



# News Release



**Office of Public Affairs**

**U.S. Embassy**

## **U.S. Ambassador Assures Continuing Support for Democratic Development during Visit to Balochistan**

*Quetta, March 12, 2007* -- U.S. Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker assured "our continuing support for democratic development and parliamentary institution building and transparency" at a ceremonial opening of Balochistan Provincial Assembly Resource Center. The American diplomat also emphasized the "strategic, vital, and multi-faceted relationship between the United States and Pakistan" and the need to "continue together in our fight against our common enemy--terrorism" during his farewell visit today in Quetta.

The American Ambassador paid calls on Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Muhammad Yousuf, 12th Corps Commander, Lieutenant General Hamid Rab Nawaz, Balochistan Provincial Assembly Speaker Jamal Shah Kakar, ANF Regional Director Brigadier Anwar ul Haq, and Inspector General of Balochistan Police, Tariq Khosa. It was the senior American diplomat's farewell visit to the province before he is scheduled to leave his current post to become the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq.

During his visit to Quetta, Ambassador Crocker participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a US-funded Parliamentary Information and Technology Resource Center at the Balochistan Provincial Assembly, where he praised the "spirit of transparency shown by Speaker Jamal Shah Kakar in his efforts to make information available to all citizens about the legislative proceedings."

The American people through their government's foreign assistance agency, USAID, have provided U.S.-\$14-million in funding and technical assistance for the legislative strengthening program in Pakistan, including the Provincial Assembly Information and Technology Resource Center in Balochistan. The U.S. government is providing similar financial and technical support for legislative resource centers in Pakistan's national and other provincial assemblies

"Our US-Pakistan Legislative Strengthening Project demonstrates our continuing and full American support for the increasing, nationwide development of democratic institutions throughout Pakistan," the American diplomat said at the dedication of the new US-funded Provincial Assembly Resource Center in Quetta. "The American people's financial support for this legislative center in Quetta reflects an essential cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy -- the spread of democracy."

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USAID has provided approximately U.S.-\$3-million in education assistance to the Balochistan Province since 2002 and has funded a U.S.-\$6-million project to the province for food security and poverty alleviation in arid agriculture. Additionally, USAID has given over U.S.-\$2 million in assistance for health activities provided to Balochistan since 2003.

U.S. Ambassador Crocker also promised his country's continuing support for collaborative anti-narcotics efforts with Pakistan during his meeting with ANF Brigadier in Quetta.

The U.S. Embassy's Narcotics Affairs Section has committed a U.S.-\$30 million package of supplemental funding to the Government of Pakistan, and U.S.-\$8 million of that total is dedicated to equipping the Anti-Narcotics Force as they expand their operations to confront the ever-present global narcotics threat. This supplemental funding further joins Pakistan and the United States in their common goal to interdict opiates that affect millions of lives worldwide.

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