Ambassador Rehman’s Message
Since arriving in Washington, D.C. just over twelve months ago, I have had the great privilege of working to improve the relationship of two great nations.

To achieve lasting goals, Pakistan and the United States must continue to work together comprehensively – toward our mutual interests, to build trust and to understand our distinct challenges. We must be responsible partners and support the efforts of the international community in facilitating a stable and peaceful Afghanistan, work collaboratively to combat terrorism and stem the flow of narcotics cleaving the region. Importantly, and above all else, together we shall continue to make trade, jobs and economic growth our common priority.

As I recall the enduring progress both sides have achieved over the last year, I see promise and hope in our two countries forging an even closer partnership and deepening our engagement to further the goals of peace, prosperity and stability for our people and the region.

In the coming months, Pakistan will prepare for its first democratic transition, continue its efforts in regional diplomacy and work toward a level of trade and economic growth commensurate with its great potential.
SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN KERRY ON PAKISTAN-U.S. RELATIONSHIP

During separate phone conversations with each of President Asif Ali Zardari and Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry reaffirmed the desire of the U.S. Government to forge closer bilateral ties and emphasized the nations’ shared interests in supporting democratic civilian institutions, fighting terrorism and extremism and achieving regional stability, including a secure and peaceful future for Afghanistan and agreed to visit Pakistan at his earliest convenience.

EMBASSY OUTREACH TO U.S. CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS

Ambassador Rehman met with several members of the U.S. Congress to share recent developments in the bilateral relationship and discuss matters of mutual interest, including counter-terrorism, the situation in Afghanistan and the reconciliation process, Pakistan’s efforts to normalize relations with India, bilateral success in countering IEDs, and Pakistan’s first peaceful transition of democratic government.

DEMOCRAT SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ OF NEW JERSEY, CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, ACKNOWLEDGED PAKISTAN’S ROLE IN STABILIZING THE REGION AND ITS ASSISTANCE TO THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT IN THE RECONCILIATION PROCESS.

DEMOCRAT CONGRESSWOMAN NITA LOWEY OF NEW YORK, RANKING MEMBER ON THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR PAKISTAN AND INQUIRED ABOUT DOMESTIC POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS.

REPUBLICAN CONGRESSMAN HAROLD ROGERS OF KENTUCKY, CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, ASSURED AMBASSADOR REHMAN OF CONTINUING U.S. SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE AND EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION FOR PAKISTAN’S COOPERATION IN THE FACE OF VARIOUS NATIONAL CHALLENGES.

DEMOCRAT CONGRESSMAN ELIOT ENGEL OF NEW YORK, RANKING MEMBER ON THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, STATED THAT THE PAKISTAN-U.S. RELATIONSHIP WAS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT, INQUIRED ABOUT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN PAKISTAN AND SOUGHT AMBASSADOR REHMAN’S VIEWS ON MAKING U.S. ASSISTANCE MORE EFFECTIVE AND MEANINGFUL.
EMBASSY WELCOMES NEW CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS AND ENGAGES IN DIALOGUE WITH SENIOR STAFF

At a dinner held at her residence, Ambassador Rehman extended her heartfelt congratulations to Democrat Congressman Ami Bera of California and Democrat Congresswoman Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona. Pakistani American community leaders from across the United States were also in attendance to welcome the new members to Washington.

In addition, Deputy Chief of Mission Dr. Asad Khan met with committee staff of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, House Armed Services Committee, House Appropriations Sub-Committee on State and Foreign Operations and House Appropriations Sub-Committee on Defense. DCM Khan responded to questions and concerns expressed by the staffers and discussed recent progress and achievements in Pakistan-U.S. relations.

DEMOCRAT SENATOR ROBERT P. CASEY OF PENNSYLVANIA, MEMBER OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, ASSURED AMBASSADOR REHMAN OF CONTINUED U.S. ASSISTANCE IN ENHANCING PAKISTAN’S CAPACITY TO OVERCOME THE COMMON MENACE OF IEDS.

MILITARY DELEGATION VISITS U.S. TO ATTEND DEFENSE RESOURCING CONFERENCE

A delegation led by Lieutenant General Muhammad Asif, Director General Joint Staff, attended the Defense Resourcing Conference and met with several officials from the Pentagon and the State Department to discuss recent developments in bilateral defense cooperation and achievements in counter-terrorism, counterinsurgency, and the stabilization of Afghanistan.

AMBASSADOR REHMAN MET U.S. TRANSPORTATION COMMANDER

General William M. Fraser, Commander of the U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) called on Ambassador Rehman at the Embassy to discuss mutual interests and logistical cooperation.

Pakistan’s Chief of Army Staff General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani met with ISAF commanders General John R. Allen and General Joseph F. Dunford Jr. The officials discussed their mutually shared goals of peace and stability in the region and strengthening cross-border cooperation. Both sides acknowledged the potential for future progress and noted the recent effectiveness of operations on both sides of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

PAKISTAN AND U.S. MILITARY LEADERS MEET IN ISLAMABAD TO DISCUSS STRENGTHENING MILITARY RELATIONS
MALALA YOUSUFZAI NOMINATED FOR NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

Malala has been formally nominated for the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize. Her name was put forward by three members of the Norwegian parliament for “her courageous commitment to the right of girls to education.”

SINDH ASSEMBLY PASSES FREE EDUCATION BILL

The provincial assembly in Sindh unanimously passed a provision for free and compulsory education to all children aged five to 16 in the province. Sindh is the first province to pass the law but others are expected to soon follow.

MALALA YOUSUFZAI AND FATHER TO RECEIVE HOPE AWARD FROM OKLAHOMA CITY

Honored for the hope they have displayed in the face of political violence, Malala Yousufzai and her father, Ziauddin, will receive the 2013 Reflections of Hope Award from the Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum at a reception and dinner on April 8 in advance of the 18th anniversary of the April 19, 1995, Oklahoma City bombing. Ziauddin Yousufzai will receive the award on his and his daughter’s behalf. His remarks will be telecast globally from Oklahoma City.

KARACHI AND LAHORE LITERARY FESTIVALS

Karachi and Lahore held literary festivals that featured Pakistan’s most famous writers and poets. Both great successes, the Lahore Literary Festival, in its first year, drew around 10,000 guests on its first day.

TRADE & ECONOMY

POSITIVE TRENDS IN DOMESTIC ENERGY SECTOR

While Pakistan is still suffering from a severe energy crisis, two major producers of domestic Pakistan oil and gas have seen an increase in their production and their profits. In addition, a consortium of foreign investors is collaborating on a $700 million project to build four coal-based power plants at Port Qasim, each of which will be capable of generating 125 megawatts.

2013 INVESTMENT POLICY SHOULD ATTRACT MORE FDI

The Board of Investment has finalized the 2013 investment policy which it hopes will help to attract at least $5.5 billion in foreign direct investment per year by removing impediments to foreign and domestic investments and eliminating the minimum equity requirement and foreign ownership ceiling on most sectors. The draft is being sent to the cabinet for approval.

TEXTILE EXPORTS UP

According to data from the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Pakistan’s textile exports increased by 8.39 percent during the first seven months of the current fiscal year compared to the same period last year. Growth has continued in 2013 and slightly accelerated as January exports are up 8.72 percent compared to the previous year.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS AND INCUBATORS: READY TO INNOVATE

A new report shows the potential dynamism of the social innovation movement in Pakistan. Diverse sectors ranging from agriculture to education are home to early-stage enterprises that are achieving financial returns, social progress and are attracting growing investment interest. The report by the Economic Policy Group explores how incubator hubs, like those that already exist in some of Pakistan’s premier business schools, can unlock the innovation potential of Pakistan’s social entrepreneurs through seed funding in business school incubators and leveraging public-private partnerships.


ALSO PAKISTAN

While the mainstream media often focuses on the problems Pakistan faces and the challenges confronted by our government and our society, there is a substantial amount of good news coming out of Pakistan.

The Embassy is pleased to share these stories of achievement with you as we redefine a narrative for Pakistan based on the values of equitable democratic and social entitlements, pluralism, rule of law and transparent governance.

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AMBASSADOR REHMAN VISITS HARVARD

Ambassador Rehman, in a public address before the JFK Forum at the Harvard Kennedy School, discussed the past, present, and future of the Pakistan-U.S. relationship, highlighting the importance of Pakistan-U.S. collaboration for a sustainable future for Afghanistan and discussing Pakistan’s progress in democratic reforms and women’s empowerment. After the event, Ambassador Rehman met with students from the Harvard Pakistan Student Group who shared the development of the Pakistan Innovation Network, an ongoing collaboration between the students and Harvard’s South Asia Institute. The following day, Ambassador Rehman joined the South Asia Institute and Harvard faculty members for lunch and discussed ideas to promote collaboration between Harvard and Pakistani universities.

Video and Harvard South Asia Institute (SAI) Newsletter: http://southasiainstitute.harvard.edu/2013/02/ambassador-sherry-rehman-visits-harvard/

EMBASSY ROUNDTABLE ON PAKISTAN-U.S. COLLABORATION IN DISTANCE LEARNING

As part of its “Generation Next Initiative,” a program launched by the Embassy in January 2013 to engage youth, young professionals and students in the U.S. and Pakistan, the Embassy organized a roundtable discussion on distance learning and virtual education. Ambassador Rehman chaired the roundtable, which was attended by representatives of the U.S. State Department, USAID, think tank community members, NGOs and members of the Pakistani diaspora. The participants discussed the potential for cooperation in the use of modern and innovative techniques in youth education and began to develop a platform to strengthen existing programs and promote greater collaboration between the United States and Pakistan in the area of education.

KASHMIR SOLIDARITY DAY

At an event organized by the Embassy in observation of Kashmir Solidarity Day, Ambassador Touqir Hussain, Professor at Johns Hopkins University and Pakistan’s former Ambassador to Spain, Brazil and Japan, addressed the dispute’s historical legacy and underscored the importance of its resolution. He emphasized the importance of recent gains, which will manifest themselves in lasting prospects of peace and stability between India and Pakistan, while enhancing the potential for economic cooperation and the emergence of an integrated regional market. Ambassador Rehman reiterated Pakistan’s moral, political and diplomatic support for Kashmir’s self-determination and emphasized the international community’s responsibility to fulfill its commitment to resolve the conflict.
AMBASSADOR REHMAN SPEAKS AT CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR BREAKFAST MEETING

Ambassador Rehman spoke at a breakfast meeting with the Christian Science Monitor. She highlighted the growing strength of Pakistan-US relations and the desire for closer cooperation based on confidence, trust and mutual respect and investment in each other. She said she looked forward to working with the new Secretary of State John Kerry and other Obama Administration officials on taking the relationship forward. She reiterated Pakistan’s position that drone strikes are counterproductive and a direct violation of sovereignty and international law that fuel the emergence of new militants.


AMBASSADOR RECEIVES SMITH COLLEGE MEDAL

Ambassador Rehman’s alma mater awarded her the Smith College Medal to commemorate her achievements on behalf of women’s rights. At the event hosted in Northampton, Massachusetts, the Ambassador highlighted her dedication to the women of Pakistan and the importance of the government’s efforts to empower women at the grassroots level.

Video: http://www.smith.edu/events/rallyday_webcast.php

AT ATLANTIC COUNCIL, AMBASSADOR REHMAN COMMENTS ON PAKISTAN-U.S. TIES

Ambassador Rehman discussed the bilateral relationship and its future prospects alongside South Asia Center Director Shuja Nawaz. She suggested broadening trade and economic ties, maintaining high-level dialogue, and continuing efforts to improve mutual understanding to strengthen the relationship over the long-term.

Video: http://www.acus.org/content/rehman-sustainable-us-pakistan-relationship-must-focus-trade-and-economic-ties
AMBASSADOR REHMAN EXHORTS YOUNG PAKISTANI-AMERICANS TO HELP REALIZE GOAL OF EDUCATION

At an event hosted by Georgetown University to support the Citizens Foundation, Ambassador Rehman celebrated the efforts to support equal access to education and to establish new opportunities for the youth of Pakistan to prosper. Ambassador Rehman emphasized the Pakistan government’s commitment to education by highlighting President Asif Ali Zardari’s establishment of the Malala Fund for children’s education in collaboration with UNESCO.

Video: http://embassyofpakistanusa.org/Ambassador_at_Georgetown%20University_02092013.php

AMBASSADOR REHMAN MEETS WITH PAKISTAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN BOSTON

Ambassador Rehman attended a community dinner organized by Mr. Shahid Ahmed Khan.
The Embassy of Pakistan welcomes your feedback.
Please send your comments to newsletter@embassyofpakistanusa.org
or visit www.embassyofpakistanusa.org