Ambassador Rehman’s Message

I am happy to finally post good news on the Pakistan-US relationship. The US apology for the death of 24 Pakistani soldiers last November, which we have been working on for months, has now allowed the Government of Pakistan to reopen the NATO supply routes that run through our country into Afghanistan. The backlog has started to move, and as the NATO trucks cross through Pakistan, we are optimistic that the US-Pakistan partnership can be recast and reshaped, once again making important progress on the critical issues and values that unite us.

In an election year, politics often trump the best laid plans. We hope that in the days ahead, however, the Pakistan-US bilateral relationship will settle down, moving from crisis management to sustained cooperation. There is too much at stake for both of our countries to not work together. Our goal is the same — a stable, economically viable and democratic Pakistan and a realistic and peaceful security transition in Afghanistan.

It has been a tough year for the bilateral relationship, with crises pulling us in many directions, but we’re back on track. We are working together again. We are in the process of restoring confidence. This will be an important summer for re-building bridges, and we certainly will do our best to post real progress from our end.

“We are sorry for the losses suffered by the Pakistani military.”

On behalf of the United States, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told Pakistan she was sorry for the loss of 24 Pakistani soldiers killed at a Pakistani check post along the Afghan border in November 2011.

Pakistan reopens NATO supply lines, signs MOU with U.S.

NATO supply lines supporting security efforts in Afghanistan were reopened by Pakistan in July after 7 months of closure. The terms of transit were later codified by the signing of an MOU.

Coalition Support Funds disbursed

Pakistan received approximately $1.1 billion from the Coalition Support Fund as reimbursement for the expenses incurred in fighting terrorism.

Ambassador’s annual barbeque underscores importance of bilateral relationship

Gathering at the Ambassador’s residence, prominent members of Congress, the White House National Security team, cabinet members, and other high-level U.S. officials mingled with regional experts and leading voices on Pakistan to discuss important issues in the bilateral relationship.

Google’s Executive Chairman visits Pakistan

Eric Schmidt, the Executive Chairman of Google, praised Pakistan after his recent visit in June. Commenting on Pakistan’s challenges, Schmidt suggested experience belied perception; that many of Pakistan’s problems are of image, not reality. Google has expanded its operations and programs in Pakistan in recent months.
PAKISTAN-U.S. RELATIONS

PAKISTAN REOPENS NATO SUPPLY LINES

Pakistan’s Defence Committee of the Cabinet (DCC) decided to reopen the NATO supply routes through Pakistan to ISAF forces in Afghanistan following Secretary Clinton’s expression of apology.

On July 5, heralding a new phase in Pakistan-US relations, the first NATO supply trucks crossed into Afghanistan since November 2011.

The routes had been closed since the November 2011 airstrikes. “We appreciate Secretary Clinton’s statement, and hope that bilateral ties can move to a better place from here,” said Ambassador Sherry Rehman. Capitol Hill welcomed the news. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry (D-Mass.) issued a statement, saying “We have much to work on together, from fighting terrorism to helping to facilitate a stable Afghanistan. These and other mutual issues of interest and concern should be our focus going forward, despite our differences.”

PAKISTAN-U.S. SIGN SUPPLY LINE MOU

On July 31, Pakistan and the U.S. signed a Memorandum of Understanding that will allow NATO supply convoys to transit Pakistani territory until the end of 2015.

In a statement, the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad said the deal underscores the two nations “shared commitment to support Afghanistan and regional stability” and added, “Our countries should have a relationship that is enduring, strategic, and carefully defined.”

CLINTON: “WE ARE SORRY FOR THE LOSSES SUFFERED BY THE PAKISTANI MILITARY.”

On July 3, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar that the United States was sorry for the death of 24 Pakistani soldiers killed along the Afghan border in November of last year. Secretary Clinton pledged that America is “committed to working closely with Pakistan and Afghanistan to prevent this from ever happening again.”

PRESIDENT ZARDARI PRAISES AMBASSADOR’S EFFORTS

In a letter to Ambassador Rehman, the President said “I am well aware of your relentless efforts in putting Pakistan’s point of view across to the American administration and Congress. With patience, perseverance and skillful handling of the negotiations, you and your team have made us proud.” He also presented her with a silver calligraphic rendition of a prayer.

COALITION SUPPORT FUNDS RELEASED

Pakistan received approximately $1.1 billion in Coalition Support Funds (CSF) to reimburse the costs incurred by 150,000 Pakistani troops carrying out counterinsurgency operations along the border with Afghanistan. Authorized by the U.S. Congress, the funds are used to reimburse expenses incurred fighting al Qaeda and the Taliban.
AMBASSADOR REHMAN HOSTS ANNUAL SUMMER BBQ

On June 27, Ambassador Rehman opened the doors of her Washington residence to members of Congress, senior Administration officials, regional experts and leading voices on Pakistan. Among those in attendance were National Security Adviser Tom Donilon, Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, USAID Administrator Dr. Rajiv Shah, Under-Secretary of State Tara Sonenshine, Special Assistant to the President for Afghanistan and Pakistan General Douglas Lute, Senate Intelligence Committee Chairperson Senator Dianne Feinstein, Congressman Ed Royce, Congressman Jack Kingston, Congresswoman Jackie Speier, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee, and President of Americans for Tax Reform Grover Norquist. “Ambassador Sherry Rehman is now the most familiar diplomat on Capitol Hill, making friends up and down both Houses,” a Congressional staffer said. The presence of so many important figures at the Ambassador’s Residence demonstrated the mutually recognized importance of the Pakistan-U.S. relationship. According to the Wall Street Journal, Donilon’s appearance signaled the Obama administration’s change of heart which ultimately led to Secretary Clinton’s apology and the consequent reopening of NATO supply lines.

AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS

Ambassador Rehman had numerous meetings with members of Congress in June and July, meeting with Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-GA), Sen. Dan Coats (R-IN), Rep. David Dreier (R-CA), Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-HI), Sen. John Isakson (R-GA), Rep. Walter Jones (R-NC), Sen. John McCain (R-AZ), Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY), Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY), Sen. Harry Reid (D-NV), Sen. James Risch (R-ID), Rep. Mike Rogers (R-MI), Rep. Jackie Speier (D-CA), and Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI). In her interactions, the Ambassador stressed the importance of overcoming bilateral challenges and working towards an even keeled relationship based on mutual respect. She responded to concerns regarding Dr. Shakeel Afridi, stressing that Pakistan has an independent judiciary which functions pursuant to the Constitution and in accordance with the laws of Pakistan. On the Haqqani network, the Ambassador strongly conveyed the message that Pakistan has no tolerance for militant groups as evidenced by Pakistan’s military campaigns in Swat, Bajaur, Mohmand Agency and South Waziristan.

DRONE ATTACKS NOT “OKAYED” BY PAKISTAN

Speaking with CNN anchorwoman Christiane Amanpour on July 10, Ambassador Rehman insisted that U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan have not been secretly sanctioned by the government. Ambassador Rehman reiterated the serious concerns of the people and the Government of Pakistan regarding drone strikes within Pakistan’s borders, stating, ”We consider it counterproductive to all our goals. It radicalizes foot soldiers, tribes and entire villages in our region.” She emphasized that drone strikes are a violation of international law, adding that Pakistan’s concerns should not be brushed aside.
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in Washington DC

World-Class Growth for Pakistani Businesses

Entrepreneurs and business leaders from the Pakistan 100 – a group of companies identified and ranked by AllWorld – participated in a three-day summit at Harvard University before traveling to Washington, D.C. to meet with government officials. The Pakistan 100 companies are growing on average at 55 percent a year, collectively employ over 41,000 people and have an aggregate revenue/turnover of close to US$1.5 billion.

"E2E", the top ranked company and one of Pakistan’s leading providers of end to end logistics services, was founded in 2006. Five years later, the company has grown by 1,918 percent and is generating over US$75 million in revenue. Rozee PK, an online job search engine started in 2007, offers another example of incredible growth. Today, Rozee PK posts more than 25,000 jobs daily and has experienced 8,500 percent growth in five years. The Pakistan 100 are a testament to the zeal and passion of the Pakistani private sector. Their biggest challenge is figuring out how to increase their visibility and brand Pakistan as an investment destination.

Clinton Calls for Promoting Trade Ties with Pakistan

At a multilateral July 8 meeting in Tokyo, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the United States and Pakistan are working on a formula to increase trade ties with Pakistan apart from aid dollars. A liberalized trade regime would be a boon for all Pakistani exporters.

Karachi Stock Exchange Gains After NATO Supply Lines Restored

The Karachi Stock Exchange strengthened from its June 13 low of 1337.89 to the end of July, appreciating noticeably after the July 3 announcement to reopen NATO supply lines. The KSE 100 is up nearly 50 percent since the start of the year.

From the Headlines and Beyond

Google’s Executive Chairman Visits Pakistan

Eric Schmidt, the Executive Chairman of Google, praised Pakistan after his recent visit in June. Commenting on Pakistan’s challenges, he suggested his experiences belied popular perceptions. "We met a number of impressive Pakistanis," wrote Schmidt. "There is a good case for optimism about Pakistan, simply because of the large emergent middle class." Schmidt added, "Here’s to the new civil society of Pakistan, who will use connectivity, information and the Internet, to drive a peaceful revolution that brings Pakistan up to its true potential."

New Chief Election Commissioner Appointed

Justice Fakhruddin G. Ibrahim (R.) has been appointed by consensus as the new Chief Election Commissioner for the upcoming General Elections in Pakistan. Justice Ibrahim served as the Senior Advocate Supreme Court, Attorney General of Pakistan, Federal law minister, Justice of Supreme Court and Governor of Sindh and was among those few judges who refused to take oath under a provisional Constitutional order of General Zia-ul-Haq in 1981, choosing to resign from his position on the Supreme Court instead.
RICHARD G. OLSON, U.S. AMBASSADOR DESIGNATE TO PAKISTAN

Richard G. Olson testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on July 31. Olson, currently the coordinating director for development and economic affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, is awaiting Senate confirmation before taking his post at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad. Mr. Olson’s testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee can be accessed here: http://embassyofpakistanusa.org/Misc_pdf_file/Olson_Testimony2.pdf

PAKISTANI CHEF APPEARS ON “CHOPPED”

Fatima Ali began cooking when she was five for fun. She never knew it would lead her onto the Food Network. “Chopped”, a televised American cooking competition, accepted her application to participate against three other chefs and on June 12 the viewing audience watched the 22-year-old flambé her way to victory. “For me, cooking engages your five senses and more. You are constantly thinking of the next step. It starts with an idea, what you want, who you want to create it, how and why. There is nothing in the world you can personalize more than food,” said Ali.

FULBRIGHT SCHOLARS FROM PAKISTAN PREPARE TO STUDY IN AMERICA

Around 180 Master and Ph.D students from Pakistan will be coming to America in 2012. Students from across the country will attend U.S. universities to study business, engineering, public policy, law, and health among other disciplines. Pakistan is the largest recipient of this program in the world.

OTHER NEWS AND EVENTS

PAKISTAN PURSUES COMPREHENSIVE CHILD HEALTH PROGRAM

At a call to action meeting addressing child survival held in Washington D.C. on the 14 and 15 of June, Ambassador Rehman outlined the initiatives Pakistan is taking to ensure health protection for children and to put an end to preventable child deaths. Of the multiple initiatives, the Government’s flagship Lady Health Workers program, launched by the late Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in 1994, remains a key strategy for delivering care to rural and marginalized populations. The program aims to provide community based preventive services through local engagement and education. The 110,000 LHWs in Pakistan cover over 70% of the rural population and provide key services related to antenatal care, breastfeeding promotion, immunizations, including oral polio vaccines, and treatment of common illnesses.

EMBASSY HONORS VITAL VOICES ORGANIZATION

On June 8, the Embassy held a lunch honoring Samar Minallah Khan, a documentary film maker working in the Northern Areas of Pakistan, who was recognized by Vital Voices, an organization established by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to empower women and others to effect change at the grassroots. During her speech Ambassador Rehman reminded the audience that “We need to bring more people out – not just women – as ambassadors of change, as ambassadors that can build bridges between societies.”

AMB. RICHARD G. OLSON

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Pakistan 2012 Fulbright Scholars (U.S. Embassy in Islamabad).

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Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in Washington DC

OTHER NEWS AND EVENTS

EMBASSY HOLDS CONSULAR CAMP IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA

In June, the Embassy organized a two-day Consular Camp in Atlanta, Georgia, bringing consular services to the doorstep of the Pakistani-American community in Georgia and adjoining states. Attendees learned about consular activities and responsibilities, visa processing, and how to serve Pakistani and local communities more effectively. The camp was the latest in a semi-annual series of consular instructional events.

EMBASSY HOSTS USPAK FOUNDATION’S 3RD ANNUAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

The Embassy hosted over 80 Pakistani-American students for the 3rd Annual Youth Leadership Conference organized by the USPAK Foundation on July 10. To showcase real life examples of leadership by Pakistani youth, the Embassy aired a series of short video documentaries, produced by Black Box Productions, presenting the lives and achievements of four extraordinary Pakistani girls. These include Malala Yousufzai (National Peace Prize winner from Swat), Suhaila Muhammadi (karate champion from Balochistan), Arfa Karim Randhawa (youngest ever Microsoft Certified Professional) and Saima Saleem (first ever visually impaired officer to join the Foreign Service of Pakistan).

POLICE REFORM IN PAKISTAN “CRUCIAL”

Ambassador Rehman delivered the opening remarks at the launch of Asia Society’s report “Stabilizing Pakistan through Police Reform” held on 25 July at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Ambassador Rehman stressed that the role of police was particularly crucial in checking the advance of extremism and terrorism, and, through better outreach and a stronger police network, could work more effectively to root out crime. Parliamentary Senator Aitzaz Ahsan, who came from Pakistan to speak as a panelist, stressed that establishing rule of law was imperative to bring about this transformation in Pakistan.

ZEB AND HANIYA JOIN WITH AMERICAN MUSICIANS FOR A SPECTACULAR EMBASSY CONCERT

On July 17, the Embassy of Pakistan and Ambassador Rehman welcomed Zeb and Haniya, the Pakistani Sufi and fusion musicians to the first open Embassy evening. Their five piece ensemble performed in front of a diverse audience that included Congressman Dennis Kucinich, senior American officials from the State Department, the White House, policy institutes, and enthusiastic members of the Pakistani diaspora. Zeb and Haniya’s inspiring performance offered another example of Pakistan’s cultural diversity, showing a side of Pakistan that is too often overlooked. “This is the new, resilient Pakistan – and we will strive to showcase, as part of our public diplomacy effort, the prodigious powerhouse of Pakistani culture and music,” said Ambassador Rehman.

Pakistan Deputy Chief of Mission, Dr. Asad M. Khan, addressing US Pak Foundation’s 3rd Annual Youth Leadership Conference delegates at the Embassy of Pakistan on July 10, 2012.

Zeb and Haniya perform at the Embassy.
CENTRE STAGE: NOORI PERFORMS AT KENNEDY CENTER

In June, Ambassador Rehman welcomed one of Pakistan’s top pop bands, "Noori," and folk rocker Arieb Azhar to the Kennedy Center as part of a new State Department initiative titled “Center Stage.” The new program is bringing international performing artists in dance, music and theater from Haiti, Pakistan, and Indonesia to tour throughout the United States in 2012.

PAKISTAN URGES US TO RESPECT ITS SOVEREIGNTY

On June 19, at a conference organized by the Pakistan-American Congress (PAC), Ambassador Rehman called for the U.S. to respect her country’s sovereignty and end unilateral U.S. drone strikes on Pakistani territory. “We want our American friends to respect our sovereignty and territorial integrity. This means no drone attacks and no incursions into Pakistani territory.” There are challenges and opportunities in Pakistan-U.S. relations, but once the two countries surmount these challenges, they will gain from a mutually productive and respectful relationship.


EMBASSY UPDATES

Bilal Hayee
First Secretary

Mr. Bilal Hayee joined the Embassy in the month of July. He holds a Master’s degree in International and Comparative Laws from Monash University, Australia.

Mr. Hayee has worked on various political and administrative positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He has wide experience in multilateral issues, particularly human rights and humanitarian laws.

Embassy updates

The Embassy of Pakistan welcomes your feedback.

Please send your comments to newsletter@embassyofpakistanusa.org or visit www.embassyofpakistanusa.org