

**Prime Minister's Address
to the
North Atlantic Council Brussels**

Secretary General

Anders Fogh Rasmussen,

Distinguished Members of the Council,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to thank you for affording me this opportunity to share thoughts with the NATO Council.

Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen has been a good friend of Pakistan. I thank him for his understanding, interest and support.

Pakistan was designated as a major non-NATO ally. I believe this designation not only signified NATO's pre-occupation with our region but also in a more subtle sense, constituted an acknowledgement of the spirit and values that guided the evolution of our partnership for the defence of freedom, over the past sixty years.

Pakistan's contribution to the cause of global peace, security and stability has been constant and very principled. It is these principles that determine the trajectory of our ongoing engagement.

In contemporary history, Pakistan's role in influencing global trends to build peace has been critical. Given our geo-strategic significance, it remains so today. Our peace, security and stability and our endeavors to stabilize our region will have a decisive impact on global peace and stability.

Mr. Secretary General,

The conflicts of the post Cold War era are not amenable to a standard prescription. The geo-strategic fault lines that crisscross our wider region present daunting challenges.

Is terrorism and violent extremism the number one issue for global security? I believe it is but this would be an over-simplification.

Promotion of religious, cultural and civilization harmony as well as resolution of deep seated conflicts and disputes within the framework of UN Charter Principles, international law and in accordance with the dictates of justice continues to test our will and ability.

Issues germane to new global security architecture require rededication to the recognized principles of International Law and UN Charter. Disarmament, non-proliferation, conventional and non-conventional security issues require new thought and approaches.

It is only by addressing the sense of insecurity at sub-regional and regional planes that we will be able to take pragmatic and effective steps.

Many of the uncertainties that characterize our times are unquestionably related to this period of transition from the post Cold War to a post-post Cold War phase. Unilateralism has not worked. Multilateralism receded. We need to re-invent multilateral cooperation that accords not only with the imperatives of global interdependence but also fully in unison with the values that are universal and must guide us all in a grand enterprise for global peace and prosperity in the Twenty First Century.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Human rights, civil and political liberties, empowerment of women and most of all socio-economic development are at the top of our national agenda. Democratic institutions have been consolidated with the 18th amendment to the Constitution. In short, Pakistan is surely and firmly on the path to political stability, economic prosperity and social justice.

Mr. Secretary General,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Pakistan's strategic priority is development. For this we need stability at home and in our region. We are blessed with huge resources. Our demography is right. We have a young population. Our people are talented. We have scientific, technological and business skills. We are a large market and rated as an emerging market economy. We are in the process of utilizing our resources for optimal effect. For this, of course, we need peace and stability in our region. Unfortunately, the turbulence in our adjoining regions has continued to have a serious detrimental effect on realizing our full development potential.

Afghanistan was the last hot front of the Cold War. The blow-back from that bygone era has had a perverse effect. Yet, we have withstood these challenges by sheer national resilience. Terrorism and violent extremism are alien to our national ethos. This phenomenon, which has had a devastating impact on our society, was a product of an odd inter-play of global strategic struggles of the past. We would never allow terrorism and violent extremism to overtake our way of life, our culture, our traditions and disrupt our societal harmony. Pakistan has utilized its own national capacity to effectively deal with militancy and terror imposed from across the border from Afghanistan. Pakistani nation is fully united

in eliminating the menace of terrorism. Our government has been able to give political ownership to the counter-terrorism campaign, which is being brilliantly executed by the Pakistan Armed Forces and the security agencies. It is our national resolve not to allow terrorists any space on our territory. Equally, we will not permit the use of territory of our neighbors for sponsoring, supporting or abetting acts of terror against Pakistan. Our success in Malakand, Swat and FATA is clearly an indication of our resolve and ability to take charge on issues of national security. We have done more and accomplished more than the international forces in adjoining Afghanistan.

All this has been at a considerable cost. Over 30,000 casualties, \$50 billion worth of losses in property and infrastructure and thousands of disabilities. The economic costs are astounding. Yet we will press ahead and will not relent. Pakistan knows fully well how to plan its strategy. We know better than most outsiders how best to prosecute our counter-terror efforts. Indeed, we have not only proven our ability to do so but also managed the internally displaced by terrorism in a short span of time. The world must not forget that we have hosted some 3.5 million Afghan refugees for almost three decades. This we did as our humanitarian duty. It has of course been at a considerable cost, economic, social and environmental. It has also compounded the security issues. The terrain on our border with Afghanistan is forbidding. Border control and management are huge issues.

Some 45,000 persons cross the border each day. Besides, there is considerable movement of trucks and containers. 5000 containers utilize our ports and roads carrying NATO/ISAF supplies each day. The damage to our infrastructure is considerable. Pakistan does not charge for this traffic. Our friends in NATO should factor this huge contribution among others.

I am here to seek your understanding not acknowledgement nor gratitude. Pakistan has done its utmost. We will continue to do what is right and just. We do it for our own sake. We are happy to partner with NATO on the anti-terrorism front. We only want you to understand that we are fully capable of determining how best to proceed in the prevailing environment given our national capacities. The real issue that concerns us together is the situation in Afghanistan. Pakistan is being impacted by the turmoil in Afghanistan. We have a legitimate interest in early restoration of peace and stability in that country.

Regrettably, the security situation in Afghanistan remains precarious. Despite years of NATO/ISAF involvement insurgency remains deep and far-spread. There is an increasing realization that a military solution will not alone work. Hence, the decision of the London Conference to institute a political process for reintegration and reconciliation. Pakistan has adopted a principled approach on Afghanistan. The salient elements are as follows:

- a) A peaceful, stable and secure Afghanistan is in Pakistan's interest.
- b) The Afghan society must be enabled to re-establish its societal equilibrium through an indigenous Afghan owned and Afghan led process.
- c) Pakistan, where necessary or required, would be happy to facilitate the process of reconciliation, given the large presence of Afghan refugees in Pakistan.
- d) Re-Talibanization of Afghanistan would not be acceptable.
- e) Pakistan wishes the best of relations with Afghanistan and will continue to assist in the reconstruction of Afghanistan.
- f) The international community in particular immediate neighbours of Afghanistan must respect the sovereignty, independence, national unity and territorial integrity of Afghanistan.
- g) Respect for the principles of non-intervention and non-interference in internal affairs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our relations with the Government of Afghanistan are cordial and very cooperative. We wish President Hamid Karzai well in his endeavors to promote peace and bring about national unity. We are assisting in economic reconstruction and ready to help in capacity building of Afghan institutions. The international community ought to do much more in rescuing Afghanistan from the state of narco-war economy. A sustained, long term engagement is very necessary.

Mr. Secretary General,

Our friends in NATO must take active interest in South Asian Security perspectives. It is a nuclearized region and issues of peace, strategic stability and security pose formidable challenges to Pakistan and impinge on global peace and security. Pakistan-India relations have a significant bearing on South Asian security. Unfortunately, long outstanding disputes such as Jammu and Kashmir, Siachen, and Sir Creek continue to fester and require a just and peaceful resolution. Our region is also water stressed. As a lower riparian, these water issues have started to impact on Pakistan's agriculture and the well being of our people.

Issues of peace and security, in particular, strategic stability need to be addressed in a forthright manner. We remain concerned over Pakistan-specific Indian military doctrines such as the Cold Start envisaging a limited conventional war under the nuclear over-hang; huge increase in Indian military budget and massive weapon acquisitions.

These together with discriminatory policies especially in the nuclear and technological arena have accentuated the regional imbalance in South Asia. Pakistan believes that all these and other issues between Pakistan and India must be resolved peacefully through dialogue. The peace process which was launched in 1997 yielded some dividends in terms of confidence building during the period 2004 to 2008. Both sides had agreed that the peace process would be irreversible and uninterrupted.

Regrettably, since the past two years the composite dialogue process was stalled. The ostensible reason given by India was the Mumbai terror attack. Pakistan acted swiftly to get the suspects arrested. We have done our utmost to bring the perpetrators to justice. We have indicated to India that only serious, sustained and pragmatic cooperation is the sure way of addressing each others concerns on terrorism. We have suggested that Joint Anti Terrorism Mechanism be reactivated. We desire good neighborly and cooperative relations with India.

Our two countries have no option but to resolve peacefully all outstanding disputes including Kashmir, Siachen and Water. We must also work closely on eliminating terrorism and forging closer economic and trade relations. I had a good meeting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in Thimphu in April this year. We have agreed to resume our dialogue process. Dialogue, I believe, offers the only way forward. We need to get back to a serious, sustained and result-oriented engagement.

Mr. Secretary General

Pakistan-NATO relations have continued to develop smoothly. We have initiated a process of political consultations. This, I believe, would enable our friends in NATO to have a better understanding of Pakistan's security perspective. We have also started a process of parliamentary exchanges. This indeed will be useful in enabling our friends in NATO to appreciate the views and sentiments of the people of Pakistan.

I also wish to thank NATO for offering training courses for our officials. The visit of the Chief of Army Staff and interaction at the military plane signifies the growing cooperation between Pakistan and NATO on counter-terrorism and for restoration of peace in Afghanistan. I wish to assure you all that Pakistan will continue to play its indispensable role for promoting peace, security and stability in Asia.

As a nuclear weapon state, we are mindful of our special responsibilities with regard to preventing proliferation and strengthening the cause of disarmament and arms control. We believe that assured security at all planes especially regional and sub-regional provide a realistic basis to make progress in these areas.

We look forward to mutually beneficial interaction with NATO in the times ahead.

Thank you.
