



Remarks With Pakistani Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri After Their Meeting

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Islamabad, Pakistan
June 27, 2006

FOREIGN MINISTER KASURI: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. It's a great pleasure for me to welcome Secretary of State Dr. Condoleezza Rice to Islamabad again. Dr. Rice is a good friend of Pakistan. She has played an important role in the positive evolution of Pakistan-United States ties over the past five years, working towards a broad-based, long-term and sustainable relationship.

Her visit to Islamabad enables us to carry forward our regular consultations process. Secretary Rice has just called on President Musharraf. The exchange of views thus far has been extensive. We discussed our wide-ranging bilateral cooperation, our joint fight against terrorism and extremism, and the situation along Pakistan-Afghanistan border. The exchange will continue over dinner. We reiterated our resolve to continue cooperation in the campaign against terrorism. This is fully consistent with our own national interest.



We also reaffirmed our strong commitment to a stable, peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan. We had a fruitful exchange of views regarding the security situation along the border. Pakistan has taken important steps to strengthen security in that area. Enormous sacrifices have been rendered by our valiant armed forces. We agreed to maintain communication and coordination through the tripartite commission that has been set up between Pakistan, United States and Afghanistan.

As you recall, Pakistan and the United States established a Strategic Partnership during President Bush's visit in March 2006. Both sides are currently focused on implementation of the decisions taken during that visit. We are satisfied with the progress made on various tracks since March. The inaugural session of the Strategic Dialogue was held in Washington on 26-27th April. The preliminary session of the Economic Dialogue took place in Islamabad in May, and as we speak our delegation is in Washington for the Energy Dialogue. The Dialogue on Science & Technology and on Education, both these dialogues are due to take place in the coming weeks.

It is thus clear that the architecture for building a multifaceted relationship, created following President Bush's visit to Pakistan in March, is progressing well.

Earlier, our Defense Consultative Group and the Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism met in Washington. These mechanisms strengthen the institutional basis of our relationship and help deepen mutually beneficial cooperation in diverse fields. Pakistan appreciates United States' support to reconstruction opportunity zones and our development plans for FATA region. These projects would create economic opportunities and help promote socioeconomic development of these areas. Both sides have agreed to work closely in moving forward on these collaborative initiatives.

Secretary Rice was apprised of the developments in the peace process with India. Pakistan remains committed to seeking durable solution to all outstanding issues, including Jammu and Kashmir dispute. We believe now is the time to move decisively towards conflict resolution in South Asia.

I welcome you, Dr. Rice, to Pakistan and invite you to make your comments, and after that both of us are supposed to take two questions each.

SECRETARY RICE: Well, thank you very much. I want to thank you, Foreign Minister Kasuri, for the warm welcome here and I look forward to receiving you soon in Washington. I think we will meet in just a couple of weeks.

It has been a great opportunity to be here and to be received by President Musharraf. We've had an excellent discussion of our broad and deep relationship. The United States does indeed consider Pakistan a strategic partner and a good friend. We have talked not only about our counterterrorism cooperation, which of course is essential to the stability and security of the United States, of Pakistan and of this region and indeed of the world, but we have also had a chance to review the progress that has been made since the President's visit here in March, progress along broad fronts. The Foreign Minister mentioned the Energy Dialogue. We do have an Education Dialogue and a Science & Technology Dialogue as well.

And I was pleased to learn of the plans that Pakistan has for the further development of the frontier region, a plan that I'm certain the United States will be eager to support.

Pakistan is a country that is going through a tremendous transition. It is a country that, as President Musharraf has said, has adopted a course of enlightened moderation. It is a course that not only the United States supports but that is supported worldwide. And we have had a discussion of the role that the further democratization of Pakistan will play on that road to enlightened moderation, including the importance of the upcoming elections in 2007, and we look forward to further discussions of those matters.

But all in all, I really came because Pakistan is such a good friend, because our Strategic Dialogue is so important to us, to note that this is a relationship that will endure, it is a relationship that will go on for many, many years because the United States will remain committed to Pakistan and to Pakistan's future. That is the message that President Bush asked me to come and to deliver to President Musharraf, and I thank you very much, Foreign Minister, for the warm welcome here.

QUESTION: My question is for you, Madame Secretary. The Government of Pakistan has devised a new strategy to dampen extremism and terrorism in the tribal area. That is through political (inaudible) and dialogue. Do you approve of this new strategy of the Government of Pakistan?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, first of all, it is, of course, important to trust your partner and to support your partner when they take on difficult circumstances. I am learning more about the strategy that is going to be employed in this region. Obviously, it is a region that has not had the kind of development and promise for its people that would lead to the kind of hope that would dampen extremism, not support it.

We are committed to Pakistan's road to economic development and reconstruction, in fact, not just in the frontier regions but in Pakistan as a whole. The United States has been very active in supporting educational reform here, very active in supporting economic reform, and of course when Pakistan was struck by the devastating earthquake very supportive of the reconstruction efforts. And so it's a broad effort. I think that the work that will be done in reconstruction in that particular zone fits very well into our pattern of supporting the overall economic and prosperity of Pakistan. But we look forward to further details of the plan.

QUESTION: This is for the Foreign Minister. Afghanistan says that Pakistan is to blame for the problems on the frontier, that you're not doing enough to halt insurgent attacks. President Karzai also has said that Usama bin Laden is not in Afghanistan so, by implication, he is in Pakistan five years after the September 11 attacks.

How do you respond to the Afghan complaints? And Secretary Rice, could you respond as well?

FOREIGN MINISTER KASURI: Thank you. The Foreign Minister of Afghanistan was in Islamabad a couple of days ago. It was a good visit. And one of the things that we agreed on was that we will not talk through the media and we will not talk at each other, that we will talk to each other.

Afghanistan faces a difficult situation. We empathize and we sympathize. Who could understand Afghanistan better than we do? After all, which country in the world supported 4 million refugees for 25 years? Which country has a greater stake in peace and stability in Afghanistan? I am a trained lawyer so I was told to look at *mens rea* motive. You must have a motive for everything.

Now, what do we want? We want gas and oil pipelines running from Central Asia via Pakistan to all over the world. We want to develop our trade with Central Asia. None of these above things is possible unless there is peace and stability in Afghanistan. We wish to increase our trade with Afghanistan. Barely five years ago, the trade was \$23 million. It's likely to be \$1.5 billion this year. That is 7000 percent increase.

So I asked the Foreign Minister of Afghanistan when he was here, I said, "Excellency, brother, tell me -- you're a scholar, you're a professor. Give me a motive why we would willingly try and destabilize you."

So what is the position? It's a difficult situation. How do intelligent people tackle difficult situations? They try and talk to each other. They try that the trust deficit does not increase. Now look at what we have done. First I was talking of motives. Now look at our actions. We have -- we had 80,000. We've decided to increase that by another 10,000 troops and Secretary Rice was given some indication of that by the President of how that will happen, how more troops are going to be there. But we've already done that in anticipation.

Now we have suffered yesterday. There was a suicide bombing in which seven of our army *javans*, or soldiers, died. The international media does cover casualties by Western forces. If you were to give the same amount of space to casualties by Pakistani, all Pakistani troops, probably you wouldn't even ask that question. We have had 650 plus martyred soldiers. So we have more troops in Afghanistan than United States, ISAF and Afghan National Army put together.

Then we are told, oh, they are hiding in Quetta. So here was my response to the Afghan Foreign Minister. I said, "Brother, tell me one thing. Have you ever given us actionable intelligence? Tell us they're hiding in such and such a place." "Don't tell us," in fact, I told his predecessor earlier, "tell the CIA." If we don't act on it, then of course.

But the easiest thing to do is to say I don't know which is the nearest place in United States, Cuba or Mexico, which is dominated by people from that city, or from those countries. Quetta has two populations. One is Pakistani population, which is Pashtun and Baluch. And we have a new Quetta; half of the population is Afghan. It's very easy to say that you know they're hiding in Quetta. Tell us where they are hiding. We promise to investigate and take action. When President Karzai gave President Musharraf a list, he shared it with the CIA and we came to the conclusion that quite a lot of the information was out of date.

So my response is, yes, we have a difficult situation to tackle. We have the tripartite commission where Americans, United States and -- United States, Pakistan and Afghanistan are there. That is the right forum. Yes, we are also trying to develop some other fora. I would leave it to the Afghan Foreign Minister to say because we've not advertised that.

We are trying to build institutional structures. Simply by saying so and so is hiding in Quetta will not get you anywhere. (Inaudible) in Kabul. Was Pakistan that effective that seven people died in an auto traffic accident? Did we send saboteurs or helicopters that they created turmoil in Kabul? No, we didn't do that. That happened. Afghanistan is supposed to -- I'm sorry to say basically it is the responsibility of the Afghan Government. What is the position on drugs? The nexus between the drug lords and the war -- I would not have wanted to actually speak at such length because we had a very good visit by the Afghan Foreign Minister. But if I don't respond, as a lawyer I'm taught when there is an allegation you must respond, otherwise silence is acquiescence and I cannot be silent when an issue of this nature is raised.

Secretary Rice.

(Laughter.)

SECRETARY RICE: You can go right ahead. (Laughter.)

Let me just make the following comment. Afghanistan is America's friend, a new democracy that is fighting fiercely now in the war on terror. Pakistan is America's friend, a country that is launched on a course to undo elements of extremism here and that is a fierce fighter in the war on terror.

The enemy, of course, is al-Qaida and the Taliban. And we, Afghanistan and Pakistan are going to unify all of our efforts, as we have done over the last several years, toward the goal of eliminating the threat from al-Qaida and the Taliban. And the way to do that is through the trilateral commission that we have, the trilateral mechanism that we've had. It is a mechanism that operates at a level that is both tactical and then can also be strategic. And we are going to do everything that we can to contribute to the effective working of that trilateral mechanism.

This is a very difficult time for both Afghanistan and Pakistan. There are attacks by these terrorists against both of these countries and I think they are united in wanting to beat them. The role of the United States in all of this is to keep pressing everyone ahead to deal with the threat. I am confident that no one wants more to see the defeat of al-Qaida and the Taliban than Pakistan on the one hand, which has suffered at its hands and Afghanistan on the other hand, which has obviously suffered at its hands as well.

And of course, since the United States too has suffered at the hands of al-Qaida, we are going to emphasize and we must also emphasize what we have in common, and we have a great deal in common, which is to defeat this terrible enemy, to return this region to peace and stability, and to allow the quite remarkable progress that has been made over the last five years to continue to the point that we have a free and secure trading relationship between the countries of this region. So that's where our focus is and that has been part of my conversation here in Pakistan. It will certainly be my conversation in Afghanistan as well.

FOREIGN MINISTER KASURI: Excuse me. Just to complete the sentence, we supported President Karzai through the Bonn process to the parliamentary elections to the presidential election. We cooperated not by words but actions. We continue to support him.

QUESTION: My question is to the U.S. Secretary of State. Madame Secretary, do you agree with Pakistan's view that to ensure peace and stability in Afghanistan a process of (inaudible) reconciliation is a must and that all members of the international community, including the United States, should support it and encourage it?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, the --

QUESTION: And the other part of my question.

SECRETARY RICE: Yes.

QUESTION: There is also a view of great concern in Pakistan that all the allegations leveled against Pakistan by the Afghan Government and its incessant call that Pakistan do more on -- to prevent terrorism are backed by the United States to divert attention from its own failure in Afghanistan. I would like you to respond to this.

SECRETARY RICE: Well, I'll certainly respond to the second. I think I've said several times standing here, not to mention in other cases, Pakistan is a friend of the United

States and a fierce fighter in the war on terror. We see it. We see the commitment of the Pakistani Government.

Afghanistan is also a fierce fighter in the war on terror. This is a difficult region, this border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. It has been a difficult region for a hundred years. It didn't start yesterday being a difficult region.

And so what we are all trying to do is to commit as strongly as we can to the -- to activities which make it ultimately impossible for al-Qaida and Taliban to operate on that border. That's why we've had such extensive discussions about border security. That's why we have the trilateral mechanism.

But our view is that we have two good friends and two fierce fighters in the war on terror, and that is a fundamental change from 2001 when that was not the case in the relationship with the United States. And so I would just caution, there is sometimes a tendency to read today's headlines; go back and read the headlines in 2001 and you will see how far this relationship has come, how far this country has come and how far Afghanistan has come. And it's our responsibility to keep pressing forward in that regard.

As to Pakistan's -- you asked about --

QUESTION: The process of reconciliation --

SECRETARY RICE: Oh, yes. Most importantly, Afghanistan believes that it needs a process of reconciliation. President Karzai more than a year ago launched a process of reconciliation in which an offer was made to those that did not have blood on their hands to join the political process. I think when you go to Afghanistan you see a parliament that is representative of as broad a sub-segments of Afghan population as one could imagine. People who were once enemies now sit together in their parliament. That's what the process of political reconciliation is about and I'm certain that it is going to continue as the democratic processes continue to mature in Afghanistan.

QUESTION: This is for Secretary Rice. Do you believe that next year's promised general election in Pakistan can still be free and fair if General Musharraf retains his military uniform and first gets reelected by the sitting assembly?

SECRETARY RICE: I think that you will remember when President Bush was here that President Musharraf himself addressed this issue and, in a quite long and eloquent answer to the question, talked about how he saw the democratic process moving forward in Pakistan.

I want to start by saying that it's a good start to talk about an enlightened and moderate Pakistan because one thing is very certain: An extreme Pakistan is not likely to support democratic processes. So let's be very clear about that.

I have had discussions with the President, with the Foreign Minister, with the Prime Minister about the importance that the world and the international community, friends of Pakistan, attach to a process next year that results in free and fair elections. And I think all questions of how those elections will proceed will be dealt with in the context of moving forward to those elections.

But we are very clear that the expectation is that Pakistan is going to take that step on the road to democracy, that it is not just a matter of election day, it is a matter of access to press, it is a matter of access to be able to assemble and to campaign. We've been very clear about all of that. And I have heard the commitment of the Foreign Minister and of the President and of the Prime Minister and others to that process. And we will certainly support it because everybody expects that process to take place.

Thank you.

QUESTION: Ma'am, you are very elegant lady and the first Secretary of State of United States of America. Would you like to have a lady Secretary General at the United Nations?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, I'm all for women being in any and every position possible. But I think that the role of Secretary General is -- that the question of who will become Secretary General will be dealt with over the next couple of months.

Let me be very clear. The United States hasn't made any decisions itself about who should hold that role. I myself am just hoping that it is a Secretary General who is very committed to UN reform. The UN is an extremely important institution. It's an institution of which the United States was a founding member, which we rely on for some of the most important issues of war and peace.

But it's also an institution that, so to speak, is showing its age. It's been in existence now long enough that a lot has grown up that makes it less effective. We really do need to have UN reform and I'm hoping that some of those management reforms will even take place over the next couple of weeks. And one of the points that I will make to my Pakistani colleagues is that we hope to have the support of Pakistan and other G-77 countries for serious reforms of the United Nations.

FOREIGN MINISTER KASURI: He wanted to know if you are partial to a woman Secretary General.

SECRETARY RICE: I heard that. (Laughter.) And I'm gender-neutral, although obviously I like to see women in any position.

FOREIGN MINISTER KASURI: Right. (Laughter.)

SECRETARY RICE: Great. Thank you.

QUESTION: I just want to ask one quick (inaudible). Did the Foreign Minister bring up the question of a civilian nuclear deal for Pakistan or what is the U.S. position on some reciprocal deal similar to what you want to do with the Indians?

SECRETARY RICE: We have not had a chance to discuss that specific issue, but we eventually will. We will. We will discuss it.

FOREIGN MINISTER KASURI: The talks are continuing.

SECRETARY RICE: We've been very, very clear. We believe that the situation with India is a special circumstance. But we're having very fruitful discussions with Pakistan about how to meet Pakistan's energy needs. This is a question of how to meet one's needs for reliable, safe, clean energy that can support economic growth. And I mentioned that the Energy Dialogue took place in Washington just yesterday and Secretary Bodman was himself participating in that, and so I think we're going to continue to have discussions about how to meet Pakistan's energy needs.

FOREIGN MINISTER KASURI: Thank you.

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