

Khabr-o-Nazar

(NEWS & VIEWS)

August 2008

Published by the U.S. Embassy, Islamabad



Joint Statement: U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Partnership
U.S. Completes Delivery Of F-16s to Pakistan
Indian, Pakistani Youth Plant 'Seeds of Peace'



President George W. Bush stands with Ambassador Husain Haqqani of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Friday, June 6, 2008, in the Oval Office during a credentials ceremony for newly appointed ambassadors to Washington, D.C. (White House photo by Joyee N. Boghosian)



U.S. Consulate Lahore Principal Officer Bryan Hunt hosted a reception in Lahore on June 20 for Pakistani students participating in the Seeds of Peace program in Maine, USA, this summer.



Sufi Masood Ahmad Siddiqi, Ameer of Tanzeem Mashiakh Uzam Pakistan, presenting souvenir to Bryan Hunt, Principal Officer of U.S. Consulate, during his visit to their office in Lahore.



United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission Director Anne Aarnes at a roundtable conference in Islamabad on July 16 for public/private partnerships to improve access to safe drinking water.



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Editor-In-Chief

Lou Fintor
Press Attaché
U. S. Embassy Islamabad

Published by

Public Affairs Section
Embassy of the United States of America
Ramna-5, Diplomatic Enclave
Islamabad - Pakistan
Phone: 051-208000 Fax: 051-2278607
Email: infoisb@state.gov
Website: <http://islamabad.usembassy.gov>

Designed & Printed by

Classical Printers, Islamabad.

Cover

President Bush, right, walks with Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, to make a statement on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, Monday, July 28, 2008. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)



Letters to the Editor

Catalyst

Thank you very much for sending a copy of the latest issue of the U.S. Embassy monthly magazine, "Khabr-o-Nazar." It is an informative and beautiful combination of Urdu and English languages. This is the time where we need a platform to join hands to work as goodwill ambassadors to clarify the misconceptions by especially arranging dialogues, highlighting the religion of Islam and its ideals of justice, tolerance and peace. This magazine is one the very good examples of presenting a true picture of the relationship between the two countries and is working as a catalyst in strengthening friendship between Pakistan and the United States of America.

(*Surrya Sami Khattak
Rawalpindi*)

Pivotal Role

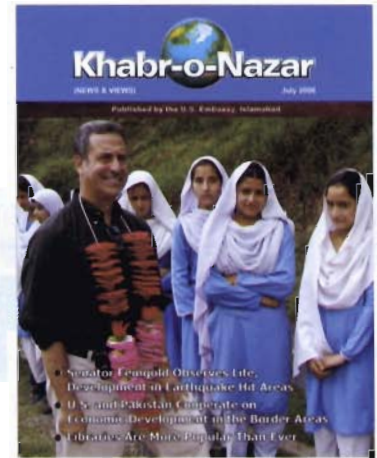
In my point of view "Khabr-o-Nazar" magazine is playing an important and pivotal role between the U.S.-Pakistan friendship. It gives me and my friends a pleasure reading and I think it should be promoted in the tribal belt as well.

(*Hamza,
Malakand Agency*)

Moved

Notwithstanding the fact that the July issue of "Khabr-o-Nazar" reached us by the last week of the month, both the covers were eye catching. Reports on the visit of several U.S. congressional members to various parts of the country were interesting and informative. Such visits also reflect the United States' persistent interest in Pakistan. I was really moved to read a detailed report on IPR protection in Paksitan. I fully agree with the Embassy's Economic Counselor that economic growth and IPR protection go hand in hand.

(*Qayyum Yazdani
Karachi*)



VOA Series Focuses on Diversity of Muslim-Americans

A new weekly multimedia series on the Voice of America offers interviews, discussions, and personal profiles to reflect the diversity of Muslim-Americans and distinguish between the myths and realities of the Muslim-American experience.

"We want to show various perspectives of Muslims in the U.S., and examine what it means to be a Muslim in America today," said Jennifer Janin, Chief of VOA's Urdu Service. "As the show's title suggests, being American is an important part of how Muslim-Americans define themselves."

"Muslims' America" airs on television in Pakistan in Urdu on Fridays in two 30-minute segments, at 8:25 a.m. (PST) on Aaj TV and at 7:30 p.m. (PST) on Geo TV. "Muslims' America" is also available on the Web in both Urdu and English at www.voanews.com/urdu.



Strategic Partnership Rooted in Security, Economic Ties: President Bush

Washington -- Pakistan is a key ally and a vibrant democracy, says President George W. Bush, and the United States will continue building a partnership with Pakistan's newly elected government to confront terrorism and promote peace in the region.

"The United States supports the democracy and supports the sovereignty of Pakistan," Bush said after his July 28 White House meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani. "We also appreciate the prime minister's strong words against the extremists and terrorists who not only would do us harm but have harmed people inside Pakistan."

Strengthening cross-border security is a key component to help democracy

take root in Afghanistan, Bush said, as well as safeguarding Pakistan, which is also facing a campaign of political violence

from extremist groups. "This is our own war," Gilani said following the July 28 meeting with Bush. "This is a war which is against Pakistan. And we'll fight for our own cause."

The leaders also discussed development aid and economic assistance to Pakistan, not only as tools to discourage would-be extremists, but also as part of what top U.S. officials call an effort to revitalize Washington's relationship with a key regional ally.

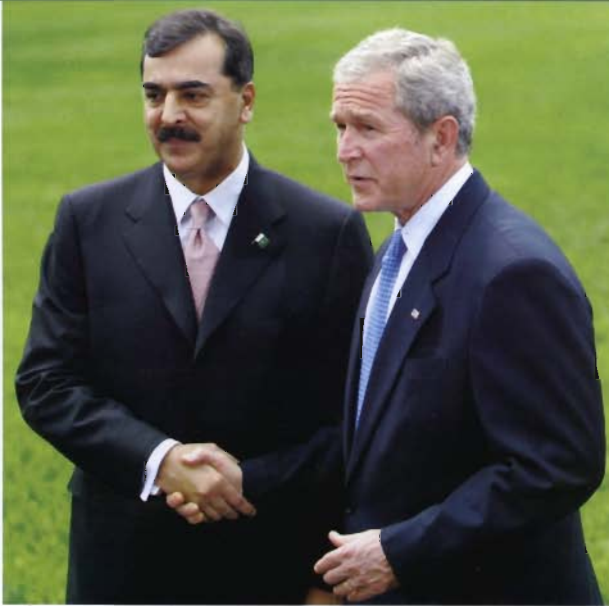


President Bush and Pakistani Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani make statements, Monday, July 28, 2008, on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, after their meeting in the Oval Office. (AP Photo/Ron Edmonds)

During the talks, Bush offered \$115 million over two years in new food aid to help Pakistan cope with rising global food prices, according to White House press secretary Dana Perino. Some \$42.5 million of that aid could be available over the next six months to nine months.

Joint Statement on U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Partnership

President Bush, right, shakes hands with Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani after making a statement, Monday, July 28, 2008, on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)



President George W. Bush welcomed Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani to Washington on July 28, 2008, for his first visit to the United States as the leader of Pakistan's democratically elected civilian government. The President and Prime Minister reaffirmed their commitment to the long-term Strategic Partnership between the United States and Pakistan, which is based on shared values and holds immense potential for the enduring peace, security, stability, freedom, and prosperity of Pakistan and of the region. The President affirmed his support for Pakistan's sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity. The two leaders agreed that the focus of the broad-based Pakistan-U.S. relationship should remain on ensuring the well-being of the people by assisting Pakistan to implement its national development agenda in a comprehensive manner. Pakistan and the United States will work together to eliminate the threat of extremism, build strong democratic institutions, modernize education, and increase economic growth and opportunity.

President Bush and Prime Minister Gilani reaffirmed their condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. They acknowledged that terrorism and violent extremism pose a common threat to Pakistan, the United States, and the international community.

The two leaders pledged to work together to address this threat and to deny any space to militants or terrorists through increased cooperation. The President recognized the sacrifices the people of Pakistan and the Pakistani security forces have made in the ongoing fight. The President and Prime Minister reiterated that success in countering terrorism will require a comprehensive strategy, including increased security, improved governance, and opportunity for socio-economic development for the people especially in the less developed regions of Pakistan. The President and the Prime Minister expressed deep sympathy for the families of those who have fallen victim to suicide and other terrorist attacks in Pakistan. The Prime Minister expressed appreciation for U.S. efforts to promote peace and stability in the region. The United States is dedicated to providing Pakistan with the support and tools it needs to lead the fight against terrorism.

The two leaders also committed to increased bilateral economic cooperation to include expanded trade, an investment promoting

cooperation in the public and private sectors, and agreed to work together to ensure food and energy security as well as facilitate investment in infrastructure and social sectors in Pakistan.

In reaffirming the Strategic Partnership, President Bush and Prime Minister Gilani attached importance to the next round of the Strategic Dialogue, which will be co-chaired by the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State and Pakistan's Foreign Minister, in September 2008 and regularly thereafter to review issues of mutual interest. In addition, the two leaders committed both countries to undertake the following steps in development, counterterrorism, economic, and regional cooperation:



Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani talking to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who called on him in Washington, D.C., on July 29, 2008. (APP Photo)



Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani and Speaker U.S. House of Representative Nancy Pelosi along with John Boehner, House Minority Leader talking with the media in Manchester on July 31, 2008. (Photo APP)

Focus on the needs of the Pakistani people: Food, Health, Education, Energy, and Democratic Governance

- The two leaders welcomed recent efforts in the U.S. Congress to extend the United States' assistance commitment to Pakistan to help address Pakistan's most urgent needs, including education, agriculture, and energy. The President will continue to work with Congress to ensure the continued support of the United States to Pakistan over the long term.
- The two leaders agreed to institute a separate track for agricultural cooperation under the Strategic Dialogue.
- The United States will provide \$115.5 million in food security assistance to Pakistan, including \$42.5 million over the next nine months.
- The United States will assist with disease control activities in Pakistan to augment the Prime Minister's initiative to combat the spread of hepatitis and other infectious diseases.
- The United States highlighted its \$30 million Pakistan Energy Development program focused on improving power availability, affordability, and efficiency.
- The United States and Pakistan will hold the next round of the U.S.-Pakistan Energy Dialogue this fall to help Pakistan meet its vast and growing energy needs.
- The two leaders agreed to hold the next round of the U.S.-Pakistan Education Dialogue later this year.

• The two leaders agreed to continue and enhance robust collaboration in science and technology under the successful bilateral Science and Technology Framework Agreement.

• The United States highlighted its support for democracy-building and improved governance through project funding.

Expand Bilateral Trade and Improve the Business Climate

- The two leaders renewed a joint commitment to pursue steps to establish Reconstruction Opportunity Zones that will expand trade opportunities in parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- The United States and Pakistan will work together toward a goal of establishing direct non-stop flights between the two countries before the end of 2008, expanding people-to-people ties and improving the investment climate to the benefit of the people of both countries.

* The United States and Pakistan agree to convene officials promptly to review the status of bilateral investment treaty negotiations.

* The two countries will reconvene the Joint Council under the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement in September 2008.

* The U.S.-Pakistan Economic Dialogue will be held on August 11 in Islamabad.

Expand Security and Counterterrorism Cooperation

- * The two leaders agreed to strengthen the long-term security relationship with a view to enhancing Pakistan's defense capabilities, especially in the field of counterterrorism, through training and equipment.
- * Reconvene the bilateral Defense Consultative Group this fall with a renewed focus on counterinsurgency and counterterrorism.

* Renew cooperative efforts to root out extremism along the Pakistan-Afghanistan

border, including the Northwest Frontier Province, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, and Balochistan.

* Expand cooperation between the United States and the Pakistani Frontier Corps and other Pakistani security forces on the front lines in the fight against violent extremism.

* Focus U.S. security assistance on efforts to enhance the counterterrorism capability of Pakistan's military forces.

Work Together to Enhance Regional Peace, Security, and Stability

* Strengthen the Tripartite Commission among the International Security Assistance Force, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

* Support the efforts of Pakistan and Afghanistan to hold the next joint jirga this fall.

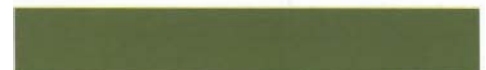
* Hold the next Regional Economic Cooperation Conference in Islamabad this fall.

* Encourage the Pakistan-India Composite Dialogue process to reduce tensions, build trust, and resolve all outstanding issues.

Prime Minister Gilani thanked President Bush and the people of the United States for the hospitality accorded to him, Mrs. Gillani, and the members of the Prime Ministerial delegation during their stay in the United States.



Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani talking to U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates in Washington on July 30, 2008. (Photo APP)



U.S. Completes Delivery of F-16s to Pakistan

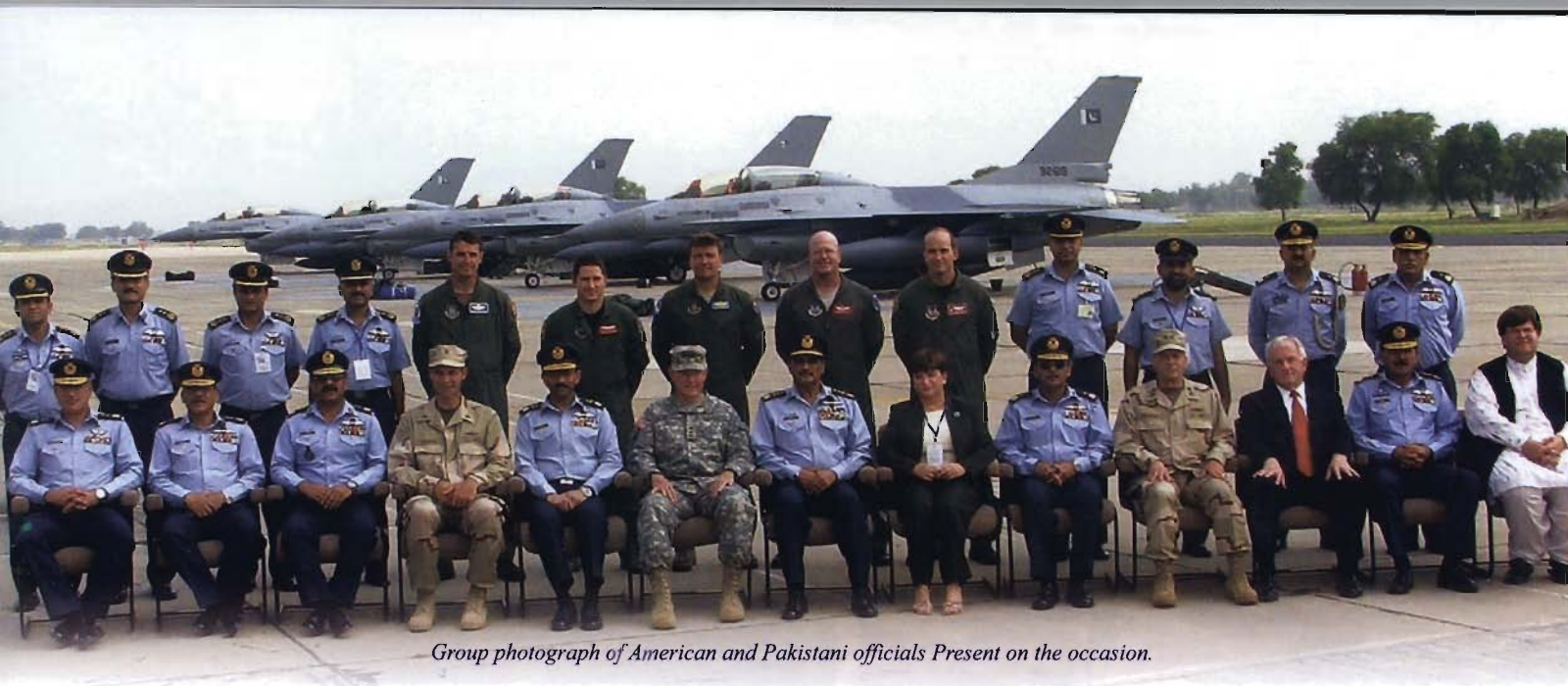


U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission Peter Bodde receiving a souvenir from Pakistan Airforce official during an earlier hand-over ceremony

The Acting Commander of U.S. Central Command, Lt. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, handed over the last four of 14 F-16 jet fighter aircraft to Pakistan Air Chief Marshal Tanvir Mahmood Ahmed in a ceremony at Pakistan Air Force Base Mushaf in Sargodha on July 28.

Also participating in the ceremony on behalf of the United States Government were U.S. Embassy Acting Deputy Chief of Mission E. Candace Putnam; Chief of the Office of the Defense Representative Pakistan Rear Admiral Michael LeFever, and Principal Officer of the U.S. Consulate in Lahore Bryan Hunt.

This completes the delivery of 14 F-16 aircraft the United States agreed to provide Pakistan under the Foreign Military Sales program. The first two were delivered in



Group photograph of American and Pakistani officials Present on the occasion.

December 2005; two more in July 2007; two in February 2008; four in June 2008; and the final four on July 28.

from the United States to Pakistan. The aircraft are valued at approximately US\$6.4 million each.

The U.S. Government provided the aircraft to Pakistan at no cost except for the expenses of preparation and transport



Pakistani Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Tanvir Mahmood Ahmad presenting a souvenir to Commander U.S. CENTCOM Lt. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey during a ceremony for handing over of four F-16 aircrafts to Pakistan Air Force at PAF base Mushaf in Sargodha on July 28, 2008. (Photo APP)



USAID Pakistan Mission Director Anne Aarnes hands over computer equipment to the Secretary, Election Commission of Pakistan, Kanwar Dilshad on July 22 in Islamabad.

USAID Donation Supports Pakistan's Electoral System

The United States Government, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), donated information technology hardware worth \$450,000 to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in Islamabad on July 22. The equipment will help the ECP improve, update, and maintain Pakistan's computerized electoral rolls.

"The importance of accurate electoral rolls cannot be overstated," said USAID Pakistan Mission Director Anne Aarnes. "The hardware USAID is providing will greatly improve the ECP's capacity to ensure the integrity of the electoral rolls."

The equipment, which is part of USAID's \$18 million Pakistan Electoral Support

Project, will be installed in the ECP's offices across Pakistan and will allow the Commission to make updates efficiently and accurately. USAID has also trained ECP's newly recruited information technology staff located at the ECP headquarters and at the four Provincial Election Commissioner offices. The training ensures that ECP has the in-house capacity to maintain and use the equipment.

Since 2006, USAID's Pakistan Electoral Support Project, implemented by the International Foundation for Election Systems, has worked closely with the ECP on voter registration issues. The project developed Pakistan's first computerized election rolls; designed training for 45,000 voter registration officials; and provided transparent ballot boxes for the 2008 national elections.



Ambassador Patterson presents a 'Football Training Resource Kit' to Federal Sports Minister Najmuddin Khan. President of Pakistan Football Association (Women Wing) Ms. Rubina Irfan is also visible.

U.S. Grant Will Expand Youth Football in Pakistan

The U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Anne W. Patterson, announced a grant of \$26,420 on behalf of the U.S. Department of State to "continue and expand U.S. support for youth football in Pakistan."

She made the announcement at the closing ceremony of the first All Pakistan Inter-Club Women Football Tournament at Islamabad's Jinnah Sports Complex on June 27.

"We will sponsor a summer training and coaching camp for new players so that they can join the enjoyment and excitement of football as it gains popularity in this country," the Ambassador told a cheering crowd of football enthusiasts.

The U.S. Department of State, through the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, supported the tournament as part of its global Youth Enrichment Program. The program, which aims to provide positive educational opportunities for young people to contribute to international cooperation and understanding, sponsored the Young Rising Stars Girls' Football Club of Rawalpindi in 2007-2008.

"This training experience for the football team will serve you in your other

activities as well," Ambassador Patterson emphasized. "The qualities of a successful



Guests watching the final match of the 1st All Pakistan Inter-Club Women Tournament. (seated from left to right) Syed Mir Hamza Gilani, Director General, Ministry of Sports; Abdul Rauf Khan, Afghan Refugee Commissioner, Ministry of SAFRON; Najmuddin Khan, Federal Sports Minister; Ambassador Anne W. Patterson; Rubina Irfan, President Pakistan Football Association (Women Wing); and Ms. Farishta Ali Sharif, Coordinator, Pakistan Football Association.



U.S. Ambassador Anne W. Patterson and Pakistan Federal Minister for Sports Najmuddin Khan with the finalists of the First All Pakistan Inter-Club Women Football Tournament at the Islamabad Sports Complex.

team athlete are the same qualities you will see in successful leaders in business, politics, education, and in life."

The Ambassador congratulated the winning team for its hard work and all other participating teams for their outstanding efforts. She also lauded the parents of the female players for their "hard decision to allow your daughters to participate in football," which is not a common sport for girls in Pakistan.

Ambassador Patterson invited the participating female players to consider going to American colleges and universities for higher education. She noted that U.S. universities frequently give scholarships to outstanding athletes.

The Federal Minister for Sports, Najmuddin Khan, thanked the U.S. Embassy for its help in the promotion of sports in Pakistan.

During the event, Ambassador Patterson presented a "Soccer Training Resource Kit" of training materials and instructional guides to Minister Najmuddin Khan and Pakistan Football Federation Women Wing President Robina Irfan.



Ms. Josie Bass speaking to the participants of a two-day workshop on 'Advocacy and Lobbying' sponsored by the U.S. Embassy Islamabad at the National Library of Pakistan in Islamabad.



Ms. Josie Bass speaking to the participants in a two-day workshop on 'Advocacy and Lobbying' sponsored by the U.S. Consulate General Karachi in collaboration with the Women Media Center on June 6.



Participants of a two-day workshop on 'Advocacy and Lobbying' sponsored by the U.S. Embassy Islamabad at the National Library of Pakistan in Islamabad.

'Advocacy and Lobbying' Workshops Train C



Ms. Josie Bass and U.S. Embassy Cultural Attaché Constance Jones with the participants of a three-day workshop on "Advocacy and Lobbying" at the National Library of Pakistan in Islamabad.

Leading American social activist and trainer Josie Bass highlighted the "importance of leadership for the creation of valued institutions" as she led a series of workshops in Karachi, Peshawar, Lahore, and Islamabad from June 4-21.

"Leadership is all about vision and future," Ms. Bass told an appreciative audience comprising journalists, civil society activists, and representatives of political parties. "The leader's unique legacy is the creation of valued institutions that survive over time."

Ms. Bass is the founder and principal of Alva Consortium, a U.S.-based leadership training organization. The U.S. Embassy sponsored her workshops in Pakistan.

She designed the workshops to give participants useful techniques for developing promoting social issues to shape the public and legislative agendas.



Ms. Josie Bass speaking to the participants in a two-day workshop on 'Advocacy and Lobbying' sponsored by the U.S. Consulate General Karachi in collaboration with the Women Media Center on June 6.



Ms. Josie Bass and U.S. Embassy Cultural Attaché Constance Jones with a participant of a three-day workshop on "Advocacy and Lobbying" at the National Library of Pakistan in Islamabad.

Lobbying Skills' Civil Society Activists



Group photo of the participants who attended the workshop conducted by Ms. Josie Bass on Advocacy, Leadership, and Media Training in Peshawar.

Ms. Bass highlighted the need for "effective lobbying" by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and special interest groups "to kindle necessary legislative changes."

"NGOs and other interest groups have a unique and powerful role to play in ensuring that important community issues are included in parliamentary agendas," Ms. Bass noted. "Through effective advocacy and lobbying of elected government representatives, they can advance the implementation of much-needed laws such as those to protect women and minorities."

Josie Bass brings more than 30 years of experience in government relations and international development outreach to her corporate and public clients. Through the nine-year-old ALVA Consortium, she provides educational training for leaders worldwide.

She also met with Pakistan's women parliamentarians during her visit.



Josie Bass (center) and US Consul General Kay L. Anske with the participants in the two-day workshop on 'Advocacy and Lobbying' sponsored by the U.S. Consulate General Karachi in collaboration with the Women Media Center (WMC) in Karachi. WMC Executive Director Fouzia Shaheen appears at far right.



U.S. Under Secretary of State for Economic, Energy and Agricultural Affairs Reuben Jeffrey meeting with Pakistan Minister of Foreign Affairs and Petroleum Shah Mehmood Qureshi in Islamabad on July 19.



U.S. Under Secretary of State for Economic, Energy and Agricultural Affairs Reuben Jeffrey discussing economic issues with a member of the Peshawar business community at a lunch held in his honor on July 19.

U.S. Under Secretary Highlights Importance Of Sound Economic Policies

Under Secretary of State for Economic, Energy, and Agricultural Affairs Reuben Jeffery visited Pakistan July 17-19 to discuss economic issues in the context of the U.S.-Pakistan relationship ahead of Prime Minister Gilani's visit to the United States.

Under Secretary Jeffery met with Prime Minister Gilani and a wide range of senior government officials and private sector leaders in Islamabad, Karachi, and Peshawar.

He stressed the great value that the United States places on its long-term, wide-ranging strategic partnership with Pakistan. Under Secretary Jeffery and Government of Pakistan officials discussed the importance of sound economic policies that address the challenges of rising food

and fuel prices and support a stable, democratic, and prosperous Pakistan.

They also discussed how to promote poverty reduction, private sector development, vocational training, agriculture, education, and access to credit.

Mr. Jeffery and Pakistani officials discussed how to promote new investment in Pakistan, particularly in the energy and infrastructure sectors. He also updated Pakistani officials and the private sector on the Reconstruction Opportunity Zone legislation that is now before the U.S. Congress. This legislation aims to promote economic growth in the FATA and the NWFP by allowing companies that set up manufacturing operations there to export their products duty-free into the United States.

Benazir Bhutto Shaheed
Prime Minister of Pakistan
International Conference on Population and Development,
Cairo, October 13, 1994

on
World Population Day

July 11, 2008

greenstar
Social Marketing



U.S. Ambassador Anne W. Patterson speaking at the National Population Convention on World Population Day in Islamabad on July 11.

Demographic and Health Survey Will Be “Guidepost” to Better Services

Ambassador Anne W. Patterson and the National Institute for Population Studies presented the findings of the 2006-2007 Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) to Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani as part of the Government of Pakistan World Population Day celebrations.

“The PDHS report offers a solid foundation for making profound changes to the way that people in Pakistan receive health care services,” said Ambassador Patterson at a ceremony in Islamabad on July 11. “Pakistan’s dedicated public health professionals will be able to draw upon the Demographic and Health Survey to identify where the needs are greatest and to make sure that government programs meet those needs.”

Funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the PDHS offers an up-to-date and accurate picture of women’s and children’s health in Pakistan.

It provides the first update in 14 years on the national maternal mortality

ratio (MMR) for Pakistan. The survey found the current MMR is 276 maternal deaths per 100,000 births nationwide, with a higher ratio in rural areas. Pakistan’s Millennium Development goal is to reduce the MMR to less than 140 by the year 2015.

“I hope that the Demographic and Health Survey will continue to be a useful guidepost as we join our efforts on behalf of Pakistani families,” said Ambassador Patterson. “I am confident that with cooperation, planning, and hard work, the progress will continue. That will represent a lasting and positive legacy for the people of this country.”

The PDHS is one of the largest household surveys ever conducted in Pakistan. USAID contributed \$2.8 million to conduct the PDHS with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and the United Nations

International Children’s Fund providing additional funding, and technical support from Macro International.

The primary purpose of the survey was to collect information about the state of maternal and newborn health. Teams polled nearly 100,000 households from September 2006 to February 2007 to collect information on family size, marital status, awareness and use of family planning methods, breastfeeding practices, childhood and maternal mortality, and awareness and attitudes regarding HIV/AIDS.



Participants at the National Population Convention in Islamabad on July 11.



Girls participating in the 2008-2009 YES program decorated their hands with traditional henna and inscribed the number '6' signifying the completion of six years of the YES program in Pakistan

YES Program: A Life-Changing Journey

By Farah Kamal

Every year, a large number of high school students from Pakistan depart to spend a year in different states of the United States. Their visit is under the Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program, which is now in its sixth year and currently preparing 61 students for departure in August 2008.

It is a big step for a young person to live

away from home for an entire year. In Pakistan, International Education and Resource Network (iEARN) devotes a lot of time and attention to preparing these students to adjust and excel in a different country, live with another family, and be great ambassadors of their culture and country.

Since 2003, the Society for International Education, which runs the iEARN program, has recruited and successfully

prepared more than 300 students for their stay in the United States. The finalists of the YES program come from a wide range of geographical regions throughout Pakistan, from the Rakaposhi Mountains of the north to the coast of Karachi.

The YES pre-departure orientation (PDO) plays a key role in developing a community of YES-Pakistan students fully prepared with the required skills,

attitude, and knowledge for spending a successful year in the United States and achieving the goals of the program. The June and July holidays are a valuable time for the YES team at iEARN-Centre, Pakistan, to work closely and rigorously with the students prior to their departure in August. The structure and content of the PDO connect with the students online - as well as in face-to-face workshops and seminars for students and their families. Events and activities take part in several cities around Pakistan during the first phase of the program, with the countrywide group convening later for a week-long intensive program in one city. The students from different parts of Pakistan get to know each other well, make friends, and develop strong ties as a big group, all geared to be young ambassadors.

The activities and online projects during orientation give the students valuable opportunities to understand current global issues, get hands-on

experience in community service, enhance study and research skills, and learn to select, read, and synthesize a wide variety of materials on Pakistani as well as U.S. culture, history, and geography.

Officials from the U.S. Embassy and Consulates take part in many of the face-to-face workshops and sessions. Other guest speakers include journalists, professors, former ambassadors, and alumni of the YES program. These sessions include topics like problem-solving and coping with culture shock, presenting Pakistani culture, preparing to adjust to different styles of social and family life in U.S. communities, and understanding the requirements, rules, and limitations of the exchange program.

The result of this rigorous and collective community effort is that every year Pakistani YES students' performance in U.S. communities as exchange students is outstanding. Pakistani students have a strong record of success, from sports to

academic excellence in their U.S. schools. Their contributions are phenomenal during International Education Week, celebrated each November. The students fulfill their roles as citizen ambassadors, sharing the rich Pakistani culture and heritage with U.S. communities. Every year a number of the Pakistani YES students win the privilege of attending the Youth Leadership Conference in Boulder, Colorado. Their interactions with American hosts are equally successful. The students leave a life-long impression on the families they stay with, and return to Pakistan with strong ties and friendship with their hosts.

Farah S. Kamal is the Country Coordinator of iEARN-Pakistan and Executive Council member of iEARN

Students participating in the 2008-09 YES program with the U.S. Embassy Counselor for Public Affairs, Kay Webb Mayfield, and Cultural Attaché, Constance Colding Jones, at the pre-departure orientation meeting.





Radio Drama in Pashto Examines Social Issues

Journalism and Fine Arts students of the University of Peshawar and Kohat University of Science and Technology performing in a live radio broadcast of "Mashal," a drama that they wrote and produced for young audiences in the FATA and NWFP.

“Mashal,” a radio program conceived, written, acted, and produced by local students to address cultural and social issues for young audiences in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), aired its first broadcast on July 17 from the University of Peshawar.

Students from the University of Peshawar and Kohat University of Science and Technology took part in “Young Tribal Voices,” a workshop to write, voice, and produce a series of Pashto-language radio dramas about the lives of young people in the FATA and the settled areas of NWFP. The University of Peshawar’s FM station recorded the first program in front of a

studio audience, and it was broadcast live from the university’s campus.

The students developed the radio dramas during a five-week workshop with a team of performing arts educators from Education Arts Resource Services Inc. The team offered intensive classes in acting for the microphone, script writing and development, and technical skills associated with producing radio drama. This workshop for journalism and fine arts students was co-sponsored by the U.S. Consulate Peshawar and the Department of Journalism, University of Peshawar.

Before the broadcast began, University of Peshawar Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Azmat Hayat congratulated the students on their efforts. The Acting Principal Officer of the U.S. Consulate, Michael A. Via, also

applauded the students’ work and thanked the University for supporting this important outlet for expression for young people in the province.

The objectives of the workshop and the July 17 broadcast were to develop students’ skills so they will be able to voice their views on issues facing their communities, and to offer a vision for the future from the next generation of leaders in the FATA and NWFP. Education Arts Resource Services designed the workshop so the students would gain all of the basic skills to continue writing, acting, and recording radio dramas in the months and years to come. It also donated to the Department of Journalism computer hardware and software that will enable students to use the latest techniques in editing and preparing dramatic recordings for broadcast.

Indian, Pakistani Youth Plant “Seeds of Peace”

U.S. camp hosts young leaders to promote reconciliation

Washington -- Usman Munir and Jehan Lalkaka laugh over a game of Frisbee. At home, the simple interaction between the two boys from India and Pakistan never could have happened. But the two became fast friends at the Seeds of Peace International Camp in Otisfield, Maine.

“I never imagined in my wildest imaginations that I’d be sitting with the Indians and talking about the issues and the conflicts which we have,” Usman, a 15 year-old native of Lahore, said. “We made friends with each other, we played pranks on each other, we made jokes with each other. We lived together.”

Seeds of Peace was created in 1993 by journalist John Wallach to give young leaders from regions in conflict the skills they need to begin moving their societies toward reconciliation. The program started with a group of 46 Israeli, Palestinian and Egyptian teenagers and has grown to include more than 4,000 participants, or “seeds.” In 2001, the U.S. State Department helped support the launch of a South Asia program. The Bureau of South and Central Affairs funds the Indian and Pakistani seeds’ experience at the camp, as well as a continuation of programming in Washington and their home countries.

Usman and Jehan are two of 32 Indian and Pakistani participants nominated by their schools and communities to go to the camp for three weeks. Although they lived, ate, and participated in activities with members of other delegations from Egypt, Israel, Jordan, the United States, and the Palestinian territories, they took part in 90-minute daily dialogue sessions with members from their own Indian-Pakistani delegation to discuss current regional issues. Through the daily dialogue sessions, the participants respectfully worked through their differences.

“It was surprising that we were all on one point at the same time. The coordination between us was really good,” said Izba Shahza, 14, of Lahore.

In addition to encouraging conflict resolution, the dialogue sessions changed campers’ world views.

“Before coming to this camp, when I grow up, I thought I would do something for my country. But now, I think that I will do something that will benefit the whole world,” Usman said.

After camp, the Indian and Pakistani delegations traveled to Washington to meet with State Department officials and the ambassadors from India and Pakistan to encourage their continued leadership development. Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte addressed the group in a reception July 16.

“Your dedication to religious and cultural tolerance, coexistence and dialogue is important to achieving lasting peace. Equally important is holding onto your ability to imagine a peaceful and hopeful future. ... Imagination is an underrated part of foreign policy. The challenge is to keep imagining a better future, and to keep working to make what you imagine, real.”



U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John D. Negroponte and Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard A. Boucher with a group of 32 young South Asian participants of the Seeds of Peace program at the U.S. Department of State on July 16, 2008. Ambassador Husain Haqqani of Pakistan and Ambassador Ronen Sen of India are also seen in the picture along with Ms. Janet Wallach, co-founder of Seeds of Peace.