



THE WHITE HOUSE  
PRESIDENT  
GEORGE W. BUSH

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For Immediate Release  
Office of the Press Secretary  
February 13, 2002

## U.S.-Pakistan Affirm Commitment Against Terrorism

Remarks by President Bush and President Musharraf of Pakistan in Press Availability  
The Cross Hall

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11:34 A.M. EST

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** Good morning. It's my honor to welcome President Musharraf to the White House. President Musharraf is a leader with great courage, and his nation is a key partner in the global coalition against terror. Pakistan's continuing support of Operation Enduring Freedom has been critical to our success so far in toppling the Taliban and routing out the al Qaeda network.

Yet President Musharraf has made an even broader commitment. He has declared that Pakistan will be an enemy of terrorism and extremism, wherever it exists, including inside his own border. He understands that terrorism is wrong and destructive in any cause. He knows that his nation cannot grow peacefully if terrorists are tolerated or ignored in his country, in his region, or in the world. He is committed to banning the groups that practice terror, closing their offices and arresting the terrorists themselves.

Terrorists operating in Pakistan recently kidnapped American reporter, Daniel Pearl. We spent a time today in the Oval Office talking about our mutual desire to see that Mr. Pearl is returned home safely. I want to thank the President for his assistance and work on securing Mr. Pearl's release.

I also applaud President Musharraf's clearly stated intention to work for peace in Kashmir, and lower tensions with India. I'm particularly pleased to note that he is going to be holding elections later on this fall.

The President has articulated a vision of a Pakistan as a progressive, modern, and democratic Islamic society, determined and serious about seeking greater learning and greater prosperity for its citizens. The United States is committed to working in partnership with Pakistan to pursue these objectives.

Together, our nations will continue to cooperate against terror and trafficking in drugs. We will strengthen ties of trade and investment between our nations. We'll work to improve educational and

economic opportunities for all Pakistanis, especially women and children. And my government stands ready to work with all parties on the Subcontinent to foster dialogue to lower tensions and resolve outstanding issues.

The forces of history have accelerated the growth of friendship between the United States and Pakistan. I believe the pages of history will record that this friendship was hopeful and positive and will lead to peace.

Mr. President.

PRESIDENT MUSHARRAF: Thank you very much, Mr. President, for your welcome and your kind words and sentiments expressed for me and for Pakistan and for my government.

I recall with great pleasure our very productive meeting last November in New York. We have also spoken quite frequently on the telephone since then. I value most highly this opportunity to exchange views with you in person.

Our discussions this morning have been fruitful and constructive, and will continue over the lunch. Our meetings and discussions with senior members of your administration continue as part of the ongoing dialogue which characterizes our close and cooperative relations.

For more than half a century, the relations between Pakistan and the United States have been friendly, multifaceted and enduring. They represent an important element of stability in our region and beyond. The criminal terrorist attacks of September 11th and the momentous events since then have demonstrated the depth and strength of this relationship between the United States and Pakistan.

Pakistan has a firm position of principle in the international battle against terrorism. We reject terrorism in all its forms and manifestations anywhere in the world. We will continue to fulfill our responsibilities flowing from our commitment.

I am gratified that my vision of Pakistan as a dynamic, liberal, progressive, peaceful and genuinely democratic Muslim country, and the decision I announced on 12 January have evoked a supportive response in the United States. I believe that Pakistan-United States relationship must draw strength from our past relationship as we move to a new century, a changed world and meet the challenges faced ahead.

I apprised the President of the massive and aggressive deployment of Indian forces on our borders and the serious security situation that it has created. The immediate return of Indian forces to peacetime locations and the early resumption of dialogue between Pakistan and India is the way forward. We welcome the constructive role played by President Bush and Secretary Powell in urging restraint and defusing military tensions.

I am committed to a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute, in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people. All other differences existing between Pakistan and India should also be settled

through peaceful means. We believe the United States can facilitate such a solution and help South Asia turn a new leaf.

The faithful implementation of the Bonn Accord provides the best guarantee for the future of Afghanistan. The interim administration must be strengthened and its writ established over the entire country. Rehabilitation and reconstruction must begin in Afghanistan. The Tokyo Donors Conference has provided a forceful and timely input to this process, which will also accelerate the return of millions of Afghan refugees in Pakistan to their homeland.

Together, the United States and Pakistan can accomplish great things. We have embarked on a long-term partnership. We look forward to an era of robust collaboration. I look forward, Mr. President, to your visit to Pakistan, where a warm and cordial welcome awaits you from the people of Pakistan, who hold you in the highest of esteem.

I thank you, sir.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Thank you, Mr. President; good job.

PRESIDENT MUSHARRAF: Thank you.

Q Mr. President, your advisors have long said that there needs to be regime change in Iraq. Are you looking at military action to achieve that goal? How could Saddam be toppled?

And to President Musharraf, are you confident that Mr. Pearl is alive and will be released soon?

PRESIDENT BUSH: Ron, I meant what I said the other night, that there are some nations in the world which develop weapons of mass destruction with one intention, and that is to hold America hostage and/or harm Americans and/or our friends and allies. And I also meant what I said, that I look forward to working with the world to bring pressure on those nations to change their behavior. But make no mistake about it, if we need to, we will take necessary action to defend the American people.

And I think that statement was clear enough for Iraq to hear me. And I will reserve whatever options I have, I'll keep them close to my vest. President -- or Saddam Hussein needs to understand I'm serious about defending our country.

I think one of the worst things that can happen in the world is terrorist organizations mating up with nations which have had a bad history, and nations which develop weapons of mass destruction. It would be devastating for those of us who fight for freedom. And, therefore, we, the free world, are going to -- must make it clear to these nations they've got a choice to make. And I'll keep all options available if they don't make the choice.

Q Mr. President, Mr. President --

PRESIDENT BUSH: Here's what's going to happen. Hold on for a second, please. Hold on for a

second. These two press people are going to actually bring some order to this by calling upon individuals, and the President is going to speak about Daniel Pearl.

PRESIDENT MUSHARRAF: Your first part of the question, whether Mr. Pearl is alive or dead -- I am reasonably sure he's alive and I really very much hope, we all hope that he's alive.

About getting him released, well, let me say we are as close as possible to getting him released. But I would like to emphasize here that I have taken certain steps in Pakistan to crush extremism, religious intolerance in the society. And therefore, I expected a certain degree of fallout of these steps. But, however, I would like to say we are not deterred. These kinds of things were expected, and we will meet this challenge and try to resolve whatever negative influences it creates in our society.

I very much hope that, with all our efforts and the combined efforts of all the intelligence agencies in Pakistan, we will be able to get Mr. Pearl released.

Q Mr. President, it is evident that the Kashmir issue has not been resolved through bilateral talks between India and Pakistan. In the beginning, U.S. -- for Kashmir, the United States and U.N. resolution. Now we hope that U.S. come forward for mediation and resolve this issue because this is the main issue between India and Pakistan.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Well, our hope is that we can facilitate meaningful dialogue between India and Pakistan. The only way this issue is going to be solved is if the Pakistani government and the Indian government sit down and have serious, meaningful dialogue to resolve this issue. And you heard the President of Pakistan say his hope is there's a peaceful resolution. That's our hope, as well. And so the best thing our government can do is to encourage there to be a -- to come to the table and start to have meaningful, real dialogue. And that's what we'll continue to press for.

Q On campaign finance reform, sir, are Republican --

PRESIDENT BUSH: Is this to the Pakistani President, or me? (Laughter.)

Q For you, sir. On campaign finance reform, are Republican operatives trying to kill the bill? And will you sign Shays-Meehan if it gets to your desk?

PRESIDENT BUSH: Well, I want to sign a bill that improves the system. And it seems like to me that if they get a bill out of the House of Representatives that improves the system, it ought to be in effect immediately. But we'll see what comes my way. And I would look at it very carefully and give it a good look.

Q What about the Republicans -- are they trying to kill the bill, working for the RNC?

PRESIDENT BUSH: I've talked to many Republicans that are trying to improve the system, as well. And again, I repeat -- I understand there's a chance to amend the bill that says, if it improves the system, let's have it in effect this year. And I support that. I think it makes sense. But I'll take a good

look at it. It's making its way through the system, and I'll give it a good look.

Q President Bush, you talked about history --

PRESIDENT BUSH: Talked about -- excuse me?

Q You talked about history --

PRESIDENT BUSH: Oh, history, yes. Getting a little hard of hearing.

Q And history shows that the U.S. dumped Pakistan after the Afghan war in 1980 -- So a common Pakistani wants to know whether the U.S. will repeat the same history again, once again. And secondly, how do you plan to help Pakistan -- Pakistan in its struggle of survival against mighty and militarized India?

PRESIDENT BUSH: Well, that's a very legitimate question. And it's -- one of the reasons why President Musharraf and I are spending time together is he has got to be confident in me and my government willingness to stay supportive of Pakistan. I think one of the things, in order for us to have a positive relationship is that he realizes that when we say we're committed, we're committed. And we're committed to peace in the region. We're committed to fighting terror.

The President made a tough decision and a strong decision -- it's not only a decision about fighting terror, it's a decision for the direction of his country. And we support that strongly.

So I can understand why some in Pakistan are saying, well, oh, this is just a short-term dance. But so long as we share the same ideals and values and common objectives, we'll work with Pakistan. And there are ways to help. The President is going to go see Secretary Rumsfeld today. We have -- he negotiated and we willingly supported a strong aid package in the '02 budget. We're now discussing help in the '03 budget. We want to help facilitate the President's concerns about a debt burden on Pakistan. We want to talk about trade matters. We want to help him achieve his vision of elevating the average citizen by giving them a chance and a hopeful opportunity for life.

And so, I would suggest that people in Pakistan remember to think about the future and not dwell in the past. That's what the President has done with his vision. And I am proud to call him friend.

I want to remind people from Pakistan that I didn't mention many world leaders in my State of the Union. But I mentioned President Musharraf, for a reason. And hopefully, that's an indication of my sincerity of developing a strong and meaningful relationship.

Q Mr. Bush and Mr. Musharraf, should secular schools be the standard in Islamic communities in Pakistan to prevent jihads and other terrorists attacks like 9/11?

PRESIDENT BUSH: Let me first -- and I'd like the President to speak on this, basically on the madrasa school issue in Pakistan. One of the things that most impressed me about President

Musharraf, that gives me confidence in his vision, is that the last time we met in New York City, we spent a fair amount of time talking about education reform. And the President has placed a very intriguing and very interesting woman in charge of the education system in Pakistan. She used to work in rural areas, a rural province of the country. He's elevated her to Cabinet position because she's a reformer. She understands the modern world requires an education system that trains children in basic sciences and reading and math and the history of Pakistan.

And the President laid out to me a vision, which he can share with you, about how to encourage madrasas to adopt a curriculum that will actually -- will work, and will provide a work force, a trained work force, and will give people hope.

And so our government is committed to working with the Pakistani government on education reform. We had a -- as I understand that of the \$600 million, part of the aid package last year, \$100 million of those dollars have gone into education reform. The President will make the decision as to how best to use that. There's \$35 million -- or \$34 million additional dollars this year that will go help on education reform.

I shared with him my passion about education reform here in America and I want to applaud him for making a visionary statement about education. He knows what I know: An educated child is one much more likely to be able to realize dreams and to be a productive citizen.

So, April, I think -- let the President speak to this issue, if you don't mind.

**PRESIDENT MUSHARRAF:** Thank you. We are involved in Pakistan, as I laid out in the 12 January speech, in a jihad -- jihad-e-akbar, which I call, a greater jihad, which is in our teaching in Islam, a jihad against illiteracy, a jihad against poverty, backwardness, hunger. This is the jihad that we are engaged now and we have initiated.

Now, within this jihad, education forms a focal area. And since the President wants me to focus particularly on madrasa, in education we are taking three areas of education. One is the madrasa education; the second is the primary and secondary education; and the third is higher education. I would just like to focus on the madrasa education. We have formulated strategies in each one of these three areas.

Madrasas, we must understand, are basically -- there are about 600,000 to 800,000 students here in madrasas. Now, the positive aspect of the madrasa -- which I did lay out in my speech also, I would like to highlight for everyone to hear -- is that they are a welfare -- they have a welfare and humanitarian aspect to them. They feed and house the poorest of the poor children. So this is the positive aspect of their providing free board and lodge to the poorest of the poor.

Now, the weaknesses of some of the madrasas only teaching religious -- giving religious education to the children has to be removed. And the children in these madrasas need to be brought into the mainstream of life. And that is what we are doing.

We have asked the madrasas to introduce four subjects. And these are science, English, Pakistan

studies, and mathematics. Now, with these four subjects introduced, we have also created a board for them to take their examinations from. And once they take their examinations through these boards, it will make them eligible to transfer to any other college or university, if I want to give them a scholarship and take them there, or to get them a job anywhere -- in a banking area or in the military or anywhere -- instead of focusing only into the religious field.

So this is the strategy that we have adopted to get these children into the mainstream of life in Pakistan. So the basic idea is utilize their strength, the strength of their giving free board and lodge to such a vast population of the poorest of the poor; and eradicate their weakness so that they are drawn into the mainstream of life in Pakistan. This is the strategy we are following.

Q My question is for President Bush. President, you know --

PRESIDENT BUSH: Why am I not surprised? (Laughter.)

Q Almost more than 700,000 Pakistanis are based in the United States.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Say that again? I'm sorry.

Q Almost more than 700,000 Pakistanis are based in the United States.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Right, right.

Q But after September 11th, FBI and different law enforcing agencies, they made a major crackdown against different communities. And Pakistani community has especially been targeted by law enforcing agencies. And hundreds of Pakistanis are in different detention centers. And there is a sense in the community they are treating them like a terrorist. And, you know, very wrong messages are delivered back to Pakistan that in the United States, Pakistanis are treated like a terrorists. And on the other side, in Pakistan, is supporting all the way the United States in the war against terrorism.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Yes.

Q And the same White House, Mexican President, Mr. Fox, visited White House and you promised that you will consider to give guest worker status to illegal Mexicans, 3.5. million. So keeping in, you know, the Pakistani -- what they have done for United States, would you be kind enough to consider a legal status for a small number of illegal Pakistanis, who are in process of legalization?

PRESIDENT BUSH: Well, first, we need to reform our INS. There's no question the paperwork delays are way too long. It's frustrating for people. So for those who are amazed at the fact that paperwork can stay in a process for such a period of time, I can understand that.

Secondly, I've always believed that we ought to encourage a willing employee and a willing employer to come together. And as we discuss immigration law, that ought to be an aspect of the law.

And, finally, this great nation is a nation that will protect ourselves; we're still under threat. But we treat people with ultimate respect. I mean, people in this country have got a chance to get attorneys at law to help them. People are not being -- we never said, let's go single out a particular group of citizens. Let's protect America. If we get any kind of lead or any kind of hint about anything that is -- could lead to an attack, we're going to give people a chance to share information to protect America. That makes sense, if you're living here and you care about the country, that you ought to be given a chance to participate.

So I don't know who, specifically, you're referring to, but people are being treated incredibly humanely here -- and in Guantanamo Bay, by the way. Perhaps you're referring to maybe some citizens there. I will just assure you, like I've assured the President, that people are getting fantastic health care, much better health care today in Guantanamo Bay than they were getting in Afghanistan, I can assure you.

And so our country is mindful of the need to respect people's rights. But I want to assure you we will do, within our power, within the Constitution of the United States, what it takes to defend the American people. My most important job is to protect innocent Americans, and this is exactly what I'm going to do.

Listen, thank you all very much.

PRESIDENT MUSHARRAF: Thank you.

END        12:00 P.M. EST

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