the East Timor crisis.

Tomorrow, the 700-member People's Consultative Assembly, the country's highest legislative body, will decide who will be Indonesia's leader for the next five years.

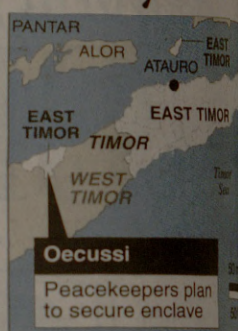
"I don't want to say good-

bye. I don't want to bid farewell," Habibie said in an emotional speech to several hundred soldiers and police at a national monument in central Jakarta.

He also said that as Indonesia's commander-in-chief, he expects the security forces to prevent protesters from storming parliament or closing the city's business district, no matter what the outcome of the election.

After he spoke, about 5,000 students demanding the election of Habibie's main rival, opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri, filled a main traffic circle in Jakarta, protesting noisily.

"We will be here until Mega becomes president. If she isn't



elect, we will start a hunger strike," Zaenal Sarifuddin said. Other students waved banners. In a separate demonstration in the city's business district, about 1,000 white-collar workers gathered to protest against Habibie.

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