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Lawyers March for Pakistani Colleagues

The Associated Press

Wednesday, November 14, 2007; 1:50 PM

WASHINGTON -- Dressed in black, hundreds of lawyers marched in support of their colleagues in Pakistan on Wednesday, a display of solidarity condemning President Pervez Musharraf's suspension of the constitution.

"We have witnessed a brutal attack on the rule of law," William Neukom, president of the American Bar Association, told the crowd, which marched two blocks from Independence Avenue to the Supreme Court. "We are here because we cannot forget the images of hundreds of our brave colleagues assaulted in the streets, carried off in police trucks."

In Pakistan, thousands of black-suited lawyers have marched in the streets, facing police batons and tear gas.

Walking in front with Neukom to the high court was Mohammad Akram Sheikh, a past president of the bar of the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

He said the Bush administration has not acted wisely in choosing Musharraf, a general who also leads the army, as a partner. "I strongly beseech, entreat and request the administration to withdraw its support from General Musharraf," he said.

Washington lawyer Roderic L. Woodson, who also marched, said the U.S. was making a long-term mistake by supporting Musharraf.

Neukom told a reporter the administration is making a

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Mohammad Akram Sheikh, a senior advocate and past president of the Supreme Court of Pakistan bar, right, participates, with members of the American Bar Association, in a rally protesting Pakistan near the Supreme Court in Washington, Wednesday, Nov. 14, 2007. (AP Photos/Susan Walsh) (Susan Walsh - AP)

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strong effort to restore the rule of law in Pakistan, to prevail on Musharraf to restore the constitution and to release jailed protesters.


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Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte is expected to be in Pakistan on Friday to tell Musharraf to rescind emergency rule and allow free and fair elections. Musharraf so far is rejecting Western pressure to quickly lift emergency rule, which he indicated probably would extend through the January elections.

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