



Khabr-o-Nazar

(NEWS & VIEWS)

March 2007

Published by the U.S. Embassy, Islamabad

An Exclusive
Interview
with
**Ambassador
Crocker**

International
**Women's
Day**

Ambassador
Visits
**Various
Cities**





U.S. Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker meeting with the Sindh Governor, Dr. Ishrat-ul-Ibad, in Karachi on March 2. (PID Photo)



U.S. Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker meeting with the Punjab Governor, Lt. Gen. (ret'd), Khalid Maqbool, in Lahore on March 5. (PID Photo)



U.S. Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker meeting with the NWFP Governor, Mohammad Ali Jan Orakzai, in Peshawar on March 7. (PID Photo)



U.S. Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker meeting with the Balochistan Chief Minister, Jam Muhammad Yousaf, in Quetta on March 12. (PID Photo)

table of CONTENTS

US Embassy Islamabad's Website	4
President Musharraf Committed to Winning War on Terror	5
Education Key To Women Empowerment	6
U.S. Diplomats Urge Women's Role in Economy	7
Ambassador Crocker's Interview	8
U.S Ambassador Stresses Enduring Ties with Pakistan	12
Amb. Crocker Highlights Support to Pakistan for Free, Fair Elections	13
Amb. Crocker Encourages Women to Play Vital Role in Society	14
U.S. Ambassador Urges Bilateral Trade	15
Amb. Crocker Visits Sufi Shrines in Uch Sharif	16
U.S. Commitment to Security & Development in NWFP, FATA Re-affirmed	17
"Democracy Dialogues" Discussion Group Inaugurated	18
Continuing Support for Democratic Development	19
U.S. Repatriates Priceless Gandharan Artifacts to Pakistan	20



Editor-in-Chief

Elizabeth O. Colton
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: 051-2080000
Fax: 051-2278607
email: infoisb@state.gov
Website: <http://islamabad.usembassy.gov>

Front Cover

U.S. Ambassador to
Pakistan Ryan C. Crocker
(AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

Log on to:
US Embassy Islamabad website
<http://islamabad.usembassy.gov>



EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES

ISLAMABAD • PAKISTAN

Embassy News | U.S. Citizen Services | Visas to the U.S. | U.S. Policy & Issues | Resources

EMBASSY HIGHLIGHTS



Islamabad, March 15, 2007 - U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher speaking at a Press Conference at U.S. Embassy Islamabad on Thursday.

Remarks By U.S. Assistant Secretary Of State Richard Boucher At The Press Conference At U.S. Embassy Islamabad, Pakistan

It's a great pleasure for me to be back in Pakistan. As you know I'm a regular visitor and I always enjoy my trips - for the hospitality first of all. But I think it's very important to us as we try to work in Washington on things involving this region, especially Pakistan, that we understand from people here what the situation is on the ground. So it's a great pleasure for me to be back. It's also a great pleasure for me to be here with our Ambassador Ronald Neumann today who's done an excellent job representing the United States. It was an honor for me to be included last night with President

Musharraf in a dinner to honor our Ambassador. This may be the last time that we appear together at a press conference, so I want you to know that and let me pay my own little tribute in public to him. *(complete text)*

LATEST HEADLINES FROM THE EMBASSY



Female's Involvement Vital For Country's Stability: Ambassador Tahir Khell

Senior Adviser to the Secretary of State for Women's Empowerment, Ambassador Shirin Tahirova, and a faculty of the Fatima Jinnah Women University, Islamabad, spoke at a press conference at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad on Thursday.

"for a country to be stable, it must invest in the empowerment of women is vital for the economic development of a country," Ambassador Tahir Khell told the female audience and providing opportunities for women to play an important role in the country's development as well as social and economic progress. The Ambassador also highlighted the importance of strengthening the role of women in the country's development.

- ★ More user friendly
- ★ Easy to navigate
- ★ Up-to-date information on U.S. visas, education in the U.S., U.S. policy towards Pakistan, Employment opportunities at U.S. Embassy
- ★ Press releases
- ★ Latest U.S. government reports in Urdu
- ★ Website updated on daily basis

<http://islamabad.usembassy.gov>

President Musharraf

COMMITTED TO WINNING WAR ON TERRORISM

—White House



White House Spokesman Tony Snow told reporters at the daily White House press briefing on February 26, that the Vice President on his trip to Pakistan had talked to Pakistani officials "about the best way of working forward in the war on terror" and going after al Qaeda. He said that "the Taliban is trying to gear up for a spring offensive, and we intend to be working with the Pakistanis to become increasingly effective at dealing with those threats."

The spokesman reminded that, "when you have a meeting with a president like President Musharraf -- who absolutely understands the al Qaeda problem; he has been on multiple occasions a target of al Qaeda assassination attempts, and he understands that there have been an al Qaeda presence within his country -- that it's important to figure out how to be most effective in that. So they

continue to work on being more effective at going after the bad guys."

Responding to another question, whether the "White House is sending a tough message to the Musharraf government," the White House Spokesperson noted, "We have not been saying it's a 'tough message.' What we're saying is... the Vice President is meeting with President Musharraf because we do understand the importance of making even greater progress against al Qaeda, against the Taliban. It is important not only for the safety and security of people within Pakistan but obviously within Afghanistan as well, and it's an important element in the larger war on terror."

(NOTE: The full text of the transcript is available at www.whitehouse.gov)



U.S. Diplomat Lyngrid Smith Rawlings opening an exhibit at the Kinnaird College highlighting various aspects of the Civil Rights Movement. The exhibit and Ms Rawlings' lecture were held in connection with the U.S. commemoration of the "Black History Month." (KN Photo)

Education

Key To Women Empowerment:

U.S. Diplomat Says

U.S. Diplomat Lyngrid Smith Rawlings addressing the students of the International Islamic University Islamabad on "Women Empowerment in the U.S. - Choice & Challenges" on the occasion of the International Women's Day on March 8.

Islamabad - U.S. Diplomat Lyngrid Smith Rawlings emphasized today the "critical role that education continues to play in empowering women" in a talk delivered at the International Islamic University, Islamabad, held in connection with the commemoration of "International Women's Day."

"Cognizant that the laws of the United States should apply equally to both males and females, American women educated themselves and then created organizations that pressured Congress to change the Constitution so that it created a more just society," Ms. Rawlings said.

Explaining how women were able to make rapid progress in the U.S. in the twentieth century, she said that during World War II, women replaced men in factories while the men went off to war. "The economic independence they experienced during World War made women reluctant to abandon their jobs and return to their homes as full time home-makers," she noted.

On the occasion of the talk titled "Women Empowerment in the U.S.: Choice and Challenges," the U.S. Embassy's Public Affairs Section also displayed an exhibit entitled "Road to Equality - How American Women Won the Vote" depicting various aspects of women's nonviolent but determined political activism.



(KN Photo)

U.S. Diplomats Urge Women's Role in Economy, Need for Maternal Healthcare, Honor High Achievers

U.S. Consulate's Principal Officer Bryan Hunt stressed "women's active participation in the economy" and the "importance of safeguarding maternal health" at events in Lahore on March 8 marking the International Women's Day.

"Women play a vital role in shaping their societies," Principal Officer Bryan Hunt said during his visit to the Beaconhouse National University today highlighting the USAID-funded PISDAC (Pakistan Initiative for Strategic Development and Competitiveness) project on women's participation in the gems and jewelry sector. "Urban and rural poverty around the world often indicates a missed opportunity for

women's participation, as the failure to use human capital curbs economic development."

"The United States is proud to sponsor innovative partnerships to promote economic opportunities for women. I hope BNU's initiative in jewelry design training will promote entrepreneurship among women," remarked Mr. Hunt.

Speaking later at a play "Bohat Dair Kar Di" (Too Late), Principal Officer Bryan Hunt said, "The Pakistan Initiative for Mothers and Newborns (PAIMAN) is part of USAID's \$127 million investment in health in Pakistan through 2006, which also includes programs to provide clean water, and combat TB, polio and HIV/AIDS."

"The U.S. Government and USAID are proud to be partnering with the Government and the people of Punjab by funding the PAIMAN Project to work in Dera Ghazi Khan, Jhelum, Khanewal and Rawalpindi to improve the healthcare provided to mothers and newborns. On the occasion of International Women's Day, it is fitting that we recognize two groups of women critical to the health of all Pakistanis: mothers and Lady Health Workers."

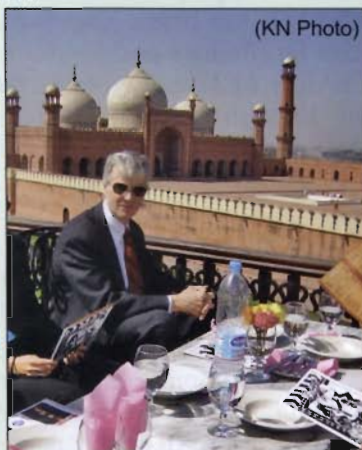
Consulate's Public Affairs Officer Kathleen Eagen underlined the need for awareness in timely treatment and care of breast cancer survivors at a meeting with Lahore's leading doctors and NGO representatives. "Valuable lives can be saved and families spared the suffering through increased awareness about breast cancer," she said.

The U.S. Consulate in Lahore celebrated the International Women's Day through a number of activities that included Political Officer Amanda Pilz's visit to a Women's Police Station, a luncheon for high-achieving women students, Principal Officer Hunt's visit to the Government Girls High School, Singhpura. The day's events were capped by a reception honoring accomplished Pakistani women in fields as diverse as media, politics, education and the arts.



Principal Officer of U.S. Consulate Lahore Bryan Hunt views an exhibition of work by Gem-Cutting Polishing Certificate Course students funded by USAID at Beaconhouse National University, Lahore. (KN Photo)

PAKISTANIS are WELCOMIN



Q: Mr. Ambassador, you have been considered a “real friend of Pakistan.” Now, as you arrive at the conclusion of your eventful stay in Pakistan, how do you look back at the last two-plus years of your stay here? What would you count as the ‘achievements’ of your tenure as U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan?

AMB CROCKER: I think the relationship between Pakistan and the U.S. has developed significantly during the last two-and-a-half years. I think that it is not really a question of credit to one particular individual. It is much more important than that. It has been the development of the institutions of our relationship, and I think we all know some of the key examples of that. Our military assistance recently marked the arrival of Cobra helicopters to support Pakistan’s efforts in War on Terror. We have done a great deal with the Pakistan Navy. The F-16 sale is now moving forward. Two F-16s have already arrived in country. We have done a tremendous amount on the economic side. Our assistance of three billion dollars over five years, split evenly between economic and security, is, I think, a concrete example of the strength and continuity of this relationship. But if I have to pick one single element in relationship which stands out for me, it would be the earthquake relief and reconstruction effort. The United States was Pakistan’s largest earthquake donor with over half a billion dollars committed. And both the size and

enormously G & HOSPITABLE

Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker



speed of the U.S. response was, I think, an indication of how deeply affected Americans were by what happened to people in Pakistan and the readiness on the part of our government and our people to stand up to that and do everything we could to help Pakistanis put their life back together.

Q: Mr. Ambassador, there are several misperceptions and reservations among the people of Pakistan about the United States. What have you done to remove those doubts and bridge the gap between the two societies? Do you see or predict a continued 'up-beat' trend in the Pak-U.S. relations in the years to come?

AMB CROCKER: This is a key point because relationships to endure obviously have to be strong between governments, but they also have to be strong between peoples. There are several things that we have done here that I think are quite important. One is, of course, we have dramatically expanded the Fulbright scholarship program to the extent that it is now the largest single Fulbright scholarship program in the entire world. This ensures that hundreds of Pakistan's most talented young people would have the opportunity to visit the United States over the next five years, developing their skills, but also developing an appreciation of American people and society, to bring back home with them. Equally important, from our point of view, during their time in the United States they are going to meet thousands of Americans who have never encountered a Pakistani, never been to Pakistan but will, from their interactions, derive a sense of what the Pakistani people are really like. So I think that is very important, that for the people to

people level. The other thing we have worked very hard on during my time here is to expand travel to the U.S. We have consistently sent the message through the Pakistani media that the U.S. welcomes legitimate visitors. And we have seen the results of that. The issuance of visas to Pakistanis in 2006 was thirty per cent higher than in 2005. The issuance of student visas increased fifty-five per cent in 2006 over 2005. So the word is getting out. More and more Pakistanis are traveling to the U.S., and as they do so, they experience the reality of what and who Americans are, and they return and communicate that to friends and family. I think you are going to see a progressive strengthening of understanding and, through understanding, friendship at a people to people level.

Q: Mr. Ambassador, there are many negative and often unfair stereotypes in the western media about Pakistan. You have been here for the last two-and-a-half years and met with different strata of society. What is your perception about ordinary Pakistanis and life in Pakistan?

AMB CROCKER: I found Pakistan and Pakistanis to be enormously welcoming and hospitable people. I find it noteworthy that during my two-and-a-half years here that, while clearly there are many Pakistanis who have been unhappy over various aspects of U.S. policy in the region, my American staff consistently report the same thing that I have seen for myself. Individualized anti-Americanism virtually does not exist here. When Americans, either from this embassy or the community, are out in the streets, the markets around the city, in the country, they encounter nothing but hospitality and generosity, and I think it is quite extraordinary. It is the same thing I remember from my first trip to Pakistan, which was as a university student in 1970--hitch-hiking from Peshawar to Wahgah. That Pakistan part of the trip stood out to me just because people were so very nice, and the people I was dealing with then did



(KN Photo)

not have very much of their own but they were always wanting to share it. So, again, what struck me most during this period (in Pakistan) was the hospitality, courtesy and generosity.

Q: Mr. Ambassador, Pakistan society is also as diverse as that of your American society. What do you see as the major differences between the way of life and outlook in the United States and here in Pakistan?

AMB CROCKER: I see more similarities than I do differences. I see in Pakistanis and Pakistan a tremendous sense of individual freedom. Pakistanis are never afraid to speak their mind or write their opinion in the press, say what they think on television or radio. There is a tremendous attachment to be free, to move your life the way you want to. I find Pakistanis passionately interested in education. Just about everywhere I go in the country, if people want anything from the U.S., that (education) is always the first thing they mention. They want their kids to have better opportunities than they had, better education than they have, and that's also very much a part of American society and culture. Like Americans, Pakistanis are very mobile people--both within the country and in their travel abroad. If I had to note a particular difference as I have seen, it would be that Pakistanis are more strongly family-oriented than Americans are. Pakistanis I have come to know and befriend, the family and the whole extended family is really at the center of their lives, and that includes not just their parents and children, brothers and sisters, but cousins of several ramose and uncles and aunts. That Pakistanis traveling abroad would expect to spend weeks with the relative in another country that here she has never seen before. So very, very strong family attachments exist in Pakistan, and I find those very admirable.

Q: Mr. Ambassador, as a foreigner and senior American diplomat, you have watched the customs and traditions of Pakistani society. What are the characteristics of Pakistani civilization and culture that have most impressed you?



(AP Photo/Shakil Adil)



(KN Photo)

AMB CROCKER: The dominant impression that I have of Pakistani civilization as an American is how very, very old, and very rich it is. We are young country, a young civilization. Pakistan has very ancient one. And whenever I visit museums around the country or archeological sites, I have been to a fair number now; I am impressed by just how far back civilization extends in this country and how important those civilizations have been for all of us in the world community. You know, from the earliest efforts of the Stone Age man in Balochistan up through Mohenjo-Daro, the Gandhara civilization, on into local times. What has happened in Pakistan has affected the world. In that sense I was extremely happy to be able to preside over the return of those priceless artifacts of Gandhara that were illegally exported from Pakistan back to Pakistani authorities. There was more historical richness in that single collection of stolen artifacts than you find in many U.S. museums and in the entire region.

Q: Mr. Ambassador, you have also traveled all over Pakistan. Which places have you found most interesting and why?

AMB CROCKER: Well, I found them all interesting. Pakistan, like the U.S., is an incredibly diverse country and society. And like the U.S., if you hope to understand Pakistan, you have to travel. One can no more sit in Islamabad and think that he or she understands the country then you can do that in Washington and have the same experience. So visiting as often as I could all of Pakistan's provinces, trying to get out not only to provincial capitals but to smaller towns and cities, I found one of the more valuable things I did here just for my own education. And you know, from Gwadar to Peshawar and all the places in between and visiting again towns like say Badin in Sindh or Bhawalpur in Punjab, you get a sense of what life is like away from the great cities of Pakistan. And again I found that enormously educative. I have had the chance to visit most of the tribal agencies during my time here and there again seen the difference between reality and stereotypes -- talking to tribal representatives in Bajaur agency, hearing that they want the same things for their kids that other Pakistanis and Americans want--health, education and employment opportunities. So the time I have spent out of this office traveling around the country is actually the best times I have had.

Q: Mr. Ambassador, is there any other thing you would like to say to the people of Pakistan?

AMB CROCKER: I am leaving with a sense of sadness that I am not going to be able to remain longer here, but with a very good sense about where we are going in this relationship. I have enormous confidence in the future of this country, the capacities and the intentions of its people. Pakistan in the years to come is going to be a regional leader, and we look forward to being a partner, as the full resources and capacities of this country continue to be developed, and a partner as a world leader with again an absolutely vital regional state and a good friend and ally.



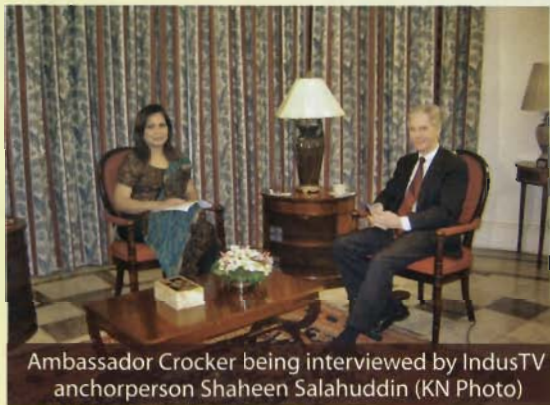
(KN Photo)



(KN Photo)



(PID Photo)



Ambassador Crocker being interviewed by IndusTV anchorperson Shaheen Salahuddin (KN Photo)



Ambassador Crocker at the American Business Council (KN Photo)

U.S Ambassador Stresses Enduring Ties with Pakistan

U.S. Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker emphasized America's "strategic and enduring relationship with Pakistan" at all meetings during his farewell visit to Karachi on March 2.

The Ambassador led the U.S. Consulate's memorial ceremony for the first anniversary of the March 2, 2006, consulate bombing that killed two U.S. Government employees, including American diplomat, David Foy, and Pakistani staff member, Iftikhar Ahmed.

"In our strategic and long-term relationship with Pakistan, we are all together continuing the fight against extremism," Ambassador Crocker stated. "The U.S. and Pakistan are fighting a common enemy, and nowhere is this fight more important than here in Karachi."

During his visit to Karachi, Ambassador Crocker met with the Chief Minister of Sindh, Dr. Arbab Ghulam Rahim, and the Governor of Sindh, Dr. Ishrat ul Ibad.

"We were here from the beginning of the creation of Pakistan. We are here now, and we will be here for a long time to come," the American Ambassador repeated on every occasion.

The U.S. Ambassador also met with the American Business Council of Karachi and discussed commercial relations between the U.S. and Pakistan.

Amb. Crocker Highlights Support to Pakistan for

Free, Fair Elections



Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker visiting Kalsoft Offices on March 5 where data entry and verification for preparation of the voters lists are taking place



U.S. Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker stressed "America's commitment to support Pakistan in holding free and fair elections" and also "the vital role of women in shaping society" during his farewell visit to Lahore on March 5. The outgoing American Ambassador emphasized the importance of the "strategic and enduring relationship" between the U.S. and Pakistan in all his meetings.

"The Election Commission of Pakistan deserves full credit for outstanding work in gathering data and overseeing data entry," Ambassador Crocker said during his visit to Kalsoft Offices where data entry and verification for preparation of the voters lists are taking place. "The U.S. government's current program is valued at \$16 million in supporting the ECP as part of an international effort led by the UNDP."

"The international community can assist, but the ultimate responsibility for organizing free and fair elections lies with Pakistanis. I congratulate the government of Pakistan for its commitment to this process," stressed the Ambassador.

AMB. CROCKER ENCOURAGES WOMEN TO PLAY VITAL ROLE IN SOCIETY



Speaking at the Kinnaird College for Women in Lahore on March 5 Ambassador Crocker said, "Women play a vital role in shaping their societies, from participating in civil society and government to raising families, to having an active voice in the media, to running their own businesses."

"You, all the young women I see here today, are going to be the leaders of the next generation, and I encourage you to think of new and innovative ways to explore how you can positively impact your society," the Ambassador urged the students.

During his farewell visit to Lahore, Ambassador Crocker paid visits to the Governor of Punjab, Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Khalid Maqbool, and the Chief Secretary, Salman Siddiqi. The U.S. Ambassador met Sunday in Islamabad with Punjab Chief Minister, Pervaiz Elahi.

The U.S. Ambassador also met with Pakistani-American businesspeople in Lahore to encourage "working together to build an even stronger relationship," building on the fact that the United States already has the highest level of foreign investment in Pakistan and is the world's largest importer of Pakistani products.





(KN Photo)



(KN Photo)



(KN Photo)



(KN Photo)

U.S. Ambassador Urges Bilateral Trade

U.S. Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker stated that the "United States is committed to finding ways to broaden our commercial relationship with Pakistan" during his visit to the Bahawalpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry on March 6.

"The Bilateral Investment Treaty represents an important first step in our new economic relationship," he said. "Rapid conclusion of this treaty is in the interests of both our countries and will increase American investor confidence in Pakistan. In addition, we are proposing the creation of Reconstruction Opportunity Zones in historically disadvantaged regions of Pakistan, particularly the Afghan border areas and the earthquake zones."

Ambassador Crocker also noted, "As we are rapidly approaching International Women's Day on March 8, I want to take the opportunity to highlight the need for more female entrepreneurship in Pakistan, especially in areas like silver jewelry making in Bahawalpur. Economy cannot grow if half the population is not actively encouraged to take part."

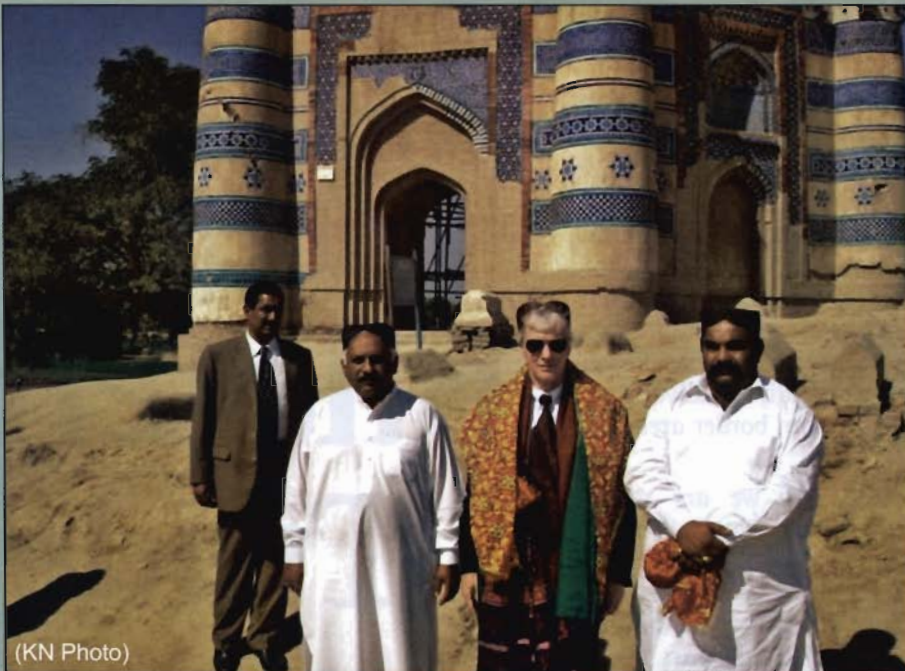
During his visit to the Sufi shrines in Uch Sharif on March 6, the Ambassador noted, "Sufis came to the subcontinent in peace. The message of peace and tolerance they brought is important in today's troubled times. It is critical that this basic message of Islam is heard above dissonant voices wishing to sow discord within the Ummah and between Islam and other religions."

Stating that terrorism "has no place in Islam or any religion," the Ambassador strongly condemned recent sectarian and extremist attacks in the Punjab.

"I congratulate all those working for inter-sectarian and inter-faith dialogue. Efforts to build bridges among faith communities will help Pakistan realize the Quaid's vision of a nation where all are free to practice the religion of their choice," the U.S. Ambassador said.

Ambassador Crocker concluded by saying that the U.S. remains committed to work with the Pakistan Government and the Pakistani people to counter extremist groups. "All of us can and must do more hand-in-hand to eliminate such groups wherever found," he urged.

Amb. Crocker Visits Sufi Shrines in Uch Sharif



U.S. Commitment to Security & Development in NWFP, FATA Re-affirmed



(KN Photo)



(KN Photo)



(KN Photo)

U.S. Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker stressed America's "long-term commitment to security and development" in the Northwest Frontier Province and the FATA during his farewell visit to Peshawar on March 7.

During his visit to Peshawar, Ambassador Crocker met with the Governor of the NWFP, Muhammad Ali Jan Orakzai, Chief Minister of the NWFP, Mohammad Akram Khan Durrani, the 11th Corps Commander, Lieutenant General Hamid Khan, and the Frontier Corps Commandant, Major General Muhammad Alam Khattak.

"The United States has a multi-faceted and enduring relationship with Pakistan," Ambassador Crocker stated. "We are strongly committed to helping the people of Pakistan in our mutual fight against terrorism and to ensure that Pakistanis enjoy improved access to education, healthcare, and employment."

The American Ambassador also visited Peshawar University's Lincoln Corner where he met with Peshawar-area university students participating in a U.S. Consulate-sponsored discussion group on democracy.

Ambassador Crocker attended a farewell reception in his honor at the residence of the U.S. Consulate's Principal Officer, Ms. Lynne Tracy, on March 6 and met with representatives from the NWFP's political, academic, business, development, and media communities.

“DEMOCRACY DIALOGUES”

Discussion Group Inaugurated

U.S. Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker on March 7 inaugurated U.S. Consulate Peshawar's third annual university student discussion group. The theme for this year's discussion group will be "Democracy Dialogues."

"President Bush has made the spread of democracy a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy," Ambassador Crocker stated. "President Musharraf has promised that Pakistan will hold free and fair elections this year and the U.S. supports his decision."

The "Democracy Dialogues" participants were selected after a rigorous screening process and represent nine Peshawar-area universities and departments.

"You were selected not only for your academic prowess, but for your commitment to service," the American Ambassador told the students' meeting at the Peshawar University's Lincoln Corner.

The group will meet weekly to discuss readings about democracy and the program will culminate in an essay competition judged by Peshawar University faculty.





(KN Photo)



(KN Photo)



U.S. Ambassador Assures Continuing Support for

DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

during Visit to Balochistan

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 in Quetta on March 12. 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."

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.

U.S. Repatriates

Priceless Gandharan Artifacts to Pakistan

The return of priceless Gandharan artifacts "represents a very significant example of the importance of cooperation between Pakistan and the United States," the U.S. Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker emphasized during a ceremony hosted by Federal Minister for Culture, Dr. G. G. Jammal, marking the repatriation of Gandharan artifacts at the Islamabad Museum, Sir Syed Memorial Building on March 8.

"It is a sign of maturity, respect and cooperation in our law enforcement relationship. It is an important sign of our true respect for the profound cultural heritage of Pakistan," the Ambassador said.

Among the 39 repatriated artifacts items recovered were Buddhist statues, a rare cup from the second century before the Common Era and a number of sculptures, including a starving Buddha.

Gandhara is one of the foundation stones of Pakistan's historic and cultural heritage. It was a center of art, a center of enlightened thought, and a center of learning from the second century before the Common Era to the fifth century of the Common Era.

"Like modern Pakistan, Gandhara was a cultural and economic crossroads of the region," the American Ambassador said. "Artifacts of Gandhara are celebrated in many of the world's leading museums of Asian art; just as they are celebrated in the leading museums of Pakistan, including those in Peshawar, in Lahore, and here in Islamabad."

Also, joining the Culture Minister at the ceremonial return of retrieved artifacts, were other Pakistani and American officials, including the Director General of Archaeology & Museums, Dr. Fazal Dad Kakar; the Secretary of Culture, Salim Gul Shaikh; the Director of Antiquities, Dr. Mohamed Ashraf; the Director General Customs Intelligence, Maj Gen. Faheem; and a representative of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Mr. Keith C. Ryan.

Ambassador Crocker said that the artifacts displayed here were shipped illegally from Pakistan to an international black market in cultural artifacts. They were seized and recovered by agents of the United States Department of Homeland Security in the port of Newark in September, 2005.



(KN Photo)



(AP Photo/Anjum Naveed)

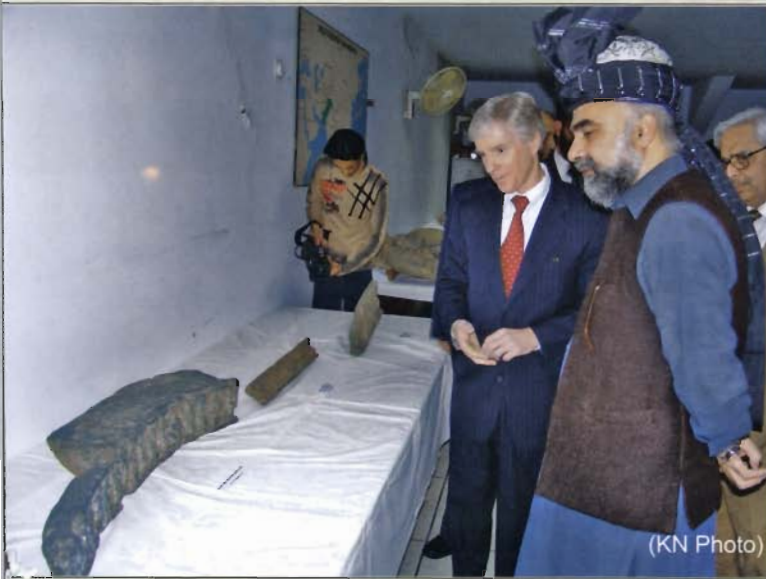
"Pakistani and American experts worked together to verify that the items had been illegally excavated from sites in the northern part of Pakistan. Under Pakistani law, it is illegal to export cultural antiquities without the expressed permission of the government of Pakistan," Ambassador Crocker said.

The Ambassador explained that the individual who was destined to receive the artifacts abandoned the items, and they remained in U.S. federal custody while a senior agent of the Department of Homeland Security investigated these artifacts. The Department of Homeland Security worked with various experts in the field of South Asian art and with staff from the U.S. State Department.

گندھارا تہذیب کے قیمتی مسروقہ نوادرات کی حواگی



(KN Photo)



(KN Photo)



(KN Photo)

امریکی سفیر رائن سی کرو کرنے کہا ہے کہ بیش بہا قیمتی گندھارا نوادرات کی واپسی پاکستان اور امریکہ کے مابین تعاون کی اہمیت کی ایک نمایاں مثال ہے۔ وہ 8 مارچ 200ء کو سرسید میموریل بلڈنگ میں واقع اسلام آباد عجائب گھر میں امریکہ کی جانب سے پاکستان کو گندھارا تہذیب کے مسروقہ نوادرات حوالے کئے جانے کی تقریب میں اظہار خیال کر رہے تھے۔ تقریب کے میزبان وفاقی وزیر ثقافت ڈاکٹر جی جی جمال تھے۔

انہوں نے کہا کہ یہ ہمارے قانون کے نفاذ کے حوالے سے تعلقات میں پختگی، احترام اور تعاون کی علامت ہے اور یہ پاکستان کے بھرپور ثقافتی ورثہ کیلئے ہماری حقیقی احترام کی اہم علامت ہے۔ پاکستان کو جو 39 نوادرات واپس کئے گئے ہیں، ان میں بدھ مت کے مجسمے، دوسری صدی قبل مسیح کا ایک نادر پیالہ اور متعدد دیگر مجسمے جن میں تپسیا کرتے ہوئے مہاتما بدھ کا مجسمہ شامل ہیں۔

گندھارا پاکستان کے تاریخی اور ثقافتی ورثہ کے بنیادی ستونوں میں سے ایک ہے۔ یہ فنون لطیفہ اور روشن خیال فکر و نظر کا مرکز تھا اور دوسری صدی قبل مسیح سے پانچویں صدی عیسوی تک علوم کا مرکز تھا۔

امریکی سفیر نے کہا کہ جدید پاکستان کی طرح گندھارا بھی خطہ میں تہذیبی اور معاشی مرکز گاہ تھا۔ گندھارا تہذیب کے نوادرات دنیا میں ایشیاء فنون کے کئی مشہور عجائب گھروں کی زینت ہیں، جس طرح پاکستان کے ممتاز عجائب گھروں میں نمائش کیلئے رکھے گئے ہیں جن میں پشاور، لاہور اور اسلام آباد کے عجائب گھر شامل ہیں۔

وفاقی وزیر ثقافت کے ساتھ اس تقریب میں پاکستانی اور امریکی حکام نے شرکت کی جن میں محکمہ آثار قدیمہ و عجائب گھر کے ڈائریکٹر جنرل ڈاکٹر فضل داد کا کڑ، سیکریٹری ثقافت سلیم گل شیخ، نوادرات کے ڈائریکٹر ڈاکٹر محمد اشرف، ڈائریکٹر جنرل کسٹمز انٹیلی جنس میجر جنرل فہیم اور امریکی محکمہ داخلی سلامتی کے نمائندے کی تہذیبی رائن بھی شامل تھے۔

رائن سی کرو کرنے کہا کہ یہاں جو نوادرات نمائش کیلئے رکھے گئے ہیں، وہ پاکستان سے غیر قانونی طور پر تہذیبی نوادرات کی کالے دھندے کی ایک بین الاقوامی منڈی میں اسمگل کئے گئے تھے۔ انہیں ستمبر 2005ء میں امریکہ محکمہ داخلی سلامتی کے اہلکاروں نے نیوآرک میں پکڑ لیا تھا۔

سفیر کرو کرنے کہا کہ پاکستانی اور امریکی ماہرین نے اس بات کی تصدیق کرنے کیلئے کہ یہ ایشیاء پاکستان کے شمالی علاقہ میں کھنڈرات سے غیر قانونی طور پر کھدائی کر کے نکالی گئی ہیں مل جل کر کام کیا۔ پاکستانی قانون کے تحت حکومت پاکستان کی واضح اجازت کے بغیر ثقافتی نوادرات کی برآمد غیر قانونی ہے۔

امریکی سفیر نے تفصیل سے بتاتے ہوئے کہا کہ جس شخص نے یہ نوادرات وصول کرنے تھے اس نے ان پر اپنا دعویٰ ترک کر دیا اور یہ امریکہ کی وفاقی حکومت کی تحویل میں رہے، جبکہ محکمہ داخلی سلامتی کے ایک اعلیٰ افسر نے ان نوادرات کے متعلق تحقیقات کیں۔ محکمہ داخلی سلامتی کے عملے نے جنوبی ایشیائی فنون کے شعبہ کے متعدد ماہرین اور امریکی محکمہ خارجہ کے حکام کے ساتھ مل کر کام کیا۔