



PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement
by
H.E. Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar
Foreign Minister of Pakistan
at
the General Debate
of
the 66th Session of the
United Nations General Assembly

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FOREIGN MINISTER'S ADDRESS
TO THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON BEHALF OF PRIME MINISTER SYED YUSUF RAZA GILANI

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen

Bismillah hirrahman irrahim. I begin in the name of God, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

I am honoured to be here today, and to represent the brave and resilient people of Pakistan before you. As you may know, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani was due to visit New York and address this august house. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister could not come, owing to the humanitarian disaster caused by the floods in Pakistan. Once again I feel privileged to be able to deliver the remarks of the Prime Minister to the General Assembly.

I bring to you Mr President and all the nations of the world assembled here, *salaam*, peace, and the greetings and good wishes of the people of Pakistan.

We are delighted Mr President, to be able to address the General Assembly under your leadership. This is an important session of the General Assembly, the State of Qatar is a truly deserving and able country for this occasion. The Pakistani people have intimate brotherly relations with your great country, and I speak for my people in welcoming your presidential term. Your election to this high office is as much a tribute to your outstanding qualities as it is to the high esteem that your country is held in the comity of nations.

Why are we here, Mr. President? Other than the allure of New York City, why have we converged at the UN General Assembly?

Pakistan is here because it believes in multilateralism. Each September we return to this great city, and this grand stage so that we can restate and reaffirm the principles and values of multilateralism. It is and has been one of the abiding central tenets of our foreign policy. We are committed to the very idea of the United Nations.

To us, this idea is simple. We can do more together than we can apart. We can solve complex problems by consensus rather than by unilateralism. Multilateral cooperation can help us deal with the spectrum of global challenges, old and new, in our interdependent world. As we grow more and more dependent on each other, the space for unilateralism and uni-dimensional answers to the most difficult questions shrinks. Those who are skeptical of the future of multilateralism are living in the past. The future, our collective global future, inshaAllah, is bright. It is the United Nations and multilateralism that will safeguard this future.

Mr President,

Pakistan believes in the promise of the United Nations -- a world free from the scourge of war; a world governed by rules and norms of civility, of decency, of good will; creating a better future for the peoples of the world; inter- state conduct premised on the respect for the immutable principles of the United Nations. We must ensure that our United Nations is the best representation of the aspirations of our peoples.

Mr President, we must do better. There is far too much distance between these aspirations, and the sometimes dark realities of our times. We are constantly struggling with difficult choices and cycles: expediency versus values, interests versus ideals, there is conflict, discord and death. Natural and man-made calamities spread fear and destitution among millions, and often exacerbate and expose already unacceptable levels of poverty and deprivation. We face these challenges in every country. We cannot afford to face them alone. The importance of togetherness and of our faith and collective commitment to the ideals, principles and values of the United Nations cannot be overstated.

Togetherness, or multilateralism of course, does not mean uniformity or conformity. It does not mean falling in line. Instead, it means harmony, tolerance, respect for diversity and a pragmatic cognitive realization that no one system, no single prescription, no one *raah*, or path works for all. Each society, every culture offers a *raah*, a path for the march of mankind. Preconceived assumptions about the superiority of one way or the other must not be allowed to contaminate the spirit of the UN.

Pakistan's oldest spiritual traditions and most beloved poets and peers have taught us there can be no progress where the mind is divorced from the heart. Faith in the United Nations is a manifestation of the best rational traditions, and the most cherished traditions of idealism and believing in something. We believe in the UN system. The spirit of the United Nations must permeate all our endeavours. The peoples of the world await the advent of the true age of the United Nations. We must reassert our promise to deliver it.

Mr President,

I would like to compliment our Secretary General Mr Ban Ki Moon, for his tireless efforts in bringing to bear the vast reservoir of good will, compassion and common humanity of member states in successfully addressing a wide array of challenges.

On behalf of the people of Pakistan, I wish to convey our grateful thanks to the Secretary General and the international community for their support and solidarity expressed so generously in the wake of devastating floods last year.

This year again, heavy monsoon rains has caused widespread flooding. Millions have been affected. Human and economic losses as well as the pressing requirements of relief and rehabilitation obliged us to seek international assistance. We again thank you for your support and solidarity.

The Pakistani people continue to consistently demonstrate their immense reservoir of courage, forbearance and generosity. *InshaAllah*, we shall overcome this misfortune through the same fortitude and resilience that our people have been blessed with.

Mr President,

At this session of the General Assembly, Pakistan is seeking election to a seat on the Security Council. In soliciting your support, I wish to assure you that we would discharge our responsibilities with utmost dedication to the high ideals and principles of the United Nations.

Pakistan attaches the highest importance to promoting the goals of peace, security and stability in the world. In our own region we have relentlessly endeavoured towards creating an environment of shared prosperity and peace.

A democratic, progressive and prosperous Pakistan embedded in a stable, secure and prosperous region guides the framework of our foreign policy and could yield enormous benefits to not only the peoples of our region but of the world.

We have reached out to our immediate neighbours with a sincere desire to join hands in bringing about durable peace and development, by a win- win approach.

Situated as we are on the cross roads of central, south and west Asia, we realize the enormous opportunities that ensue from pursuing with diligence the vision of common development and cooperation.

I am happy to note that both Pakistan and India are now engaged in a substantive dialogue process. A dialogue process that we in Pakistan hope will be uninterrupted and uninteruptable. We certainly intend to make this engagement fruitful and premise it on the promise of a mutually rewarding enterprise that would enable us to optimally avail the complementarities that exist.

We look forward to resolving all outstanding issues including the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, which is among the oldest on the agenda of the United Nations and the subject of several Security Council resolutions. A peaceful resolution that accords fully with the aspirations of the Kashmiri's, is a sine qua non for durable stability. As is the need for safeguarding of their fundamental human rights.

The reality of a nuclearised South Asia, imposes on both Pakistan and India, the onerous responsibility to work together for creating mutual confidence, avoiding an arms race, and enhancing strategic stability. We look forward to moving in this direction in the dialogue process.

Pakistan is also firmly committed to promoting stability and peace in Afghanistan. We respect and support the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan under the leadership of President Karzai for reconciliation and peace.

We strongly condemn the recent terror attacks in Kabul in which many precious lives were lost. We also express our sympathy with our brothers and sisters and the leadership of Afghanistan on the tragic assassination of Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, former President and Chairman of the Afghan High Peace Council. Such cowardly attacks will never succeed in deterring our proud Afghan brothers and sisters from realizing the noble goal of reconciliation and peace.

Pakistan fully supports an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned inclusive process of reconciliation and peace in Afghanistan. We want to see Afghanistan as a united, independent and sovereign state. We urge all concerned to join the reconciliation process. We also call for a de-escalation and cessation of violence.

The road ahead for peace in Afghanistan and our region as a whole is full of challenges. The complexity of the situation and the ground dynamics need to be analyzed objectively and carefully. Clarity and strategic coherence, especially among Afghanistan, United States and Pakistan is of utmost importance. It is for this reason that we attach importance to the work of the Trilateral Core Group. We also attach considerable importance to the Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Commission for Peace and Reconciliation.

It is only by charting a clear roadmap that we would be able to bring about necessary operational policy coordination to achieve shared goals and objectives.

Given the volatility of the situation, it is perhaps understandable that there is a high level of anxiety and emotions. But we must not lose sight of the goals. We must work closely and as responsible partners together in a cooperative manner and not rush to judgments or question each other's intentions. A cooperative endeavour, in full solidarity with the people of Afghanistan, is the only sure way of ensuring peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

Pakistan is willing to do its best with the international partners and, most notably, the governments of Afghanistan and the United States, to acquit itself of this high responsibility, at this defining moment in one of the most important struggles of our times.

Mr President,

Pakistan has always upheld the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to an independent homeland with Al Quds Al Sharif as its capital. I would like to reaffirm our principled position. President Mahmoud Abbas made an historic and memorable case for his people. We stand by him and the Palestinian people. We stand by our brothers and sisters. And we agree: This really is not, sustainable, anymore. We support the quest of the State of Palestine for membership in the United Nations.

In North Africa and the Middle East, we have witnessed important developments. Pakistan believes that the aspirations of the people must be accommodated peacefully, without external interference and in a manner consistent with the principle of sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of states.

Mr. President,

Very few countries have been ravaged by the monster of terrorism as brutally as Pakistan has. We are keenly aware about the threat terrorism poses to Pakistan, to Pakistan neighbours, or to the rest of the world. 30,000 innocent Pakistanis have been killed—men, women and children. The ever valiant Pakistani armed forces have defended Pakistan, and the rest of the world at the highest cost. Our troops have laid down 6,532 *shuhada*, or martyrs. 19,190 of our strongest, bravest and most honor-worthy boys have suffered injuries. And it does not stop there. We have seen 3,629 of our police and paramilitary personnel embrace *shahadat*, or martyrdom. 10,720 of these men and women of the police and paramilitary services have been injured, since 2002. The grieving mothers, daughters, sisters and wives of these brave men and women are a constant reminder of our need to be vigilant and to fight the menace of terrorism. Pakistan's most popular leader, Shaheed Mohatarma Benazir Bhutto, was assassinated in 2007. Numerous politicians have lost sons and brothers and fathers at the hands of terrorists. Our streets are filled with armed police posts. We cannot enter our parks, or shopping centers, or churches or mosques without being searched and frisked. Terrorists have attacked our military installations, attacked the gravesites of our spiritual elders, attacked our minorities and attacked the very idea of Pakistan. If I began recounting Pakistan's sacrifices and Pakistan's suffering, I would keep you here till next September. We do not take terrorism lightly. We cannot. We have suffered far too much.

Our nation is united in its determination to eliminate the spectre of terrorism from our soil, from our region and the world. It is important to enhance international cooperation to totally obliterate terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Our resolve is inspired by Allama Mohammed Iqbal, the legendary poet-philosopher to whom Pakistan owes a debt of gratitude. Iqbal said:

*Shaheen kabhi parwaz say thak kar nahi girta,,
Purdam hai agar tuu tau nahi khatra-e-uftaad ...*

(The eagle does not fall from its soaring height/
If you have the will there is nothing to fear from adversity)

Pakistan has the will. We do not fear adversity. It is Pakistan's firm determination not to allow any space on its territory for militants and terrorists. At the regional plane, we must all pledge that our respective territories will not be allowed to be used against others by terrorists.

The issue of organizing, financing, arming, supporting and abetting terrorist violence needs to be addressed seriously and effectively.

Notable success against Al-Qaeda and its affiliates has been registered in recent years. It is well known that following the Tora Bora bombing and consequent dispersal of Al Qaida, it was Pakistan's intelligence and security agencies that interdicted a large number of Al Qaida operatives. Very recently, Yousuf Al Mauritani, the Chief Operative of Al-Qaeda was arrested in a joint ISI and CIA operation.

We must demonstrate complete unity in ranks, avoid any recrimination, build greater trust and more importantly bring about the requisite operational coordination in combating this menace. Otherwise, only the terrorists will gain.

Eliminating terrorism is in our national interest. We believe that our success is critical to regional and global peace and security.

Despite our limited capacity and other constraints, we have done all we can for the sake of realizing the vision of a bright future for our people and the peoples of Afghanistan and of the region. We have actively advocated and worked for closer regional economic integration. We believe that without prioritizing development and creating win-win scenarios in terms of mutually beneficial joint ventures in connectivity, infrastructure, energy and trade, we cannot succeed in changing the picture. We need to give hope and provide a silver lining to those who have not seen peace for three generations, and have only taken mercenarism and guns as a means of livelihood.

Pakistan's commitment to eliminating terror and militancy is irrevocable. We believe that this warrants a comprehensive approach not only to deal with violence but also its root causes. This requires enhancing international cooperation in multiple domains.

Pakistan has reached out to all countries of the world to establish mechanisms and arrangements ranging from intelligence cooperation; mutual assistance in legal and criminal matters; as well as joint operations, where required.

We believe that this is a global issue and needs to be addressed effectively.

Mr President,

Pakistan supports initiatives to strengthen the United Nations. However it is important not to start anything that proves divisive or has the potential to unravel the essential pillars of the UN.

The process of Security Council reforms must be worked in a manner that will reinforce the confidence of the peoples of the world in this body and enhance its credibility and effectiveness.

The reforms must enjoy full consensus of the international community and accord with the fundamental principle of sovereign equality. I remain committed to the vision of Pakistan's

martyred leader, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, who reminded us time and again that selective morality by definition is immoral, and that fundamental human values alone must guide our actions.

Pakistan attaches high importance to UN Peacekeeping functions and is a major troop contributor to the UN Peacekeeping. Pakistan has consistently been among the top UN peacekeeping contributors for many years. We have over 10,000 troops in the UN Blue Helmets.

We also attach importance to the United Nations work in the field of disarmament and non proliferation. Our collective endeavours in these fields could best be effective if we could enhance security, for all, and pursue approaches that are not selective or discriminatory. Normative work must be premised on principles.

Mr President,

We applaud the work of the United Nations in multiple domains. The specialized organizations, bodies and institutions are veritable examples of accomplishing shared goals and broadening vistas of cooperation.

Pakistan played a leadership role in conceiving and piloting the UN's Delivering as One agenda. This is a potentially vital informant to global development, and to the aid effectiveness. Despite the Paris Declaration and its reaffirmation at Accra, we have a long way to go. The One UN pilot exercise in Pakistan has struggled to achieve the lofty goals it set for itself, but we continue to invest hope in its eventual success.

Of course, the most important kind of harmonization is the one that takes place between people, between hearts and minds, between people. We place immense importance on our ability to promote harmony and tolerance among and between societies, cultures, faiths and nations. We know the price to be paid when these values are breached, having lost the Governor of our most populous province, Salmaan Taseer, and our valiant minister for minority affairs, Shahbaz Bhatti to acts of violence perpetrated by extremists. For us, the process of harmony and tolerance begins at home, we take it very seriously. We are committed and our resolve is strong.

At the international level, we are confident that UN provides the best global forum, that is fully equipped to enhance understanding and good will between all members of the international community.

Respect for beliefs, cultures and traditions are the hallmark of civilized conduct. We are particularly concerned over campaigns that tend to stigmatise Islam and Muslims. Islam is a religion of peace. It is important that the international community celebrate our common humanity and unity in diversity.

Mr President,

The systemic fault lines in the global economic landscape have surfaced lately and remain a source of immense concern. The debt and financial crises adds another worrying dimension to the existing disparity between developed and developing countries and the need to promote holistic development and economic growth. This requires re-visiting the fundamentals and readiness to equitably address the underlying issues.

Mr President,

As a democratic country, committed firmly to the ideals, values, and principles of the United Nations, Pakistan will continue to do its best for the cause of global peace and prosperity. Under the leadership of President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, the Pakistani nation is moving ahead confident of itself and its enormous capabilities. As a vibrant democracy, we are in the process of accomplishing a historic societal transformation. The challenges our people have dealt with empower and embolden us. We will remain unflinchingly democratic. We will defeat those that seek to terrorize us. We will empower women. We will protect the weak and the vulnerable in our midst, especially minorities. We will stand up for the weak and vulnerable abroad. We will support the human rights of Kashmiris. We will speak in support of the Palestinians. We will educate our children. We will protect our children. We will face any and all challenges with determination and faith. Most of all, we will be a peaceful and prosperous society. There will be challenges, but *inshaAllah*, we will overcome them.

We don't anticipate doing any of these things alone. With our neighbours and our friends, we will do all this in the spirit of togetherness. We will forge ahead despite the darkness of our times in the spirit that helped build this great institution. That spirit, a spirit that speaks to the very heart of Pakistani identity, is the spirit of the UN. Let us join hands and marching forward! For the good of the peoples of our countries and for the good of the world.

I will conclude my statement with the words of Pakistan's founding father Qauid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah which is the quintessential expression of Pakistan's foreign policy. Mr. Jinnah in a radio broadcast in February 1948 stated and I quote

"Our foreign policy is one of friendliness and goodwill towards the nations of the world. We do not cherish aggressive designs against any country or nation. We believe in the principle of honesty and fair play in national and international dealings and are prepared to make our utmost contribution to the promotion of peace and prosperity among the nations of the world. Pakistan will never be found lacking in extending its material and moral support to the oppressed and suppressed peoples of the world, and in upholding the principles of the United Nations Charter."
(End of Quote)

I thank you.

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