

PRIME MINISTER'S LUNCHEON

SPEECH IN HONOUR OF

PRESIDENT HAMID KARZAI

11 MARCH 2010

Your Excellency,

President Hamid Karzai

Distinguished Members of the Afghan Delegation

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me immense pleasure to extend a very warm welcome to my brother, President Hamid Karzai and distinguished members of his entourage. Pakistan, Mr. President, is your second home. Our people greet you with open arms, not just as a revered guest, but as one of their own.

Pakistan and Afghanistan have a very special relationship. It is rooted in shared history and geography and fortified by bonds of culture and kinship. Our ties are eternal and abiding. Our pains and pleasures, our sorrows and successes, intersect thus imparting in our collective conscience, a compelling sense of shared destiny.

Excellency,

Our decisions today will make us answerable to the coming generations. We are determined to address the challenges by restoring peace to our lands; by healing the scars of the past and nursing the wounds of today; by vanquishing the terrorism; by according our relationship the respect, the trust and the sanctity it warrants and by marching forward in partnership along the path of progress and prosperity. The Joint Declaration on Directions of Bilateral Cooperation signed by our two countries, last year, was a landmark achievement. It

reflected our common desire for a peaceful and prosperous future. Now it is time to take the next steps in solidifying our comprehensive strategic partnership.

Excellency,

Our discussions today have indeed been very productive and fruitful. We have been able to identify elements of a common agenda. We will pursue it with full vigour. We will strive to increase our bilateral trade to \$ 5 billion by the year 2015. We will work for opening the new roads and new highways and extend rail links into Afghanistan. We will double the number of scholarships for Afghan students. To harness the resources and energies of our corporate sectors, we will establish a Pakistan-Afghanistan Reconstruction Consortium, and a Silk Route CEOs Forum. We will also study the possibility of a Food Bank to enhance food security in our two countries.

Excellency,

Pakistan has a strong desire and is working to see Afghanistan peaceful, stable and prosperous. In it, lie the seeds of our own peace, stability and prosperity. We commend the roadmap set out by Your Excellency for Afghanistan and endorsed by the international community. We feel it is a solid blueprint for a better tomorrow.

The democratic Government of Pakistan has consistently held the view, and continues to believe that the future of Afghanistan must be determined by the people of Afghanistan. They alone must be the masters of their own destiny. In the pursuit of peace and development, for national reconciliation and reintegration, Pakistan places its full weight behind the agenda and the vision outlined by the Afghan people and their elected leadership. In our humble capacity as brotherly neighbor Muslim country, we will continue to assist the people of Afghanistan in every manner possible. Pakistan's Government and people, wish you Excellency, and their Afghan brethren every success.

Thank You.