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ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

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C O N T E N T S

Introduction: STROBE TALBOTT
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Moderator: STEPHEN P. COHEN
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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. TALBOTT: Good morning, everybody. Welcome to Brookings. I'm Strobe Talbott. It's my pleasure to welcome you all here on behalf of the Brookings Leadership Forum.

Our guest this morning, Foreign Minister Kasuri, I'm happy to say is not a stranger to the Brookings Institution. He was here just a little over 2 years ago. I'd like to think, Mr. Minister, that makes you part of the extended Brookings family which puts you in extremely good company, including with Ambassador Karamat who has the status of being an alumnus of this institution because he was once upon a time a visiting Fellow here, and I'm glad that did no damage to his career.

[Laughter.]

MR. TALBOTT: Foreign Minister Kasuri brings great distinction and some highly pertinent experience to the topic that he is going to be discussing with us over the next 45 minutes or an hour.

His topic is Challenges and Opportunities in U.S.-Pakistani Relations. I wouldn't be surprised if he were to touch on some other relationships as well. I think it can be said that one of the themes of his career is that he has constructively met the challenges and he has imaginatively capitalized on the opportunities.

He has been active in Pakistan's democratic experience as a parliamentarian, elected to the National Assembly of Pakistan. He has been active in Pakistani diplomacy as a prime ministerial special envoy dealing skillfully with a variety of difficult and important assignments. He has been active in promoting dialogue and

better relations with India including, I might add, before that was a widely supported objective as it is today.

Also he knows the United States quite well. He's lectured at universities in this country and he has advised his own government on higher-education matters including as they relate to higher education in the United States.

He's here in Washington at an especially important time. I think it's fair to say that this is a critical moment in the U.S.-Pakistan relationship. He comes here, of course, in the wake of the announcement of the F-16 decision. The two governments are in the midst of intense cooperation with regard to the United States effort to apprehend and bring to justice figures believed to be associated with al Qaeda.

More generally, I think that this is a moment of potentially dramatic shifts in what might be called the strategic quadrangle among Pakistan, the United States, India and China.

All but one of those sets of relationships are improving. The only one that is not improving is the U.S.-China relationship, and Mr. Minister, we're not going to hold you responsible for that, or if you have any comments on it, we'd be very interested to hear them.

I suspect that he will touch on all of these subjects and more. He has agreed that at the conclusion of his remarks he will join with all of you in a discussion. That discussion will be moderated by our resident expert on South Asia and also the author most recently of *The Idea of Pakistan* which is on sale at the Brookings bookstore right outside the auditorium, Steve Cohen.

Mr. Minister, welcome to Brookings.

[Applause.]

MR. KASURI: Thank you very much. Mr. Strobe Talbott, president of the Brookings Institution, Professor Stephen Cohen, Senior Fellow, Ambassador Karamat, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I would much prefer an interactive session, but unfortunately, I have to go through with a written text for more than one reason. I'll try to take not more than 15 or 20 minutes, and will therefore have about 40 minutes of a question and answer session.

It gives me great pleasure to be here at Brookings once again. I will share with my thoughts on bilateral relations between our two countries and how we can realize the potential of this relationship in addition to what's already been achieved since we became partners once again in yet another global effort.

I will also touch upon Pakistan's role in the region in which we see the United States playing a valuable role. And in case I forget about what Strobe said just now about how attempts to improve relations with the United States and China, we did an effort when Dr. Henry Kissinger pretended he had a belly ache, was hidden in a Himalayan hill station, had dark glasses and was flown from there to China. We are prepared to do that again with or without dark glasses.

Ladies and gentlemen, Pakistan's location at three concentric geographical regions, South Asia, Central Asia, West Asia and the Middle East, presents its own challenges and opportunities. Our policies are accordingly devised. It should not therefore be surprising that we are members of both SARC and ECU, involving a growing relationship with the East Asian community. Those of you who do not know what SARC and A. Q. stands for, SARC is South Asia Regional Cooperation, which has

all countries of South Asia including India and Pakistan, the two largest. And A. Q. has 10 countries, all Central Asian, plus Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey.

Pakistan has been engaged for the last few years in countering the threat posed by the menace of terrorism whether occurring within or emanating from outside, but having an equally devastating effect within Pakistan. After the abhorrent incidents of 9/11, the world saw us a front-line state in this war. However, a victim of this phenomena for years, Pakistan had already started taking steps to check this menace much before 9/11. Various extremist outfits were banned before that date.

The struggle continues, though we can justifiably claim credit for achieving more notable successes than perhaps any other country. The apprehension of over 700 suspected al Qaeda operatives and affiliates, including Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, Ramzi bin al-Shibh, and most recently Abu Farraj al-Libbi testifies to that.

These successes have not been without cost, both material and human. Many precious Pakistani lives have been lost including those of the armed forces of Pakistan. Over 70,000 troops had to be deployed along the border with Afghanistan to check the extremist elements from crossing over in either direction.

We actively engage with the United Nations to freeze assets of such individuals and groups. But we remain unwavering in our principal stand, the dangers to our top leadership notwithstanding. There have been two attempts on the life of President Musharraf and one of that of the Prime Minister. All of us are potential targets, but our commitment is unwavering.

Terrorism is a menace not only to the international community, but to our own security and political and economic well-being. Terrorism will, however, not be

defeated by military means alone. I will say that with emphasis. The root causes will have to be addressed, ladies and gentlemen, however much many people don't wish to hear of that. The sense of deprivation will have to be tackled. There can be no selectivity in the application of U.N. Security Council resolutions as there has undoubtedly been if a comprehensive, long-lasting solution is to be found.

Another challenge is the improvement of relations with India and the resolution of our outstanding issues including Jammu and Kashmir. A promising start has been made, people-to-people contacts have improved, economic and cultural interchanges have increased. We are glad that the Indian leadership has reciprocated our efforts.

We intend to pursue this past. This will, of course, involve addressing substantive issues in a meaningful way. That, unfortunately, has not happened, but we are prepared to go the course and we hope that the Indian leadership will cooperate with us so that we can keep the past behind us.

The commencement of the Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus service between the two sides of Kashmir is a win-win situation for all parties involved, especially the Kashmiris themselves, who have long suffered deprivation.

For a durable peace between Pakistan and India, the issue of Kashmir needs to be resolved. It is axiomatic that for this to happen the people of Kashmir have to be involved in the peace process. Kashmir has bedeviled relations for 57 years. We must take pains to see that new issues come up. I'm specifically referring to the Baglihar and Kishenganaga projects on the river Indus that India plans to build. These are emerging as serious issues.

The resultant peace and security in South Asia will allow diversion of resources towards addressing the pressing problems of poverty, literacy and disease; that is, if we were able to get over our problem, I think there's a bright future for both of the countries and, in fact, for the whole of South Asia. A new paradigm will have been created.

As a friend of both countries, the United States has played a positive role in urging the two sides to move forward. Its continued engagement is essential to ensure that the momentum is not lost. An energy corridor from Iran to Pakistan to India will be a significant confidence-building measure between the two countries, besides meeting our critical energy needs.

I know many of you in think tank circles see the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline from this perspective. We hope that the U.S. administration will see it in a similar way. I may also add that this is one of the three projects. The others being contemplated are Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan pipeline, and the Qatar-Pakistan-India pipeline. We have offered India that if it wants gas, Pakistan will not stand in the way. We'll allow all gas pipelines to go to India.

Ladies and gentlemen, the transformation in relations with Afghanistan has been no less dramatic. We've made steady progress in not only confronting the common challenges the two countries face, but also realizing the potential of our proximity and religious, cultural and ethnic bonds.

We see a peaceful and stable Afghanistan being in our interest. In our effort to improve relations with the government of the people of Afghanistan, we are guided by the principle of mutual trust, sovereign equality and non-interference in each

other's internal affairs. Pakistan supports the ? process and President Hamid Karzai's efforts for national reconciliation and development.

Relations between the two countries have registered a marked improvement. Frequent interaction among the top leadership of our two countries testifies to that. President Hamid Karzai's presence as the chief guest on Pakistan's ? symbolizes the level of closeness achieved between our two countries. And may I add that President Musharraf and I were the first two foreign leaders to visit Afghanistan after President Karzai's victory in his general elections.

This closeness is also reflected in the very impressive growth in bilateral trade which has jumped—can you believe it—from a bare \$20 million three years ago to \$1 billion, approximately, today. That is 50 times the trade has gone. Now, \$1 billion may not seem much to Americans, but in the context in which I'm talking, ? trade, it is a lot.

Partly, this is the result of steps taken by Pakistan to facilitate bilateral trade, including the manifold reduction in duty on imports from Afghanistan. Pakistan provides that country with an easy access to the Arabian Sea.

Despite its meager resources, Pakistan has pledged \$100 million for support to our Afghan brethren. Of this, about \$45 million has already been utilized for infrastructure development, health and education sectors. Afghan officials, including diplomats, police and customs personnel, are receiving training in Pakistan. We are happy to note that this improvement in the relationship with Afghanistan enjoys full support of the United States administration.

Ladies and gentlemen, to promote peace and understanding between Islam and the West, and to address the challenges that we confront both within Pakistan and around us, President Pervez Musharraf has propounded a vision of what has properly become to be known as enlightened moderation.

This envisages a two-pronged strategy. The first is for the Muslim world to shun militancy and extremism and adopt the path of socio-economic uplift and human resource development. The second is for the West to help resolve longstanding political disputes justly and to assist in the socio-economic development of the deprived Muslim world. We are happy to see that the concept has found an increasing number of takers. The U.S. supports it. The OIC, or Organization of Islamic Conferences, endorsed it. If there are more questions, I would go into greater details.

Based on this vision, we want to create a modern, tolerant, democratic Islamic country. Moderation will bring society together, build a new culture of cooperation and economic development. As the second largest Muslim country with a moderate outlook, and located in a geopolitically important region, Pakistan is well poised to play its role. It can also act as a bridge between Islam and the West.

This approach of moderation and accommodation guides on to the approach to domestic political reform. Elections to local bodies will be held this year. The general elections are set for 2007. Thus, within two years, we would be well ahead on the path to sustainable democracy.

Ladies and gentlemen, Pakistan's relations with the United States continue to expand. Both countries find it in their interest to do so, but the reasons for this upward trajectory are manifold, not the least of which is the similarity of perceptions

over the situation in our region and an appreciation of the path of enlightened moderation that Pakistan has chosen for itself.

President Bush and other senior officials have reiterated the United States' commitment to a broad and sustainable, long-term relationship with Pakistan. We see a bipartisan consensus on this. The recommendations of the Bipartisan National Commission on Terrorist Attacks on the United States itself calls for an enhanced and a long-term relationship with Pakistan. This approach provides the basis for addressing challenges of terrorism, poverty, literacy, et cetera, and tapping opportunities where available.

For the last four to five years, Pakistan has been aggressively pursuing economic reforms to alleviate the lot of its poor. This we feel can be achieved through rapid economic development. Our economy has made a dramatic turn-around. The GDP last year was the second highest in Asia, after China, and it was for the third year running that there has been an upward trajectory and it was 8.4 percent.

But the task is far from over. The fruits of this growth have to be shared by all segments of society. Pakistan's education and economic reforms have been welcome by the United States, who has responded by extending tangible support in this sector. We appreciate this assistance which supplements the government's own efforts. The welcome U.S. annual assistance of \$600 million-plus is in keeping with a pledge made by President Bush to President Musharraf when they met at Camp David in 2003.

Ladies and gentlemen, we highly value the trade relationship with the United States. It's, after all, our largest trading partner. Last year, Pakistan's exports to the United States stood at \$3 billion, and imports at \$1.3 billion. We are confident that

our textile sector, in particular, is well placed to compete for a share in the U.S. market. Better access to this market through a level playing field with our competitors will be of great benefit to us. We could take the volume of trade to much higher levels.

U.S. investment into Pakistan has gone up, facilitated by the resumption of the activities of the U.S. Export-Import Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. Our two countries have been discussing a bilateral investment treaty. Two rounds have been held. Once we conclude the negotiating process and take the prerequisite steps, the treaty would realize the enormous investment potential.

The country's chosen path of moderation and to improve the lot of its own people would remain unfulfilled if it did not acquire a sense of security due to arms imbalance in our region. A secure and confident Pakistan will be a source of stability to the region. The U.S. can contribute by providing the requisite defense equipment and training. We welcome the decision to supply PC-3 Orions and F-16 aircraft phalanx guns and communication equipment, because our purchases are basically of a defensive nature.

Ladies and gentlemen, Pakistan takes its responsibility as a nuclear weapons state seriously. That is why when confronted with the challenge of nuclear proliferation two years back, we took immediate steps to help dismantle the international smuggling network.

I think there will be questions on that. I'm going to skip over the rest because I was looking at my watch and we are running out of time. And I have gone on to touch the need for peaceful use of nuclear energy and cooperation between Pakistan

and the United States, and one or two other matters. But I think it's much better to leave the rest to the interactive session.

I thank you all. I'll be happy to respond to any questions you may have.

[Applause.]

MR. COHEN: We heard the overture. Now, we'll get to the concerto, which will be a concerto for speaker and audience, and so let's take questions. I'll try to group them according to subject. That will be a little difficult. I should remind you that when Minister Kasuri was here last time, in fact, we organized a seminar and it was a very valuable experience for all of us.

So let's go to questions now, and the gentleman all the way in the back. I'll try to balance this—

MR. KASURI: Can I stand?

MR. COHEN: Do you want to stand?

MR. KASURI: Yes. I think it's better.

Yes, please.

MR. SOLANGI: Mr. Foreign Minister, the question is—

MR. KASURI: Can you raise your hand? Oh, thank you.

MR. COHEN: Could you please identify yourself?

MR. SOLANGI: My name is Mortadai Opfer [ph], Voice of America, Urdu Service.

The question is regarding the development that came yesterday with four countries dropping their insistence on becoming veto power, and also becoming member of United Nations Security Council.

What would be Pakistan's position after India has dropped its insistence on becoming veto power?

MR. KASURI: Well, actually, you know, I'd like to make one thing clear. Our policy is not India-specific. For some reason, people seem to believe that we've adopted this posture just because of India. Actually, our policy is based on principles.

UN reform is long overdue. As members of the international community, we feel that we have a stake in a successful UN system and, in principle, we are against permanent members. The last five didn't ask us. They were victors. Some of them would not be there today. I mean, I don't wish to name them. They are in some cases one-hundredth the size, in some cases much smaller, much less powerful than they were.

Now, the idea of permanence itself I find reprehensible. Why should one country, because we do believe in principles of sovereign equality—let's say one country is important today, it falls to pieces tomorrow and it remains there permanently. Why? I mean, there are other countries which can fulfill their international obligations and they can be given a chance.

So we have never viewed this from the point of India-Pakistan relationship, which in the past has been—well, has left much to be desired. But the issue is far too fundamental. The issue of UN reform is—you have to adopt a holistic approach towards this.

There's the issue of United Nations General Assembly. It's a role envisioned in the charter; ECOSOC, the functioning of the Security Council itself. This unhealthy emphasis on UN Security Council expansion is actually unfortunately

hijacking the entire United Nations reform agenda. And the idea of Pakistan's opposing permanent members is based on justice.

Now, we feel, of course, there can be variations, as the high-level panel has proposed A and B schemes. There can be variations on B scheme, which Pakistan and a large number of other countries who have got together under uniting for consensus—we are interested in developing a consensus with other countries, including the four that you've named.

So please do not look at it from the point of India-Pakistan relations. Our position remains what it was. Yes, we are prepared for some countries—if, for example, they look after the regional interest, they could be reelected again and again and again. So they could even become permanent members, but they have to go back to the club to which they belong, which means that if they belong to the Asian region, they must go back to the Asian region and ask the Asian region for their mandate, renewal of the mandate.

So if some country which fulfills all international obligations and the international community generally feels that it has rendered great service in either development aid or in peace-keeping operations or whatever the criteria, that country could get reelected again and again. But we are against the principle of permanent members.

The last five didn't ask us. Now, it makes no sense for us to willingly say, yes, we are less important than another six. Why?

MR. COHEN: Let's see. We have Barry Jacobs.

MR. JACOBS: Mr. Minister, Barry Jacobs, of the American Jewish Committee. There have been interesting comments coming out both from your government and from media in Pakistan that are supposedly having close ties to the government about thoughts in changing the relationship between Pakistan and Israel.

Would you comment?

MR. KASURI: Yes. Actually, President Musharraf started a debate in the country because we think we—our public, where we have a very independent media—let me say freest in Asia—as of last count, either there were 52 independent channels or there are about to be 52, because some more channels were being given permission. We have a healthy debate. We want this debate to take place and the debate did take place.

I think Pakistan would like to resume relations with Israel, but it's contingent on, because we have to carry our public opinion with us, a resolution of the dispute. And before that, Crown Prince Abdullah had himself proposed what is known as the Abdullah plan, which said, you know, recognition not just by Pakistan, but by all the Muslim countries, in return for territories. So we have to carry our public opinion with us.

We are no security threat, by the way, I want to take this opportunity to say, because ours, whether it's our conventional program or our strategic program, it is of a defensive nature. We did not make South Asia a nuclear zone. I don't want to go into the reasons. Everybody knows why it happened. When I'm asked a question, I'll deal with that.

But on the issue of Israel, we feel that this issue is in the interest of world peace. The sooner it's resolved, the better, and I think I have said what I wanted to on that. Thank you.

MR. COHEN: Let's see. There was a—this gentleman behind you.

MR. : Mr. Minster, Elkashurmur Dekanhel [ph]. Do you today remember Quaid-e-Azam as a secular leader, and would the Pakistan of your dream be a secular nation?

MR. KASURI: This is a very interesting question following—I don't know what the latest status of Mr. LK Advani is. Has he withdrawn his resignation or not?

MR. : Not as yet.

MR. KASURI: Not as yet, no.

MR. : But he will.

MR. KASURI: But he will, okay. Good, if he does. Okay, right. Now, he was in Islamabad. I was responsible, as it were, for setting the whole thing in motion because I went to Delhi and invited him, because I strongly believe that the Pakistan-India peace is far too important for one country.

But first responding to you, you see, the word "secular" translated in Urdu means "ladi" [ph]. Ladi means anti-religion. That is not what secular means in English. That is why when I was talking to somebody in the administration or somebody who is of Republican bent of mind, I said "liberal" is a dangerous word, but it's not in the context of South Asia because it translates as moderate in South Asian

lexicon, or non-sectarian approach, you see, because translated, my speech or whatever response I give to you will be translated in Urdu.

So what I'm going to say to you is Quaid-e-Azam's speech of 11th of August, 1947, stands by itself; it needs no explanation. And, yes, that is the Pakistan of my dreams. So I won't like appendages to that.

MR. COHEN: Yes, the gentleman there.

MR. NINIOS: Sir, good morning. My name is Andrew Ninios. I'm an independent analyst. I just have a quick question regarding the latest developments in Sacramento, California, about the apprehension of the gentleman by the FBI who claims that he was trained in a terrorist camp in Pakistan.

What is the reaction of Pakistan? What is your response?

MR. KASURI: Thank you. Why was it not the first question? I had a great reception. I landed here and the embassy rang me, said put your TV on. So I said what is that? And the story was breaking.

All I can tell you is that, I mean, I heard—since the embassy asked me, I put on the TV and I looked at the defense council. The defense council is saying he's not being charged for terrorism at the moment. He's being charged, I think, for giving wrong information or contradictory information, or for lying or whatever you have.

The government of the United States has not, as of 7:30 in the morning when I was given the last information, contacted the government of Pakistan. Of course, if it is serious, they will contact the government of Pakistan. It goes without saying that they will receive all support.

But the name that is being mentioned—it says somewhere near Rawalpindi. It's like saying New York. Now, what New York, the state of New York, city of New York? Rawalpindi is a city, a district. There can be villages, there can be mountains around Rawalpindi. We don't know. We don't even know if the claims he is making are correct. Your government has not said so.

The short answer is we are wedded to rooting out terrorism. It destroys Pakistan more than it destroys any other country. It hurts us before it hurts the United States or it hurts anybody else. Our commitment is total. There should be no doubt on that, and if any information or cooperation is required, it will be given on this issue.

MR. COHEN: This gentleman here.

MR. KASURI: Please introduce yourself.

MR. GOYAL: Raghubir Goyal, India Globe and Asia Today.

MR. KASURI: India Globe?

MR. GOYAL: And Asia Today.

MR. KASURI: Asia Today, okay.

MR. GOYAL: I was in the Delhi for the last April historic meeting between General Musharraf and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

MR. KASURI: The last one?

MR. GOYAL: Yes, sir.

MR. KASURI: A few months ago?

MR. GOYAL: Yes, sir, just in April.

MR. KASURI: Yes.

MR. GOYAL: And that was really a beginning of the people-to-people contact because people in both countries, what they are seeking and asking really—I went to Kashmir, also, in ? , not in Pakistan-Kashmir, because I'm still waiting for a visa.

MR. KASURI: So many thousands of Indians have come. You must be particularly unfortunate. You don't see to get a visa.

[Laughter.]

MR. KASURI: Are you not fond of cricket? You could have got a cricket visa.

MR. GOYAL: [INAUDIBLE.]

MR. KASURI: So why don't you go?

MR. GOYAL: You have to send me a letter and—

MR. KASURI: The ambassador is here and he says that the—

MR. GOYAL: We are not part of that.

MR. KASURI: Okay. He wants a visa. Please give it to him.

[Laughter.]

MR. GOYAL: Same thing I'm told by the president.

MR. KASURI: If the president has said, everybody said, why don't you go? You are welcome, okay.

MR. GOYAL: Sir, my question is that when I was talking with people in Kashmir, what they are saying now, both sides, India and Pakistan, is that they want both countries to drop all the military budget because what they are saying is the more we are spending on the military for the last 50 years—

MR. KASURI: "They?" You are referring to Indian public opinion?

MR. GOYAL: And the Pakistanis who are in India.

MR. KASURI: Okay, okay.

MR. GOYAL: What they are saying, sir—the budget on the military we are spending or we have been spending for the last 50 years, billions of dollars, are coming from the development of the people. Now, we have people-to-people contact. Why don't we work—India and Pakistan work together to fight against terrorism rather than spending more on ? ?

Also, sir, finally, what do you see the relations today, and truly India and Pakistan relations today, where do you put them?

MR. KASURI: Okay, let me first—you asked about the defense budget, because that's the easiest to duck, and I won't duck it. So I want to take that first, lest I forget. First of all, yes, I'm behind the spirit, but there will be no, and there cannot be realistically unilateral disarmament by any country.

I make a statement here. Pakistan is prepared for mutual and balanced reduction of armed forces, but it cannot be unilateral. Why? History teaches us that that is a panacea for disaster. Weakness doesn't make for peace. Just look at Pakistan-India relations, and I think I don't want to go into reasons. You probably understand what I'm trying to say.

Both countries are today confident. Neither Pakistan nor India is in the position today to inflict a military decision on the other on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir. That more than anything else is bringing realism into play. But your question

is perfectly legitimate; it's guns or butter. It's a very old issue. I'm for butter, but it will have to be by both, and as long as by both, I'm quite happy.

The state of our relations, you asked me, is far improved. Can you just even begin to imagine Mr. LK Advani, the Hurriyat leaders and Mani Shankar, the oil minister, in Pakistan on the same day? Could you have believed that?

I mean, but I don't want to mislead you. We have not yet tackled major issues. And as I said, we want durable peace with India, but durable peace with India—let's not live in a cuckoo land—can only happen if the issue of Jammu and Kashmir is resolved. And it will not happen unless the Kashmiris are involved. That's why I welcome the decision of the government of India in allowing the Kashmiris to come across the line of control.

Now, I feel once the Kashmiris are allowed to travel openly—when I was in Delhi, the Prime Minister of India asked me, he said, Mr. Minister, is it all right if we meet leaders from your side of Kashmir? I didn't even—I said, sir—I didn't say, sir, let me find out from Islamabad. I said yes, you meet not just the President of Kashmir, not just prime minister, but also meet leader of the opposition, who belongs to People's Party. You can meet anybody you like. Why? Because it is only by that interaction.

But we want actually, if a resolution is to be found, Pakistan, India and Kashmir. They are a vital party, they are the main stakeholder. They should all sit together, but we can't dictate. India has not accepted that suggestion. Short of that ideal situation, we are happy that at the moment, in the interim, this has been accepted that Kashmiris are allowed to travel.

Now, the second best thing is Kashmiris talk to Pakistan, they talk to India and they talk amongst each other, most importantly. Let them think forward. Let them bring forward a solution, which, of course, first has to be acceptable to the Kashmiris, but then also to Pakistan and India. That is the only way that it can become a win-win.

MR. COHEN: I thought I'd join you up here so I can see the audience better. We've had six questions in a row from journalists, so let's get a few non-journalists.

Michael Krepon, right here.

MR. KASURI: How are you?

MR. KREPON: It's great to see you here.

MR. KASURI: A pleasure.

MR. KREPON: You've made so many positive steps in your relations with India. The one area that you haven't [INAUDIBLE] nuclear risk reduction agenda.

MR. KASURI: Okay.

MR. KREPON: [INAUDIBLE]. What's the hang-up?

MR. KASURI: Okay, thank you for the question, actually. It's a very important question. You know, one of the items listed on the composite dialogue, one of the eight items is this particular one. We have proposed a Strategic Restrained Regime, SRR for short. What does it imply?

It implies not just nuclear issues, not just conventional issues, also conflict resolution. It's a holistic approach. We have submitted a paper to the government of India and we hope that we will meet with a positive response, because I

couldn't agree with you more because these weapons are so dangerous that we have suggested a lot of—for example, there should be no coupling of delivery systems with the weapons, and many others, and the trajectories of the missiles; so many things we are discussing with each other; the types of missiles that we should cover.

Pakistan would like to cover all types of regimes, all types of missiles, including some others that are friends are not presently prepared to. So we would want a holistic approach, we would want a total approach. And we would like to have a strategic restraint regime with India and we want all our friends to be aware of that, yes, and I'd like the government of India to respond positively to that.

MR. COHEN: If I could interrupt and ask a question myself pertaining to the previous question, it has been said by many people, including myself, that one of the obstacles to a serious peace process between India and Pakistan on the Indian side is the Ministry of External Affairs, the homeland of the hawks. I'd let the Indians respond to that some other time.

But on the Pakistani side, I think there's more evidence that it's the military, that the military represent really the hardliners in terms of making concessions to India, and that the military see the India-Pakistan relationship as a strategic problem, not merely a Kashmiri problem.

What's your response to that?

MR. KASURI: Well, I can say on the basis of experience as a foreign minister, previously it was also said military makes foreign policy. I would not be Foreign Minister. I would not be Foreign Minister if I didn't have an input, and I have

not been in a position to so say now. I have an input in foreign—I'm not a dictator, nor is anybody else.

The President of the United States—the first person he meets in the morning, I believe, used to be Director of CIA. So intelligence agencies and the military have a major input all over the world in foreign policymaking. They should not have a decisive say. The civilians in this country take a decision.

But responding to your question, President Musharraf, who heads Pakistan army, is the greatest upholder of a peaceful process with India, of resolution of all disputes peacefully. So whatever your experience, I cannot comment, and it's vast. You've written on the issue and I have not, so I would not like to challenge what you're saying.

But I can say on the basis of my three years' experience that, A, President Musharraf is a leader. Leader means somebody who leads and is not led. And when he leads, that means it includes the army, it includes the intelligence agencies. As far as our foreign office is concerned and as far as the Foreign Minister of Pakistan is concerned, I am consulted on everything.

And I have also had my share—I was involved with Pakistan-Indian dialogue not after I became Foreign Minister, but before I became Foreign Minister. That was known to the president, so this was not a secret.

So, A, the foreign office does have a major input in foreign policymaking. B, the military that I knew, led by President Musharraf, that I know currently, is not an impediment.

MR. COHEN: Let's see, a question in the back there.

MS. ALTAFF: Sabeen Altaff from the Arab American Institute. My question—

MR. KASURI: From what? Sorry.

MS. ALTAFF: The Arab American Institute.

MR. KASURI: Arab American Institute?

MS. ALTAFF: Right.

MR. KASURI: Okay.

MS. ALTAFF: What steps does Pakistan plan to take to eradicate the problem of increase in opium smuggling from Afghanistan?

MR. KASURI: Okay. Well, as far as this issue is concerned, we are very directly affected. Europe and the United States is far removed. We are not just a transit country. We are also a consuming country, and it is a direct threat to our population, particularly the youth in the areas bordering Afghanistan.

So I have signed a pact with Afghanistan also on this issue earlier. We are prepared to give all help, but it is—yes, I agree with you, at one stage in our tribal areas were used to have a problem. It was eradicated, but if Afghanistan—if it prospers in Afghanistan, it becomes a problem for Pakistani border areas, also.

So there is total commitment by the government of Pakistan on that issue, and I think that is appreciated by the U.S. administration and they know of our commitment to this.

MR. COHEN: The woman—I'm sorry—the gentleman on the left there, yes.

MR. LEGHARI: I'm Munawar Leghari and I'm with the World Sindhi Institute. And I have a question—

MR. KASURI: Mr. Lakani, you said?

MR. LEGHARI: Leghari.

MR. KASURI: Leghari.

MR. LEGHARI: Yes.

MR. KASURI: Okay.

MR. LEGHARI: If there is in future, because Sindh and Baluchistan are two backward provinces and—

MR. KASURI: Sindh and Baluchistan are two?

MR. LEGHARI: Backward provinces in many areas, and there is a moment over there ripe for self-determination in Sindh and Baluchistan. So what will impact on U.S. and Pakistan relationship?

And the second is you are Foreign Minister. How many Sindhese and Baluch are in foreign ministry and foreign services?

MR. KASURI: Oh, yes, that's a very easy question to field. Our constitution lays down a certain ratio. It is strictly adhered to. Any member of the national assembly or senate can ask that question everyday. No ministry, foreign ministry or any, can dare to violate that. That's the first question.

And some of our best ambassadors actually until recently—his predecessor was from Baluchistan. Our permanent representative in New York is from Sindh. These are the two most important positions. So I mean rest assured there are no problems.

It reminds me of Prince Muhammad Daoud's visit to—who was the former Prime Minister of Afghanistan. He didn't particularly love Pakistan. This was during the day of King Zahir Shah, and he landed in Islamabad and he was introduced, because they were fighting for Pashtuns in Pakistan, the rights of the Pashtuns.

So the president said—somebody introduced, here is President Ayub Khan, a Pashtun. Here is Chief Justice, a Pashtun; here is commander-in-chief, Pashtun; here is so-and-so-, Pashtun, and these are the people you are trying to liberate.

So I mean this makes no sense. When you say how many are foreign ministers—Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was a very distinguished foreign minister. And what I'm saying is you had Najmuddin Sheikh, the former foreign secretary, is from Sindh. I mean, this question really has no basis even, unless it's a rhetorical question.

So, first of all, the numbers are adhered to religiously. Nobody can dare do it. He loses his job, because everyday we have a question, or in the national assembly and the senate.

You talk of Baluchistan. Let me say today that out of stretched revenues, Baluchistan is getting more. We call it a public sector development program, PSDP. It is more than Punjab. Please, check the figures.

Punjab's population is 60 percent. Baluchistan is 6 percent, and Baluchistan gets more money than Punjab does. Check the facts, and if these facts are wrong, communicate this to him.

[Laughter.]

MR. COHEN: The gentleman all the way in the back there.

MR. SARIN: This is Ashok Sarin from the Voice of America, Hindi Services. I would like to know about Advani's resignation—

MR. COHEN: Could you repeat your affiliation?

MR. SARIN: Is it not clear?

MR. COHEN: The Washington—

MR. SARIN: I am from Voice of America in Washington, D.C., Hindi Services, broadcasting to India, Pakistan and other places.

Now, I would like to know about your reaction, the government's reaction about Mr. Advani's quite surprising resignation on return from Pakistan.

MR. KASURI: Okay, thank you. I wanted somebody to ask this question because unfortunately, you know, I left Islamabad that day. I wanted to react, and thank you for asking that question.

I was saddened and surprised, but very sad indeed. It does show that there are extremists on both sides, and that's why it's so important to resolve outstanding issues between Pakistan and India. These people will go to any extent, and if we leave the issue of Jammu and Kashmir and other issues unresolved, that's a big challenge to the leadership of Pakistan and India.

We should seize the moment, not let this moment pass, because recently the recently the resignation of Mr. Advani has proved that there are people who will do anything to destroy the peace process. Mr. Advani said nothing exceptional. He said Quaid-e-Azam was a great leader. Well, he was. He created history. He said in his words he was secular.

I used another term in terms of the 11th of August in the constituency assembly of [TAPE CHANGE.]

Mr. Advani was not inventing a speech. He was only repeating a speech. People can't even tolerate that, but I think one good thing that Advani did during his visit was that he gave greater permanence to the peace process. The BJP started it. It lost the elections. We thought there might be some hiccups on Pakistan's side, the change of government. Luckily, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Prime Minister Musharraf are continuing with the same speed.

And BJP assured Pakistan when Mr. Advani was there as far as Pakistan-India peace process is concerned, it enjoys the support of his party. But as the reaction of some extremists shows, they will go to any lengths to destroy the peace process, and we must guard against that. So the conclusion is continue with a peace process at a greater speed than hitherto so that it does not get hijacked by extremists on either side.

MR. COHEN: You had your hand up, the gentleman here.

MR. WISHENGRAD: Mr. Minister, with regard to—

MR. COHEN: Stand up and—

MR. WISHENGRAD: Oh, yes. I'm Joel Wishengrad, senior correspondent of World Media Reports, WMR News.

With regard to the extremists you've just mentioned, what are government strategies to work with religious elements to end a possible clash with the government and also with warlords and others coming with their doctrines from Afghanistan, as you've earlier mentioned? Is there some strategy to end this immediately before it develops?

MR. KASURI: Thank you. This is a very important question. Actually, it doesn't only concern Pakistan and Afghanistan, as you mention; it concerns the whole world. It concerns the thesis of people who believe in clash of the civilizations. Well, I think it would be horrid. We must do all we can to prevent it.

Now, what is Pakistan doing? President Pervez Musharraf at the heads of state meeting of the Islamic countries—the Organization of Islamic Conferences it is called—in Malaysia two years ago made a proposal, to which I made a reference in the speech, and the proposal was that it came to be known by enlightened moderation, but it had aspects to it.

One was the role of reformation of Muslim societies from within—education, science and technology, interfaith harmony. And in that connection the European Union approached me that they would like to hold a conference. They held one in Indonesia. We would welcome that, representatives of all religions and Muslims getting together, and we would like to do that.

But specifically coming to your question, President Musharraf's idea involves also ? the secretariat of the Islamic conference, which would have people taking care of gender issues. That's a very major issue. Women in Islam, their role—that is very important; gender issues, science and technology, trade, education.

And the second meeting, the first eminent persons meeting, was held in Malaysia, the second one in Islamabad last month, and they are going to be making recommendations to foreign ministers in Yemen on the 28th of June. So I'm coming to very specific things, and if we can agree, then we will make a recommendation to the heads—that is, the presidents and the prime ministers of Islamic nations—to strengthen

the secretariat and a better dialogue with the rest of the world, which would mean in New York the OIC representative playing a bigger role, the media playing a bigger role.

So media also has—those prophets of doom who are predicting an inevitable clash of the civilizations are actually predicting an end of the world. And we don't want that to happen, so we will do all in our power. And I've given you some specific landmarks, and the dates also where we are trying to get. I hope we will agree in Yemen on this, and we wish to do a lot on education and others, but the West will have to play its role.

You know, as I said in my speech, terrorism, yes, but you must also look at the roots of terrorism. And roots of terrorism are poverty, and also a sense of injustice. When United Nations resolutions are flagrantly violated by certain powers, it's only when the great powers get interested in something that it gets done. Otherwise, it's ignored.

MR. COHEN: The gentleman over here.

MR. DATTA: Colonel Datta, Foreign Policy Association. I wanted to know, in your opinion—at the moment, there are contemporaries of pre-partition days in politicians, as well as in armed forces.

Do you think, according to your opinion, would the peace be established now or it'll be too late if this generation passes out and hands over to the next generation, who doesn't know anybody? It doesn't know their contemporaries.

MR. KASURI: Thank you. I know what you're saying. First of all, I think the officers of the Indian and Pakistani armies have met, and we have encouraged

it. And I think you were present—somebody was mentioning—you were present? You were present at one of these gatherings and we welcome that.

And as far as people-to-people contact is concerned, it has turned into a flood, not a tidal wave as yet. But there's a lot—you know, a lot of meetings about Indians and Pakistanis. We need to maybe further liberalize the visa regime, but I take your point. But we are not standing—SAFMA, South Asia Free Media Association, journalists are meeting. Artists are meeting, intellectuals are meeting. Retired soldiers like yourself, as you said, they're also meeting. There's no restrictions as far as Pakistan is concerned. We would welcome that.

MR. COHEN: Let me be impolite and ask the last question, because we have to wrap up soon. And nobody has asked about the—nobody has asked the A. Q. Khan question. Let me put the A. Q. Khan question in a different framework.

You've been here. You've just come from the White House, in fact. You're talking with senior American officials. Have they made the kind of offer to Pakistan, say the potential sale of civilian nuclear technology, that they made to India? And if they have, or even if they have not, is Pakistan prepared to take steps such as joining the proliferation security initiative and other arrangements which would assure the rest of us, the rest of the world, that Pakistan's nuclear facilities are under control, because Pakistan has claimed that, you know, the A. Q. Khan network has been ruled out, but we don't have really good evidence that there aren't other networks operating out there? So, you know, what's your view on this one?

MR. KASURI: Thank you. You ask a very comprehensive question, and since you said it's the last, it calls for a comprehensive answer.

First of all, is it rolled up or not? Don't take my word. Why should you take my word? Look at the site of the State Department. It's an 11-page briefing by the State Department, and that is what they say that they know everything that they need to know about A. Q. Khan. It's a sensitive issue because he's regarded as a national hero. He's the man who brought strategic stability to South Asia. But don't take my word for it.

And I don't see the greatest superpower today—the only superpower, in fact, in the world—why should they accept the word of Pakistan? They have means of finding out. Their links, intelligence links, are very good. They say they are satisfied. And I took the precaution yesterday when I was on the flight of reading every single word of the State Department website which they posted, and I can quote chapter and verse out of that.

Number two, even this is not a good enough answer, I go a step further. What I'd like to say is this: Pakistan became a nuclear power 20 years ago. It detonated in 1998 after India detonated its device, but its program was started in 1974 after India detonated its nuclear device. We have a very unhappy history. We are trying to change that for the future, but we cannot forget what has happened.

We've had not three, but six wars; three major wars, then we had the Siachen war, 25 years or more. We had the distinction to go in Guinness Book of Records, the highest battlefield in the world. We were fighting on a glacier. Then we had the Rann of Kutch, which was a small thing, and then Kargil.

So anybody who knows Pakistan-India history cannot believe that Pakistanis—any government in Pakistan would be spared the wrath of its people if we did not try to do the best we could in connection with trying to neutralize the threat.

Yes, we did go nuclear, but that's nothing new. Twenty years ago, we were not prepared to detonate if India didn't. We were forced to do it in the wake of that. We are prepared to cooperate, and here are the instances.

The International Atomic Energy Agency wanted to support. They have got it. We have gone a step further. Our public opinion is not even very happy. We have sent, because they wanted something to find out about the signature matching, as it were, which you understand, on the Iranian program, and we have shipped centrifuges, competence of all centrifuges to Vienna.

Then your government is cooperating in many areas I will not talk about, and the government knows about that. And we have been talking to them and we talk to them regularly. The only this is our program cannot be touched. It's irreversible. Unless the situation in the world changes in which others also denuclearize and demilitarize—or denuclearize is the right word, or disarmament, nuclear disarmament, but we will take all precautions—proliferation security initiative, MTCR or Nuclear Suppliers Group.

In fact, the president of the Nuclear Suppliers Group was in Pakistan recently. We are prepared to cooperate, but as I said to Dominique de Villepin, who is now the prime minister, and to Jack Straw, who's standing next to me in Islamabad, I said we are a declared nuclear power. We are prepared to behave responsibly, and he

said the time has come—and I quote Jack Straw—that Pakistan and India were brought out—and he mentioned Israel—were brought out of the nuclear netherworld.

I think the time has come for Pakistan, India and Israel to be brought out of the nuclear netherworld. We know the constraints on the NPT, no other than five countries, but there are other mechanisms. We should evolve mechanisms, but we cannot be targets and partners at the same time. We'd rather be your partners.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

MR. COHEN: I want to thank the Minister for again appearing at Brookings, and really, I think—in my book, The Idea of Pakistan, I wrote about him. I said—and the reference was, in a sense, Musharraf appointed a genial politician to be Foreign Minister. This was right after the appointments, and I had never met you until then.

MR. KASURI: Thank you very much.

MR. COHEN: So I would rewrite that. I would say I wouldn't use the word "genial." I would say dynamic, and I would be certainly more emphatic about your skills and your ability, I think. And I think the way you've begun to actually direct foreign policy—I agree with what you said.

MR. KASURI: Thank you very much.

MR. COHEN: Let me at this point thank you, but offer you copies of both my book, but also Strobe Talbott's book, Engaging India, and I think you'll find them useful reading on the way back home.

Thank you.

MR. KASURI: Thank you very much. I appreciate the books and your remarks.

[Applause.]

MR. COHEN: Yes. Could everybody please hold for a second until the Minister leaves—thank you—for security reasons? Thank you.

MR. KASURI: Thank you very much.

MR. COHEN: Thank you.

[Session concluded.] a—b