

**SPEECH BY
THE PRIME MINISTER
AT
NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY**

13 DEC 2010

**The President, National Defence University,
Distinguished guests, faculty members,
Participants of the National Security and War Course,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Assalam o Alaikum and Good Morning**

Today it is a matter of great pleasure for me to visit the illustrious NDU and interact with this august gathering of future leaders of Pakistan Armed Forces and officers of civil bureaucracy. I am also delighted to see a large number of allied officers from many friendly countries as well. I am sure your presence here enriches the course and brings uniqueness to National Defence University in this regard. I also hope that you take along good memories and friendships alongside knowledge from Pakistan.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I have been asked today, to speak to you on “My Vision of Future Pakistan. Let me begin by saying that I have great pride and confidence in the people of Pakistan who have, time and again, proved that they are capable of overcoming the challenges successfully. It is our privilege to lead this great nation and our own conviction is that the country is ‘Alhamdolillah’ strong and on its way to progress and prosperity with a bright future ahead.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It would be more appropriate if I speak to you in some detail about present affairs of the country which will set the stage to make an objective assessment of the future. Pakistan is arguably in an ‘unprecedented era of transformation’. In its short history; particularly since 9/11, Pakistan has faced great challenges and has emerged as an important country in the comity of nations. Because of its geo-strategic location, reservoir of human resources, natural resources, achievements and potential, Pakistan can play a meaningful role in major global and regional policy initiatives.

Pakistan now has a turbulent but gradually stabilizing economy; from a comparatively uneasy, but improving internal environment, media has an

unprecedented freedom of expression and active participation of civil society, women now are politically empowered and asserting themselves in their respective domains and above all, the democratic culture is setting in. Notwithstanding much that is still to be done, I indeed see with optimism a very bright future for Pakistan, should we continue to remain on course by following the policies put in place with pragmatism and realism.

We are living in very exciting as well as very dangerous times. These are the times of great challenges and great opportunities, and it is up to us, what we make of them. Extremism and terrorism, which has turned into an international security challenge, is essentially affecting Pakistan the most. Poverty, unemployment and poor social indicators stand in the way of our progress and cause great suffering in many parts of the country. The challenges that we face today are broader and more diverse than we ever imagined. We need to build the capacity to meet these challenges in a befitting manner.

However, the question we need to ask ourselves is that how effective institutions and approaches of the 20th century are in meeting the realities of the 21st century. While the world has definitely changed, have we changed with it? The need of the hour therefore is to develop a long term strategic vision, an overarching strategy in line with the realities of our times and the requisite institutional capacities to meet these challenges up front in a pro-active manner.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me now allude to Pakistan's role in geo-political intricacies of today's world:

- a. In wake of the September 11 events, the world changed. Pakistan boldly decided to join the international coalition against the war on terrorism. By doing so, Pakistan made a significant impact on its international standing, protecting its vital national interests. Pakistan's relations with the US have further flourished and both countries have initiated wide ranging Strategic Dialogue leading to a mutually benefiting long term strategic partnership. Now, there exists a greater understanding of each other's national interests and sensitivities.
- b. Friendship with China constitutes the cornerstone of our foreign policy. China fully supports Pakistan's policy of combating international terrorism. Our bilateral economic ties are good and the two sides have concluded many agreements encompassing cooperation in the fields of education, infrastructure development, mining, telecommunication, defence collaboration and tourism, which would imply significant Chinese investments and financing in Pakistan.
- c. Pakistan is actively participating in the activities and programmes of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). The OIC continues to extend valuable support to Pakistan on the issues

of vital importance. The Muslim 'Ummah' has an image problem; it cannot get its point of view across effectively to major stakeholders in the world. OIC provides us the platform to put across our perspective as peaceful and progressive people.

d. Pakistan is formally committed to the principles and objectives of SAARC. It favours consolidation of the progress made through better coordination for result-oriented activities and avoidance of venturing into too many areas. Pakistan believes that a peaceful and secure environment in the region is of vital importance for the promotion of economic development. It is imperative that the member states commit themselves to removing the underlying causes of tension in the region and to foster trust, friendship and good neighbourly relations.

e. Pakistan stands for peaceful and negotiated resolution of all issues including the core issue of Jammu & Kashmir with India. We would continue to support the justified cause of people of Occupied Kashmir morally, politically and diplomatically. We seek the resolution of the Kashmir issue in line with resolutions of the United Nations.

f. In step with global trends, if I may conclude, Pakistan's foreign policy has been re-oriented to focus on furthering of our economic interests abroad. Our interaction with various countries/regions of the world especially China, European Union and the regional countries will further bolster the economic opportunities. Our foreign policy will remain vibrant and responsive to the evolving trends in international relations. Pakistan will continue to maintain constructive engagement and interact with the world for promoting its national interests, working simultaneously for international peace, security and progress for the future.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me now deliberate upon some of the internal affairs. Governance, as you know is the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of country's affairs. It is also characterized by several important values: effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, the rule of law, participation, consensus orientation, responsiveness, equity and strategic vision. The Government is doing everything in its might to improve Governance and deliver on its promises to the people.

Major structural reforms have been undertaken covering every aspect of the country, from banking, capital market, labour reforms, petroleum sector, industry and agriculture etc. The reforms agenda must not stick to one area only and should cover a broad range of Government initiatives; as you see today. Colonial mindset and centralization, the twin evils of Pakistan's bureaucratic institutions, can not be abolished overnight; however through elected representatives, continuity of political process and devolution of administrative

powers, the answer could be found. Political empowerment of women is being further promoted, so that they get more opportunities to participate in the political process of Pakistan.

The Government believes in clean and transparent governance and accountability is being effectively implemented at the national level.

Distinguished audience

The Pakistani nation showed its mettle in dealing with the devastating floods, which displaced twenty million people, washed away standing crops and livestock worth billion of dollars and damaged whole communication system and infrastructure from the north to the south of the country.

In a remarkable show of national unity, the Federal Government demonstrated our national resolve to deal with the aftermath of the world's worst floods in unison with the provincial Governments, armed forces and other state institutions. The multi-pronged post-flood strategy worked out by the federal government in concurrence with the stakeholders has laid the foundation-stone for building a better Pakistan. We remain dedicated to turning this tragedy into an opportunity to rebuild hope and broken lives of our flood-affected people.

These floods have dealt a blow to the national economy and slowed down our growth. We have devised broad-based economic reform package and tightened our belt. The government has reprioritized its budget, froze expenditure to last year's level, cut non-development expenditures, and taken steps for widening the tax base. On this occasion, I would like to pay glowing tribute to soldiers and leadership of our armed forces who worked hard day in and day out during rescue and relief operations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Internally, the Government has increasingly opened the landscape for political debate. Opposition parties and civil society find greater political space today than ever before. The Government is determined to resolve all the issues through negotiations as per provisions of the Constitution. In a relative short span of time, the political and democratic culture and reconciliatory approach followed by our Government has started bearing fruit. Creation of a national consensus and support against War on Terrorism through public and parliament, Agaz-e- Huqooq-e- Balochistan Package, the Gilgit-Baltistan Package, the unanimity on NFC Award, the passage of 18th Constitutional Amendment and Restoration of Free and Independent Judiciary are some of the land mark achievements.

Amidst intense internal security problems, peace has returned to the valley of Swat and life is fast running towards normalcy. The situation in FATA has also improved. The reversal of militants and terrorists has only come about due to the political backing of the WOT and the immense sacrifices given by the People of Pakistan, its Armed Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies. Our Government is determined to up root these violent elements that operate outside the framework of the rule of law. These elements are clearly a threat to Pakistani

civil society and their world view is absolutely incompatible with the vision of a modern Pakistan.

Situation in Balochistan, Ladies and gentlemen, is improving however, its law and order undercurrents remain a point of concern. Ardent political efforts are being made for better integration of the people of Balochistan with the country. Aghaz-e- Huqooq-e-Balochistan Package is a step in this direction and its implementation will surely address the issue of political alienation and socio-economic grievances of the people.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I will now spend few moments to share our vision of Pakistan.

a. Our future vision lies in pursuing a policy of reconciliation and consensus. I believe that Pakistan's salvation lies in democracy. The major attribute of a democratic system is that it tends to find solution to the complex and intractable problems by evolving consensus and accommodating all stakeholders. Democracy in its very essence is inclusive and participatory. It establishes unity within the broad and diverse viewpoints. There is no doubt about the fact that federations are very delicate political arrangements and can only be kept intact and strengthened by taking everyone on board through inclusive approach. The democratic government has been very clear in its vision that if we want to create harmony and order in our polity, it would require a democratic constitution. Our Government has been successful because of our reconciliatory policy and democratic approach regarding all national issues.

b. Since assuming power, the Government is pursuing to improve governance, economy and law & order while trying to reduce poverty. The fundamental basis was deregulation, and encouraging the private sector to play an active role in economic development. This will allow us to change the direction of economy and improve our rating in the capital markets.

c. The Government is making efforts for macroeconomic stabilization, and structural reforms in the sectors of finance, energy, water security, agriculture, infrastructure development, and social sectors.

d. Power and water crises problems are not easy to tackle. Current electricity shortage is around 4000 MW and this gap will increase in coming years. To overcome the energy crisis a strategy has been formulated to address this issue both in the short and long term. New power units are being set up. The work has started on Diamer- Bhasha Dam. We have launched Thar Coal electricity generation project. Investments in Keti Bandar project are also being invited.

e. The economic losses due to WOT and the devastation caused due to the recent Floods have retarded recovery and growth of Pakistan's economy. However, with some harsh and

unpleasant economic decisions; taken in the best interest of Pakistan, our economy is slowly gathering momentum. Despite all economic handicaps, the Government is doing its best to attract FDI and facilitate private investment in the country.

f. The inflationary trend witnessed in the recent past is now under check. Given the current inflationary trend, the average inflation is likely to be close to 10 to 12% in the future.

g. Given an improved law and order situation, the future of Pakistan's economy is bright. The outcome of the current fiscal year is expected to add some strength to the economy. The growth in large scale manufacturing will ensure the good performance of the sector. The buoyant activity in housing and construction, telecom sector, banking & finance and wholesale & retail trade will help achievement of the desired growth targets. Investment-friendly interest rate environment will encourage the private sector to play their leading role in achieving the growth target.

h. Much progress has been made in the last 63 years, but still a lot remains to be done. Sound macroeconomic policies and their continuity, financial discipline, internal and regional stability will be the key factors affecting sustained growth and the country's economic future.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The future of Pakistan lies in creating gender equality environment in the country. I see women of Pakistan playing an important role for the future of Pakistan. The Government has taken initiatives to improve gender equality. The Government continues to advocate elimination of discrimination against women and children.

The Government will continue to engage with local women rights NGOs and provide support to strengthen penalties for domestic violence and honour killings and to reform the discriminatory provisions of our legal system.

Strategies to combat child labour and human trafficking are being accelerated in cooperation with international agencies. On the human rights front, the government with civil society institutions and international organizations is combating religious discrimination and violence, human trafficking and legalized discrimination against women.

Ladies and gentlemen,

One prime focus of the Government for a bright future of Pakistan is also towards the Human Resource Development (HRD).

a. The Government recognizes that accumulation of human capital is as important as the accumulation of physical capital for sustaining development. Moreover, in the absence of healthy and literate population, it will be difficult for Pakistan to bring about the real increase in productivity. There has now been a

paradigm shift in the development strategy and policy in Pakistan. The Government is committed to ensure improved access to physical assets, education, vocational skills, training and other education services that enhance human capital of the poor and enable them to generate better income through gainful employment opportunities.

b. Education is our long term salvation and I have called the Provinces for focusing all energies in this field. The new strategy is to encourage cooperation and linkage between the public and the private sectors to move towards spreading literacy and taking it to every nook and corner of the country. While resources for Education are to be created through soft loans, grants, debt swaps, private sector, public philanthropists, expatriates and educational foundations, there is something more than that will always be required. This is a reserve of committed educationists whose services can be summoned for the purpose.

c. The Higher Education Commission of Pakistan is solely tasked to concentrate in improving and promoting higher education, research and development in Pakistan. Today, as the world becomes increasingly interconnected, higher education is considered critical for the achievement of economic progress, political stability and peace. Our vision is transformation of our institutions of higher education into world class seats of learning, equipped to foster high quality education, scholarship and research, to produce enlightened citizens with strong moral and ethical values that build a tolerant and pluralistic society rooted in the culture of Pakistan. At the same time we would like to improve our secondary education system and ensure its linkages with higher education system in Pakistan.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the end, I may conclude that there is a long term strategy in place for building of a modern, enlightened and progressive Pakistan that values the spirit of inquiry, critical and independent thought and public duty. Pakistan is self assured of its destined role to play according to the aspirations of people of Pakistan. Pakistan indeed is on the road to progress and prosperity with a bright future ahead.

Internal situation of the country may be a point of concern for some of you, but let me assure you that the Government is fully in control of the situation and would not allow any body to pursue their vested personal agendas or derailing the country from the path of economic prosperity and sustained democracy. Let me assure you ladies and gentlemen that the Government is fully aware of all the issues and is dealing with the situation prudently and effectively to ensure that nothing stands between the realization of the dreams of growth, progress and development of this great country and prosperity of its people. I would like to end

my speech with a quote of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He said and I quote:

“We must work our destiny in our own way and present to the world a system based on true Islamic concept of equality of manhood and social justice. We will thereby be fulfilling our mission as Muslims and giving to humanity the message of peace which alone can save it and secure the welfare, happiness and prosperity of mankind”

I thank you all.

God Bless You!

Pakistan Zindabad