

'Indo-Pak war not possible till 2005'

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BY A STAFF REPORTER

“War between India and Pakistan will definitely not erupt until 2005. Pakistani military does not want it, and the Indian authorities lack the political will,” says Mr. Sundeep Waslekar, head of International Centre for Peace Initiatives (ICPI), an organisation that deals in conflict resolution between two nations/parties.

The reason Mr. Waslekar can safely predict this is because he is also the head of ICPI's sister group, the Strategic Foresight Group (SFG), that on the basis of its vast data base provides insights into the future and predicts nation's strategies.

Now, Mr. Waslekar has translated the tremendous wealth of information he has access to, into a comprehensive book. *Future of Pakistan* offers a window into the socio-economic affairs of our un-friendly neighbouring country. Mr. Waslekar says his book, "has everything that one would like to know about Pakistan. I have thoroughly analysed each and every aspect of Pakistan's economy right from availability of water to their economic health." He says that his information sources include Pakistani officials and authentic information from the state sources.

After all Mr. Waslekar is an old hand at government policies. He was a visiting research faculty at the Centre for Policy Research, an indepen-



Mr. Sundeep Waslekar, an expert on Indo-Pak affairs.

dent Delhi based NGO, for "five long years" where his main business included critically analysing the policies framed by the government. While Mr. Waslekar liked the job, he was itching to do something different. That's when in 1991, he hit upon ICPI.

His first brush with the idea of a peace initiative was when he was invited to go to Canada on a 8-nation peace mission, he says. Accordingly to Mr. Waslekar developed his formidable international contacts, largely at Oxford, where he was chosen for a special scholarship where he studied Philosophy, Politics and Economics. "I had just graduated from the Sydenham College when an international youth organisation was inviting essays from students across the globe. I wrote a lengthy essay where I challenged the whole structure of World Bank," says Mr. Waslekar, not without a twinkle of pride in his eyes. He was selected for the scholarship where he was given a "handsome allowance, mainly to spend and experience."

It was there that Mr. Waslekar went all out to attend the cabinet ministers of various countries. "Every weekend I'd speed off to Brussels or Rome or even Berlin to attend one meeting or the other. I really enjoyed myself," he says, with a far-away look.

Despite, sounding like a man in the serious business of getting Indian authorities to talk with Kashmiri terrorists, which he did as part of ICPI's peace procedures, Mr. Waslekar says that he is basically a fun-loving man. "I believe in having fun and making it viable," he says before returning to his blinking computer terminal. He is currently in Mumbai, finding vital links out of US dignitaries' Mr. Donald Rumsfeld and Mr. Richard Armitage's visit to India. ■