

Documents

July-December 2008

I. Foreign Policy

D-8

Text of the speech delivered by Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani at the sixth Developing-8 Summit

His Excellency Dato Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Prime Minister of Malaysia, Honourable Heads of Delegation, Dr. Dipo Alam, Secretary General D-8,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to address this eminent and distinguished gathering. I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Prime Minister, on assuming the Chairmanship of the Developing-8. We are confident that under your able and dynamic leadership, this organization will make further progress in achieving our common objective of development cooperation.

We are thankful to the people and the Government of Malaysia for the warm welcome and gracious hospitality extended to us since our arrival in this beautiful city. I avail myself of this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to Indonesia for providing excellent leadership to this organization over the last two years.

Our Secretary General H. E. Dr. Dipo Alam deserves our commendation for his strenuous efforts in promoting the objectives of the organization.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The sapling of the D-8 planted eleven years ago in Ankara, is growing steadily. Our vision in 1997, under the leadership of Turkey, was to make collective efforts for development cooperation among us. Though we are spread over in three continents, we have the bonds of affinity through close friendship.

Today, as we gather in this beautiful city of Kuala Lumpur, we renew our collective pledge and determination to build a better, peaceful and prosperous future for our people. Ours is an organization with a global reach, with abundant natural resources, and youthful population.

We are happy to see progress in promoting economic cooperation by promoting trade among D-8 countries. The signing of Agreements on Preferential Trade Agreement, Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters, and

Simplification of Visa Procedures for Businessmen of Member States, are commendable steps in the right direction. Early implementation of these agreements will give impetus to promotion of intra D-8 trade, which is at present only US\$ 60.5 billion.

Today, as we enter into the second decade of D-8, it is important to review our achievements and lay down a clear roadmap for adding value to our endeavours. Let me share my views in this regard.

In the last 11 years, the D-8 has made steady progress. However, the progress achieved so far does not reflect the true potential of D-8 countries. We need to look into the challenges before us, analyze them and convert them into opportunities to the advantage and betterment of our people.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Pakistan is committed to the success of D-8. Pakistan's trade with D-8 countries accounts for 8.14 percent of its overall trade, which is the highest as compared to the trade of other D-8 States with members of the organization. We need to do more to enhance economic opportunities that exist amongst us.

The D-8 can become a model of progress, development, cooperation and partnership. This organization has a great promise with more than 930 million people and vast natural resources. We need to build knowledge-based societies, promoting human resource development, skill development, education and research, and learning from each other's experiences and good practices. We need to promote greater connectivity, people-to-people contacts, networking and linkages exploiting the opportunities rendered by the Information Age.

We have the D-8 Roadmap for Economic Cooperation in the Second Decade of Cooperation among Member States. This is a useful document containing a blue print of D-8 cooperation in diverse fields. I would like to suggest that we should prioritize areas of cooperation and focus on some selected projects with timelines and verifiable indicators for effective monitoring and evaluation. Our first and foremost priority should be the promotion of intra D-8 trade. We hope all of us will soon implement the three agreements that we have signed for facilitation of trade promotion.

Pakistan would like the D-8 to rapidly grow and become a vibrant and effective organization. In order to achieve success and move forward, we need to provide the requisite human and financial resources to the D-8 Secretariat. We support the endeavours of the Secretary General in strengthening of the Secretariat that is commensurate with its mandate.

We welcome the association of private sector with the D-8, which will enrich our cooperation in various fields. The holding of Business Forum on the sidelines of this Summit to deliberate on issues like biotechnology, halal industry, and renewable energy, is commendable. This offers an occasion for the private sector and businessmen from D-8 countries to interact with each other and explore ways and means to further enhance intra D-8 trade.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The top most priority of my Government, which is democratically elected and enjoys overwhelming mandate of the people, is economic development for poverty alleviation in Pakistan. This overarching objective determines our economic reform process. Today we have a liberalized market oriented economy with abundant opportunities for businessmen and investors. We have established special economic zones with special incentives for foreign companies to invest in Pakistan.

Pakistan is strategically located at the confluence of South Asia, Central Asia and South-West Asia, with immense human and natural capital. It can serve as an energy, trade and communication corridor for the entire region. The wealth of our human and material resources is available to our brothers in the D-8 for enhancing mutually beneficial cooperation and integration of our fast growing economies.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world is facing today the menace of extremism and terrorism, which has affected our socio-economic development. Pakistan has suffered the most due to this scourge. Our great leader former Prime Minister Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was martyred by terrorists. However, such cowardly acts will never dampen our firm resolve to fight terrorism and extremism with iron fist. We are following a multi-pronged approach in dealing with extremism that combines use of political, economic, administrative, and military measures.

Peace and stability are indispensable for socio-economic progress. We have made positive progress in recent years in our dialogue with India. We are seeking peaceful resolution of all our outstanding issues, including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. Pakistan is committed to peace and stability in our region. However, we are of the view that there is a need to move from conflict management to conflict resolution to achieve durable peace and security in South Asia.

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Government and the people of Pakistan, I avail myself of this opportunity to assure your government and the people of Malaysia of our full cooperation in our collective efforts within D-8 to achieve tangible results in socio-economic development of our people.

Thank you.

AFGHANISTAN

1. Text of the address by Foreign Minister, Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, at the meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Afghanistan

Mr. President,

We wish Vietnam, a friendly developing country of Asia, great success in its presidency of Council this month. Let me also congratulate Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad and the United States delegation on their successful presidency of the Council in June.

Mr. President,

The new democratic government of Pakistan has inherited imposing political, economic and security challenges. We are addressing these challenges democratically and effectively. None among these challenges is as critical as the threat posed by terrorism and extremist violence – a threat we face in common with our neighbour, Afghanistan

I have condemned the terrorist attack against the Indian embassy in Kabul. We deeply regret the loss of life and damage caused by this unacceptable suicide bombing. Any attack on civilians or diplomatic missions is highly reprehensible. As you know, a day earlier, a suicide bomber in Islamabad, killed twelve policemen and civilians and wounded scores of people. Again, a day later, there was a series of terrorist bombings in Karachi. We welcome the condemnation of these terrorist attacks by the Security Council.

Mr. President,

I am, therefore, grateful for this opportunity to address the Security Council on the situation in Afghanistan. I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kai Eide, for his briefing this morning and to assure him of our cooperation. Pakistan supports the central coordinating role of the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan in accordance with its mandate, which is specific and limited to Afghanistan. Bilateral relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan will continue to be conducted between the democratically elected governments of the two countries.

Since the Bonn Agreement, considerable progress has been made in Afghanistan. We need to consolidate these gains and effectively address the outstanding challenges, in particular the intensifying threat posed by terrorist violence and militant insurgency. The continuing insecurity and violence in several parts of Afghanistan can be attributed to a complex interplay of several factors – Taliban, Al-Qaeda, lingering warlordism, factional rivalries and criminal activity including, but not limited to, the drug trade.

Mr. President,

Peace and Stability in Afghanistan are in Pakistan's vital interest. The bonds of geography, history, faith and culture inextricably link the destinies of our two nations. We face a common threat of extremism and terrorism. Peace and

stability are essential to enable Pakistan and Afghanistan to serve as the hub and corridor for trade and economic cooperation between the dynamic regions of South Asia, Central Asia, China and the Gulf.

Apart from the Afghan people, the people of Pakistan have suffered the most from the decades of conflict in Afghanistan. We have hosted over 3 million refugees. We have been afflicted with drugs and arms. And our frontier regions, which were previously peaceful, have been inflamed by the three decades of war and instability in Afghanistan specially after 2001, when many Al-Qaeda and Taliban elements crossed the border into Pakistan.

Pakistan's contribution to the fight against terrorism and extremism is well known. Much of the success against Al-Qaeda and Taliban has been achieved with our support and cooperation. We have lost more soldiers than any other country in the effort. Yet, we remain determined to defeat and eliminate terrorism and its root causes. An end to conflict in Afghanistan will help to restore normalcy on our side of the border and conversely, we recognize, that our efforts to stabilize, pacify and promote development in our frontier region will also have a positive impact on the situation across the border.

Pakistan has taken several measures to prevent cross-border infiltration by terrorists and insurgents. These measures have curbed such cross-border movement. But, the security environment on our side deteriorated sharply as a result of our role in the counter-terrorist campaign. In 2007, Al-Qaeda and some Taliban-linked groups turned on Pakistan and its security forces. Last year, there were a larger number of suicide bombings in Pakistan than Afghanistan, resulting in 2000 civilian casualties. Pakistan lost Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto – a leader of great stature and vision – to terrorist attack. This terrorist onslaught continues. The recent suicidal attack in Islamabad suggests that terrorist's threat to Pakistan is far from over. Naturally, this has led to growing popular concern and questioning by some of the excessive reliance on the military option. However, there is also popular disenchantment in Pakistan, including in our frontier region, with the terrorists and extremists, as evident from the success of mainstream political parties, in the region in our February 18 elections.

The new democratic government in Pakistan cannot but be sensitive to the sentiments of our people. The new holistic strategy we have evolved seeks to restore peace in our frontier regions, halt and reverse extremism, and eliminate terrorism and violence through political dialogue and socio-economic measures but retaining the option to use force, whenever required. We remain committed to cooperation with Afghanistan and the Coalition forces to stabilize Afghanistan. Political reconciliation and economic reconstruction and development are our priority options to win over the people, the tribes and the moderates, and to isolate the terrorists and violent extremists. In the context of these pacification efforts, it is important to note that the problems and threats in each area and region of our frontier – as across the border – differ from region to region. Pacification will, therefore, require painstaking efforts, region by region, to win the trust and support of local people and their leaders. We are negotiating with tribal leaders and other influentials in these regions; not with the terrorists, nor with those who do not eschew violence.

Reconciliation and reconstruction are the only sustainable solution to insurgent violence and instability. We plan massive investment for the reconstruction of the area and its incorporation into the domestic political mainstream of the country. We welcome the commitment by the U.S. to the creation of Reconstruction and Opportunity Zones in the region and its pledge to provide \$ 750 million over 3 years to support these Zones.

While we seek peace through dialogue and development, challenges to the authority of the government, acts of terrorism, or cross-border attacks in Afghanistan, will not be tolerated. Where such challenges and violations occur, the government will take forceful action to eliminate them. We are currently doing so in the Khyber Agency against certain violent and criminal extremist militias. The Chief of Army Staff has been given the authority to decide on the application of such military action when required. Pakistan will not allow its territory to be used against other countries. However, no foreign troops will be allowed to operate inside Pakistan.

Mr. President,

We can assure greater success in containing, terrorism and insurgency on both sides of the border through more effective cooperation and matching military measures. This is a joint responsibility. Pakistan will continue active cooperation within the Tripartite Commission. We are prepared to consider suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of such cooperation. At the same time, we feel that our partners too could contribute to enhancing operational cooperation by undertaking the following measures:

- Expansion military deployments and check posts on the Afghan side of the border to match Pakistan's 100,000 military personnel and 1200 check-posts;
- real time intelligence sharing;
- caution in the use of artillery and aerial attacks, to avoid accidents or territorial violations;
- supply of counter-insurgency equipment requested by Pakistan ;
- more effective check of the 40,000 daily legal crossings, including through use of biometric I.D. cards;
- relocation of Afghan refugee camps close to the border from Pakistan to controlled sites in Afghanistan .

Mr. President,

The bonds that bind the peoples of Pakistan and Afghanistan, the mutuality of our strategic interests, the democratic mandates of our governments dictate that political relations between our countries should be much better than have been in recent months. Foreign Minister Spanta and I have made a beginning, by exchanging visits during the last two months. President Karzai, who I had the honour to meet in Kabul, was one of the last people to see our martyred leader, Benazir Bhutto, hours before her tragic assassination.

Yet, clearly, we need to do more to overcome suspicion and distrust. We will do our best to reassure our Afghan brothers and sisters that our

government is inspired by nothing but goodwill towards them. They too should make every effort to address our concerns.

I would suggest that we take some initial steps such as:

- declaring mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, in accordance with the Kabul Declaration;
- not allow our respective territories to be used against each other;
- avoid provocative statements;
- intensify the frequency of mutual visits at all levels;
- revive and reinvigorate the Jirga process. Pakistan will soon convene the smaller Jirga meeting we have agreed on;
- support the Ankara Process as well as the Afghanistan – Iran – Pakistan Tripartite cooperation;

Mr. President,

The economic relationship and cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan is already intimate and intense. Our trade amounts to around one billion. Its potential is far more. We want to realize its full potential. Most of Afghanistan's trade transits through Pakistan. Pakistan has committed \$ 300 million for Afghanistan's reconstruction. We have pledged additional \$ 20 million for the resettlement of Afghan refugees. Responding to the food crisis, and despite shortage in Pakistan, we have authorized the export of 50,000 tons of wheat to Afghanistan at subsidized rates. Pakistan supports the Afghan National Development Strategy, endorsed in Paris, as the engine for economic growth and equitable development. We will host the next meeting of the Afghan Regional Economic Cooperation forum in Islamabad from 28-30 August, this year.

Pakistan and Afghanistan must press forward on all possible avenues to exploit the significant potential for mutual economic cooperation, for example by:

- jointly establishing Reconstruction Opportunity Zones along the border, in which Pakistan entrepreneurs would be prepared to invest;
- implementing Pakistan's plans to import electricity from Central Asia;
- implementing the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project.

Mr. President,

Afghanistan and Pakistan can succeed in achieving their objective of peace, stability and prosperity through mutual cooperation. They can succeed only if they enjoy the unconditional support of the international community.

Mr. President,

This debate is a good opportunity to commence an honest and objective evaluation of the challenges we face in Afghanistan and to devise a cooperative strategy for success. This strategy must combine military containment with political reconciliation, administrative control and rapid socio-economic development. The military option should be used but as a last, and not the first,

resort. Military tactics should not create more alienation, more opposition and more enemies. We are convinced that dialogue and reconciliation together with calibrated use of force, are the best means to promote peace. To win this war, it is vital to win the hearts and minds of the people. We must build peace in Afghanistan in a bottom-up approach – village by village, district by district – offering incentives and disincentives to win the cooperation and support of the local population. Most importantly, our strategy for success must accelerate reconstruction and development. It must offer hope to the people – hope for peace, for jobs, for better lives, for themselves and their children.

Thank You.

10 July 2008. *Source:* Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad. www.mofa.gov.pk

2. Text of the joint press statement issued by Foreign Ministry of Afghanistan at the conclusion of Afghan Foreign Minister Rangin Dadfar Spanta's visit to Pakistan

On the invitation of H.E. Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, H.E. Dr. Rangin Dadfar Spanta, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan paid an official visit to Islamabad on October 22nd, 2008. During the visit, the Foreign Minister of Afghanistan held talks with his counterpart as well as the President, Speaker of the National Assembly and the National Security Advisor of Pakistan.

The visit took place in light of the understanding reached between Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani and President Hamid Karzai during their fruitful meeting in Colombo on 3rd August 2008, in which the two Foreign Ministers were mandated to prepare a framework of constructive engagement across the board. The talks were very constructive and took place in warm and cordial atmosphere characteristic of the brotherly relations between the two countries. In the talks, the Foreign Ministers discussed a wide range of important subjects pertaining to bilateral cooperation, regional and global issues of mutual interest and concern.

In the spirit of a new beginning to the Afghanistan and Pakistan bilateral relations, the two Foreign Ministers exchanged views on the ways to articulate a new vision for their bilateral relations as well as for the region. They highlighted the enormous potential of the region to become the adobe of peace, moderation and prosperity for the two countries and the entire region. Pakistan shared a draft Declaration on Directions of Bilateral Cooperation which will be finalized soon.

The two Foreign Ministers emphasized that extremism and terrorism posed a common threat to the two countries as well as to the regional and international peace. They agreed to collaborate closely to eliminate the scourge

of extremism, militancy and terrorism. In this context, there will be regular contacts on political; military; security and intelligence tracks.

Both sides agreed to comprehensively upgrade their bilateral relations and to hold regularly a Strategic Dialogue at the level of Foreign Ministers. The Foreign Ministers will oversee the work of a Specialized Commission in all disciplines notably, political, security and economic sectors.

The two Foreign Ministers noted with satisfaction the convening of Jirga Gai in Islamabad on October 27-28, 2008. They also expressed satisfaction at the preparatory work for the holding of 7th Joint Economic Commission (JEC) in Kabul in the second half of November 2008 and the 3rd Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA) in January 2009, in Islamabad.

Responding to the serious concern expressed on the abduction of Ambassador-designate of Afghanistan to Pakistan, Mr. Abdul Khaleq Farahi, the Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi expressed deep anguish at the unfortunate abduction of the Ambassador-designate and assured H.E. Dr. Rangin Dadfar Spanta that the Government of Pakistan will leave no stone unturned for the safe and early recovery of the Ambassador-designate.

On behalf of H.E. President Hamid Karzai, Dr. Rangin Dadfar Spanta extended a warm and cordial invitation to President Zardari to visit Afghanistan in the near future. The Foreign Minister of Pakistan also accepted the invitation by the Foreign Minister of Afghanistan to visit Kabul at his earliest convenience.

22 October 2008. *Source:* Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad. www.mofa.gov.pk

3. Text of the inaugural address delivered by Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi at the Pak-Afghan *jirga*

Your Excellency, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, Chairman of Afghan Component of Jirgagai, Your Excellency, Governor Owais Ahmed Ghani, Chairman of Pakistan Component of Jirgagai, Distinguished Members and Honourable Elders!

Assalam-o-Alaikum

It is a singular honour for me to address this august gathering of leaders and elders from Pakistan and Afghanistan, at the inaugural session of the Pakistan-Afghanistan Jirgagai. On behalf of the Government and people of Pakistan, I have the privilege to extend to you a very warm welcome.

I am also honoured to bring to you the greetings and warm welcome from President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani.

The Government of Pakistan is gratified at the opportunity you have accorded us for hosting this historic event. We are humbled by the honour you

have given us by gracing us with your presence. I hope you all have a comfortable stay in Islamabad.

No two countries are as closely linked as Pakistan and Afghanistan. Our ties are abiding and deep. Our cultures and customs, folklore, languages and literature, our heroes and histories are all common. Above all we share our glorious and eternal faith – Islam. Our concerns and aspirations are common.

When calamity afflicts one country, the other cries in pain. Our destinies are interlinked. Therefore, be it the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan , or the tragic earthquake of October 2005, throughout history, our two peoples have stood resolutely by each other.

As you all are aware, since the holding of the Joint Peace Jirga last year in Kabul , Pakistan has undergone a major transition to full democracy. The new democratic government of Pakistan is deeply committed to the cause of peace, stability and prosperity not only in Pakistan, but in the whole region.

Our government has already made a new beginning in the Pak-Afghan relations, restoring a climate of trust and confidence. Today, both countries are constructively engaged with each other in all spheres. Together we are developing a forward-looking vision of peace, prosperity and development for our peoples and the region.

Distinguished Members of the Jirgagai,

Afghanistan and Pakistan have both suffered immensely and continue to suffer at the hands of extremism, militancy and terrorism. This is the gravest threat to both countries. Pakistan and Afghanistan, therefore, need to cooperate closely to effectively counter and completely eliminate this curse.

Thirty years ago, when a superpower marched into Afghanistan, the landscape of our region changed tragically and irrevocably. Afghanistan got mired in a prolonged conflict as the last theater of the cold war. Millions of innocent Afghans lost their lives. Millions others were displaced from their homes and forced to seek refuge outside their homeland. It was a humanitarian catastrophe of unprecedented scale. With open hearts and open arms, Pakistanis welcomed their Afghan brethren, and did everything within their means to mitigate their suffering. Your pain was our pain; your anguish was our anguish.

The Afghan jihad altered the course of history. The cold war came to an end and the Soviet Union unraveled. Yet as the world enjoyed the dividends of peace, the valiant Afghan sacrifices went unacknowledged and uncelebrated. Afghanistan, and with it Pakistan, suffered at the hands of international neglect. Our societies suffered deeply as a result of free flow of weapons, drugs and the insidious spread of extremist ideologies. This in turn led to the spread of militancy and terrorism.

Pervasive poverty, widespread illiteracy and lack of employment opportunities provided fertile ground for the rapid growth of extremism and terrorism.

Afghanistan, which was the main theater of jihad against the Soviet Union, in the eighties converted into a stage of intense infighting following the

Soviet withdrawal. The political vacuum thus created, led to the Talibanization of Afghanistan.

The Taliban in Afghanistan were subsequently hijacked by Al-Qaeda converting Afghanistan into a breeding ground of extremism and terrorism. All these developments not only devastated Afghanistan but also had serious negative implications on Pakistan. Afghanistan and Pakistan have suffered together and together they need to reverse the tragic legacy of the past three decades.

The Joint Peace Jirga held in Kabul, in August, last year was a historic first people-to-people contact. It was a bold initiative to address the challenges of insecurity, militancy, terrorism and to redress a wide range of socio-economic and developmental issues concerning both countries.

The Peace Jirga Declaration, concluded on the basis of time-tested tribal traditions, customs and Revaj, reflected an overwhelming consensus among our two peoples for partnership and peace, stability and progress in the region.

It recognized terrorism as an anti-humanity phenomenon and against the spirit and essence of our eternal faith – Islam. It further recognized terrorism and extremism as a common threat to both countries. It called for a concerted campaign against terrorism. It also took note of the nexus between terrorism and narcotics.

The Peace Jirga emphasized the importance of brotherly relations in pursuance of policies of mutual respect, non-interference and peaceful coexistence.

In short, it laid a broad framework for the two countries to move forward, in a constructive, cooperative and meaningful manner.

Pakistan fully subscribes to the Jirga process and the decisions of the 'Kabul Peace Jirga'. The democratic government in Pakistan accords top priority to effectively deal with the menace of terrorism and enjoys broad-based support in this regard. It is also the resolve of the Government of Pakistan to cooperate closely with the brotherly people and the Government of Afghanistan in overcoming their difficulties emanating from terrorism.

Our government has always stood up to its responsibility of resolutely tackling extremism and terrorism. Thousands of innocent civilians have fallen victim to terrorism in Pakistan. The tragic loss of our great leader Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed has strengthened our determination to close our ranks against this lethal threat. Our armed forces and people have joined hands and are fully mobilized against it. A democratic polity draws its strength from the mandate of the people. It has a much greater chance of success than a dictatorship. Today, Pakistan is more committed than ever not to allow anyone to use its soil for nefarious activities against its own or Afghanistan's interest.

A few days ago, the Parliament of Pakistan spoke decisively on the issue of terrorism. Representatives of the people of Pakistan unanimously declared the nation's firm resolve to stand united against this growing menace, and to address its root causes. Pakistan's territory shall not be used for any kind of attacks on other countries, and foreign fighters, if found, will be expelled

from our soil. At the same time, Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity shall be safeguarded at all costs. Dialogue will be given high priority with all those willing to abide by the Constitution of Pakistan and rule of law and development of the affected areas will be expedited.

The charter given to this Government by the Parliament will henceforth guide our actions and policies. We shall not deviate from this course.

Distinguished Jirgagai Members,

The Jirgagai is being held in pursuance of the decisions of the Peace Jirga. Its mandate is clear. You have been tasked to expedite the on-going process of dialogue for peace and reconciliation with the opposition, to monitor and oversee implementation of the decisions of the Joint Peace Jirga and plan and facilitate the convening of the next Grand Peace Jirga. The mandate of Jirgagai is short in words but vast in scope.

There is an increasing realization that the use of force alone cannot yield the desired results. For lasting success, negotiations and reconciliation must be an essential part of the process. The wrongs and neglect of the past must be corrected. Political, economic and social reforms must proceed hand in hand. We must not shut doors of negotiations to those sons of the soil willing to forsake the path of violence. With a patient ear, we must listen to them, and let them be heard.

I have full faith in your sagacity and wisdom as revered leaders. You represent a wide spectrum of political, regional and ethnic mix in both countries. The distinguished Jirgagai members imbibe the true spirit of tribal traditions and wisdom in peacefully resolving complex issues. We have full trust in your collective wisdom and your ability to navigate your way to success.

Distinguished Members of Jirgagai,

Both Afghanistan and Pakistan need peace. Both need a healing touch. We owe it to posterity to work towards it. Peace will lead to prosperity. In my mind, a day will come InshaAllah, in the not too distant a future, when Pakistan and Afghanistan will serve as an integrated gateway for the region and beyond.

When gas pipelines and transit corridors will traverse our territories. When the peoples of the two countries will enjoy the fruits of peace and prosperity, and when narcotics and terrorism will be but a distant memory.

The future I foresee is well within our reach. The Jirga process holds the promise of morphing this vision into reality. I wish you great success. My prayers and best wishes will remain with you.

Thank You

OIC

Text of the address by Foreign Minister, Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, at the OIC Ambassadorial meeting

Brothers and Sisters, Permanent Representatives of the Islamic countries, Assalam-o-Alaikum!

Your presence here at short notice is a testimony of your affection for and solidarity with Pakistan. This is my first visit to New York after assuming responsibilities as the Foreign Minister of Pakistan.

Just a few weeks ago, I had the honour to attend the 35th Islamic Conference in Kampala, Uganda. I wish to congratulate Uganda on the success of this Conference and on assuming the OIC Chairmanship.

I wish to take this opportunity to share with you my thoughts on some of the vital issues that confront the Islamic Ummah.

Excellencies,

The Islamic world, unfortunately, is in the vortex of several volatile political and economic transitions. Muslim lands remain under occupation. Our noble faith is repeatedly attacked and insulted in a systematic campaign of Islamophobia. Our youth are being misguided to a path of extremism and violence. Our societies are battling against internal and external threats. Many of our countries remain underdeveloped, economically, socially and technologically. The new onslaughts of food crisis and high energy prices are aggravating the multiple challenges facing our countries.

Most of these threats affect us collectively and threaten the peaceful existence of our countries. It is necessary to respond to them collectively and wisely. We should endeavour jointly to address the underlying political and security challenges facing the Islamic countries. We should try to play a more active role at the United Nations and other organizations to resolve the issues of Palestine, Islamophobia, international terrorism, and development.

Pakistan has always been at the forefront in advancing the causes of the OIC, particularly the legitimate cause of Palestine. We desire a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and an end to the occupation of all Arab territories.

I wish to also thank the members of the OIC for their continued support to the just cause of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and for their internationally recognized right to self-determination. Tangible progress on this issue will contribute to Pakistan's endeavour to build cooperative relations with India and to enable South Asia to emerge as a zone of prosperity and peace.

It is a matter of pride for us that during the tenure of Pakistan's chairmanship of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, our Organization was able to secure the adoption of the new OIC Charter. We hope that the ratification of the new Charter by all member States will help to transform our Organization into a more relevant and vibrant entity that can help the Islamic countries to respond the challenges of the 21st century.

Pakistan has and will continue its efforts to transform the OIC into a more coherent and strong Organization, able to advance the objectives of the Islamic world. During the last year, the OIC Group in New York has set up informal working groups which have helped to consolidate the OIC positions on important issues, such as human rights, Islamophobia, Terrorism, Disarmament, Development and UN Reform. The OIC Group in New York has also adopted a number of statements on the core problem of Palestine and other Arab occupied lands as well as on instances of Islamophobia.

We have every confidence that during the Chairmanship of Uganda, the solidarity and cooperation of the Islamic countries in all relevant UN bodies will be intensified and enlarged in accordance with the decisions of our leaders.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The active and constructive role of OIC members at the United Nations is vital to safeguard and promote our national and collective interests. Many members of our Organization are playing prominent roles in new UN entities, such as the Peace Building Commission and the Human Rights Council.

Our countries should also play a significant role in the Security Council and in its reform and expansion. The OIC constitutes more than one-fourth of the UN membership; it should have proportional representation on an expanded Security Council, specially since the Council's agenda contains many items of direct concern to the Islamic countries. In our joint statements, the Islamic Foreign Ministers have categorically stressed that any reform of the Security Council in any category of membership must ensure adequate representation of the OIC member States. This should remain the minimum goal for our Group in the future discussions of this issue at the United Nations.

Dear Brothers & Sisters,

The continued misrepresentation of Islam and repeated insults to our Faith is another significant challenge we face today. We cannot accept malicious attempts to defame our religion under the cover of the freedom of speech. In this context, I would like to recall the historic decision of the last Annual Coordination Meeting of the OIC Ministers in New York to combat Islamophobia in a comprehensive manner. It called for the finalization of a legally binding instrument on discrimination and instigation of hatred against any religion. This decision was emphatically endorsed by the 11th Islamic Summit in Dakar. The OIC should vigorously engage the Western and other countries to promote this objective.

Another major challenge faced by the Ummah today is terrorism and violent extremism. Both pose a serious threat to our societies and countries and to our regions and the world. Pakistan has been one of the principal victims of terrorism and violent extremism. Just the day before I left for New York, we faced a new spate of bombings in Islamabad and Karachi.

Terrorism can never be justified and must be condemned in all its forms and manifestations. In our collective efforts to eliminate this menace, however, we need to address some deeper questions including the root causes of

terrorism. We must evolve a holistic and multi-dimensional strategy to tackle the challenge of terrorism and extremism.

Pakistan's contribution to the fight against Al-Qaeda and Taliban terrorism and extremism is well known. We are pursuing such a comprehensive strategy in our frontier regions. Our priority is to promote political reconciliation and economic reconstruction and development in Pakistan's tribal areas to win over the people, the tribes and the moderate forces and to isolate and eventually eliminate the terrorists and violent extremists. However, I would like to stress and clarify that our pacification moves and negotiations are only with tribal elders and other influentials in the region and not with terrorists nor those who do not eschew violence.

In our efforts to restore peace through dialogue and development, any act of terrorism or cross-border attack in Afghanistan from Pakistani soil will not be tolerated. If any such violation occurs, our government will take forceful action to eliminate that. On the other hand, Pakistan will not allow any foreign troops on its territory.

We believe that peace and stability between Pakistan and Afghanistan are indivisible. It is in the vital interest of our two countries which are bound by geography, history, faith and culture, to cooperate closely to defeat the menace of terrorism. Peace in our countries will enable Pakistan and Afghanistan to serve as the hub for trade and economic cooperation in the regions of South Asia and Central Asia, China and the Gulf. We can succeed in realizing these objectives only with the good wishes and support of the Islamic countries and the unconditional cooperation of the international community.

I thank you.

10 July 2008. *Source:* Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad. www.mofa.gov.pk

PAKISTAN-INDIA RELATIONS

1. Text of the joint statement issued after the meeting of the India-Pakistan Working Group on cross-LoC CBMs

1. The meeting of India-Pakistan Working Group on cross-LoC CBMs was held in Islamabad on 18 July 2008. Indian delegation was led by Mr. T.C.A Raghvan, Joint Secretary (PAI), Ministry of External Affairs while the Pakistan side was headed by Mr. Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhry, Director General (South Asia & SAARC).
2. The meeting was held in a cordial and constructive atmosphere.
3. The two sides discussed modalities for implementation of the decisions taken by the Ministerial meeting of 21 May 2008 on cross-LoC travel and trade. They also reviewed measures to ensure effective implementation of the existing cross-LoC measures.
4. Joint Secretary (PAI) also called on the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan.

18 July 2008. *Source:* www.meaindia.nic.in

2. Text of the joint statement issued after the third meeting of the Pakistan-India Judicial Committee on Prisoners

The Pakistan-India Judicial Committee on Prisoners visited jails in Amritsar , Delhi and Jaipur on 18-23 August 2008. The Members of the Committee are Justice (Retd) Mr. Abdul Qadeer Chaudhary, Justice (Retd) Mr. Fazal Karim, Justice (Retd) Mr. Nasir Aslam Zahid and Justice (Retd) Mr. Mian Muhammad Ajmal from the Pakistan side and Justice (Retd) Mr. Nagendra Rai, Justice (Retd) Mr. Amarjeet Choudhary, Justice (Retd) Mr. A.S. Gill and Justice (Retd) Mr. M.A. Khan from the Indian side.

As per the agreement on Consular Access, the lists of prisoners were exchanged in July 2008. According to Indian authorities, 378 Pakistani prisoners were in different jails throughout India. However, according to Pakistani authorities, there were 644 Pakistani prisoners in custody in India. According to Indian authorities, there were 687 Indian prisoners including 412 fishermen in various jails in Pakistan, as against which, Pakistani authorities confirmed that there were 470 Indian prisoners including 412 Indian fishermen. (Out of the 412 Indian fishermen, 35 juvenile Indian fishermen have since been released by Pakistan authorities).

The Committee reiterates its earlier recommendation that a consolidated list of prisoner with full particulars be reconciled and exchanged. This should be done expeditiously and in any case before the next meeting of the Committee.

During its current visit, 131 Pakistani prisoners were produced before the Committee who were confined in the three jails visited by the Committee in India

The Committee recommends the following:

- All prisoners who have completed their sentences and whose travel documents are available should be repatriated to their respective countries immediately and in any case before 30th September 2008.
- The Committee strongly reiterates its earlier recommendations that women and Juvenile prisoners, prisoners terminally ill or suffering from serious illness or physical disability, mentally disabled persons and prisoners involved in minor offences like violation of Foreigners Act, border crossing, visa violation like overstaying or visiting places not covered by the visa deserve compassionate and humanitarian consideration. Its recommendation that such prisoners, whether under trial or convicts, be repatriated to the country of their origin at the earliest and, for that purpose, necessary action be taken for withdrawal of prosecution or for remission of the balance sentence as the case may require, be implemented by the Governments.
- Consular access should be provided immediately to all those prisoners who have not been given consular access, but not later than 30th September 2008. The Committee also desires that both the countries should follow the

commitments made in the Agreement on the Consular Access signed between them in May 2008.

- All the prisoners shall be provided legal aid at all stages of their cases.
- The Committee reiterates its earlier recommendation for supply of copy of Post Mortem Report to the respective High Commission in the unfortunate event of the death of a prisoner in custody.
- During the next visit of the Judicial Committee to various jails, prisoners who are lodged in the different jails of the same Province/State should be brought to the jail to be visited by the Committee in that Province/State. Efforts should also be made to produce prisoners from other Provinces/States, for meeting the Committee.
- The respective courts be requested for expeditious trial of all the under-trial prisoners for early disposal of their cases.
- The Committee appreciates the release of 131 Indian fishermen and 6 civil prisoners, (including 35 Juvenile fishermen) by Pakistani authorities, and 14 Pakistani fishermen and 3 civil prisoners by Indian authorities on its recommendation and further expects that its earlier recommendations for the repatriation of remaining fishermen and other prisoners be implemented at the earliest.
- Both the Governments should facilitate the prisoners to correspond with their family members.
- The Committee strongly recommends that the Home/Interior Secretaries of the two countries should meet at the earliest for issuance of directions for implementation of recommendations of this Committee.

The Committee suggests that their further visits to jails in both the countries be decided early through diplomatic means in consultation with the members of the Committee.

23 August 2008. *Source:* Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad. www.mofa.gov.pk

3. Text of the India-Pakistan joint statement issued after the meeting between President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh

The President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of India met during the 63rd UNGA session in New York.

Prime Minister Singh congratulated President Zardari on his election and the victory of democracy in Pakistan. He expressed the hope that this would pave the way for a profound transformation of the bilateral relationship, so that India and Pakistan could work together on their shared objectives of peace, prosperity and security.

Both leaders welcomed the several positive outcomes of the four rounds of the Composite Dialogue, which have brought their people, businesses and institutions closer, while permitting sustained efforts to be made to resolve

all outstanding issues; these gains need to be consolidated. They agreed to work for an early and full normalization of relations between India and Pakistan, on the basis of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and noninterference.

Both leaders acknowledged that the peace process has been under strain in recent months. They agreed that violence, hostility and terrorism have no place in the vision they share of the bilateral relationship, and must be visibly and verifiably prevented. Severe action would be taken against any elements directing or involved in terrorist acts. President Zardari reassured Prime Minister Singh that the Government of Pakistan stands by its commitments of January 6, 2004.

Both leaders agreed that the forces that have tried to derail the peace process must be defeated. This would allow the continuation and deepening of a constructive dialogue for the peaceful resolution and satisfactory settlement of all bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir.

The two leaders agreed that:

- The Foreign Secretaries of both countries will schedule meetings of the Fifth round of the Composite Dialogue in the next three months which will focus on deliverables and concrete achievements.
- The ceasefire should be stabilized. To this end, the DGMOs and Sector Commanders will stay in regular contact.
- A special meeting of the Joint Anti-Terror Mechanism will be held in October 2008 to address mutual concerns including the bombing of the Indian Embassy in Kabul.
- The expansion of people to people contacts, trade, commerce and economic cooperation provides an effective platform to develop and strengthen bilateral relations. Towards this end it was decided to:
- Open the Wagah-Attari road link to all permissible items of trade
- Open the Khokrapar-Munabao rail route to all permissible items of trade.
- Continue interaction between the Planning Commissions of both countries to develop mutually beneficial cooperation including the energy sector.
- Commence cross-LoC trade on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawalakot roads on October 21, 2008.
- Modalities for the opening of the Skardu-Kargil route will be discussed soon.

24 September 2008, *Source*: www.meanindia.nic.in

4. Text of the joint press statement issued at the conclusion of Pakistan-India meeting of the joint anti-terrorism mechanism

A special Meeting of the Joint Anti-Terrorism Mechanism, as directed by the Prime Minister of India and the President of Pakistan in New York on 24th September 2008, was held in New Delhi on 24th October 2008. The Pakistan delegation led by Mr. Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Indian delegation by Shri Vivek Katju, Special Secretary, Minister of External Affairs.

Information on issues of mutual concern including the bombing of the Indian Embassy in Kabul was exchanged. The Meeting was held in a positive, constructive and forward looking atmosphere.

24 October 2008. *Source:* Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad. www.mofa.gov.pk

5. Text of the joint statement issued at the conclusion of fifth round of Pakistan-India interior/home secretary level talks on terrorism and drugs trafficking

The fifth round of Interior/Home Secretary Level Talks between Pakistan and India on Terrorism and Drugs Trafficking was held in Islamabad on 25th and 26th November 2008 as a part of the Composite Dialogue. The Pakistan delegation was led by Syed Kamal Shah, Secretary, Ministry of Interior, while the Indian delegation was headed by Mr. Madhukar Gupta, Home Secretary of India.

2. The meeting was held in a cordial and friendly atmosphere.
3. Both sides discussed the issues related to terrorism and drug trafficking and reviewed the implementation of decisions taken during the last round. Both sides noted with satisfaction the progress made and identified ways to further promote cooperation in a number of areas.
4. Both sides condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and affirmed their resolve to cooperate with each other to combat the menace of terrorism. It was agreed that terrorism must be prevented and as directed by the leadership of the two countries at the meeting in New York on 24 September 2008, severe action be taken against any elements involved in terrorist acts.
5. Both sides welcomed the release of prisoners and fishermen by each other on the eve of these talks as a gesture of goodwill and on humane considerations. It was agreed to exchange by 31st December 2008 names of those civil prisoners, who have completed their sentence and whose national status has been confirmed, with a view to facilitating their release in January. It was further agreed that, henceforth, verification of nationality status would be completed within six weeks of provision of consular access. It was also agreed to facilitate the expeditious release of fishermen and boats.
6. Both sides welcomed the signing of Agreement on Consular Access during the review of the Fourth Round of Pakistan-India Composite Dialogue, and affirmed full implementation of the Agreement.
7. Both sides commended the work done by the Judicial Committee on Prisoners for the release, repatriation and humane treatment of prisoners and agreed on the need for the continuation of the work of the Committee.
8. Both sides underscored the need for visa liberalization. In this context, useful discussions were held on draft Visa Agreement. The Indian side

would propose a draft Visa Agreement within four weeks, based on parameters discussed.

9. Both sides agreed that the issue of inadvertent crossers be viewed from a humanitarian dimension and recommended early finalization of the draft agreement regarding inadvertent crossings by the expert group on Conventional CBMs which is due to meet soon.
10. Both sides noted that Protocol of 1974 on visits to religious shrines was due for revision along with lists of religious shrines in both countries. The subject will be discussed under the segment of Secretary Culture level talks on Promotion of Friendly Exchanges which is likely to take place soon. It was recommended that a revised Protocol and the list of shrines should be finalized as early as possible and the Pakistan side agreed to furnish its comments on the lists before the talks on Friendly Exchanges.
11. Both sides assessed as positive the existing cooperation and information sharing between the Anti Narcotics Force of Pakistan and the Narcotics Control Bureau of India and agreed that both Agencies would enhance mutual cooperation in terms of effective and sustained steps to control drugs trafficking.
12. The MoU on Drug Demand Reduction and Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotics Drugs/Psychotropic Substances and Precursor Chemicals and Related Matters, was initialed. Both sides welcomed this development and agreed that the MoU will further promote bilateral cooperation in this field. It was agreed that Director General ANF of Pakistan and Director General of NCB of India will meet as early as possible to discuss ways of furthering cooperation.
13. It was decided that the Federal Investigation Agency of Pakistan and the Central Bureau of Investigation of India will schedule a meeting at an early date to discuss ways of cooperation in addressing the issues of human trafficking, illegal immigration, and counterfeit currency, along with Red Corner Notices (RCN) subjects.
14. The Home Secretary of India also called on the Advisor to the Prime Minister on Interior/Minister and discussed issues of mutual interest.
15. It was agreed to continue the discussions within the framework of the Composite Dialogue.

26 November 2008. *Source:* Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad. www.mofa.gov.pk

6. Text of the briefing given by Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi to foreign envoys about Pakistan's position regarding Mumbai terror attacks

The Foreign Minister met the Envoys representing P-5, EU member states and a select group of other countries based in Islamabad today to brief them on Pakistan's position regarding recent terrorist attacks in Mumbai.

The Foreign Minister made the following points:

- Pakistan condemns in the strongest possible terms the recent terrorist attacks in Mumbai. We condole with the families of the victims and the people and Government of India.
- Pakistan reiterates the assurances of our utmost cooperation and assistance to bring the perpetrators of this heinous act of terrorism to justice.
- The issue of terrorism is a major challenge of our times. Both Pakistan and India have suffered from indiscriminate violence. Pakistan and India must enhance their coordination and cooperation in combating terrorism whether perpetrated by individuals, groups, or non-state actors. Serious, sustained and pragmatic engagement that is multi-tiered and comprehensive is warranted.
- While the Government of Pakistan stands ready to extend its full cooperation, both sides must avoid blame game and hostile propaganda, which only works to the advantage of the terrorists in their nefarious designs. Allegations by Indian media about complicity of Pakistan in the Mumbai incident are strongly refuted.
- Pakistan has proposed to India that a Pakistan-India Joint Commission, suitably composed, be set up to work together on the Mumbai incident. The Commission could be co-chaired by the National Security Advisors of the two countries and meet as early as possible for exchange of information and discussions on mutual cooperation in this regard.
- Pakistan believes that both sides should work together to reduce tension and continue our constructive engagement in a comprehensive manner.
- The two countries have made significant progress in the Composite Dialogue process towards confidence building. Terrorists must not be allowed to undo the gains made. We are convinced that continuation of the peace process and the Composite Dialogue is in the larger interest of the people of the two countries.

02 December 2008. *Source:* Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad. www.mofa.gov.pk

SAARC

1. Text of the address by Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, at the 30th meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to begin by extending to you our congratulations on your assumption of the Chairmanship of the Council of Ministers. I am confident that under your stewardship, the Council would fulfill its mandate. I assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation.

Mr. Chairman,

I also wish to thank you and the Government of Sri Lanka for the warm welcome and the gracious hospitality extended to us.

I take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the commendable manner in which His Excellency Pranab Mukherjee steered the work of the Council for the last one year.

I would also like to thank Secretary General Dr. Sheel Kant Sharma, and the SAARC Secretariat, for their important contribution to the preparatory work of the Summit.

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome the theme of the Summit chosen by Sri Lanka: 'Partnership for growth for our people'. We share the conviction that people should be at the heart of all SAARC processes. Socio-economic development is linked, in large measure, to the creation of peace and stability. We are confident that the Colombo Summit would contribute to building trust and according a pragmatic impetus to regional cooperation in South Asia.

Since its establishment in 1985, SAARC has come a long way. From the initial tentative steps limited to technical cooperation, SAARC now has grown into a vibrant organization tackling the challenging subjects of social uplift, regional connectivity, food security, energy cooperation, and human resource development. It must continue to surge ahead and become an effective vehicle for regional cooperation. The coming years would surely test our collective resolve as we embark on addressing the difficult but vital questions related to inter-dependence and integration.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan is committed to the SAARC objectives. We have made substantial contribution towards various SAARC processes and taken a number of initiatives in furthering the goals of close regional cooperation.

Pakistan believes that SAARC can enhance its relevance to the peoples of our region by pursuing people-centered and result oriented approach. In this regard, we find merit in many of the recommendations given by the Secretary General in his detailed analysis report.

We agree with the Secretary General that poverty alleviation and achievement of SAARC Development Goals (SDGs) should be a priority for SAARC. Pakistan has taken a number of steps for the attainment of this objective. We have also aligned our national goals to SDGs.

The rising food prices have placed an added stress on our efforts to achieve SDGs, in particular poverty alleviation. Achieving food security in our region should be a matter of high priority for us.

Pakistan, therefore, strongly supports early operationalization of SAARC Food Bank. Besides, SAARC needs to develop a comprehensive and holistic regional strategy on food security, which should include sharing of best practices in agricultural sector, technology transfer and efficient irrigation system.

In this regard, I had shared my ideas with you. I am pleased to learn that our Foreign Secretaries have finalized the text of a separate Declaration: 'Colombo Statement on Food Security', which expresses our resolve to take

urgent actions to ensure food security in our region. We should commend this Declaration to our Leaders for approval.

Likewise, the rising prices of fossil fuel in international market warrant SAARC to step up its efforts for regional energy security through sharing of indigenous sources of energy, i.e. solar, wind, bio, and hydro.

We hope that the ADB study on options/benefits and constraints of intra-SAARC energy trade will contribute to our endeavours in this field.

I had proposed to all colleagues in the Council of Ministers that SAARC may consider concluding a regional inter-governmental framework agreement to provide an enabling environment for such cooperation. I am pleased to note that the draft SAARC Declaration prepared by the Foreign Secretaries adequately addresses this important subject.

The fourteenth SAARC Summit had directed SAARC to move from declaratory to implementation phase. SAARC should, therefore, focus on project-based cooperation.

SAARC mechanisms should identify regional and sub-regional projects in priority areas. Each Member States should adopt at least one project as the lead country.

We should also involve SAARC Observers and other relevant international organizations in the implementation of projects. I believe these ideas have been duly reflected in the draft Declaration prepared for adoption by our Leaders.

Mr. Chairman,

Fourteenth SAARC Summit had stressed the need for regional connectivity. It is important to take early action on development of transport and communication infrastructure to link SAARC countries with each other as well as with other regions. These are essential pre-requisites for regional trade and economic cooperation.

SAFTA is progressing well. We can strengthen the efficacy of SAFTA by complementing it with other trade facilitation measures including elimination of all non-tariff and para-tariff barriers.

We are happy to note that the SAARC Ministerial meeting on climate change held in Dhaka earlier this month has evolved a comprehensive plan of action on climate change. Our efforts to protect the environment and climate change should include measures to protect melting of the glaciers of the Himalayas and the Karakoram, which are the major source of fresh water in the region.

We note the progress made with regard to SAARC Regional Multi-model Transport Study (SRMTC). We support the development of pilot projects through consultations.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan supports early operationalization of SAARC Development Fund (SDF). Pakistan has offered to host the Secretariat of the SDF. The Secretariat of its

predecessor organization, South Asia Development Fund (SADF), was also based in Pakistan.

As a front-line state in the global fight against terrorism, Pakistan attaches great importance to regional cooperation to combat terrorism, drugs and human trafficking. Pakistan has taken a number of measures, backed by appropriate legislation, to counter the menaces of drugs and human trafficking and terrorism. We have formal mechanisms with 39 countries on issues relating to terrorism.

We welcome the finalization of the SAARC Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters.

Pakistan advocates the need for SAARC to open up to the world and enter into collaborative arrangements with international and regional organizations. In this spirit, we had supported granting observer status to important countries and EU. We also welcome the interest shown by Australia and Myanmar for obtaining observer status with SAARC. We believe we should now think of going beyond observer status and think of dialogue partnerships with those Observers who wish to actively associate with SAARC programmes, activities, and projects. In this regard, we commend the Standing Committee for preparing the requisite Guidelines for cooperation with Observers and Inter-Governmental Organizations. This would indeed enrich the work of our Organizations.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, let me state that in its third decade SAARC must mould itself into an effective regional organization that is responsive to the aspirations of its peoples. We must introspect, constantly evaluate what we have achieved so far, and clearly identify our priority areas for further action. We have tremendous potential. We can leverage it to avail of the opportunities available and overcome our challenges.

I hope that our deliberations in this session would give a new push to the multifaceted regional cooperation. Pakistan would always be ready to provide its full support to this shared objective.

I have touched upon all important issues on our agenda today. We can discuss these issues further as we take up these items as per the agenda of the meeting.

Thank You

31 July 2008. *Source:* Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad. www.mofa.gov.pk

2. Text of the address by Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani at the 15th SAARC Summit

Your Excellency President Mahinda Rajapaksa,

Your Excellencies the Heads of State and Governments of SAARC Member

States, Distinguished Representatives of Observers,
Mr. Secretary General,

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honour for me to represent the Islamic Republic of Pakistan at the fifteenth SAARC Summit. I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the office of the Chairperson of SAARC. We are confident that under your dynamic leadership, SAARC will move rapidly towards realization of its cherished goals. I assure you of Pakistan's full support to your endeavours in this direction.

We are thankful to the people and the Government of Sri Lanka for the warm welcome and the gracious hospitality extended to us since our arrival in this beautiful city. I avail myself of this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to His Excellency Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister of India, for providing excellent leadership to SAARC during the last one year. I would also like to thank the Secretary General, His Excellency Dr. Sheel Kant Sharma, and his dedicated team, for their important contribution to the preparatory work of the Summit.

SAARC Charter bestows upon us the onerous responsibility to promote the welfare of the people of South Asia. The theme of the Summit 'Partnership for growth for our people' is a welcome reminder of our joint responsibility to place people at the center of the SAARC process. No society can realize its full potential without improving the socio-economic conditions of its people.

We must follow a comprehensive approach, paying urgent attention to poverty alleviation. We must also take steps to ensure full implementation of the SAARC Social Charter and the SAARC Conventions on Women and Children.

Economic development of South Asia is contingent upon assured and inexpensive availability of energy. The contemporary global fossil fuel crisis has exacerbated the need for the South Asia region to look for alternate energy sources. We must harness region's indigenous energy potential, particularly solar, wind, biomass and hydro energy. We should also envisage a net-work of intra-regional and trans-regional oil and gas pipelines. Within SAARC, an enabling environment for regional energy cooperation can be facilitated by concluding a regional framework agreement on energy cooperation.

We have a vast pool of talent. We have fertile lands and developed irrigation systems. Our societies are agrarian. We export agro based products to the world. Yet, the region faces food shortages from time to time. Sadly, the region has to look to the outside world for its food security. We must address this issue on priority. We should share and learn from best practices in the region and beyond, modernize our irrigation systems, use appropriate technology, and expand our agricultural research and resource base.

The contemporary global food crisis has underscored the need for SAARC countries to develop a comprehensive regional strategy to ensure food security. This is our common responsibility to the people of South Asia. Together with other Asian countries, we should consider launching a Greater Asia Food Security Programme.

Pakistan supports greater regional economic cooperation. In the last two decades, SAARC has made considerable progress in this area, including SAFTA. We must enable these arrangements to deliver real dividends and create a win-win situation for all. Towards this end, a number of steps can be taken including trade facilitation measures, elimination of non-tariff barriers, reduction of sensitive lists of member states, and strengthening of the existing transportation and communication links across the region.

Closer cooperation in the area of finance and banking is essential to promote economic and commercial cooperation in the region. Under the mechanism of SAARC FINANCE, the Governors of the Central Banks of the Member States can make solid contribution to improve macro-economic policy coordination. The SAARC Development Fund (SDF) could underwrite financial support for important development projects of mutual benefit to SAARC members.

Historically, the arteries of transport and communications have enriched this region. As we attempt to connect our region anew, a people-centered approach can ensure the success of our endeavours. The rich civilizational and cultural heritage of the people of South Asia is our shared pride. Our arts and craft, cultural traditions, diverse landscape, and magnificent historical monuments are our invaluable assets. We must give priority to promoting tourism, including religious and third country tourism, in our region.

Another pressing issue for SAARC is to enhance cooperation in the field of environment. In this regard, the Dhaka Declaration of the SAARC Environment Ministers is a welcome step. We must take appropriate measures to preserve our environment, including the glaciers of Himalayas and Karakorum, which are the largest source of fresh water in the region.

We must also encourage a move towards project-based cooperation under SAARC. The focus should be on implementing regional and sub-regional projects in the agreed priority areas. Each Member State could take one or two projects as 'lead country'. We may also involve SAARC Observers and other international development institutions in these efforts. Public-private sector collaboration should also be another venue to achieve our development objectives.

The world is facing today the menace of extremism and terrorism, which has challenged our entire value system and impacted our socio-economic development. Though Pakistan has suffered the most, terrorism afflicts all countries of our region. It is our joint responsibility to rid our region of this scourge. We need to fight terrorism individually as well as collectively. The forthcoming meetings of the SAARC Police Chiefs and Home/Interior Ministers in Islamabad later this year should focus on strengthening regional cooperation against terrorism. We welcome the finalization of the text of the SAARC Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters.

In an interdependent, fast globalizing world, no regional grouping can hope to function in isolation. SAARC should develop positive links with the adjoining regions and beyond. We must adopt an inclusive approach. We should be open to mutually beneficial interactions, especially with our larger Asian

neighbourhood. Such linkages and interdependencies would create a win-win support system.

I take this opportunity to extend a very warm welcome to the representatives of the SAARC Observers present here in this meeting. We look forward to their valued contribution towards SAARC programmes, activities and projects. We also welcome the interest expressed by Australia and Myanmar to be associated with our organization as Observers.

As we seek to evolve modalities to associate observers with the work of the Organization, we should consider the option of granting 'dialogue partnership' status to those Observer states which wish to deepen their relationship with SAARC for mutual benefits.

SAARC has to its credit some notable achievements. We can justifiably take pride in the progress we have made thus far. However, we cannot be complacent. We must recognize in all candidness that the gap between the promise of SAARC and the reality of its accomplishment remains wide. We need concerted efforts to build on areas of convergence. Let's minimize divergences and augment complementarities for the greater good of the people of this region. Pakistan for its part will spare no effort to translate the vision of the SAARC Charter into a reality.

Greater economic integration is inextricably linked to the creation of requisite political climate of peace and stability. SAARC meetings provide a good opportunity not only to deepen trust and understanding but also create the enabling environment for resolution of political disputes and outstanding Issues. We believe that the imperatives of South Asia's socio-economic development demand greater political commitment to build on convergences and resolve our differences.

Pakistan and India are engaged in a peace process. Since the induction of elected government in Pakistan, the peace process has registered noteworthy progress. Success of the process will augur well for the region and SAARC.

It is time to place people at the center of the SAARC processes. Our people are our greatest strength. If SAARC becomes relevant to the lives of our people, we could be assured of our success.

As we look ahead, let the Colombo Summit be remembered as the turning point in SAARC's history. Let this Summit infuse new dynamism in SAARC. Let us pledge to lay a solid foundation of mutual cooperation and trust.

I am confident that the Colombo Summit would provide a fresh impetus to reinvigorating regional cooperation in South Asia.

02 August 2008. *Source:* www.saarc-sec.org

3. Text of the Declaration adopted at the 15th SAARC Summit

Partnership for Growth for Our People

The President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, His Excellency Mr. Hamid Karzai; the Chief Adviser of the Government of the People's Republic of

Bangladesh, His Excellency Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed; the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bhutan, His Excellency Lyonchhen Jigmi Y. Thinley; the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, His Excellency Dr. Manmohan Singh; the President of the Republic of Maldives, His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom; the Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, the Rt. Hon'ble Girija Prasad Koirala; the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, His Excellency Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani; and the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa, met at the Fifteenth Summit meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on August 2-3, 2008.

Regional cooperation

2. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their commitment to the principles and objectives enshrined in the SAARC Charter. They renewed their resolve for collective regional efforts to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development which would promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and improve their quality of life, thereby contributing to peace, stability, amity and progress in the region.
3. The Heads of State or Government recognized that SAARC has been making steady and incremental progress over the years, in particular since the last Summit held in New Delhi in April 2007, towards realizing the objectives of the Charter. They accordingly emphasized the importance of maintaining the momentum, through clear links of continuity between the work already underway and future activities. The Heads of State or Government recognized the need for SAARC to further strengthen its focus on developing and implementing regional and sub-regional projects in the agreed areas on a priority basis. Each Member State may consider taking up at least one regional/ sub-regional SAARC project as the lead country.
4. The Leaders noted with satisfaction the considerable progress made in various domains of partnership among SAARC Member States and emphasized the need to consolidate and ensure effective implementation of all SAARC programs and mechanisms by rationalization and performance evaluation on a regular basis.

A Partnership for Growth for the Peoples of South Asia

5. The Heads of State or Government were convinced that the process of regional cooperation must be truly people-centered, so that SAARC continues to strengthen in keeping with expectations as a robust partnership for growth for the peoples of South Asia. They accordingly directed all SAARC mechanisms to abide by the Charter objective of promoting the welfare of the people and improving their quality of life. In this regard they directed the Council of Ministers to ensure that SAARC mechanisms identify further areas of cooperation where people-centric partnership projects could be initiated.

6. The Heads of State or Government observed that an effective and economical regional tele-communication regime is an essential factor of connectivity, encouraging the growth of people-centric partnerships. They stressed the need for the Member States to endeavour to move towards a uniformly applicable low tariff, for international direct dial calls within the region.

Connectivity

7. The Heads of State or Government recognized the importance of connectivity for realizing the objectives of SAARC. They accordingly directed the SAARC mechanisms to continue to embody in their programs and projects a strong focus on better connectivity not only within South Asia, but also between the region and the rest of the world. They further stressed the necessity of fast-tracking projects for improving intra-regional connectivity and facilitating economic, social and people-to-people contacts.

Energy

8. The Heads of State or Government noted that increased access to energy is critical for fulfilling the legitimate expectations of growth and development in South Asia. They observed in this regard that the escalation of oil prices threatens both the energy security of the region, as well as the economic growth witnessed in South Asia. In this context, they recognized the need to expeditiously develop and conserve the conventional sources of energy and to build up renewable alternative energy resources including indigenous hydro power, solar, wind and bio, while introducing energy reforms, energy efficiency and the trade and sharing of technology and expertise. They also noted that there is tremendous potential for developing regional and sub-regional energy resources in an integrated manner and noted the efforts being made to strengthen regional cooperation in capacity development, technology transfer and the trade in energy. While expressing satisfaction at the progress over the recent years to strengthen energy cooperation, the Leaders directed that the recommendations of the Energy Dialogue be implemented through an appropriate work plan.
9. The Heads of State or Government stressed the urgent need to develop the regional hydro potential, grid connectivity and gas pipelines. They noted that the possibility of evolving an appropriate regional inter-governmental framework may be explored to facilitate such an endeavour. They welcomed Sri Lanka's offer to host the Third Meeting of SAARC Energy Ministers in Colombo in 2009.

Environment

10. Being increasingly aware of global warming, climate change and environmental challenges facing the region, which mainly include sea-level rise, deforestation, soil erosion, siltation, droughts, storms, cyclones, floods, glacier melt and resultant glacial lake outburst floods and urban pollution,

the Heads of State or Government reiterated the need to intensify cooperation within an expanded regional environmental protection framework, to deal in particular with climate change issues. They were of the view that SAARC should contribute to restoring harmony with nature, drawing on the ancient South Asian cultural values and traditions of environmental responsibility and sustainability.

11. The Leaders expressed satisfaction at the adoption of SAARC Action Plan and Dhaka Declaration on Climate Change by the SAARC Environment Ministers at the SAARC Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change held at Dhaka on 3 July 2008. In this context they stressed the need for close cooperation for capacity building, development of CDM projects and promotion of programs for advocacy and mass awareness raising on climate change. They also expressed satisfaction at the adoption of a SAARC Declaration on Climate Change for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) by the Twenty-ninth Session of the Council of Ministers.
12. The Heads of State or Government expressed deep concern over global climate change and its impact on the lives and livelihoods in the region. They also noted the urgency of the immediate need for dealing with the onslaught of climate change including sea level rise, on meeting food, water and energy needs, and taking measures to ensure the livelihood security of the peoples in the SAARC region. They resolved to work together to prevent and address the threats to the livelihoods of the peoples and to provide access to remedies when these rights are violated and also to find an equitable distribution of responsibilities and rights among the Member States. They also emphasised the need for assessing and managing its risks and impacts. In this regard, they called for an in-depth study on 'Climate Justice: The Human Dimension of Climate Change,' to come up with a rights-based approach that would highlight the human impact when responding to the impacts of climate change.
13. The Heads of State or Government affirmed that every citizen of this planet must have an equal share of the planetary atmospheric space. In this context, they endorsed the convergence of per capita emissions of developing and developed countries on an equitable basis for tackling climate change. They were of the view that any effort at addressing climate change should take into account historical responsibility, per capita emissions and respective country capabilities.
14. The Heads of State or Government expressed concern at the human loss suffered through natural disasters in the region and stressed the need for the timely provision of relief in humanitarian emergencies. In this regard they directed that a Natural Disaster Rapid Response Mechanism be created to adopt a coordinated and planned approach to meet such emergencies under the aegis of the SAARC Disaster Management Centre.

Water Resources

15. The Heads of State or Government expressing their deep concern at the looming global water crisis, recognized that South Asia must be at the forefront of bringing a new focus to the conservation of water resources. For this purpose they directed initiation of processes of capacity building and the encouragement of research, combining conservation practices such as rain water harvesting and river basin management, in order to ensure sustainability of water resources in South Asia.

Poverty Alleviation

16. The Heads of State or Government while acknowledging the significant steps taken to alleviate poverty in the region, resolved to continue to combat poverty through all available means, including especially through people's empowerment. They committed themselves to continuing to share each other's experiences and success stories of pro-poor poverty reduction strategies such as micro-credit systems, community-driven initiatives and the raising of the consciousness of the poor on their right to resources and development.
17. In this respect, they emphasized on undertaking sustained efforts, including developing and implementing regional and sub-regional projects towards the attainment of SAARC Development Goals (SDGs). They noted the decision by the Ministers on Poverty Alleviation to obtain an inter-governmental mid-term review of the attainment of the SDGs to be completed by 2009.
18. The Leaders welcomed the offer of Nepal to host next Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Alleviation.

SAARC Development Fund (SDF)

19. The Heads of State or Government expressed satisfaction at the signing of the Charter of the SAARC Development Fund (SDF), and finalization of its Bye-laws, and called for an early ratification of the SDF Charter. They also welcomed early operationalization of the Fund from the available funds. They expressed satisfaction at the launching and identification of the projects on women empowerment, maternal & child health and teachers' training under the social window of the SDF, as directed by the Finance Ministers. They reiterated their commitment to expedite their financial contributions to the Fund. In this regard, the Heads of State or Government accepted with appreciation the offer of the Kingdom of Bhutan to host the SAARC Development Fund Secretariat in Thimphu.

Transport

20. The Heads of State or Government expressed satisfaction at the progress through the Meetings of the Ministers of Transport. They reiterated the critical importance of an efficient multi-modal transport system in the region for integration and for sustaining the region's economic growth and competitiveness. They urged early implementation in a gradual and phased

manner of the proposals of the SAARC Regional Multimodal Transport Study (SRMTS).

21. They noted the progress made in the consideration of the draft Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA) by Member States. They also noted that technical inputs related to Regional Transport and Transit Agreement and Regional Multilateral Railway Agreement were being examined by the Member States. In this context, they directed the next Transport Ministers Meeting to expedite work in this regard. They appreciated the offer of Sri Lanka to hold the Second Meeting of SAARC Ministers of Transport in Colombo in 2008.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Development

22. The Heads of State or Government urged the need for even more expeditious and close regional cooperation in information and communication technology. They welcomed the enhanced digital connectivity among the Member States and the ongoing work to upgrade the regional telecommunication infrastructure. They directed that the arrangements needed to implement the proposed collaborative tele-projects such as those for health care and education, be expedited.

Science and Technology

23. The Heads of State or Government acknowledged the ongoing contribution of Science & Technology including cutting edge technology in information and bio-technology in improving the quality of life of the peoples of South Asia. They noted the offer of India to host the Ministerial Meeting on Science & Technology on September 15-16, 2008 for development of a roadmap on identifying implementable focused regional and sub-regional projects in SAARC.

Tourism

24. The Heads of State or Government underscored the vital contribution that tourism could afford to the economic development of the SAARC region. They agreed to make every effort to implement the comprehensive action plan adopted by the Second Ministerial Meeting held at Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh. These efforts would include facilitating the movement of people through improved travel infrastructure and air, sea and land connectivity among the SAARC countries, collaboration in human resource development and the promotion of SAARC as a common destination through public-private partnerships and joint campaigns.

Culture

25. The Heads of State or Government emphasized the role of cultural connectivity in bringing the peoples of South Asia closer, while reinforcing and projecting a distinct South Asian identity. They directed that the Agenda for Culture be implemented in full.

SAFTA and Trade Facilitation

26. The Heads of State or Government emphasized their commitment to implement SAFTA in letter and in spirit, thereby enabling SAARC to contribute as well to the dynamic process of Asia's emergence as the power house of the world. Recognizing the need to continue to address the major barriers hindering effective trade liberalization in the region, which include sensitive lists of items and Non-Trade Barriers (NTBs), they directed that the decision to revise the sensitive lists by the SAFTA Ministerial Council (SMC) be implemented early. They also recommended that while revising the Sensitive Lists, special consideration be given to the LDCs. The Leaders directed that SAFTA Committee of Experts (SCoE) to expeditiously resolve the issue of Non Tariff Measures (NTMs) and Para Tariff Measures (PTMs) in order to facilitate and enhance the trade under SAFTA.
27. The Heads of State or Government underlined the need for taking concrete measures to improve trade facilitation in terms of the mutual recognition of standards, the adoption of common tariff nomenclatures, the harmonization of customs procedures. They directed the relevant SAARC bodies to expedite their work in these areas. They also recognized the importance of development of communication system and transport infrastructure and transit facilities specially for the landlocked countries to promote intra-SAARC trade.
28. The Heads of State or Government observed that the SAARC legal instruments on trade liberalization and the measures and initiatives for trade facilitation are increasingly affording significant openings for mutually beneficial trade, investments and economic co-operation within South Asia. These openings are complemented by the uniformly sound levels of national economic growth being attained by the Member States of SAARC. The Leaders accordingly noted the growing and urgent need for enhancing capacity within SAARC dedicated to encouraging national and regional strategies that would further maximize the positive trade, investments and economic cooperation climate in South Asia. In this regard they welcomed the offer of Sri Lanka to prepare a Concept Paper and a Working Paper on the subject and directed that the Paper be discussed at a Session of the Standing Committee specially convened for this purpose, to enable the adoption of appropriate follow-up measures.
29. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the signing of the text of the Agreement on the Establishment of the South Asian Regional Standards Organization. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the signing of the Protocol on Afghanistan for Accession to SAFTA.

Trade in Services

30. The Heads of State or Government expressed satisfaction at the conclusion of the Study on Trade in Services and welcomed the decision of SAFTA Ministerial Council to commence negotiation on the Framework Agreement on Trade in Services. Towards achieving further economic integration, they

directed that the Draft Agreement on Investment Promotion and Protection be finalized early and the SAARC Arbitration Council be operationalized.

SAARC Social Charter

31. The Heads of State or Government underscored the imperative to make steady progress in the implementation of the SAARC Social Charter and directed the Member States to complete the National Plans of Action with a perspective of seeking to transform current challenges into opportunities. They further directed the National Coordination Committees (NCCs) to recommend activities in conformity with the Social Charter and to introduce an efficient and effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism for reviewing the progress in the implementation of the Social Charter. The Leaders emphasized the need to implement the selected regional and sub regional programs and projects to complement national implementation efforts. They urged that such activities be suitably accommodated in the SAARC Calendar. They called for people's participation in strategy initiatives, planning and implementation to ensure people's responsibility and ownership. The Leaders directed to develop a policy on the protection of rights of the senior citizens for their geriatric care taking into account existing national policies of the Member States.

Women and Children

32. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction the increased cooperation in the region towards achieving the all important goal of bringing women fully into the mainstream of development, on the basis of gender equality. They called for focused attention on women's economic empowerment and skills development, while addressing key health issues and violence against women. The Leaders directed to work for a regional cooperation for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and abuse against women in general and widows in particular and guarantee their rights to live in the society in a dignified manner.

Education

33. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the substantial progress made in the establishment of the South Asian University in New Delhi and directed that the University should begin its Session from 2010. They also directed that increased interaction between students should be encouraged through institutionalization of students, academics, teachers and youth exchange programs. They further directed early institutionalization of an elaborate SAARC Scholarship Scheme in ICT and related areas.

Combating Terrorism

34. The Heads of State or Government strongly condemned all forms of terrorist violence and expressed deep concern over the serious threat posed by terrorism to the peace, stability and security of the region.

35. They further recognized the growing linkages between the phenomenon of terrorism, illegal trafficking in narcotic and psychotropic substances, illegal trafficking of persons and firearms and underscored the need to address the problem in a comprehensive manner. They reiterated their commitment to strengthen the legal regime against terrorism, including by undertaking to implement all international conventions relating to combating terrorism to which Member States are parties, as well as the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism and the Additional Protocol to the SAARC Regional Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism. The Head of States or Government while recalling United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001) emphasized the importance of criminalizing any act for the provision, collection and acquisition of funds for the purpose of committing terrorist acts.
36. The Heads of State or Government recognized in this regard the value of the proposed UN Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. They noted the progress made during recent rounds of negotiations and called for an early conclusion of the Convention.
37. They emphasized the need for strongest possible cooperation in the fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime amongst the relevant agencies of the Member States especially in the area of information exchange. The Heads of State or Government further emphasized the importance of completing all legislative and other relevant measures to implement within Member States, the provisions of the Regional Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. The Leaders noted the considerable work done to promote cooperation in Police matters. They appreciated the offer of Pakistan to host the Third Meeting of SAARC Ministers of Interior/Home in Islamabad during 2008.
38. The Heads of State or Government expressed satisfaction on the finalization of the text of the SAARC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters at the Fifteenth Summit and its signing. They expressed appreciation at the accommodating manner in which the negotiations were conducted by the Member States to provide each other the widest measures of mutual assistance in criminal matters to ensure a greater sense of security within the region, the Heads of State or Government urged for early ratification and implementation of the Convention.

Joint Positions

39. The Heads of State or Government resolved to encourage consultations among delegations of SAARC Member States at the appropriate international forums and agreed to cooperate accordingly.

Observers

40. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the Observers namely the People's Republic of China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mauritius, the United States of America and the European Union and appreciated their participation in the Summit. They

also welcomed Australia and Myanmar to be associated as Observers to SAARC. They approved the guidelines for cooperation with Observers and looked forward to working with them in the common pursuit of the partnership for growth for our people.

Sixteenth Summit

41. The Heads of State or Government welcomed with appreciation the offer of the Maldives to host the Sixteenth Summit Meeting of the Heads of State or Government of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

03 August 2008. *Source:* www.saarc-sec.org

PAKISTAN & THE US

1. Pak-US joint statement issued after a meeting between Prime Yousuf Raza Gilani and US President George W. Bush

President George W Bush welcomed Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani to Washington today (Monday) for his first visit to the United States as the leader of the democratically-elected civilian Pakistani government.

The president and the prime minister reaffirmed their commitment to the long-term strategic partnership between the US and Pakistan, which was based on shared values and held immense potential for the enduring peace, security, stability, freedom, and prosperity of Pakistan and of the region.

The president affirmed his support for the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Pakistan. The two leaders agreed that the focus of the broad-based Pakistan-US relationship should remain on ensuring the well-being of the people by assisting Pakistan to implement its national-development agenda in a comprehensive manner.

Pakistan and the US will work together to eliminate the threat of extremism, build strong democratic institutions, modernise education and increase economic growth and opportunity. President Bush and Prime Minister Gilani reaffirmed their condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

They acknowledged that terrorism and violent extremism pose a common threat to the US, Pakistan and the international community.

The two leaders pledged to work together to address this threat and to deny any space to militants or terrorists through increased cooperation. The president recognised the sacrifices the people of Pakistan and the Pakistani security forces had rendered in the ongoing fight.

The president and the prime minister reiterated that the success in countering terrorism would require a comprehensive strategy, including increased security, improved governance, and opportunity for the socio-economic development for the people, especially in the less-developed regions of Pakistan.

The president and the prime minister expressed deep sympathy for the families of those who had fallen victim to suicide and other terrorist attacks in Pakistan.

The prime minister expressed appreciation for the US efforts to promote peace and stability in the region. The US is dedicated to providing Pakistan with the support and tools it needs to lead the fight against terrorism.

The two leaders also committed to increased bilateral economic cooperation to include expanded trade, an improved investment climate, promoting cooperation in the public and private sectors, and agreed to work together to ensure food and energy security as well as facilitate investment in infrastructure and social sectors in Pakistan.

In reaffirming the strategic partnership, President Bush and Prime Minister Gilani attached importance to the next round of the strategic dialogue, which will be co-chaired by the US Deputy Secretary of State and Pakistan's foreign minister, in September 2008 and regularly thereafter to review issues of mutual interest. In addition, the two leaders committed both countries to undertake the following steps in development, counterterrorism, economic, and regional cooperation:

Focus on the needs of the Pakistani people: Food, Health, Education, Energy, and Democratic Governance:

- The two leaders welcomed recent efforts in the US Congress to extend the United States' assistance commitment to Pakistan to help address Pakistan's most urgent needs, including education, agriculture, and energy. The president will continue to work with Congress to ensure the continued support of the United States to Pakistan over the long-term.
- The two leaders agreed to institute a separate track for agricultural cooperation under the Strategic Dialogue.
- The United States will provide \$115.5 million in food security assistance to Pakistan, including \$42.5 million over the next nine months.
- The United States will assist with disease control activities in Pakistan to augment the prime minister's initiative to combat the spread of hepatitis and other infectious diseases.
- The United States highlighted its \$30 million Pakistan Energy Development program focused on improving power availability, affordability, and efficiency.
- The United States and Pakistan will hold the next round of the US-Pakistan Energy Dialogue this fall to help Pakistan meet its vast and growing energy needs.
- The two leaders agreed to hold the next round of the US-Pakistan Education Dialogue later this year.
- The two leaders agreed to continue and enhance robust collaboration in science and technology under the successful bilateral Science and Technology Framework Agreement.
- The United States highlighted its support for democracy-building and improved governance through project funding.

Expand Bilateral Trade and Improve the Business Climate:

- The two leaders renewed a joint commitment to pursue steps to establish Reconstruction Opportunity Zones that will expand trade opportunities in parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- The United States and Pakistan will work together toward a goal of establishing direct non-stop flights between the two countries before the end of 2008, expanding people-to-people ties and improving the investment climate to the benefit of the people of both countries.
- The United States and Pakistan agree to convene officials promptly to review the status of bilateral investment treaty negotiations.
- The two countries will reconvene the Joint Council under the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement in September 2008.
- The US-Pakistan Economic Dialogue will be held on August 11 in Islamabad.

Expand Security and Counterterrorism Cooperation:

- The two leaders agreed to strengthen the long-term security relationship with a view to enhancing Pakistan's defence capabilities, especially in the field of counterterrorism, through training and equipment.
- Reconvene the bilateral Defence Consultative Group this fall with a renewed focus on counterinsurgency and counterterrorism.
- Renew cooperative efforts to root out extremism along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, including the Northwest Frontier Province, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Balochistan.
- Expand cooperation between the US and the Frontier Corps and other Pakistani security forces on the frontlines in the fight against violent extremism.
- Focus US security assistance on efforts to enhance the counterterrorism capability of Pakistan's military forces.

Work Together to Enhance Regional Peace, Security, and Stability:

- Strengthen the tripartite commission between the International Security Assistance Force, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.
- Support the efforts of Pakistan and Afghanistan to hold the next joint Jirga this fall.
- Hold the next Regional Economic Cooperation Conference in Islamabad this fall.
- Encourage the Pakistan-India composite dialogue process to reduce tensions, build trust, and resolve all outstanding issues.

Prime Minister Gilani thanked President Bush and the people of the United States for the hospitality accorded to him, Mrs Gilani, and the members of the prime ministerial delegation during their stay in the United States.

2. Address of Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani and Presiden Bush to the media

President Bush: ‘Mr prime minister, welcome. It’s been a — it’s been a very constructive morning. We’ve had a good meeting in the Oval Office. And then I’m going to have lunch with the prime minister here in the main White House. And that’s fitting. After all, Pakistan is a strong ally and a vibrant democracy. The United States supports the democracy and supports the sovereignty of Pakistan.

We talked about areas of concern. Of course, we’re going to spend a lot of time on the economy, about how the United States and Pakistan can continue to cooperate to — for economic benefits for all the people of Pakistan and for our own country, for that matter.

And of course, we talked about the common threat we face: extremists who are very dangerous people. We talked about the need for us to make sure that the Afghan border is secure as best as possible; Pakistan has made a very strong commitment to that.

I told the prime minister that the United States is committed to helping the Afghan democracy succeed, which is in Pakistan’s interest. After all, the prime minister wants there to be a peaceful country on his border.

The US, I repeat, respects the sovereignty of this democracy. And we also appreciate the prime minister’s strong words against the extremists and terrorists who not only would do us harm but have harmed people inside — in Pakistan.

So we welcome you here, Mr prime minister, and looking forward to having a good lunch with you after your statement.’

Prime Minister Gilani: ‘Thank you. Now?’

President Bush: ‘Please, yes, absolutely.’

Prime Minister Gilani: ‘First of all, I want to thank Mr President Bush for inviting me to United States, and this is my second meeting with the president. Previously I met Mr president in Sharm-al-Shaikh, and today again I am meeting Mr president.

And I appreciate what he has said about supporting democracy, supporting sovereignty, looking after the interests and on a lot of other areas we are — there’s a cooperation between us — Pakistan, United States have very cordial relations and bilateral relations. And this is not of today — this is for over 60 years since the creation of Pakistan. We were inspired with their slogan of liberty and self-determination. And now we want to further improve our relations.

We are committed to fight against those extremists and terrorists who are destroying and making the world not safe. And that is — this is our own war; this is a war which is against Pakistan.

And we’ll fight for our own past. And that is because I have lost my own leader, Benazir Bhutto, because of the militants, and therefore I assure United States, the people of United States, that majority of the people of Pakistan and the people of those areas, the NWFP and Fata, they are the

patriarch, the loyalists, they want the peace in the world, and they want to cooperate. And there are few militants — they are handpicked people, militants, who are disturbing this peace. And I assured Mr President we'll work together for democracy and for the prosperity and peace of the world.

Thank you very much.'

President Bush: 'Thank you, sir.'

29 July 2008 *Source:* www.thenews.com.pk

Khabr-o-Nazar (News & Views)

3. Joint Communiqué issued at the conclusion of the U.S.-Pakistan Economic Dialogue

The third Pakistan-U.S. Economic Dialogue was held today under the co-chairmanship of Pakistan's Minister of Finance, Revenue, Economic Affairs, and Statistics, Syed Naveed Qamar, and U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Economic, Energy and Business Affairs Daniel S. Sullivan. The Dialogue sought to deepen the U.S.-Pakistan economic partnership and further develop a long-term, broad-based economic relationship that mutually benefits the citizens of our two countries. The two sides discussed a wide-ranging agenda, including macroeconomic policy, labor, intellectual property rights, energy, agricultural cooperation, eliminating terrorism finance networks, Reconstruction Opportunity Zones, a GOP scholarship proposal, foreign assistance and FATA development, regional cooperation and transit trade, private sector cooperation, and a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT). Representatives from Pakistan's Ministries of Finance, Commerce, Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Interior, Labor, Law and Justice, Water and Power, Education, the Board of Investment, and the State Bank of Pakistan, as well as Pakistan's Economic Minister to the United States, participated. They were joined by officials from the U.S. Departments of State, Commerce, Treasury, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the U.S. Embassy.

The two delegations discussed Pakistan's macroeconomic policies, including fiscal and monetary reforms and social safety net measures the GOP has taken and plans to take to promote economic growth, provide protection to vulnerable groups, and increase prosperity of all Pakistanis. The United States and Pakistan agreed on the importance of GOP measures to stabilize the economy, to adhere to the announced macroeconomic policy and targets, and to continue Pakistan's structural reforms, including monetary and fiscal policy adjustments. A fruitful discussion was held on establishing Reconstruction Opportunity Zones, which will facilitate job creation and economic development in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, North West Frontier Province, the earthquake-affected areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Balochistan within 100 miles of the Afghan border. The Reconstruction Opportunity Zones will provide greater market access to exports from businesses in these areas and create employment opportunities for the border regions.

Trade liberalization, protection of intellectual property rights, and labor issues, all aimed at fostering increased economic opportunities, were also discussed. Useful discussions about the issues that remain in concluding a BIT, which would promote a more open, transparent, and predictable business climate, were discussed as well. We agreed that the United States and Pakistan have a strong interest in resuming BIT negotiations and that our investment experts should meet as soon as possible to do so. Ways to increase the opportunity for Pakistani students to study at U.S. universities, including through expanding scholarship opportunities, were considered, and we agreed to pursue the matter further.

Recognizing rising world fuel and food prices, policy measures already taken by the GOP to cope with rising prices and ways in which bilateral cooperation in energy and agriculture could be strengthened, in particular increasing capacity and attracting greater U.S. investment in the these areas. The two parties spoke of positive steps to better address matters relating to eliminating terrorism financing networks and strengthening Pakistan's Money Laundering Ordinance. There was also discussion about ways to strengthen GOP efforts for sustainable socio-economic development of the border areas.

The two delegations agreed to meet again in 2009 in the United States.

11 August 2008. *Source:* www.Islamabad.usembassy.gov

TURKEY

Text of the joint statement issued at the conclusion of Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani's visit to Turkey

The Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani paid an official visit to the Republic of Turkey from 27 – 31 October, 2008. Mrs. Gilani and a high ranking entourage accompanied the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

2. In Ankara, Prime Minister Mr. Gilani, held talks with the Prime Minister of Turkey His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdogan and called on President of Turkey, His Excellency Abdullah Gul and the Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, His Excellency Koksal Toptan. Prime Minister of Pakistan was the Chief Guest at the National Day Celebrations of the Republic of Turkey. The Prime Minister of Pakistan also attended the World Economic Forum meeting in Istanbul.
3. Pakistan and Turkey enjoy special relations which are characterized by unique bonds of close affinity, mutual respect and solidarity and are deep-rooted in the hearts of the peoples. Both sides attach highest importance to the friendship between their peoples and their mutually beneficial partnership.
4. In their talks, which were characterized by great warmth, leaders of the two countries expressed their determination to comprehensively upgrade their strategic cooperative partnership, which is in the fundamental interests of

their peoples and is an important factor in promoting regional peace, stability and prosperity.

5. The two sides decided to institute regular strategic dialogue and further intensify the process of coordination, consultation and cooperation on regional and global issues.
6. It was decided to establish comprehensive frameworks to promote economic and trade; defence; scientific and technological; and cultural cooperation. Both sides agreed that project cooperation in all sectors hold immense potential and will be invigorated by enabling their respective corporate sectors to collaborate effectively.
7. They agreed to take up important development projects in infrastructure, minerals, agriculture, manufacturing and energy sectors. Public and private sectors corporations of Pakistan and Turkey will also jointly undertake regional and trans-regional cooperation.
8. It was also decided to enhance connectivity by establishing transportation and communication links, including additional air links. Given the special geo-economic and geo-political significance of both Pakistan and Turkey, special attention will be given to road and rail links.
9. Both countries are determined to increase their cooperation bilaterally as well as multilaterally to promote regional peace, development and prosperity.
10. Pakistan expressed appreciation for the important role played by Turkey in promoting peace in Afghanistan. In this context, it was agreed to further pursue the Ankara Tripartite Summit process, which will especially focus on development dimension.
11. Pakistan also expressed full support for the realization of the aspirations of the Turkish Cypriot people.
12. Turkey expressed full solidarity and support for Pakistan's sovereignty, political independence and territorial territory. Turkey also expressed support for the efforts of Pakistan to combat the menace of terrorism and extremism. Both sides decided to increase their cooperation in security and counter terrorism.
13. At the cultural plane, it was decided to institute regular youth exchanges, linkup universities and think tanks, film, television and media, joint productions and cooperation.
14. It was decided to declare the ancient cities of Multan and Konay as sister cities. The precious cultural heritage of the two sister cities is a cherished treasure and both cities will jointly promote multidimensional cooperation highlighting in particular their great spiritual significance.
15. It was also decided to promote tourism between the two countries as well as develop special joint tourism products and packages.
16. The Parliaments of the two countries will develop regular exchanges. With a view to facilitating this process, following the formation of the Turkish side, the Pakistani side of the Parliamentary Friendship Group will be established in the earliest time frame.

17. The Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan accepted the invitation of the Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani to visit Pakistan.

31 October 2008. *Source:* Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad. www.mofa.gov.pk

UN

1. Text of the address by President Asif Ali Zardari at the 63rd session of the UN General Assembly

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, Assalaam Alaykum May peace be with you.

I come before you today in the name of my late wife, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, as a victim of terrorism representing a nation that is a victim of terrorism. I am a grieving husband, who has seen the mother of my children give her life fighting the menaces of terrorism and fanaticism that haunt the entire civilized world.

In her place and in her honor, I come before you as the elected President of a democratic Pakistan who received a 75% mandate of our Parliament and assemblies. That extraordinary mandate of our Parliament and assemblies. That extraordinary mandate of support was a vote of confidence in her, in her doctrine and in her message. That vote was an act of love and a demand for a democratic, moderate, modern, tolerant and economically just Pakistan, the essence of the Bhutto Doctrine.

It has been eleven months since the first attack on my wife on October 18, 2007 was followed by a United Nations resolution calling for an inquiry in that crime against humanity. That UN resolution has so far been ineffective. After her assassination on December 27, the international community demanded an independent inquiry – a demand supported by resolutions in Pakistan's parliament and four provincial legislatures.

Today we still do not know what forces and institutions were involved, who plotted and planned and coordinated and trained and paid for the murder of my wife and my nation's beloved leader. A UN investigation into the murder of their leader would reassure the people of Pakistan that the international community cares about them, that the UN's charter of justice is more than rhetoric. We owe it to her. We owe it to history.

We paid a political price at home for coming to the UN and not conducting the investigation at home. But we wanted this investigation to be credible and independent and representing this respected institution's commitment to the victims of terrorism.

If the President of a country and his children cannot get justice through the United Nations, how would the poor and the dispossessed around the world find reassurance that the UN is capable of protecting the weak and the suffering? Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the name of humanity and in the name of justice, move forward quickly on the investigation of the assassination of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, so the people of Pakistan and the world will know once and for all, whose bloody hands took away one of the greatest women of history.

My wife courageously returned to Pakistan last year, openly confronting the forces of terror. Three million people turned out to welcome Benazir, and to welcome the return of democracy to Pakistan. She was a brave woman who understood the dynamic of our region and the world, who understood the interrelationship between politics and economics, between social injustice and political dictatorship.

For years she told world leaders that dictatorship fuels extremism and poverty fuels fanaticism. She outlined the Bhutto Doctrine of Reconciliation so brilliantly presented in her last book, a dual mission to combat dictatorship and terrorism, while promoting social and economic reform and justice for the people of Pakistan. Benazir Bhutto understood that democracy was not an end, but a beginning: that a starving child has no human rights; that a father who could not support his family was someone ripe for extremism.

The Bhutto Doctrine of Reconciliation is a road map not only to a new Pakistan, but to a new era of peace and cooperation between East and West, between people of all faiths, a road map that it followed will avoid the clash of civilizations and clash of religions that is the terrorists' ultimate goal.

The Bhutto doctrine is the new century's equivalent of the Marshall plan that saved Europe after World War II. And just as the Marshall plan was centered on the principle that an economically sound Europe could and would resist communism, the Bhutto Doctrine's pillar is that an economically viable Pakistan will be the centerpiece of the victory of pluralism over terrorism.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Bhutto doctrine will ultimately prove to be as critical to the victory of freedom in this century as the Marshall Plan was critical to the triumph of liberty in the last. Ours is the Doctrine of Reconciliation. Theirs is the Doctrine of Death. Her killers thought her elimination would end her dream of a democratic Pakistan and the balkanization of our region would enable the forces of darkness to prevail. But our nation rallied in the aftermath of her brutal and tragic assassination. If Al Qaeda and the Taliban believed that by silencing Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, they were silencing her message, they were very wrong. We have picked up the torch and will fight against terrorists who attack us, and fight against terrorists who use our territory to plan attacks against our neighbours or anywhere in the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ours has been a bloody fight, and the personal pain that my children and I feel cannot be fully expressed, nor the pain of a Nation that has been robbed of its greatest asset, its greatest leader. But the terrorists' lust for blood and hate has not been satisfied. Only last week, the forces of evil struck against with a bloody and cowardly attack against my people. A suicide truck bomb destroyed a great

building in our capital barely a stone's throw away from my office and the house of Parliament. Once again, Pakistan is the great victim in the war on terror. And once again our people wonder whether we stand alone. Thousands of our soldiers and civilians have died fighting against the common enemies of humanity. We have lost more soldiers than all 37 countries that have forces in Afghanistan put together.

The roots of today's terrorism can be traced to a war involving the world's superpowers in Afghanistan during the 1980s. Afghanistan and Pakistan, and increasingly the world, are reaping the bitter harvest sowed towards the end of the cold war. The world turned its back on Afghanistan after the Soviet defeat. In Pakistan, we were left with three million refugees within our borders. Their camps that soon became the breeding grounds for intolerance and violence. The West left South and Central Asia. We were left to live with the consequences. And one of its greatest consequences was the birth of Al Qaeda and the talibanization of Afghanistan and parts of our tribal areas.

Yet we do not look back on history. We are victims but we will never be vanquished. On the contrary, the more of our children's blood they spill, the stronger is our determination to defeat them. We in Pakistan stand united and in defiance. We are resolved that our future will not be dictated by these who defy the spirit and laws of Islam for their sordid political goals. We may be the targets of international terrorism, but we will never succumb to it. Toward that end, we reach out to you and to the entire civilized world.

Terrorism cannot be fought by military means alone. Fighting it requires political will, popular mobilization, and a socio-economic strategy that wins the hearts and minds of nations afflicted by it. Unilateral actions of great powers should not inflame the passions of allies. Violating our nation's sovereignty is not helpful in eliminating the terrorist menace. Indeed, this could have the opposite effect.

Many of you in this great hall read about terror. We live with it. We do not learn about terror from reading newspapers or watching the evening news. We see our children and our wives being blown up before us. My cities, neighborhoods, streets, hotels and offices bear the brunt of the terrorist fanatic rage every single day.

A democratic Pakistan is in the process of reaching the national consensus necessary to confront and defeat the terrorists. Only a democratic government can win this war. We are fighting the menace and we will continue to fight. But this is the fight for the peace of the world. This is the fight for the future of generation to come. Yes, we fight for ourselves, for our children, for our very soul. Yes, this is our war, but we need international support – moral, political and economic. In our stability lies the world's security.

Globalization is not just economic; it is also political. The terrorist vision strikes out at all continents and all nations. We must draw the line on their rampage. And we must draw that line in Pakistan. The question I ask the world's leaders in this august chamber is whether you will stand with us, just as we stand for the entire civilized world on the frontlines of this epic struggle of the new millennium?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I stand before you as the President of a great nation that has just suffered under a decade of brutal military dictatorship, human rights abuses, and the systematic destruction of the foundations of democracy and civil society. Sadly, all too often the world stood silent as dictators ruled our people with a bloody fist. Nations that were founded on democracy were silent for reasons of expediency. My wife would say that they ‘danced with dictators’

Today, as we meet here in New York, the democratically elected leader of Myanmar, Aung San Suu Kyi, continues to be imprisoned in Yangon. She has suffered year after year under house arrest. The world should demand that this great woman finally be freed. Today, the horror of terrorism that plagues our region and threatens the world is a byproduct of this lack of commitment to the values of democracy. When the world betrays democracy, it sets the table for disaster. We all continue to pay the price.

In the early years of the new millennium, there are two great battles before mankind. First there is the battle for democracy and liberty against authoritarians and dictators – the fight for universal human rights that is the hallmark of this body. At the same time, we are fighting in the trenches of the battle that will determine the course of the new millennium – the battle against extremism and terrorism – between the forces of ignorance and the forces of education, between bigotry and tolerance, between justice and discrimination, between confrontation and reconciliation.

Democracy is not like water from a tap that can be turned on and off when it’s convenient. It is a universal value guaranteed to all men and women. It is the outcome of these struggles that will determine whether the noble experiment embodied in these hallowed walls of the United Nations will succeed or fail. The struggle between the Bhutto Doctrine of Reconciliation and the Terrorists’ Doctrine of Death will determine the future of mankind. Let not the extremists who would manipulate Islam for their political ends define us to you. They are rabid but they are few.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is time for the world to take notice. We are not the cause of the problem of terrorism, we are its victims. We are an aggrieved nation NOT one that has caused grief. We have fought this battle largely alone. We have shared our air bases, our air space, our intelligence, and our armed forces in a coordinated effort to contain terrorism.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is time for the developed world to step up to the plate to help us, and in turn help itself. The fight against extremism is a fight for the hearts and minds of people. It can’t be won only by guns and bombs. The fight must be multifaceted. The battleground must be economic and social as well as military. We will win when people are mobilized against the fanatics. To mobilize them we have to give them hope and opportunity for their future. They need jobs. Their children

need education. They must be fed. They must have energy. We must give people a stake in their own government, and we must demonstrate to them that democracy does perform, that democratic governance can improve their everyday life.

An economically viable Pakistan will be a stable Pakistan. And a stable Pakistan will suck the oxygen from the terrorists' agenda. Economic justice and political democracy are the worst nightmares of the terrorists. We must all fight this epic battle together as allies and partners. But just as we will not let Pakistan's territory to be used by terrorists for attacks against our people and our neighbors, we cannot allow our territory and our sovereignty to be violated by our friends. Attacks within Pakistan that violate our sovereignty actually serve to empower the forces against which we fight together.

I am a democratic President of a democratic country that intends to be a model to our region and to our religion, of a vibrant, modern, tolerant, peaceful, moderate democracy committed to economic and social justice. People, including my wife, died for this movement. We will not waste their sacrifices. We will work patiently to persuade leaders in FATA and our Pakhtunkhwa Province to accept the writ of government and turn their back on terrorists. The terrorists can blow up our girls' schools but we will rebuild them, brick by brick, inch by inch. We are in this battle to win. And we know how we have to do it.

We will work together with our neighbour Afghanistan, and the NATO forces stationed there, to ensure security of our common border. We will continue the composite dialogue with India so that our outstanding disputes are resolved. Whether it is the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir, or cooperation on water resources, India and Pakistan must accommodate each other's concerns and interests; we must respect and work with each other to peacefully resolve our problems and build South Asia into a common market of trade and technology.

Better relations between Pakistan, Afghanistan and India would help create the regional environment that is more conducive to reducing militancy in our region. But let be clear, to those in this hall, and to the terrorists lurking in their caves plotting their next assault on humanity. If necessary we will confront evil with force – our police, our army and our air force. We will turn the power of the state against the stateless terrorists. We will turn the power of justice against the chaos of anarchists. We will turn the power of right against the darkness of evil.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I did not come to the office of President, to this moment, by design. As my wife once said about herself, I did not choose this life, it chose me. An extraordinary combination of circumstances brought me to this moment. It has not been an easy road. I spent nine years in prison, in solitary confinement, as a hostage to my wife's struggle for democracy and to our party's future. I was unjustly imprisoned under a judicial system manipulated and controlled by the forces of dictatorship. I refused to break under pressure. My years in prison made me a

stronger person and hardened my resolve to fight for democracy and justice. Those years prepared me for this moment.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Terror took my wife's life. But the terrorists cannot kill my wife's dream. Her vision, her passion, her force is now our common task. The Benazir Bhutto Doctrine of Reconciliation lives on; it guides us in our endeavors. Her Reconciliation is the mantra of the new era, and I am dedicated to implementing what she has proposed. I wish I could do it at my wife's side. But now I will do it in my wife's place. Pakistan will prove wrong all the negative predictions about its future. We will show the way in overcoming suspicions towards and from our neighbours, and building a future for our people. Throughout her life, my wife struggled to make the world a better place for our children, the children of Pakistan and the children of the world.

I owe it to her memory, and to all of the martyrs of democracy to continue to do the same, until the Bhutto Doctrine of Reconciliation is not just her dream but the world's reality.

Thank you.

25 September 2008. *Source:* www.presidentofpakistan.gov.pk

2. Text of the statement by Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi in response to the UN Security Council Resolution 1267

Under the Security Council Resolution 1267, certain individuals and entities have been designated by the Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee on 10 December 2008. An official communication from the UN in this regard has been received by the Government of Pakistan. These entities and individuals include Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jamaat ud Daawa.

It is obligatory for all states to comply with international obligations arising from Security Council decisions.

Accordingly, the Government of Pakistan has initiated the process to comply with the listing of Jamaat ud Daawa and certain other trusts as well as individuals by the Sanctions Committee.

As regards the spate of allegations concerning the involvement of certain individuals of Pakistani origin in Mumbai terrorist attacks, the Government of Pakistan has already initiated investigations on its own. It is the firm conviction of Pakistan not to allow its territory to be used for any act of terrorism. Pakistan itself has been a victim of terrorism. However, our own investigations cannot proceed beyond a certain point without provision of credible information and evidence pertaining to Mumbai attacks. Despite our requests, no evidence or information has been shared with the Government by India so far.

Any criminal investigation proceeds from the scene of crime to the criminal. This is standard investigation procedure. Pakistan has repeatedly

underscored the need for serious, sustained and pragmatic cooperation between Pakistan and India to combat terrorism in either country.

Our proposals for the establishment of a joint commission as well as joint investigations have been made in an earnest effort to move forward in an area, which equally concerns both Pakistan and India.

As far as Pakistan's own investigations are concerned, these will be pursued in accordance with our own laws. Pakistan is committed to internationally respected concept of 'due process'.

It is Pakistan's firm determination to do whatever it can to eliminate the threat of terrorism from South Asia.

12 December 2008. *Source:* Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad. www.mofa.gov.pk

II. Human Rights

Excerpts from *State of Human Rights in 2008*

I. Rule of Law

Laws and law-making

... fundamental rights, including equality of status, of opportunity and before law, social, economic and political justice, and freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship and association, subject to the law and public morality, [shall be guaranteed] ... the independence of the judiciary shall be fully secured.

Constitution of Pakistan

Preamble

To enjoy the protection of law and to be treated in accordance with law is the inalienable right of every citizen, wherever he may be, and of every other person for the time being within Pakistan

Article 4

Any law, or any custom or usage having the force of law, insofar as it is inconsistent with the rights conferred by this chapter [on Fundamental Rights] shall, to the extent of such inconsistency, be void.

Article 8(1)

It is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Preamble

Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or indirectly or through freely chosen representatives.

Article 21(1)

The law-making process greatly slowed down in 2008. One reason was that in the past the need to reissue ordinances, that could not receive parliament's

endorsement, used to keep the official draftsmen busy. They were relieved of this burden by General Musharraf when he decreed vide the Provisional Constitution Order of 2007 that the ordinances that were in force before the emergency of November 3, 2007 and those issued during the emergency (November 3 to December 15, 2007) were not liable to lapse.

Besides, the new government fell for the Musharraf regime's questionable innovation of adopting legislative measures through the Finance Bill. This bill originally proposed amendments in 26 laws but the number was eventually reduced to 20. Many amendments, including the one aimed at increasing the strength of the Supreme Court, were not related to financial matters. The use of the Finance Bill for steamrolling legislation was heavily criticized in the Senate and even the Leader of the House took exception to the inclusion of 12 laws in the list of enactments down for amendment. The sweep of these amendments can be seen below.

The enactments amended through the Finance Act 2008 are:

- Petroleum Products (Development Levy) Ordinance, 1961 (sections 2 and 3)
- Customs Act, 1969 (sections 1, 21, 155F, 156, 179, 194C, 195C, First schedule)
- Securities and Exchange Ordinance, 1969 (sections 2, 15A, 15B, 15C, 15D, 15E, 21, 32E)
- Companies' Ordinance, 1984 (sections 158, 187, 206, 208, 251, 282G, 282J, 282K, 282M)
- Finance Act, 1989 (section 7)
- Sales Tax Act {section 2 (clauses 2A, 3, 3A, 4, 5AA, 5AB, 6B, 9, 11A, 13, 20, 21, 22A, 28A, 29A, 31, 33, 35, 43, 44, 47), sec 3, 3AA, 7, 8, 8B, 10, 11, 13, 25, 26, 30, 32AA, 33, 34, 36, 45A, 46, 47A, 50, 58A, 58B, 61A, 67, 69, Third Schedule, Sixth Schedule}
- Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1997 (section 2 – to raise the court's maximum strength from 16 to 29 judges w.e.f 3/11/2007.)
- Regulation of Generation, Transmission and Distribution of Electric Power Act, 1997 (section 3).
- Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan Act 1997 (sections 7, 13, 20, 32, 33).
- Khushali Bank Ordinance, 2000 repealed.
- Islamabad Capital Territory (Tax on Services) Ordinance, 2001 (section 3)
- Income Tax Ordinance 2001 (sections 2 [clauses 5B, 19, 19A, 19B, 19C, 19D, 19E, 30A, 30B, 31A, 35B, 45A, 45B, 47A, 47B], 21, 23A, 54, 57A, 101, 113, 115, 120A, 124, 129, 134A, 137, 146B, 147, 148, 152, 153, 153A, 155, 159, 169, 174, Part IX replaced, 184, 193, chapter XI Part III added, 230A, 231B, 233A, 234, 235, 237, 'local authority' wherever occurring replaced with Local government', First schedule, Second schedule, Third schedule, Fourth schedule, Sixth schedule, Seventh schedule)

- Listed Companies (Substantial Acquisition of voting shares and Take-overs) Ordinance, 2002 (sections 2, 3, 12, 13, 15, 26, 29A, 30B)
- Federal Excise Act, 2005 (sections 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 12, 14, 19, 31, 33, 38, 43A, First schedule, Third schedule) Some amendments in labour laws also made through the Finance Bill were:
- The Provincial Social Security Ordinance, 1965, was amended to raise the wage ceiling for applicability from Rs 5,000 per month to Rs 10,000, and the monthly contribution by a secured person was reduced from 7% of the wage to 6%.
- The Standing Order 15 of the West Pakistan Industrial and Commercial Employment (Standing Orders) Ordinance, 1968, was amended to raise the subsistence allowance, paid to a worker during the period of his suspension (for misconduct) pending completion of inquiry, from 50% of the wage to 100%.
- The Workers' Welfare Fund Ordinance, 1971, was amended to extend its application to commercial and other services sectors (in addition to industrial establishments).
- The Employees' Old Age benefits Act, 1976, was amended to cover establishments employing five or more persons, to extend the law to banks/banking companies, to reduce the employees' contribution from 6 to 5% and raise the wage level for payment of contribution from Rs 4,000 p.m. to Rs 6,000 to raise the employers' contribution from Rs 276 to Rs 300. The monthly pension was raised from Rs 1,500 to Rs 2,000.
- The minimum wage for unskilled workers was raised from Rs 4,600 to Rs 6,000 per month through an amendment to the Minimum Wages for Unskilled Workers Ordinance, 1969.

Bills in the National Assembly

The National Assembly elected on February 18 started meeting in March and held 98 sittings till the end of 2008. During this period it adopted four bills: Industrial Relations Bill (adopted earlier by the Senate); the Finance Bill; the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services Bill (to provide for the training of parliamentarians); and the Pakistan International Airlines Corporation (Suspension of Trade Unions and Existing Agreements) Order (Repeal) Bill.

Eleven bills introduced in the National Assembly by the government and pending in the standing committees were: the Rulers of Acceding States (Abolition of Privy Purses and Privileges (Amendment) Bill; Family Courts (Amendment) Bill; Guardians and Wards (Amendment) Bill; Press, Newspapers, News Agencies and Books Registration (Amendment) Bill; Modarba Companies and Modarba (Floatation and Control) (Amendment) Bill; Insurance Act (Amendment) Bill; Federal Board of Revenue (Amendment) Bill; Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill; Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill; Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill; Companies (Appointment of Legal Advisers (Amendment) Bill; and Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Bill.

In Addition the government tabled six Ordinances issued in 2008 in the National Assembly. These were:

The Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Ordinance; Provincial Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Ordinance; Prevention of Electronic Crimes Ordinance (earlier the ordinance XLII of 2007 also had been tabled); Women in Distress and Detention Fund (Amendment) Ordinance; Regulation of Generation. Transmission and Distribution of Electric Power (Amendment) Ordinance, and Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Ordinance.

Constitutional package

A still-born initiative in the area of law-making was the preparation of a constitutional package by the Law Minister on behalf of the People's Party. The draft was presented to the PML-N for comments but the effort to amend the constitution was overtaken by events (specially the break-up of the PPP-PML(N) coalition.

The package, which was never introduced in the parliament, proposed the following changes in the constitution:

1. Art 1. North West Frontier to be renamed 'Pakhtunkhwa'.
2. Art 6. The definition of 'high treason' enlarged to include suspension/holding in abeyance of the constitution, and extended to superior courts condoning or validating subversion of the constitution or violating the oath of office by judges.
3. Article 41. Musharraf-specific clauses omitted.
4. Article 44. Clause (2) replaced. President eligible for re-election but only once,
5. Article 45. The President given the power to "indemnify any act whatsoever".
6. Article 48. The President's obligation to act on advice increased and his power to act in his discretion curtailed.
7. Article 50. The President excluded from the parliament's composition.
8. Article 55. The National Assembly's quorum reduced from one-fourth of the membership to one-sixth.
9. Article 58. Clause 2 and 3, that allowed the President to dissolve the National Assembly on his own and provided for reference to the Supreme Court, to be omitted.
10. Article 59. The Senate's strength raised by five (four non-Muslims, one member for Islamabad)
11. Article 62. Clause (i) dropped.
12. Article 63. Disqualification clauses revised.
13. Article 70. The system of joint sitting to resolve differences between the houses of parliament revived.
14. Article 71 relating to Mediation Committee omitted.
15. Article 73. The period allowed to Senate to comment on a money bill increased from 7 days to 14.
16. Article 75. The time allowed to the President to assent to a bill reduced from 30 days to 15.

17. Article 90. Instead of the executive authority of the federation being exercised by the President, it will be exercised in his name by the cabinet through the Prime Minister who will be the chief executive of the federation.
18. Article 91. The National Assembly to meet within 30 days of election and the procedure for the election of the Prime Minister elaborated.
19. Article 95 substituted. Procedure for vote of non-confidence against the Prime Minister revised.
20. New Article 95-A. Procedure for the designation of an Acting Prime Minister laid down.
21. New Article 99. The authority to make rules for authentication of orders and the rules of business shifted from the President to the federal government.
22. Article 100. The authority to appoint the Attorney-General transferred from the President to the federal government.
23. Article 101. Governor to be appointed from the same province.
24. Article 104. Provincial assembly Speaker to be the first choice as acting governor.
25. Article 105. Governor to be bound by advice. His power to dissolve assembly in his discretion omitted.
26. Article 112. Process for dissolution of a provincial assembly elaborated.
27. Article 116. Time allowed to the Governor for assenting to a bill reduced from 30 days to 15.
28. Article 129. The executive authority of the province transferred from the Governor to the provincial cabinet.
29. Article 130. Regulation of assembly's meeting after election and the chief minister's election.
30. Article 133A. New provision to regulate the working of a provincial minister as the Chief Minister.
31. Article 136. Revised procedure for a vote of non-confidence against the Chief Minister.
32. Article 139. Executive authority of the province transferred from the Governor to the provincial government.
33. Article 153. The composition of the Council of Common Interests enlarged by including in it the Leader of the House in the National Assembly and the Leaders of the Opposition in the Senate and the National Assembly both.
34. Article 154. Members of the National Economic Council designated, instead of being chosen by the President.
35. Article 160. The National Finance Commission to be constituted after every three years, instead of five.
36. Article 175. Provision made for a High Court for the Islamabad Capital Territory, and courts barred from validating subversion of the constitution.
37. Article 177. Condition of consultation with the Chief Justice for the selection of SC judges deleted.
38. Article 177 A. New provision laying down the manner of appointment of SC judges by a commission comprising chief justices of superior courts.

39. Article 179. To raise a SC judge's retirement age to 68 (from 65) years and fix the tenure of the current or future chief justice of the SC.
40. Article 181. To fix the maximum tenure of an acting judge of the SC at one year.
41. Article 182. To fix the maximum tenure of an ad hoc judge of the SC at one year.
42. Article 183. The permanent seat of the SC to be at Islamabad only.
43. Article 184. Matters in dispute between any two governments to be heard by a 5-member bench of SC constituted by the CJ in consultation with two most senior SC judges.
44. Article 185. Appellate jurisdiction of the SC revised.
45. Article 192. Up to 10% of the seats at each High Court to be reserved for women and at least 30% for persons from the judiciary.
46. Article 193. The process of appointment of CJ and judges of High Courts to be the same as laid down for the SC (Art 177-A).
47. Article 193A. New provision for appointment of High Court judges. (Similar to Article 177 A).
48. Article 194. The President or his nominee to administer the oath to the CJ of the Islamabad High Court,
49. Article 195. The retirement age of High Court judges raised to 65 (from 62) years and the CJ tenure limited.
50. Article 196. The most senior judge to be the acting CJ of a High Court.
51. Article 197. The maximum tenure of an additional judge of a High Court fixed at one year.
52. Article 198. The seat of the Islamabad High Court to be at Islamabad. The Sindh High Court to have benches at Hyderabad and Larkana also. The governor need not consult a CJ of the High Court for creating a new bench.
53. Article 203B. To permanently exclude taxation and banking laws from the jurisdiction of the Shariat court.
54. Article 207. A former judge of a superior court not to hold any office of profit for two years after ceasing to hold judicial office.
55. Article 208. Rules for the appointment of officers and servants of Islamabad High Court may be made with the approval of the President.
56. Article 209. The Supreme Judicial Council to be replaced with a Judicial Commission comprising "nonpoliticized" retired judges. Procedure detailed.
57. Article 209A. New article to provide for appeal against a verdict of the Judicial Commission to the SC.
58. Article 213. The Chief Election Commissioner to be selected by a joint parliamentary committee out of two names proposed by the Prime Minister in consultation with the Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly.
59. Article 215. The Chief Election Commissioner's tenure to be extended only by parliament in a joint sitting.
60. Article 218. The Election Commission to have a judge / ex-judge of each High Court.

61. Article 219. The duties of the Election Commissioner assigned to the Election Commission.
62. Article 221. The Election Commission, and not the Commissioner, to choose the staff.
63. Article 224. Instead of caretaker governments being appointed by the President and the Governor in their discretion, they will be appointed in consultation with the Speaker and Senate Chairman at the centre and the speaker in a province. The word 'caretaker' to be replaced with 'neutral' and caretaker: ministers, like the Prime Minister/Chief Ministers, to be ineligible for election.
64. Article 243. Appointment of Service chiefs by President out of three names suggested by an outgoing Chief of Staff, instead of 'in consultation with the Prime Minister'.
65. Article 243A. New provision. No declaration of war without prior approval by the Prime Minister/cabinet.
66. Article 247. Tribal areas. President's powers assigned to the federal government.
67. Article 255. All oaths by judges other than those provided in the Third Schedule to be invalid.
68. Article 260. Definitions. Consultation (advice not binding on President) clause deleted.
69. Article 267. President's power to remove difficulties redefined.
70. Article 268. Clause (2) (no amendment to a law in Sixth Schedule without the President's approval) deleted.
71. Article 2709A. In clause (1) reference to Gen. Zia's election to be deleted and clause (6) [amendment procedure for laws/orders in the Seventh Schedule] also deleted.
72. Article 270 AAA. New article. Some of Musharraf decrees of Nov-Dec 2007 validated.
73. Article 270BB. New article to validate the 2008 general election.
74. Article 270 CC. Judges removed by Musharraf to be restored to their offices.
75. Third Schedule. Oath for members of armed forces to include a pledge not to subvert the constitution.
76. Fourth Schedule. Entries 6, 1, 19, 21, 23, 25, 33, 37, 41 and 43A in the concurrent list to be dropped.
77. Sixth Schedule. Number of protected laws reduced.
78. Seventh Schedule. The protection to Zia's orders withdrawn.
79. 'Majlis-e-Shura', wherever occurring, replaced with 'Parliament'.

Ordinances

The deeply-entrenched tradition of making laws through the exercise of the President's extraordinary power to issue ordinances was, however, not wholly given up. The following ordinances were issued during 2008 (all for the whole of Pakistan and with immediate effect.)

- i. The Women in Distress and Detention Fund (Amendment) Ordinance; February 9; to amend Act XV of 1996 in the light of creation of a separate human rights division and a human rights ministry.
- ii. The Regulation of Generation, Transmission and Distribution of Electric Power (Amendment) Ordinance; February 21; to amend Act XL of 1997 and lay down the qualifications for the chairman.
- iii. The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Ordinance; February 21; to amend Ordinance XVII of 2002 and lay down the qualifications for the Chairman of the Authority.
- iv. The Prevention of Electronic Crimes Ordinance; May 31; in place of the Ordinance that had been issued in the last week of December 2007. Objective: “to prevent any action directed against the confidentiality, integrity and availability of electronic system, networks and data as well as the misuse of such system, networks and data by providing for the punishment of such actions and to provide mechanism for investigation, prosecution and trial of offences and for matters connected therewith.” Media representatives criticised the measure for the sweeping powers granted to the executive and advocates of abolition of death penalty disapproved the addition of cyber crime to the list of offences (27 already) liable to capital punishment.

Recommendations

1. *Law-making needs to be given due priority by the parliament as this is a pre-requisite to consolidation of democratic governance.*
2. *The use of Finance Bill to introduce changes in laws outside the category of money bills must be discontinued as this amounts to adopting legislation without readings in the Senate.*
3. *Ways must be found to submit to parliament’s scrutiny the ordinances put on the book of permanent statutes.*
4. *The practice of circulating important legislative proposals for eliciting public opinion should be revived.*

Source: State of Human Rights in 2009 (Lahore: Human Rights Commission of Pakistan 2009), pp.11-16

II. HRCP Stands-excerpts

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Militancy / sectarianism / extremism

January 10: HRCP is outraged at the ghastly killing of nearly two dozen people, most of them policemen, in an explosion outside the Lahore High Court. The Commission shares the grief of the bereaved families and is shocked at the loss of so many policemen who fell victim to a situation for which their employers must accept increasing responsibility. The target obviously was the procession of lawyers and they presumably escaped due to some delay in their

arrival at the venue chosen for massacre. Who is gunning for lawyers and why? Or, whoever the culprits are, do they want to terrorise lawyers or political parties or the people in general? Do they want to sabotage elections? Are people being targeted across the country in retaliation for the so-called war against militants? Where does the administration stand now for it has lost all claim to capacity to curb the monster of terrorism. The authorities must answer these questions in a straightforward manner as cursory excuses and advice to the harried citizens to look after themselves will be adding insult to injury. If the regime lacks the means to protect the people's lives, should it not seek expertise wherever it may be available? And if it lacks the will to do its primary duty it must not delay making way for a civilian government of national consensus.

March 5: HRCP has called upon the administration to demonstrate some capacity to protect lives against terrorist attacks instead of merely announcing alert or red alert after each explosion or suicide bombing. The terrorist attack inside the Navy War College in Lahore on Tuesday was not more serious than the recent incidents in Swat and Darra Adamkhel, in which nearly 100 people perished, but the fact that the site was very close to the Governor House and the Provincial Assembly chambers and the students at the college included officers from friendly nations, lent it special significance. As usual the authorities announced a red alert across the country. Such gestures are becoming increasingly meaningless as the terrorists are evidently enjoying freedom of the land. The administration must now admit its failure to deal with the menace of terrorism. The people have a right to know what has been done to trace terrorists' training camps, the routes used for supply of explosives, and the sources of funds used in these operations.

May 14: HRCP has expressed reservations about the reported terms of agreement between the NWFP government and the Tehreek-e-Taliban Swat. The NWFP government by giving concessions to militant elements engaged in terrorizing civilians not only glorifies them and their illegal acts but also encourages them. The government's reconciliatory approach towards those using violence is seen as an incentive to other militants to raise arms against the State and manage a bargaining position. It would be unfortunate if talks between the provincial government and the Taliban lead to a clean slate for armed elements responsible for bombings girls' schools, NGO outfits and businesses. HRCP encourages dialogue but not at the cost of granting impunity to perpetrators of human rights abuses. Militants anywhere cannot be treated any differently from other citizens and given a higher status, in imposing their own brand of Islam, laws and morality. By imposing the Fazlullah brand of Islam in Malakand division the government is playing with fire. It abdicates its responsibility to protect its citizens, particularly women and religious minorities from being persecuted in the name of religion. Conceding in Malakand will not be the end of the story. The adjoining areas are bound to be affected and religious bigotry will travel throughout the country. HRCP warns that such

delicate issues should not be decided from a position of weakness and for the sake of a compromise.

March 11: HRCP has expressed alarm at the government's inability to guarantee security of life to the people in the face of almost daily explosions even in cities teeming with personnel of a multitude of security agencies. In a statement issued after two suicide car blasts in Lahore, the commission said that the security agencies are consistently failing in fulfilling their primary responsibility of ensuring the safety of lives and property of the citizens. The State's role is clearly more than that of a news agency. At a time when the citizens are extremely worried about their security following explosions on a daily basis, the government has nothing comforting to offer. It is disappointing to once again hear government statements merely on whether the explosion was a suicide bomb or not. Official statements about a random number of suicide bombers entering different cities are hardly reassuring. Such statements do little more than increase a sitting-duck feeling among the common people. The current spate of explosions comes less than a month after the caretaker interior ministry claimed the government had broken the back of terrorists. Any effective plan to counter such unfortunate attacks in the future remains invisible. What the people would now like to hear is how the government plans to counter increasing bomb blasts in the country. The people would also like to see the security agencies concentrating their resources on ensuring security for the people instead of beating up peaceful protesters, detaining judges and resorting to "disappearances".

June 3: HRCP urges the government to come up with a holistic strategy and a sane policy in combating militants. The bomb blast in Islamabad, ostensibly targeting the Danish embassy, blowing up of a CD shop and a girls' school in Mardan, all in a single day should put those in authority on full alert. Militancy is spreading and recruitment is in full swing. According to credible reports received by HRCP, the militants are being handled with kid gloves while the security forces are regularly using excessive force against non-combatants. Election results of 2008 make it abundantly clear that the militants have very little support amongst the local population. In the former Malakand Division, where militants have kept the local people hostage, the polls returned candidates that were not affiliated to religious extremism. There is also disturbing information that the militants enjoy patronage of those who are in the decision making bodies running the so-called "war on terror". HRCP calls upon political leadership to take the lead in expressing unqualified outrage against acts of terrorism as such acts only harm the economic, political and social growth of Pakistan and its citizens. Pakistan cannot afford to isolate herself from the international community but the activity of the militants and the smugness of the establishment will alienate a number of friendly countries. It will have a devastating effect on the country's economy and political standing. All sections of Pakistani society must act with sobriety and denounce all those supportive of Taliban style groups operating within the country.

July 21: The government must immediately put an end to bloodshed in Kurram Agency and restore its writ in a region held hostage by terrorists engaged in sectarian violence, HRCP said in a press statement. The people of Kurram Agency have been suffering horrific sectarian violence at the hands of home-bred and foreign terrorists since April 2007. For over a year, the main road connecting the agency to the rest of Pakistan has been occupied by militants who close it as and when they please. Ambulances have been attacked, innocent people slaughtered and dismembered bodies in sacks found dumped by the roadside. Heavy weapons are used to target peaceful civilian neighbourhoods. Communication and water supply systems have been destroyed, and the local economy ruined. The situation has grown from bad to worse. There is little evidence that government's efforts to restore law and order have worked so far. The agency has been virtually cut off from the rest of the country, prices of essentials have hit the sky, development activities have been suspended and closure of courts and government offices is causing serious problems for the people living in the agency. The government needs to act in a manner that can restore confidence of this area's people in rule of law and the government's ability to ensure rights for the people. The government needs to ensure that Kurram residents are duly protected.

November 17: HRCP has expressed anxiety at the growing reach of extremist elements in the NWFP, especially at recent threats by the so-called Tehreek-e-Taliban to an NGO working on development issues and women's rights in Peshawar. On top of the recent spate of targeted killings and abductions in Peshawar and generally in the NWFP by extremist elements, this escalation in threats to NGOs is not only aimed at the civil society but at whatever remains of the state's writ in that part of the country. In the latest threat sent to an NGO's Peshawar office by email, the extremists' claim of having photographic and video evidence of immoral activity by female staff – being seen with male colleagues and working in the field without wearing a veil – and asking them to 'mend their ways' should not surprise anyone. The escalation in pressure and blackmail against NGOs working for public welfare has not come overnight, but is a direct result of the authorities' cowing down to extremists, negotiating with criminals and ignoring clear signs of dilution of state authority. The government must take meaningful measures without wasting any more time to ensure safety, security and freedoms of individuals, as much for the citizens' sake as to reassert its authority in a region where extremists are filling the void left by the State.

November 24: HRCP has applauded the World Performing Arts Festival (WPAF) organizers for the fact that they continued with the festival despite a series of blasts close to the venue and for not bowing to extremist elements' pressure and threats of sabotage. Credit is also due to the government for improving security for the last day of the event. The HRCP believes that militants must not be allowed to kill the spirit of the people, which has been

very much central to such entertainment and cultural activities, especially in Lahore. The society and the silent majority must assert itself by coming together and exposing militant and extremist elements as the miniscule minority that they represent. It must also deny them the space they seek to create by resorting to threats, intimidation and other pressure tactics.

Anti-terror measures, Swat and Tribal Areas

August 29: HRCP has written to Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani and NWFP Chief Minister Ameer Haider Hoti, asking them to urgently address the security situation in Swat district, and ensure that the local population is not targeted by a haphazard military operation and facilitate the internally displaced persons.

In the letter that the HRCP Chairperson wrote to the prime minister and the NWFP chief minister, the HRCP has said: “The HRCP has been anxiously following the security situation in Swat district. We are aware that it is a difficult and complex issue but recent developments are extremely alarming. Reports from the district show that the life of the residents is at great risk despite the military operation. Individuals who are capable of building public opinion against militancy and excesses of the security forces are being targeted and some have indeed lost their lives. Others are at risk and can be targeted any moment.

According to our information neither the federal nor the provincial government have been able to assist those who are fleeing the area due to the desperate circumstances. We have received worrying reports of attacks on women who are now stranded in the district and despite calls to the security forces have received no protection from them.

It is indeed for the government to draw up a law enforcement strategy and their obligation to protect peaceful citizens from militant groups. A genuine and well-planned action against those who have taken the law into their own hands can only be supported and encouraged. However, the realities on the ground show a different picture. It has come to our notice through a number of reliable sources that the military operation is greatly flawed. There are incidents where innocent citizens had to fight for their lives on their own against militant groups while the security forces looked on and failed to protect those under siege. At least in one incident, even the women in the house had to pick up arms to defend themselves and to unsuccessfully save their lives. They were outnumbered by armed militants attacking them and the law enforcement personnel failed to come to their rescue despite several calls. Those who risked their lives to provide information to the security forces on militant groups and criminals were betrayed and many paid for it with their lives. On the contrary, a large number of testimonies have been received by the HRCP indicating that factions within the security forces are working hand in glove with the militants and criminal elements against the interests of the civil population of the area. HRCP was shocked at the desperation expressed by the locals at the failure of the military action and their resolve to organize themselves for defending themselves against armed attacks. This would lead to civil strife and even a greater exodus of those who stayed behind in the hope that the government

would act on their behalf rather than on behalf of the militants or external forces that wish to see an operation of any sort.

The locals in the area have pointed out that the operation is without a direction and targeting civilian population rather than the militants. They have given numerous examples where militants could have been apprehended or attacks on civilians could have been averted had the security forces acted with diligence. They insist that there is no targeted operation against militants rather it is a haphazard armed invasion of the people of the District of Swat.

Nevertheless, we feel that all may not be lost and that the civilian population can still be saved and supported as the district is still accessible, though under great risk.

HRCP calls upon this government to take urgent and immediate steps to:

Provide military convoys and protection to those who wish to evacuate the district and arrange for proper shelter for such internally displaced persons.

That the civilian government both at the federation and in the province must monitor the situation and keep their lines open to the local population who can inform them on the realities on the ground.

A high-powered, multi-party delegation of parliamentarians should visit the area and hold consultations with the population of the district so that a true picture emerges. In particular the high-powered delegation must give ample hearing to women and religious minorities living in the district who are far more vulnerable.

It is crucial that all organs of the federal and provincial administration as well as the high-powered delegation address the question of collusion between elements of the security forces and the lawless militants.

In view of the seriousness of the situation we are under obligation to share this information and therefore HRCP is compelled to release this letter publicly.

Your Excellencies, our organisation has been in the forefront in demanding a transition to democracy. It is our belief that only a democratic political set-up has the capacity to address such intricate issues that have been built up over the years. This is the foremost challenge for this government and we feel it is our duty to assist you by bringing to your notice authentic information that we receive on a daily basis.”

September 9: HRCP has asked the government to take meaningful steps to prevent loss of life and property in the Tribal Areas in raids by US-led coalition forces operating in Afghanistan. Attacks in the Tribal Areas, the killing of civilians and violation of Pakistan’s territorial sovereignty by the US-led coalition forces have assumed the form of a regular series. Each attack is followed by stereotyped official protests by Islamabad, threats of ‘befitting replies’, statements of condemnation by all and sundry and the occasional summoning of the US envoy to the Foreign Office. Such gestures achieve little, nor do they convince the people of the government’s keenness to protect innocent lives or to assert its sovereignty. Securing the life of its people is a

responsibility the government owes to all its citizens, including those living in the Tribal Areas.

Pakistan must urgently hold earnest negotiations with its allies in the so-called war on terror to ensure that such attacks on its territory and killings of innocent Pakistanis in the Tribal Areas cease. The issue is much too serious to be addressed only through angry and reactive statements after every attack. It must be emphasised in these talks that such attacks are counter-productive. The killing of innocent people creates hatred and militants faster than any military action can eliminate.

September 25: While endorsing the need for using effective force to fight terrorism in NWFP, HRCP has called upon the authorities to avoid aggravating the already unbearable plight of the civilian population. The human rights situation in Swat is alarming and is getting worse every day. HRCP is shocked and grieved at the loss of life as a result of firing by security forces on a crowd that was only drawing attention to their unbearable suffering. Information available to HRCP reveals that the situation in Swat is harrowing for more than one reason. On the one hand the population is facing a serious threat from militants and on the other hand disruption of electricity, gas and water supply and shortage of edibles have compounded their misery.

While the citizens have to put up with the rigours of extended curfew, at some places round the clock, they must have protection against criminals and lawless elements who appear to be enjoying a free hand. In this situation, the decision by the people of Swat to demonstrate in Mingora is a measure of their courage as well as their despair, for which they deserve to be respected and not fired upon. The anxieties of the local community have been fuelled by reports that the militants have been able to strengthen their domination in the areas falling under the Matta, Khawazakhela and Kabal police stations and that the authorities themselves appear to be sceptical about the outcome of the operation against them. Almost everywhere the people are astounded by the inability of the law enforcement agencies to track the apparently unhindered movement of the militants.

The ordeal of the people can be judged from the killing of at least three individuals, namely Abdul Kabeer Khan, Musa Khan and Muhammad Amin for their affiliation to the government. In one case, the victim, brother of a sitting minister, resisted the militants throughout the night and consistently called for help but his cries for help went unheeded. Eventually, he and his family were mercilessly slaughtered. Equally hair-raising is the story of another victim whose child was killed in front of his eyes before he himself was liquidated.

HRCP calls for investigation of such cases and for justice to be done. HRCP has no doubt that such murderous acts do not enjoy any religious sanction and their perpetrators deserve to be dealt with collectively. They are themselves responsible for inviting use of force against them. However, it is necessary to ensure that the cost of operation to the civilian population must be drastically controlled and the needs of the internally displaced persons addressed with diligence and sincerity.

HRCP believes it is certainly time to seek the help of the UNHCR and the ICRC in mitigating the suffering of the displaced people. This also applies to displaced persons in other parts of the country.

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Law and order

January 1: HRCP has called for immediate disbandment of vigilante squads maintained by the establishment or its favourite political party as their interference with citizens' normal affairs is not only unlawful it would lead to chaos. In an unfortunate incident, a few young girls, including Muneeza Jahangir, HRCP chairperson's daughter and a well-known TV producer / reporter, accompanied by a couple of young men, decided to take photographs of some election posters. Suddenly a bunch of armed toughs pounced upon them, mercilessly beat up a young man, dragged the girls and shut them up in the office of the son of the outgoing Punjab Chief Minister. The armed goons abused the girls and threatened them by pointing their guns at them, and offered the same treatment to Ms. Asma Jahangir when she arrived at the scene to rescue the girls. These men had no right or authority to resort to violence and imprison their victims in private premises. Worse, the culprits seemed to enjoy local authorities' patronage and were reportedly backed by a couple of police constables in uniform. The interim rulers must probe the matter and call the guilty to account, that is, if they have the power to do so.

January 10: HRCP expressed grave concern at reports that the government was using the current disturbances after the tragic assassination of Benazir Bhutto, as an excuse to enter people's homes, arrest hundreds of thousands of political workers and create an environment of fear. HRCP has decided to collect – to the extent possible – the available data and particulars of the hundreds of thousands of workers of political parties and other citizens arrested or wanted by the local administration in the province of Sindh on the allegations of arson, loot, dacoities and burning of the private and public properties following the assassination of the PPP chairperson.

February 12: HRCP strongly condemns spread of mob violence and lawlessness across the country, just before the general elections in Pakistan. This violence has spiralled completely out of control of the government, and is threatening to plunge the country into a state of total anarchy. Recent terrorist attacks in Pakistan show the failure of anti-terrorism policies. It is obvious that mere policing and random arrests can do nothing to overcome the menace. A broader approach is required, coupled with a willingness to end the air of secrecy that currently surrounds operations being carried out against alleged terrorists, the statement said. Repeated attack on the election campaigns and the candidates, including the recent attack on the workers of ANP resulting in deaths of several party workers indicate there are attempts to intimidate voters.

A government which cannot provide safety to the voters and their candidates is incapable of holding free and fair elections. The caretakers and

President Pervez Musharraf have no moral or legal justification to remain in office.

HRCP also condemns the violent attack on the peaceful gathering of lawyers, human rights activists and members of the civil society in Islamabad on February 09, 2007 and the recent fake cases of sedition and war against state registered against more than a dozen lawyers in Peshawar, who were protesting against the arrest of the Chief Justice, Mr. Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, and prominent lawyers.

HRCP believes that targeting innocent people, suspending access to justice and repressing legitimate dissent would only create resentment, encourage extremism and exacerbate insecurity.

November 25: HRCP has welcomed government's announcement of disbanding the political wing of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and must stress that the measure was long overdue. However, official action to control the agency's activities must not stop there, especially in view of its widely criticized role in enforced disappearances among other illegal practices. The HRCP implores the government to ensure that there must be a law under which the ISI operates. The government should also put in place a procedure to allow accountability of the agency's actions in a transparent manner by parliament.

December 1: HRCP has expressed shock at the loss of life in recent violence in Karachi and urged the government to ensure that the city is de-weaponised and no one is allowed to fan ethnic strife there. The loss of life and property in Karachi in acts of indiscriminate violence in the past two days is truly alarming. Deployment of paramilitary force in the sensitive areas to help control the situation is needed, but such deployment and shoot-at-sight orders do not address the causes of violence. Talibanization is no doubt a serious threat not only in Karachi, but for the whole of Pakistan. However that cannot be justified as a pretext to fan ethnic violence. It is shocking and beyond comprehension that some political leaders were urging Karachiites to buy weapons. Also disappointing have been the slogans for expulsion from Karachi of citizens from other provinces. The Constitution guarantees every citizen's right to live in any part of the country, and this right cannot be compromised.

The extent and use of weapons in the hands of non-state actors in the city in the last few days has been horrific. The government should ensure de-weaponisation of the city in a truly unbiased manner. The possibility of the government achieving that depends to a large extent on it convincing the citizens of its ability and willingness to protect all so that they need not keep private arms to protect themselves. The significance of impartial action cannot be emphasized enough. Picking favourites must be avoided as that could lead to disastrous consequences.

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Judicial crisis

January 2: HRCP has strongly condemned extension of the illegal detention of Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan, President of Supreme Court Bar Association as well as of Mr. Ali Ahmed Kurd, member of the Pakistan Bar Council and the continued illegal detention of Mr. Justice (r) Tariq Mahmood, former president of Supreme Court Bar Association. This decision of the present regime is not only without any legal or moral reason or justification but is on account of personal vengeance and vendetta, only because these senior leaders of the lawyers community had successfully pleaded the case of Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry and have played and are continuing to play a commendable heroic role in the lawyers movement for independence of judiciary, rule of law, freedom of press and restoration of true uncontrolled democracy.

HRCP has demanded forthwith release of Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan, Mr. Justice (r) Tariq Mahmood, Mr. Ali Ahmed Kurd and all other lawyers and warned the government that at this crucial juncture, political condition in the country will further aggravate if such illegal and vindictive policy and actions are not forthwith withdrawn by the regime.

February 4: HRCP regrets that the government could not stomach its good act of restoring Aitzaz Ahsan and Tariq Mahmood to freedom for more than 24 hours. The tactic used by the government to evade its obligation to refer their cases to the Review Board reminds one of practices favoured by autocrats of the most contemptible variety. An administration that circumvents its legal and moral duties in this manner undermines the very foundations of an order based on respect for law. What makes the action against these distinguished lawyers reprehensible, from the very first day of their incarceration, is the fact that they have not been accused of any offence, and what they are supposed to be prevented from doing is not a crime in any democratic dispensation. Their detention at the moment also amounts to a crude interference with the electoral process. The orders of their detention must be withdrawn forthwith.

March 8: HRCP endorses the call of Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan, President Supreme Court Bar Association, to commemorate the Black Flag Week in and outside Pakistan from March 9 – 16, 2008, and the Black Flag Hoisting to be held on the 10th of March 2008, to express HRCP's solidarity with the lawyers' movement for the restoration of the judiciary, rule of law and supremacy of the constitution of Pakistan.

April 9: No words are strong enough to condemn the unpardonable violence inflicted upon Arbab Ghulam Raheem in Karachi and Dr. Sher Afgan in Lahore. Both will cause the people distress, shame and anger for years to come. The victims' record may not be such as to make any defenders of justice and democracy envious, and their warped view of human rights is known, but every human rights activist will defend their right to disagree and their right to personal safety and dignity. Both incidents must be thoroughly probed and no

quarter shown to those responsible for committing violence as well as those who failed in their duty to quell disorder. Both incidents reveal the extent to which long periods of dictatorship have brutalized the Pakistan society, and how professional gangsters of old days have been joined in criminal acts by educated professionals. The Karachi incident invited indictment of political workers and the Lahore horror stigmatised the lawyers. One should still like to hope that both these groups realize their stake in fostering democracy and justice. As neither of the two incidents appeared to be a fortuitous affair there is ground to suspect that the traditional enemies of democracy might be up to their nefarious tricks. But that only increases the responsibility of political activists and lawyers to avoid being trapped or exploited. It is good that the bar leaders have condemned the disgraceful episode but the Bar Council must also hold an independent inquiry. They have to save their movement from coming to grief as a result of the excesses or weakness of a few of them. The situation does not allow the luxury of evading responsibility.

June 6: HRCP has expressed wholehearted support to the lawyers' movement for restoration of the judges, independence of judiciary & rule of law. It assured the lawyers community of participation of HRCP, its office bearers & members in the "Long March" of the lawyers from Multan to Islamabad, for achievement of the said causes, which are imperative for the protection of the human rights and national interest.

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Military rule & elections

January 8: Activists of civil society organisations and concerned citizens, including representatives of the four provinces, met at HRCP office in Lahore on January 4th 2008 to discuss the over-all situation and the upcoming elections and summed up their concerns and demands in the following statement:

The assassination of Benazir Bhutto has made the situation in Pakistan much worse. Elections have been postponed despite the demand by the main parties, including the most severely affected PPP, to stick to the scheduled date of January 8, 2008. The new date for elections has been set for February 18, but there are apprehensions of further postponement and lawlessness. General Musharraf's decision to use the army during and after the elections is ominous as it aims to stifle dissent and public opinion through the use of force. The participants demanded that there must be no further delay in elections as this will only exacerbate the crisis of state and society.

The participants condemned lawlessness regardless of the identity of culprits but insisted that a clear distinction must be made between those who have indulged in looting and destroyed public property and those who gave vent to their spontaneous grief and shock. They expressed concern at reports that the government is using these disturbances as an excuse to enter people's homes, arrest thousands of party workers and create an environment of fear. The participants strongly and unequivocally condemned the attempt to give an ethnic colour to the tragedy and its aftermath for electoral advantage. They demanded

that all political workers must be released immediately and allowed to exercise their democratic rights, otherwise the tendency to single out and blame one party for the disturbances will send wrong signals to the victims and further undermine the federal bond.

It is time for General Musharraf and everyone else to recognize that he is now a major part of the problem rather than a part of the solution. He must accept responsibility for actions and developments that have contributed to the national crisis, especially since August 2006, such as the killing of Nawab Akbar Bugti in Balochistan: the firing of the Chief Justice of Pakistan, mishandling of the Lal Masjid incident, removal of the majority of the superior judiciary, imposition of Martial Law under the guise of Emergency and the absolute failure to make adequate security arrangements that resulted in the assassination of Benazir Bhutto. He should quit office forthwith, and allow the assemblies that will come into existence after the elections to elect the president.

Noting that an independent judiciary is critical to the functioning of a democratic state and order in society, the participants called for the restoration of the judges who have been illegally removed from office. The independence of the judiciary cannot become a reality unless the key institution of the superior judiciary is strong and secure. The judges who took a principled stand rather than follow the precedent of bowing to the whims of the executive have set a very different standard for the institution, eliciting country-wide resonance. Their phenomenal act must be fully and unequivocally endorsed by political parties and society at large. And this can only be done, operationally, by ensuring their restoration. The participants called upon both the parties participating in and those boycotting the elections to come together to ensure the restoration of the superior judiciary.

The independence of the judiciary and the promotion of people's democratic aspirations has been the central concern of the lawyers' movement. Bar associations have led a remarkable struggle since March 2007 and put up with state oppression and all kinds of other hardships without faltering. Participants were of the view that the lawyers should be extended full support by the other sections of civil society and political parties to continue their struggle.

The participants demanded repeal of the PEMRA ordinance and removal of all restrictions on the media.

The meeting noted that the real menace of militancy and extremism has to be contested politically. Under no circumstance must force be used indiscriminately as such a policy has led to the death of innocent civilians. This is the inevitable fall-out of an undemocratic state and lack of consensus on the basis of a political strategy. In this regard the meeting took a serious view of General Musharraf's snide and derogatory comments on Pakistani society which he claims is not developed enough to deserve democracy and democratic institutions. Such unmerited denigration is what emboldens the regime's external patrons, the United States in particular, to assume that Pakistan can deserve nothing better than autocracy and rule by decree. The government's continued collusion with the US administration has seriously damaged Pakistan's sovereignty and national interest.

The participants noted that the government's claim of good governance and economic growth are belied by the rising cost of food and essential items. A minimum of eight-hour power cuts, shortages of water and gas are seriously impacting on people's lives and livelihoods. As always, the worst hit are the vulnerable sections of society: the poor, women, minorities and children.

The manifestos of the political parties taking part in the elections were discussed at the meeting. While appreciating the parties' efforts to address the many issues confronting the state and the people, the participants expressed the view that greater attention needed to be paid to the means of combating religious extremism, discrimination against women, minorities and the economically marginalised. It was also necessary to plan for the elimination of poverty and guarantee a fair deal to the tillers of the soil and the working people.

January 15: The Sindh Council of HRCP has taken serious notice of the provocative election campaign of PMLQ through advertisement in the leading newspapers of Pakistan and warned the Government of Pakistan that such advertisements would only lead to ethnic violence in the country. The council considers it a serious criminal act on the part of PML-Q which is not only against the code of conduct of the Election Commission of Pakistan but also provokes people to resort to violence on ethnic and regional basis. The council strongly demands that the Government of Pakistan must take serious action against those responsible for such advertisements in the newspapers and that the Election Commission of Pakistan must also take notice of such provocation.

February 18: HRCP will not be monitoring the general polls, either by itself or in partnership with anyone. All HRCP offices and fieldworkers will be observing certain aspects of the elections, i.e. they will be watching and assessing the electoral process – pre-poll, during polling and post-poll – as it is part of Pakistan Coalition for Free, Fair and Democratic Elections (Pacfrel).

HRCP will be observing and documenting:

1. the Election Commission's (EC) performance
2. complaints of candidates to the EC
3. voting arrangements for prisoners
4. if government servants have been persuaded/pressurized into voting en bloc
5. status of applications for postal ballots and related information and issues
6. reports of returns from Pakistan missions abroad
7. if women have been allowed to vote freely and where and how it has not been so
8. if forced labour has been allowed to vote
9. candidate's manifestos
10. future plans of workers of parties that have boycotted the polls.

February 19: HRCP applauds the people of Pakistan who overcame several obstacles and despite pre-poll rigging gave a clear verdict in favour of democratic governance. Regrettably, this opportunity was not available to the electorate in Balochistan. Boycott by worthy political leadership from contesting

the elections and their call for staying away from the polls have not allowed a reflection of the genuine will of the people of Balochistan in the 2008 polls. This will pose a challenge to the federal parliament as well as the future government of the province.

The people of Pakistan have placed a monumental responsibility on the winning political parties to ensure that the democratic transition takes place. In addition, the people expect the new parliament to restore the deposed judiciary, improve law and order and solve the economic crisis. The new government will also be expected to find imaginative ways of combating terrorism, without putting the lives of non-combatants in danger. This will require policies and actions built through consensus. Unilateral and rash decisions of the past have not checked the rise of 'Talibanisation' but has added to the miseries of the people. A large number of people have been displaced, lost their lives and been regularly exposed to violence. Pakistan's civil society, too, must continue to play their role and maintain closer interaction with political parties.

HRCP would also like to express its gratitude to all foreign observers, who travelled to Pakistan to monitor our elections. Despite the threat of violence, these observers came to ensure that the true voice of the people of Pakistan could be heard. The message is clear: rule by the military can no longer be tolerated, whether in the name of combating terror or in the garb of ensuring a transition to democracy.

February 26: While welcoming the people's verdict of February 18, and felicitating them on foiling the designs of the various elements that wanted to interfere with the electoral process through threats of violence, illicit influence, blackmail and bribery, HRCP has demanded immediate convening of the newly elected National and Provincial Assemblies and transfer of power to majority parties / coalitions so that the peoples' wishes for a change in the Presidency and restoration of judges could be expeditiously addressed. This does not affect HRCP's censure of large-scale manipulation of the electoral process before the polling day and the Election Commission's failure to rise to the minimum acceptable standards of efficiency and respect for democratic imperatives. But these matters, as well as irregularities noticed during and after the polling, will be taken up in due course. HRCP sees no force in the plea against a change in the presidency on the ground that it might affect the war on terror. Indeed the restoration of decision-making powers to popularly elected representatives and their parliament will lend the state actions legitimacy and strength both and the performance of the armed forces in this area also should improve when they realize the importance of democratic sanction for their operations. Above all, resistance to change in the presidency will pollute the political environment, embolden anti-democratic professionals to undermine the national consensus and create unwarranted obstacles to the resumption of the people's democratic journey. All restrictions on the judges and their families, lawyers, and political activists must be withdrawn forthwith. Further, there is no gainsaying that any tendency to put the common citizens' aspirations for bread, job, and a decent living on the back burner will undo the recent gains by democracy and cause

dangerous frustration to the masses. Finally, HRCP wishes to hail the beginning of the end of the people's alienation from politics and hopes that the country's principal parties will help this trend by establishing rule by as large a democratic consensus as possible.

March 30: The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan welcomes the Prime Minister's 100-day reform and relief package, in particular the lifting of the ban on students' and trade unions, review of the PEMRA ordinance and the FCR, incentive to women workers, relief to farmers, increase in the minimum wage and expansion of employment opportunities. It is an encouraging declaration of purpose and policy.

HRCP believes that a complete break from authoritarian form of governance requires a forward looking approach to the many crises the country is facing. The foremost need is to establish democratic and responsible government, which fully respects human rights and protects its citizens. HRCP believes that while a large number of reforms are required, some initial steps are vitally needed to pave the way for an atmosphere where human rights can be respected:

1. The government of Pakistan should become a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratify the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as the Convention on Involuntary Disappearances and the Convention against Torture.
2. Over 1.5 million internally displaced people are in dire state in Pakistan. The government must extend humanitarian assistance to all IDPs and seek for this the co-operation and assistance of the UNHCR.
3. At the earliest opportunity, the Parliament should set up a permanent and independent Election Commission and disassociate sitting judges from the electoral process.
4. The judiciary must be restored to the position of 2 November and all criteria of independence of the judiciary be adopted, so that the selection and accountability of judges can be made transparent.
5. There are thousands of Pakistani prisoners in foreign jails. Over 10,000 are in Gulf countries alone. We urge the government to depute human rights officers in missions in countries where Pakistani prisoners are suffering. A large number of Pakistani prisoners continue to suffer imprisonment in India despite court orders that they should be repatriated and there are many others who have served their sentences.
6. A large number of people are still on the list of the disappeared and their cases are pending in various courts for over a year. The superior judiciary too could not get these individuals freed from the illegal detention with the security and intelligence agencies of the country. The new government should order their release and record their statements, so that the perpetrators of this heinous crime can be brought to justice.
7. No political government can survive nor can people's rights be protected unless the working of Pakistan's intelligence agencies is made transparent and they are accountable to the elected authorities of the country. The

parliament should identify the laws under which the intelligence agencies of the country operate and make them accountable. A clear message must be sent out that abuse of citizens' rights and excesses against them by security and intelligence agencies will no longer be tolerated.

8. Over 7,000 prisoners are on the death row. In the past year, 134 convicts were executed and 309 new ones awarded death penalty. The number of people awarded death penalty and the executions are among the highest in the world. HRCP research shows that international safeguards and restrictions on the application of death penalty are almost never observed. Capital punishment is irreversible and there is strong evidence that it is being applied in the country without regard to the due process. HRCP believes that a moratorium be immediately placed on the execution of death penalty and in the meanwhile a parliamentary committee should review the application of this form of punishment.
9. All reports of deaths in custody, torture or through so-called encounters must be thoroughly investigated. The reports of such investigations should be filed in the courts of the district and civil judges, and made freely available to the media and civil society.
10. All safe houses being illegally run by the law enforcement and security forces must be closed.
11. The government must ensure that women also benefit directly from ownership rights transferred to the disadvantaged sections of society by the government.
12. NGOs must be granted access to prisons and police stations.
13. The Prime Minister must take a pledge from all political parties to denounce militancy and ensure that no political party arms itself.
14. It is crucial that a high level investigation be carried out into the target killing of scores of policemen in all parts of the country so that the perpetrators are identified and brought to justice.
15. Finally, HRCP urges members of the parliament to eliminate the misuse of authority by the political forces themselves, including the Nazims. This was particularly evident during the recent election.
16. Repeal of Pakistan Bar Council Act amendments.

HRCP recognises that the government is faced with serious economic challenges which require its utmost priority, but these challenges cannot be met unless the rights of the people are fully guaranteed.

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Benazir Bhutto

February 9: Pakistanis are looking for a dignified closure to the tragic assassination of Benazir Bhutto. The Scotland Yard findings do not satisfy the basic requirements of any investigation. In addition, there is a contradiction in the report as all those present in the car of late Bhutto confirmed that the explosion took place seconds after she slumped back into her seat in the vehicle. The findings of the report on the one hand admit that "what happened was complicated by the lack of an extended and detailed search of the crime scene,

the absence of an autopsy, and the absence of recognized body recovery and victim identification processes”, and yet it concludes that “nevertheless, the evidence that is available is sufficient for reliable conclusions to be drawn”. A categorical conclusion in the absence of basic forensic and freedom of deposition by doctors can only be viewed as a hunch of the investigators. Other observers in Pakistan have different intuitions but the fundamental objective of any investigation must be of categorically identifying the authors, perpetrators, and accomplices of the attack. This has not been achieved and cannot be reached by an investigation that is carried out under the shadows of the present authorities. A proper investigation must go deeper into establishing the links of those suspected, so far arrested, or identified by Ms Bhutto herself or her family.

It is therefore imperative that in the interest of the people of Pakistan a United Nations-led investigation into the assassination of Benazir Bhutto and the sources of violence in Pakistan be carried out. An impartial investigation will lead to the truth being uncovered and for the wheels of justice to take their natural course.

December 12: While hailing the conferment of the United Nations Human Rights Award on Benazir Bhutto as an honour for Pakistan, HRCP has reminded the government of its increased responsibility to promote human rights both at home and abroad. This and the fact that the award was given on the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights increase the government’s responsibility to pursue its human rights agenda more vigorously than ever.

This should mark the beginning of a concerted drive to resolve the human rights issues left over by the previous regime, such as: the attack on the judiciary of November 3, 2007; the cases of the disappeared persons; the plight of the internally displaced people; the proliferation of armed militants; and the high scale of violence to women and discrimination on grounds of belief. All this should keep the newly created Ministry of Human Rights busy for quite some time. It is essential that the state should go beyond addressing cases on individual basis and develop institutional safeguards against human rights violations. At the same time the country needs a full blown programme to implement the international human rights treaties. This must include ratification of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention Against Torture, adoption of legislation needed for implementing the key human rights instruments, and creating institutional frameworks for eliminating the threats to the people’s right to life, liberty and security and relief from poverty and exploitation.

Constitution package

June 7: The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan has studied the proposed constitutional package floated by the Pakistan People’s Party. There is no doubt that the present Constitution, which contains several amendments, particularly those inserted through the brute force of dictators require wide ranging amendments so that the country can embark on a constitutional rule. At the same

time, the package does not fulfil a number of requirements and is tailored to suit the interests of the current set-up, rather than to deepen democratic governance. HRCP wonders how the PPP proposes to secure support to their package as clearly they do not have the two-thirds majority required for constitutional amendments. As such the few pressing issues, including of the restoration of the judges will painfully linger to the detriment of the country and the democratic transition.

There are a number of positive amendments. The change of name of NWFP to Pakhtoonkhwa, the demise of Article 58(2) B, reserved seats for minorities in the Senate and the restoration of the executive authority with the Prime Minister are steps in the right direction. HRCP also welcomes the amendments regarding the selection and appointment of judges to the superior courts and in restricting sitting judges from taking on other high official assignments. There is though a contradiction. Sitting judges cannot be appointed as a Chief Election Commissioner or to other non-judicial posts but can still be members of the Election Commission.

HRCP rejects the requirement of the Prime Minister being a Muslim as added by the package amendment to Article 91. It is disappointing that a party that prides on its democratic credentials should discriminate amongst citizens on the basis of religion. The package has also not touched upon Articles 62 and 63, that require members of the parliament to be “pious” and their qualification is based on vague and subjective criteria of the “goodness” or otherwise of an individual. Similarly, the restriction on the election of a person for more than two terms to be Prime Minister is kept intact.

The suo motu powers of the Federal Shariat Court to take up any law and strike it down as being repugnant to Islam is being kept intact, while the original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court to hear matters of public importance with reference to the enforcement of fundamental rights is severely curtailed by the package. Under it, the Supreme Court can only pass a declaratory order under its inherent powers and will be not be able to enforce its rulings providing relief to the victims. HRCP is mindful that judges must act and select cases of “public importance” with due care and through well-reasoned judgments, yet the package amendment will be a serious blow to the enforcement of fundamental rights of vulnerable groups and individuals in Pakistan.

HRCP rejects the wording of “reappointment” of the pre-3rd November judges as recommended under Article 270 CC of the package. It could also be misconstrued especially as the two consecutive terms of the Chief Justice appear to have been deliberately kept vague. As such the package leaves an impression that the formula of minus-one and plus-one has been adopted, which has firmly been rejected by the lawyers community and civil society. It will lead to a worse judicial crisis that will have long-term repercussions.

The intention of the package appears to undermine the independence of the superior courts. The composition and powers of the Judicial Commission are arbitrary. The Commission has the potential of turning itself into a menacing watchdog rather than an impartial tribunal. By allowing the Judicial Commission to make a code of conduct for the superior judiciary, the authors of

the package have subjugated the Supreme and High Courts to a body of retired persons. The requirement of Commission members to be “non-politicized” is vague and absurd. Who decides what is “non-politicised” and how can any person of knowledge and standing be politically empty?

HRCP hopes that the PPP will take on board the suggestions made to it by all political forces and make clear decisions on the constitutional direction it wishes to pursue. Priorities must be set as several issues are at stake and must be resolved through the Parliament, but the package must not keep all of them hostage to a collective decision in a single package. The present draft of the package is totally unconvincing, both in its intent and substance, in dealing with the political crisis left behind by Musharraf and his military predecessors.

Musharraf's resignation

August 18: While hailing General (r) Pervez Musharraf's resignation from presidency as the logical result of the people's verdict of February 18, HRCP has stressed the sobering effect of the development and reminded the coalition partners that satisfaction of the people's heightened expectations will now demand greater sincerity and resoluteness than before.

The government will be tested to the extreme in meeting these expectations. Unity of democratic forces, effective supremacy of parliament, and consolidation of institutions of governance, the judiciary foremost among them, will be essential for pulling the state out of the mire created by a dictatorship. The issues that will brook no delay are: steps to fight ongoing insurgency in the north and the plight of the internally displaced persons as a result thereof; a crash programme to deal with the economic crisis, especially the rising cost of living and unemployment; and the urgency of guaranteeing the security of life and liberty. The people also must not forget that constant vigil is the price of liberty. And of progress too.

Source: State of Human Rights in 2009, pp.218-222, 225-26, 227-230-235. www.hrcp-web.org