



Remarks on Pakistan

John D. Negroponte, Deputy Secretary of State

Islamabad, Pakistan

November 18, 2007

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President Musharraf has been and continues to be a strong voice against extremism. We value our partnership with the government of Pakistan under the leadership of President Musharraf. We welcome President Musharraf's announcement that elections will take place in January, a commitment he repeated to me yesterday in categorical terms. He also repeated his commitment to retire from his army post before commencing his second presidential term and we urge him to do so as soon as possible. Unfortunately the recent political actions against protesters, suppression of the media and the arrests of political and human rights leaders, runs directly counter to the reforms that have been undertaken in recent years. Their continuation undermines the progress that Pakistan has made. I urged the government of Pakistan to stop such actions, to lift the state of emergency and release all political detainees. Emergency rule is not compatible with free, fair and credible elections.

A democratic Pakistan that continues the fight against terror is vital to the interests of both the United States and Pakistan.

I also have no doubt about the commitment of the Pakistani government, the Pakistani army and the Pakistani security forces to deal with that situation (violence in northwest frontier region).

We believe that the path of political moderation is the best way forward for Pakistan and that to the extent that that is true, reconciliation between the moderate political forces is a very desirable thing and could well set the conditions for a successful election.

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