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SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Visit to Vietnam

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From the Chairman's Desk

I am delighted to present the 20th Report in the series of the activities of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The Report is a unique document, as it was the first parliamentary contact between the two countries since Vietnam's independence. The freedom loving people across the world have the highest esteem for the indomitable courage of the Vietnamese nation for the sacrifices they made in defence of their homeland and finally prevented. Looking at Pakistan today, I find the saga of Vietnam's heroism an inspiring example for our nation.

The delegation was also unique in the sense that it was the first time that Pakistan delegation was composed of five major political parties represented in Pakistan's Parliament and thus reflected the unity across the national spectrum.

The visit was very rewarding. It provided the delegates an opportunity to see and learn from a Vietnamese experience and share mutual aspirations and experiences.

I am confident that the Report will be a useful document for policy makers and those interested in international affairs.

I compliment the Committee's staff and the Hanns Seidel Foundation for their contribution to the preparation of this Report.



Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A delegation of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate of Pakistan, headed by its Chairman, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, visited Vietnam from 30th June to 5th July 2008. The delegation, comprising of nine senators from five different political parties, was the first ever parliamentary delegation from Pakistan to visit Vietnam.

The Foreign Relations Committee of Pakistan Senate, led by Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, held talks with the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly of Vietnam on July 1, 2008. The Vietnamese side highly appreciated the first ever visit of the Foreign Relations Committee of Pakistan to Vietnam. Both sides hoped that the visit would lay the foundation of strong bilateral relations, particularly between the two parliaments in the future.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed spoke highly of the achievements of the Vietnamese nation under the leadership of President Ho Chi Minh, and recalled the support rendered by the people and government of Pakistan to the people and government of Vietnam during their struggle in the past. The Vietnamese side informed that Vietnam accords high priority and great importance to its relations with Pakistan and would like to further enhance these relations, particularly between the two

parliaments and their different committees.

Both sides agreed to exchange information on parliamentary documents so as to share each other's experience in legislation. Emphasis was also laid on exchange of visits of parliamentary delegations and strengthening coordination at international parliamentary forums. They also agreed to work for enhancing people-to-people contacts and commercial and economic relations between the two countries. An MoU between the two parliaments would be signed when the Vietnamese delegation will visit Pakistan during the last quarter of the year 2008. On this occasion, invitations to the Vietnamese side were extended by Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed and other members of the delegation.

The delegation called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Pham Gia Khiem on July 1, 2008. He welcomed the delegation and termed the visit as an important landmark in bilateral relations between the two countries and stressed on the need for vigorous economic exchanges and trade. The current turnover is US\$ 135 million. He emphasized that it was still a very modest volume keeping in view the potential of the two countries. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed



congratulated the Foreign Minister on assumption of the presidency of the UN Security Council on the same morning. The Chairman also thanked the Vietnamese side for support to Pakistan in its membership in ASEM and urged for similar support to Pakistan's bid for Full Dialogue Partnership Status with ASEAN.

The Pakistani delegation called on Vice President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Madam Nguyen Thi Doan on July 2, 2008. While welcoming the delegation, the Vice President informed that the party and people see with great interest the development of Pakistan. Chairman Mushahid, while briefing the Vice President on the achievements of Pakistan, observed that the composition of the delegation itself is reflective of the "diversity in unity" of Pakistan. The Chairman expressed satisfaction at the increasing relationship between the two nations. In this context, he underlined the need for development of economic relations and defence relations through mutual exchange of visits. The Vice President thanked Pakistan for support to Vietnam in its entry to the WTO and becoming a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. She endorsed the need to increase and continue exchange of visits at high level between ministries and agencies for developing investment and trade relations. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed also

briefed the Vice President on the role of women in Pakistan.

The delegation called on the President and Chairman of the National Assembly, H.E. Mr. Nguyen Phu Trong, who termed the delegation as a very strong team and important delegation visiting Vietnam. Mr. Nguyen Phu Trong thanked the Pakistani parliamentarians for taking interest in Vietnam and informed that a new stage has been set in our bilateral relationship. Leader of the Pakistani delegation briefed the President of the National Assembly of Vietnam on their discussion and conclusions reached between the two Foreign Affairs Committees. He informed that it has been agreed that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee would be a focal point for cooperation between the two parliaments and both sides would increase cooperation at international parliamentary forums particularly at IPU.

The delegation also visited the headquarters of Nhan Dan Newspapers, the leading daily of Vietnam and official organ of the Communist Party.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed stated that because of international political reasons, facts are distorted by the media and fiction is promoted. Sometimes, political interests influence reporting and if political interests are not compatible with the interest of certain



countries then their media presents coverage in a different manner. Currently, the West was justifying the invasion and occupation in our region by linking events with their own security. This happened in Vietnam 40 years ago.

Chairman Mushahid briefed the newspapers' editors and staff stating that Pakistani society was very dynamic and this could be seen in the struggle of the lawyers, the civil society, the media, the women activists and the NGOs. The dynamism was reflected in certain kind of freedom which was there because of Pakistan media revolution in Pakistan. Pakistan is happy that peace has returned to Vietnam and it hopes that our region, particularly Pakistan, also achieves peace, since it has been in the eye of the storm for the last 30 years.

Mr. Thuan Huu informed that Vietnam has several publications; some are daily, some weekly, as well as two electronic publications. "In Vietnam we have many newspapers which are published in English, French and Chinese. There are 100 channels operating in Vietnam. There are no private TV channels and when the government grants permission to a government sponsored channel only then there is no checking."

Senator Maulana Sami-ul-Haq complimented the hosts on their

achievements in fighting against American imperialism as well as French colonialism and Japanese aggression. Pakistan wants to learn from Vietnam's example which is a living example of inspiration for all oppressed people.

The delegation also had a dialogue with Associate Professor, Dr. Duong Van Quang, Director, and other members of the Board of Management and faculty of the Institute of International Relations & Diplomacy, Vietnam, which is a leading think tank of the country. Senator Mushahid spoke on the topic of "Emerging scenarios in Asia and the role of Pakistan". A very positive image was conveyed during these interactions and misperceptions were allayed by responding to the questions of the participants. He proposed to the Institute of International Relations & Diplomacy, Vietnam to consider signing of an MoU for cooperation with the leading think tank of Pakistan like the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad.

A meeting between the delegation and the Institute of International Relations and Diplomacy was held on July 4, 2008. Senator Mushahid observed the visit as a path breaking because this was the first Parliamentary delegation since the establishment of the diplomatic relations between the two countries in November, 1972. Pakistan has been in the eye of the storm since, 1979. There was the invasion and



occupation of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union, which resulted in a huge influx of 3.5 million refugees from Afghanistan to Pakistan. These refugees were hosted by Pakistan and the relationship between the refugees and the people of Pakistan was friction free. Pakistan was a pivotal player in the last big battle of the 20th century, which ended the Cold War. Pakistan is again the center of gravity and Afghanistan faces U.S and NATO forces instead of the former Soviet forces. Pakistan is the partner in the campaign against terrorism. Pakistanis are worried that a war in Afghanistan may spill across into their country and might destabilize the parts of Pakistan neighbouring Afghanistan.

Continuing further, Senator Mushahid Hussain stated that another important development had been the nuclearization of the region, which was started by India and was culminated on May 28, 1998 when Pakistan tested its nuclear devices. India went nuclear for its status while Pakistan went nuclear for its security, being a medium sized power. India faced no threat from any quarter, be it China, USA or Russia. Pakistan, on the other hand, faced aggression on three different occasions in its history. Therefore, Pakistan went nuclear purely for defence purposes and deterrence. Now there is a South Asian version of the balance of terror, which had initially preserved peace in South Asia. Then there was peace a process between Pakistan and India

as the people were keen for rapprochement and normalization of relations which included the resolution of longstanding dispute of Jammu and Kashmir, which was still part of the United Nations agenda. The resolutions of Kashmir should be implemented by the United Nations like it implemented the resolution on Kuwait, Kosovo and East Timor. Since 1989 there had been popular, indigenous and widespread uprising in Kashmir. India has the highest soldier-to-civilian ratio in the Kashmir valley. Pakistanis feel that Kashmir should be treated as a human issue. Senator Mushahid Hussain reminded the participants that there were only two instances after World War-II where rape had been used as weapon of war. One is Kashmir and the other is Bosnia in Europe during the 90s. He said that this situation was repugnant to all accepted norms of civilization, norms of democratic conduct, and also a violation of the United Nations Charter and the International Law.

Senator Mushahid Hussain said that there was a new positive trend happening in the region, one on the domestic front, and the other on the regional front. On the domestic front, there was the power of public opinion which was making itself felt and was bypassing governments and established leadership. For example, in Nepal, there was victory of the Maoist Party through democratic elections. In India in 2005, the nuclear agreement

between India and America was scuttled by the power of public opinion when the Communist Party of India and the NGOs and civil society refused to accept it. In Pakistan, the longstanding movement for the restoration of judiciary was spear headed by people like Senator Khosa and Senator Zafar, including Senator Nilofar Bakhtiar. That movement involved the people of Pakistan, media, lawyers, civil society and NGOs. That power of public opinion weakened the strong military president and led a new environment in Pakistan. In Turkey, the American forces wanted to use Turkey as a base to attack Iraq but the Turkish Parliament did not accept that. The Turkish army wanted to prevent the candidacy of Mr. Abdullah Gul for presidency but he is now president. So, the power of public opinion is there, which is a very healthy development for Asia.

Senator Mushahid Hussain further stated that on the regional front there was regional cooperation emerging, driven by energy and economy. There are regional organizations like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Afghanistan is now a member of SAARC. China was an observer of SAARC and Iran wanted to join SAARC. Then there was the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Russia, China, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are members of SCO,

while Pakistan, India and Iran are now observers of SCO. Then there are the pipelines coming up, like the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline, and the Qatar-Pakistan-India pipeline. So this is a good sign that countries are cooperating regionally with each other, based on energy and economy. Pakistan is a bridge between East Asia and Central Asia and Pakistan was the shortest outlet to sea for Central Asia.

He concluded by saying that Pakistan is a friend of Vietnam and wants closer cooperation with it and in ASEAN. Pakistan seeks the support of Vietnam to become a full dialogue partner of ASEAN. He thanked Vietnam for their support to Pakistan in ASEM. Pakistan supported Vietnam in the U.N Security Council and the WTO and Pakistan has absolutely no conflict of interest with Vietnam.

Professor Dr. Duong Van Quang thanked Senator Mushahid Hussain for his introductory remarks and responded to the questions. Professor Quang replied that Vietnam's foreign policy has three main priorities; national security, economic development and international status. There is a dynamic relationship between the three. From 1968 to 1985, national security was No.1, economic development No.2, and international status was No.3. Reason being that Vietnam was isolated at that time and had to normalize the relations with big powers. In 1995, economic



development became No.1, supported by national security, followed by international status. Since 2000, Vietnam enshrined economic development, followed by international status in its foreign policy. This is why, it was making the effort to become a permanent member of the United Nations. Since, 1998, Vietnam introduced a policy of having fewer enemies and more friends. In 2001, it introduced the policy of being friend of all. Vietnam had territorial disputes with China and other countries but they are being discussed. This does not mean that it does not have security concerns. The Communist party was pursuing the policy of fighting poverty, which was classified as enemy No.1. Mr. Nguyen Hung Son stated that, from Vietnam's perception, there were no permanent friends and no permanent enemies. Only the national interest was paramount and it tried to minimize the element of differences with other countries. Vietnam considered the United

States as enemy which caused suffering to the people of Vietnam, but Vietnam could never benefit without economic cooperation from the U.S. Therefore, it considered the U.S. as its friend and it tries to maximize the area of cooperation and, at the same time, tries to minimize the differences with the U.S.

On the issue of Kashmir, Mr. Ngyuen Hung Son said that it was very unfortunate that this issue had not been resolved and Vietnam shared the same sympathy with both India and Pakistan. He showed little knowledge about the Kashmir issue but said that they share the concerns of the delegation on the humanitarian aspects of the conflict and whatever initiative Pakistan takes to resolve the human rights crisis it would be supported by Vietnam. Professor Quang stated that he was sure that unipolar moment for the U.S. has passed.



Members of the Senate Foreign Relations
Committee Delegation to Vietnam



Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Delegation to Vietnam

A delegation of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senate of Pakistan visited the Socialist Republic of Vietnam from 30th June to 5th July 2008 on the invitation of Vietnam Parliament. The delegation which was led by Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed spent five busy days in Hanoi and held meetings with various dignitaries of Vietnam which included the Vice President of Vietnam, the President of the National Assembly, the Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, the Foreign Affairs Committee of Vietnam Parliament, the Deputy Editor of Nhan Dan daily and scholars of the Institute of International Relations & Diplomacy.

The following constituted the delegation:

1. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed
(Leader of the Delegation)
2. Senator Syed Tahir Hussain Mash'hadi
3. Senator S.M. Zafar
4. Senator Nisar A. Memon
5. Senator Maulana Sami-ul-Haq
6. Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood
7. Senator Muhammad Latif Khan Khosa
8. Senator Naeem Hussain Chattha
9. Senator Nilofar Bakhtiar
10. Mr. Iftikharullah Babar,
Secretary Committee/Additional Secretary



Verbatim record of the meetings held at Vietnam

- Meeting with the Foreign Affairs Committee of Vietnam Parliament
- Meeting with Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister
- Meeting with Vice President of Vietnam
- Meeting with President of the National Assembly
- Meeting with Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Nhan Dan Newspaper
- Meeting at the Institute of International Relations & Diplomacy, Vietnam



Meeting with Foreign Affairs Committee of the of the National Assembly of Vietnam

Hanoi, July 1, 2008

Mr. Nguyen Van Son, Chairman Foreign Affairs Committee: The Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam extends to you a warm welcome on your visit to Vietnam. I know that you bring a very strong team, both members of your Committee, as well as various chairs of the committees in the Senate. It is indeed my great pleasure to meet you again after our meeting in Islamabad en route to Europe with a delegation of the National Assembly. I am confident that your visit will further promote cooperation between our two countries and parliaments.

Before we start our discussion, I would like to introduce my delegation to you. Mr. Ngo Anh Dung, is Deputy Chairman of the External Affairs Committee, Mr.

Luong Phan Cu, is Deputy Chair of the Social Affairs Committee, Mr. Ha Minh Hue, is Member of the External Affairs Committee, Member of South Asia-Vietnam Parliamentarian Caucus, Mr. Nguyen Lan Dung is Member of the External Affairs Committee, Ms. Pham Thi Loan is member of the Committee of Finance and Budget, Mr. Le Nhu Tieu is member of Council and Education Committee and Vietnam-South Asia Caucus. Also present in my delegation is Ms. Vu Thi Hong Ngoc, Deputy Director General of External Affairs Department of the National Assembly Office, Ms. Nguyen Tuong Van, Chief of Asia-Pacific Division of the External Affairs of National Assembly Office and other officials of the National Assembly.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: Thank you very much Mr.





“The people of Pakistan have been very much inspired by the heroic and resolute struggle of the people of Vietnam against Japanese imperialism, against French colonialism and against American imperialism. You will be pleased to know that during Vietnam’s political struggle, there was always support for Vietnam across the political divide in Pakistan. All political parties, irrespective of ideology, have always supported the people of Vietnam.”

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed

Nguyen Van Son and your distinguished colleagues. It is our privilege and pleasure to be here in this great country of Vietnam. It is a pleasure to renew our relationship which started when we met for two hours at the Islamabad International Airport along with your President of the National Assembly and his delegation. Like your distinguished colleagues, we also have a delegation of very eminent public figures from Pakistan representing different political parties and I think it will be a historic delegation because this is a first ever delegation of parliamentarians from Pakistan to visit Vietnam.

Allow me first to introduce this distinguished delegation. On my right is Senator S. M. Zafar, one of the eminent jurists of Pakistan, parliamentarian and lawyer, former Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs and currently Chairman of the Human Rights Committee of the Senate. On Mr. Zafar’s right is Senator Tahir Hussain Mashhadi. He is a former writer, a columnist and a former Military Officer. He is Chairman of the Committee on Rules of Business and Privileges and he belongs to the MQM which represents the middle classes and lower middle classes, especially from the province of Sindh in Karachi. On his right, is one of Pakistan’s famous religious scholars, Maulana Sami-ul-Haq. He heads the biggest seminary or Madrassah in Pakistan. He is also Chairman of the Committee on Religious Affairs and his father played an active role during the Afghan jihad of 1980s against the occupation of Afghanistan. Fourth from my right is Senator Naeem Hussain Chattha. He is a former Federal Minister. His father played a very major role in the freedom movement fighting against British imperialism. He is also Chairman of the Committee on Labour and Manpower. On my left is Senator Nisar Memon, former Minister for Information, a very distinguished figure in the Pakistani multinational scene and a public affairs advocate. He is also Chairman of the Senate Defence Committee. On Mr. Memon’s left is Senator Talha Mahmood. He



is also a distinguished public figure and advocate for humanitarian causes. He is Chairman of Senate Interior Committee and he represents a very famous religious political party JUI (F). On his left is Senator Latif Khosa. He is a very famous lawyer. He has been a lawyer for Ms. Benazir Bhutto and Mr. Asif Ali Zardari. He represents the Pakistan Peoples Party, which is currently the ruling party. During the recent lawyers struggle he was one of the leaders of movement for restoration of judiciary. He has many public cases to his credit. And on Senator Khosa's left is the distinguished, dynamic and charming lady, Senator Nilofar Bakhtiar. She has been a predominant advocate of the rights of women. She has been in prison several times for women's causes. She has been Minister for Women Development and also Minister for Tourism. On her left is Mr. Iftikharullah Babar who is Secretary of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and he is one of the key figures of Pakistan Parliament in terms of administration, management and organization and without his dynamic efforts, this trip would not have been possible. He is the No. 2 person in the Senate Secretariat. On his left is Mr. Idrees Mahsud, who is the chargé d'affaires of the Pakistan Embassy in Vietnam. An interesting aspect of Mr. Mahsud is that he represents an area which is currently very famous in the media because he comes from a place called

“Just as we were inspired by your struggle against foreign domination, we were very much impressed by your remarkable economic growth which shows the resilience of your people and the capacity to bounce back from difficulties and crisis.”

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed

Waziristan where there is a big struggle of the Pakistan armed forces against terrorism, Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. We have also three staff members whom I would like to introduce, Mr. Khattak, Mr. Farooq and Mr. Riaz Khan.

So as you can see that this delegation is a representative in terms of backgrounds, in terms of genders, in terms of politics and in terms of society. I just want to say a few things about Pakistan's current political transition and the role of our Committee. First of all, we bring greetings from the Chairman of the Senate, Mr. Mohammedmian Soomro to the Parliament of Vietnam and also we have greetings from the lady Speaker of the National Assembly, Mrs. Fehmida Mirza. We have had successful political transition in Pakistan. Elections were held on 18th of February, 2008 and as a consequence of those elections, there was a transfer of power. The party which was governing Pakistan



“We have just returned from paying homage to President Ho Chi Minh and it was a great moment of inspiration as well as a sentimental journey for all of us. That visit was a reminder that how quality of leadership, and caliber of leadership can make a difference and change the destiny of not just their own people but of mankind, and we have seen this in our own case, in the case of Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and we have now seen that also in the case of President Ho Chi Minh.”

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed

before 18th of February – the Pakistan Muslim League, to which I and some of my colleagues belong, lost the elections and the party which is led by Mr. Khosa – the Pakistan Peoples Party won the elections. So we transferred the power to them in the National Assembly but in the Senate – the Upper House, we still have a majority. So we remain the ruling party in the Senate while the government is now run by the Pakistan Peoples Party and the government is in coalition with some other parties also. Our 9-member delegation of parliamentarians includes members of five different

political parties, both belonging to the government as well as to the opposition. In our Parliament, our committees are quite active. The Committee which is interacting with Your Excellency, Nguyen Van Son, is the Foreign Relations Committee. Our Committee is very active, issuing regular reports and we have about 18 reports that we have published since the Committee was formed. We have our own website, we have our own research system and we have regular visits to different foreign countries which include Europe, Central Asia, South Asia and now includes East Asia as well.

I will use this opportunity to present three aspects which I think may be of interest to you. One is the history of Pakistan where there are lots of similarities with Vietnam. Like Vietnam, we achieved our independence after World War II. You achieved your independence in September, 1945; we achieved our independence in August, 1947 from British imperialism. You had a great leader Ho Chi Minh, we had a great leader Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who was leading the struggle for freedom for Pakistan. You had the Indo-Chinese Communist Party, led by Ho Chi Minh; we had the All India Muslim League led by Mr. Jinnah, which is the second oldest party of Asia formed in 1906, the oldest political party of Asia is All India Congress party. One of the areas of commonality is that we



have both struggled against outside intervention, foreign aggression and outside pressure throughout our history. These pressures have taken in the form of military pressure, economic pressure, pressure on media and attempts to change the policy and we have maintained our course when it involved our national interests. The people of Pakistan have been very much inspired by the heroic and resolute struggle of the people of Vietnam against Japanese imperialism, against French colonialism and against American imperialism. You will be pleased to know that during Vietnam's political struggle, there was always support for Vietnam across the political divide in Pakistan. All political parties, irrespective of ideology, have always supported the people of Vietnam. I was a student in America at Georgetown University in Washington during the 70s, and one of the happiest days of my life in Washington was April 30, 1975 when Saigon was liberated by the Vietnamese National Liberation Front and Vietnamese Peoples Army. I was a young student in College when I learned that President Ho Chi Minh had died in September 1969. There was no Vietnamese Embassy in Pakistan, but I did send a letter of condolence to the editor of Nhan Dan Daily because I knew that Nhan Dan Daily is the official organ of the Central Committee of Vietnam's Workers Party and I also received a response from them for

“I am sure that the visit of such an important delegation from the Foreign Relation Committee of Pakistani Senate will open up a new stage in relationship between the two parliaments and contribute to further consolidation and development of the overall relationship between Vietnam and Pakistan.”

Mr. Nguyen Van Son

the condolence message.

Just as we were inspired by your struggle against foreign domination, we were very much impressed by your remarkable economic growth which shows the resilience of your people and the capacity to bounce back from difficulties and crisis. So I would say that the initiative that we have taken to come to Vietnam on your very kind and warm invitation is a first in the parliamentary history of Pakistan and Vietnam and we would like to see this step as a harbinger of new relationships, especially between the Parliament of Pakistan and Vietnam. Although you had a very brief stopover and it was confined to Islamabad Airport, we would also like to take this opportunity to invite a delegation of the External Affairs Committee under the leadership of Your Excellency and your distinguished colleagues, to visit



“We need to further encourage our industries, our enterprises to increase contacts and collaboration to further boost bilateral trade.”

Mr. Nguyen Van Son

Pakistan at a time that is convenient to us mutually, so you can have a stay at length and that visit will certainly strengthen the ties between our two committees, our two parliaments and the two countries and the people. I thank you for your very warm and gracious hospitality which has been evident from the moment we arrived in your beautiful country. We have been very much well looked after and we are looking forward to a very positive, productive and interesting stay. We have just returned from paying homage to President Ho Chi Minh and it was a great moment of inspiration as well as a sentimental journey for all of us. That visit was a reminder that how quality of leadership, and caliber of leadership can make a difference and change the destiny of not just their own people but of mankind, and we have seen this in our own case, in the case of Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and we have now seen that also in the case of President Ho Chi Minh.

Mr. Nguyen Van Son: On behalf of my distinguished colleagues, I would like to express our sincere thanks to you for the excellent and

fine sentiments for our people, President Ho Chi Minh and to our cause of national liberation. I fully share and associate myself with your honor on the development of relationship between our two countries. I am sure that the visit of such an important delegation from the Foreign Relation Committee of Pakistani Senate will open up a new stage in relationships between the two parliaments and contribute to further consolidation and development of the overall relationship between Vietnam and Pakistan. I will convey the good wishes of your leaders to the President of our National Assembly. I would also like to thank you for your invitation to visit Pakistan, which we shall arrange at the most appropriate and convenient time. This is indeed the very first official meeting between us and I am sure we have many things to share. I also share with your honour that our two countries have many historical and cultural similarities and now we have shared interests, so we should further promote our bilateral relations. We always appreciate the role and position of Pakistan in the region and the world and we attach much importance to the development of our ties. I would propose that our two Foreign Affairs Committees further enhance and strengthen our relationship in order to contribute to the overall development of ties between the two parliaments, the various committees of our parliaments as well as the overall relationship between our countries.

To that end, I would now propose the following:

- First, we need to further exchange information. There are many ways that we could exchange information, but the easiest way to exchange information is to send parliamentary documents to each other, especially sharing the experience in legislative matters.
- We will serve as the focal point in each parliament to further the exchange of delegations and visits between the two parliaments and various committees of the parliaments.
- We should further enhance our coordination at international forums, especially the international parliamentary forum.
- We should jointly consider the possibility of concluding an agreement or MoU for co-operation between the two parliaments to be signed at a mutually convenient time.

I would avail this opportunity to brief you about the situation in Vietnam. And certainly, if the time for this meeting is not long enough, we still have a dinner ahead so we could continue our discussion during the dinner. You must be aware that after the war, despite all the grave consequences, we have been putting much effort in reforms. The focus of our reforms is economic, political

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Nguyen Van Son

and international integration. In our assessment, we might say with confidence that our reforms have been quite successful and had historical achievement, totally changing the face of our country. Our people are now enjoying much improved living standard. Vietnam's international relations have been largely expanded and our position in the international arena has been elevated to a new position.

Vietnam's economic growth has reached a high rate and last year it was 8.5%. But at the end of last year, and the beginning of this year due to fluctuations in the world market and slowdown in the global economy, and the price hikes in the world, our economy has been badly affected. Prices in Vietnam are rising fast and inflation is in double digits. During the first session of our National Assembly this year, we had to revise our growth targets for this year. We



“I would also like to congratulate you for the good economic performance of your country which was possible because of the international philosophy of peace that you have been pursuing. Peaceful relations and resolving issues with all the neighbours has been your success and I think it is an example to follow.”

Senator Nisar A. Memon

have adjusted our growth rate to 7% from the 8.5 to 9% recorded previously. Our objective now is to further control inflation to stabilize the macro economy and ensure social security to prepare for new phase of sustainable development.

In terms of foreign relations our policy is consistent with independence, sovereignty, peace and development, marking liberalization and diversification of our external ties in the spirit that Vietnam is a friend of all countries in the international community. In that spirit we also look forward to further strengthening relationship between our two countries. In recent years our bilateral relationships have recorded positive development with a fast growing trade burden. However, this figure is modest compared to our potential. You can see, with just 134 billion US dollars

of trade turnover last year, this is very modest. With population of more than 160 million people, Pakistan is not a small country. Vietnam is also not a small country in this region, with population of 86 million. Both our economies are growing fast and positioned in the most dynamic area of the world. You can see that our potential is enormous. As such, we need to further encourage our industries, our enterprises to increase contacts and collaboration to further boost bilateral trade.

At the end, I wish to express the most sincere thanks to Pakistan and your parliament and government for the gesture of goodwill by handing over a cheque of 120 thousand US dollars to support and assist the people affected by the floods in Vietnam in October last year. Thank you very much for sharing our consequences of calamity and disaster. With that, I wish to leave the floor to our distinguished members.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: Thank you Excellency, it was a very good intervention from your side. You gave us a good briefing on your situation. I just want to briefly say a couple of things before I handover to few of my colleagues. We fully agree with your four points about parliamentary cooperation and we would certainly serve as the focal point from the Pakistani parliament for the promotion of ties between the two parliaments and Mr. Babar will



do the needful. Secondly, the MoU is a very good idea. We will sign that memorandum when your Excellency leads the delegation to Pakistan on our invitation. And now I would like to request some of my colleagues to say a few words briefly. We have ten minutes left. I request my colleagues for a very brief intervention – one or two minutes each, and they all are very articulate people like Senator S.M. Zafar, Senator Nisar Memon, Senator Latif Khosa, Senator Talha and Senator Mashhadi. And of course, we should not forget the 50% population of Pakistan – Senator Nilofar Bakhtiar.

Senator S.M. Zafar. Thank you very much. I will be very brief but firstly my congratulations to Vietnam. For the first time, you have become the President of the Security Council in the United Nations this year. It is another interesting thing that we are here in this year when you are celebrating the 115th birthday of your great President Ho Chi Minh. Today in the morning, as Mr. Mushahid mentioned, the visit of the mausoleum of President Ho Chi Minh, was such an inspiring experience. As mentioned earlier our leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah also fought and got this country Pakistan. When he left, he left for us a slogan or a central theme of 'Unity, Faith and Discipline'. I was wondering if you could tell us what central theme President Ho Chi Minh left for the people of Vietnam. Now, I have got two small questions. One is; for how long does your National Assembly

“I would invite you on behalf of the coalition Government to visit Pakistan at whatever level you want. I hope that as Chair of the UN Security Council, Vietnam will protect the interests of Pakistan. It is very much because of your leadership that you got rid of hegemonic designs of the super powers.”

Senator Latif Khan Khosa

meet each time when it meets twice a year? One important issue that interests me more is that Vietnam has been fighting three imperialist forces with arms and ammunition; how has the State disarmed everybody in this country? Lastly, are you emphasizing on micro financing for fighting inflation? Thank you.

Senator Nisar A. Memon. I agree whatever sentiments and views were expressed by our Chairman and Mr. S.M. Zafar. I would also like to congratulate you for the good economic performance of your country which was possible because of the international philosophy of peace that you have been pursuing. Peaceful relations and resolving issues with all the neighbours has been your success and I think it is an example to follow. From rice importing country you have become rice exporting country due to your



“Please accept the gratitude of the Government of Pakistan for inviting this delegation to your great country and for a direct interaction between the parliamentarians which we hope to continue and which will flourish with the coming times. We need to emulate the manner in which you and your people countered colonial terrorism within your country and brought peace and stability. We are passing through the same strain, unfortunately, and we would like to learn from you – how you were able to get over it and how you brought peace and stability to your country.”

Senator Latif Khan Khosa

focus on agriculture. As an agricultural country, we should focus on imports of fertilizers from Vietnam. That could be another area of cooperation between our countries. For your economic development, peace is important, so as Chairman of Defence and Defence Production Committee, I invite you and your Defence Committee to visit Pakistan. Please convey the greetings and also an invitation to them so that we can show you the development in the defence industry sector. Thank you

for supporting us to become member of ASEAN and also the dialogue partner in ASEM. While we believe in peace but for our national defence, we will be ready to combat any aggression like you have done. Thank you.

Senator Latif Khan Khosa: Excellency, I bring greetings on behalf of the coalition government, the ruling party which is not only part of the federal government but also from the four provinces of Pakistan. Please accept the gratitude of the Government of Pakistan for inviting this delegation to your great country and for a direct interaction between the parliamentarians which we hope to continue and which will flourish with the coming times. We need to emulate the manner in which you and your people countered colonial terrorism within your country and brought peace and stability. We are passing through the same strain, unfortunately, and we would like to learn from you – how you were able to get over it and how you brought peace and stability to your country.

Your economy, in fact, is the second fastest growing in Asia after China. Its growth by 8.5 percent, by any stretch of imagination, is very valuable for us to follow and of course due to inflationary trends you have reduced it down. We were also at 7.5 percent but we also reduced it to 5.5 percent and still we are struggling. So we would like to benefit from your experience.

We have to stabilize our economy and get over the inflationary trend which has wrecked the world with economic crunch. With your 86 million and our 180 million people, a sizeable humanity has to bring peace and stability and certainly we would benefit from your experience. I would invite you on behalf of the coalition Government to visit Pakistan at whatever level you want. I hope that, as Chair of the UN Security Council, Vietnam will protect the interests of Pakistan. It is very much because of your leadership that you got rid of hegemonic designs of the super

powers. Humanity has to be treated equally and we have to look to the poor and voiceless people of this globe and bring hope and peace. Thank you very much sir.

Senator Tahir Hussain Mashhadi: I have the honour to represent Muttahidda Qaumi Movement which is a political party in the southern part of Pakistan where the commercial and trade city of Karachi is located. I bring to you, along with the people of Pakistan, especially people from my party, the highest regard, respect and admiration that we have for the people of Vietnam



July 1, 2008: Senator Mushahid Hussain presenting a gift to his Vietnamese counterpart.



“I would be more than happy to invite any trade or cultural delegation which you may like to send to Pakistan. It will be an honour and privilege for us to receive the great people of Vietnam.”

Senator Tahir Hussain Mashhadi

and for the glorious, brave and heroic struggle that you carried out against Western imperialism. You are a source of inspiration for us and it gives me great pleasure to be here today. The great leader, Excellency, President Ho Chi Minh is a source of great inspiration, love and respect, especially for the people of my party. We feel that the great people of Vietnam and this great nation can be a source of great inspiration and we can learn from your struggle, which will be a source of great help for our development. We hope to have better relations especially in trade and culture and on behalf of my party which is in power in Karachi. I would be more than happy to invite any trade or cultural delegation which you may like to send to Pakistan. It will be an honour and privilege for us to

receive the great people of Vietnam. Thank you.

Senator Talha Mahmood: I belong to Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam and our Party leaders have sent best wishes for your country. First of all, I welcome your trade center which was opened in Karachi and we invite you to arrange trade awareness between both countries so that business community could be attracted and our trade relations establish on concrete basis. Thank you.

Senator Nilofar Bakhtiar. Thank you Mr. Chairman, I just want you to know, ladies and gentlemen, that I am not a member of the Foreign Relations Committee but I requested the Chairman to bring me here. I have great respect and admiration for the people of Vietnam because of your courage and bravery against foreign aggression. I would like to know and hear more on the role of your Parliament. Thank you

Mr. Nguyen Van Son: I think we have had a very interesting and important discussion. We will definitely answer your questions during dinner. Thank you.

At the end of the meeting a carpet was presented to Mr. Nguyen Van Son, Chairman of the Committee.

Meeting with H.E. Pham Gia Khiem, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Vietnam

July 1, 2008

H.E. Pham Gia Khiem: On behalf of the Government, I welcome you to Vietnam. Your visit will usher in a new era of relations between the two Parliaments. I am sure you had productive talks between the two Foreign Affairs Committees. I am delighted that the two sides have agreed on ways and means of establishing further relations. I am delighted to inform you that there is a trade of US \$ 103 million between Pakistan and Vietnam. This number is moderate and does not commensurate with our potential. I

would like to congratulate you on the stability and development in Pakistan. I wish your visit a great success.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: I thank you for giving us the time to meet you. In our delegation there are members from five different political parties. I bring greetings from President Pervez Musharraf, Prime Minister, Yousaf Raza Gilani and Foreign Minister, Shah Mahmood Qureshi. The Foreign Minister is ex-officio member of our



Hanoi, July 1, 2008: Meeting with H.E. Pham Gia Khiem, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Vietnam.



July 1, 2008: A group photo of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Vietnam, Mr. Pham Gia Khiem

Committee. We extend our heartiest congratulations to Vietnam on assuming the Chair of the UN Security Council this month. This is a great achievement for Vietnam. This is the first time that a Pakistan Parliamentary delegation is visiting Vietnam. I extend thanks for supporting Pakistan as a full dialogue partner in ASEAN and ASEM. Our visit is bearing fruit as you mentioned we agreed on various ways of extending cooperation. First, we have invited the Committee of Foreign Affairs and National Security and the Committee of Defence to visit Pakistan. Secondly,

that the two Foreign Affairs Committees will be the focal point between Pakistan and Vietnam Parliaments and thirdly, the two Committees will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) whenever the Foreign Affairs Committee of Vietnam visits Pakistan this year.

The interaction between the two countries will be a force multiplier of further increasing trade relations. Since your Excellency is the Deputy Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister I will present the report of the Standing Committee on its visit to Sri Lanka. This is just an

illustration of our work.

We have common historical experiences and we have a lot to learn from Vietnam as to how it preserved its independence. Senator Latif Khosa is a member of the ruling coalition and his leader Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto established relations between Pakistan and Vietnam in November 1972 and our first ambassador to your country was Mr. Ashfaque Ahmed Khan. I recall that in every public demonstration in Pakistan during the 1970s, we used to carry three posters and the one

“We extend our heartiest congratulations to Vietnam on assuming the Chair of the UN Security Council this month. This is a great achievement for Vietnam.”

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed

was of Ho Chi Minh, whose mausoleum we visited today. Excellency, I want to ask you whether the dispute of Spratly



July 1, 2008: Senator Mushahid Hussain introducing members of the delegation to Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister.



“We have invited the Committee of Foreign Affairs and National Security and the Committee of Defence to visit Pakistan. Secondly, that the two Foreign Affairs Committees will be the focal point between Pakistan and Vietnam Parliaments and thirdly, the two Committees will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) whenever the Foreign Affairs Committee of Vietnam visits Pakistan this year.”

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed

Islands affects relations with China?

H.E. Pham Gia Khiem: There still remain some disputes between Vietnam and China and ASEAN. Spratly Islands belong to the sovereignty of Vietnam. We have a Code of Conduct between China,

Vietnam and ASEAN over these Islands. The Code of Conduct envisages status quo and there will be no violence from any side. The dispute will be solved through peaceful dialogue.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: It is a great honour to meet you because of the reforms you have implemented in Vietnam. I would congratulate you for being elected a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party and now to be in its Politburo. Under your leadership, relationship between Pakistan and Vietnam will increase further.

Senator Latif Khan Khosa: The understanding between the people of Pakistan and Vietnam has grown into love. I invite you to visit Pakistan.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: Yesterday, we fell in love with Vietnam's cuisine and the lady fell in love with silk. Thank you.

At the end of the meeting a gift of Pakistani carpet was presented to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Meeting with Madam Nguyen Thi Doan, Vice President of Vietnam

July 2, 2008

Madam Nguyen Thi Doan: I welcome all the members of the Foreign Affairs Committee to Vietnam. We are anxious to know how you feel about this trip?

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: All have fallen in love with Vietnam. The members of the Committee who belong to different political parties have developed a special camaraderie for Vietnam. We have fallen in love with the cuisine and silk. This is the first

visit of a Pakistan Parliamentary Committee to Vietnam. We are aware of the heroic struggle of the women of Vietnam. It's a great pleasure to be here. We are inspired by Vietnam's struggle against foreign occupation and now by the economic growth.

Madam Nguyen Thi Doan: Thank you for the extremely kind words about us and our country. Your trip will be a great success and it will further improve ties between the two



July 2, 2008: Meeting with Madam Nguyen Thai Doan, Vice President of Vietnam.



“We are aware of the heroic struggle of the women of Vietnam. It’s a great pleasure to be here. We are inspired by Vietnam’s struggle against foreign occupation and now by the economic growth.”

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed

countries. The Party and the Government of Vietnam watch with great interest the developments in Pakistan. We congratulate you on the successful elections in February, 2008. I fully agree with you that the delegation is a rainbow and there is unity in diversity and the new Parliament will bring political stability and economic development to Pakistan. You might be aware that in Vietnam we have combined all ethnic groups into unity. The strength of that is shown in our people but also support from other countries, including Pakistan. I am glad to see that institutional development has taken place in 2007. We had 17 years of diplomatic relations and our foreign trade remained at \$ 7 million.

We are now developing defence cooperation by sending officers on training courses to Pakistan. We want to see Pakistan achieve economic development despite all difficulties and maintain economic growth. On behalf of the state, Government, and people of Vietnam we thank the State, Government, and people of

Pakistan for sending relief goods worth \$ 110,000 in 2007. It shows solidarity between the two peoples. I am also glad to notice that our cooperation at the international level in ASEAN and Non Aligned Movement is exemplary. We also thank Pakistan for supporting our entry in WTO and the Security Council. All the cooperation shows traditional friendship and solidarity. We believe that in the times to come we will tap new potential of friendship and enhance mutual exchange of high level visits to achieve cooperation at new levels.

I would take this opportunity to urge the Chairmen to utilize their positions to promote cooperation between our two countries and we will see fruits of that cooperation. I am very glad to see that there is a women senator in your delegation. You were right when you said Vietnam’s women were active in the struggle for independence. Ho Chi Minh said that Vietnam’s women had resilience, were loyal and skillful. The Secretary General of the United Nations has said that the world should give attention to women and increase the level of investment in women in the 21st century. On our part, we will do our best to fight social vices.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: I share the sentiments you dilated on. You are right about women and what Ho Chi Minh said. The same can be said about Pakistani women too. Recently, we

lost our great leader Benazir Bhutto. She was the youngest Prime Minister at the age of 35. I would say that in the 1940s women played a role in the struggle for independence, including women like Fatima Jinnah, the sister of Quaid-e-Azam. So women's role cannot be discounted. There is a longstanding role of women in our countries. In the last 3 to 4 years, we passed legislation in Pakistan Parliament to promote and protect women's right. The people of Pakistan deserve congratulation for holding transparent and smooth elections where opposition became government and vice versa. You rightly mentioned the need for

“We are grateful to Vietnam for its support to Pakistan in ASEM and we hope to receive full support from Vietnam for Pakistan becoming full dialogue partner in ASEAN. Because of Pakistan's geographical location and its role as a bridge between Central Asia and South East Asia it will help in building a truly Asian century.”

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed

national unity. In Pakistan, on 27th of March, 2008 the Prime Minister



July 2, 2008: Senator Mushahid Hussain presenting Report of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to Vice President of Vietnam.



“Your trip will be a great success and it will further improve ties between the two countries.”

Nguyen Thi Doan

got a unanimous vote from the Parliament.

Cooperation in politics, economics, and defence is important for which we are discussing an MoU. There are training courses in Vietnam from which our officers can learn a lot. While using this occasion, I congratulate you on Vietnam

occupying the Chair of the Security Council. Vietnam will be the voice of the oppressed people and will speak for them. We are grateful to Vietnam for its support to Pakistan in ASEM and we hope to receive full support from Vietnam for Pakistan becoming full dialogue partner in ASEAN. Because of Pakistan’s geographical location and its role as a bridge between Central Asia and South East Asia it will help in building a truly Asian century. We are grateful for the hospitality. A journey of a thousand miles starts with a step and we have to build a relationship that is lasting. Thank you.

At the end of the meeting a gift of Pakistani carpet was presented to the Vice President.

Meeting with H.E. Nguyen Phu Trong, President of the National Assembly of Vietnam

July 2, 2008

H.E. Nguyen Phu Trong: I extend my warmest welcome to the Foreign Affairs Committee. It seems you have brought a strong delegation and through this visit the relations between the two parliaments and the peoples will get stronger. I am glad that I am meeting you so soon after I transited through Islamabad on my trip to Europe. On my way back we also stopped over at Karachi and we received photographs taken with you in Islamabad. I hope your visit will be a great success.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: I am sorry I could not receive you on your way back as I was attending a meeting in Paris. Photographs of your visit were on the front pages of newspapers in Pakistan. You are now familiar figure in Pakistan. Our delegation

“It seems you have brought a strong delegation and through this visit the relations between the two parliaments and the peoples will get stronger.”

Nguyen Phu Trong

is happy for the invitation that you extended for this first Pakistan Parliamentary visit to Vietnam. I bring special greetings from Mohammedmian Soomro, Chairman Senate of Pakistan and Dr. Fehmida Mirza, Speaker, National Assembly of Pakistan to you. This delegation shows that the Parliament and people of Pakistan attach great importance to relations with your country. There are nine members in this delegation who represent different provinces, parties and



July 2, 2008: Meeting with the President of the National Assembly of Vietnam, H.E. Mr. Nguyen Phu Trong.



“We had good meeting with the Foreign Affairs Committee of Vietnam and we reached a few decisions. Firstly, we agreed to exchange documentation between the two Parliaments and to cooperate in various parliamentary fora, particularly IPU. Secondly, we agreed that the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee will be the focal point between the two Parliaments. Thirdly, invitations have been extended to Vietnam’s Committee on Foreign Affairs and National Security and the Committee on Defence to visit Pakistan.”

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed

people and this shows unity in diversity.

H.E. Nguyen Phu Trong: Thank you for the introduction. Our National Assembly is honoured to receive such a powerful delegation from the Parliament of Pakistan. I believe that with such composition of the delegation, the relationship between the two Parliaments will get new impetus. The relations between our two countries since the establishment of the diplomatic relations 36 years ago are sound and I am glad that for the first time such a delegation came which will open new vistas in our relations.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: Yesterday, we had good meeting with the Foreign Affairs Committee of Vietnam and we reached a few decisions. Firstly, we agreed to exchange documentation between the two Parliaments and to cooperate in various parliamentary fora, particularly IPU. Secondly, we agreed that the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee will be the focal point between the two Parliaments. Thirdly, invitations have been extended to Vietnam’s Committee on Foreign Affairs and National Security and the Committee on Defence to visit Pakistan. We will receive these Committees during the last quarter of 2008. Now that we have had a good visit you should lead a delegation to Pakistan and I have been authorized by the Chairman Senate in this regard and reinforced by the Speaker National Assembly.

Senator Talha Mehmood: I am thankful to you for the warm welcome. I understand that you are expecting an increase of 30% in exports. How will you go about it?

H.E. Nguyen Phu Trong: With regard to our trade relations we see good progress. Last year, trade between the two countries was to the tune of 97 million dollars but now it is 134 million dollars. This is a modest figure but in the times to come we need to enhance trade and investment ties. Our countries share many similarities but we complement each other. Vietnam is now embarking on the path of industrialization and modernization of

agriculture.

Senator S. M. Zafar: In 1946 you adopted a constitution then you adopted another constitution and turned Vietnam from a republic to a socialist country. Is it a change towards an ideological State? The Chief Justice of Vietnam is nominated by the President but how does the National Assembly decide? Is it the Prosecutor General, the Attorney General or Ombudsman or both? You mentioned about the 10th National Congress. Kindly explain that.

H.E. Nguyen Phu Trong: In terms of our constitution the policy of Vietnam State is consistent. We try our best for the cause of construction and development and for the defence and protection of our sovereignty. Chief Justice from 1946 till date is appointed by the National Assembly which is the highest body of the people. National Assembly performs three functions:

1. Legislative and constitutional.
2. Supreme oversight for legal documents and laws.
3. Decides important issues of the people.

The National Assembly is elected by the people through adult franchise which in turn elects and selects the President, Prime Minister, Chief Justice and the Prosecutor. In Vietnam there is one Prosecutor, who is equal to the Attorney General. The question about the 10th Party Congress will require a long answer so it is better to read

“The relations between our two countries since the establishment of the diplomatic relations 36 years ago are sound and I am glad that for the first time such a delegation came which will open new vistas in our relations.”

Nguyen Phu Trong

the document.

Senator Nilofar Bakhtiar: 27% women get elected. Do they get elected from minority parties?

H.E. Nguyen Phu Trong: It is true that in this National Assembly there are roughly 27% women. In terms of election they have equal privileges and rights. The selection of candidates is done at the constituency level through social organizations. They are introduced through our system and have equal rights. The National Assembly has just adopted a law on gender equality. The National Assembly also establishes a Women Parliamentarian Group and this has been fully covered by the media. In the last assembly all the vice presidents were women. We tried for 30% representation for women but we could not get to that figure.

Senator Latif Khosa: Excellency, your counterpart in Pakistan is Mrs. Dr. Fehmida Mirza. We too, are empowering women. We have special women seats in the



“This delegation shows that the Parliament and people of Pakistan attach great importance to relations with your country. There are nine members in this delegation who represent different provinces, parties and people and this shows unity in diversity.”

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed

Parliament, provincial assemblies and local bodies to empower them. Our party established diplomatic relations with Vietnam and we look forward to a greater relationship with your country.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: We have a progressive approach and we have consensus on women empowerment between parties.

Senator Nisar A. Memon: We have lots of similarities. The greatest similarity is at the grassroots wherein 33% women are elected. 17% seats are reserved for women in the National Assembly. All these changes were brought about by President Pervez Musharraf. Pakistan attained 7% economic growth rate during President Musharraf's time when PML, my party, was in power.

H.E. Nguyen Phu Trong: When I

transited through Islamabad I was informed that the Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan is a lady. We have a woman Vice President. Two Committees, out of 11, are chaired by women. I would like to thank your delegation for the kind words about the relations between our two countries. Please convey our sincere thanks to the Chairman of your Senate and the Speaker of the National Assembly for the invitation extended to us. The Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of Vietnam has reported to me the excellent outcome of your meeting. I would urge that the two Committees and the two embassies coordinate the activities of the two Parliaments and report to their respective Parliaments. It is true that after the 2001 visit of President Musharraf and the 2004 visit of the President of Vietnam to Pakistan no visit has taken place and therefore, your visit is a very important one. The two Committees should come up with a comprehensive programme. We will do our best to further nurture and enhance relations between the two Parliaments.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: This is no longer a relationship but a romance. We have fallen for Vietnam's food and the women for its silk and that includes the people and culture of Vietnam.

H.E. Nguyen Phu Trong: Please keep visiting us. I wish you success in your talks in Vietnam.

At the conclusion of the meeting a gift of Pakistani carpet was presented to the President of the National Assembly.

Meeting with Mr. Thuan Huu, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Nhan Dan Newspaper

Hanoi, July 1, 2008

Mr. Thuan Huu: It's a great honour to welcome all of you to the Head Office of Nhan Dan Newspaper. I would like to invite the Leader of Pakistan delegation to introduce the members of his delegation.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: Thank you very much. It's a great pleasure to be here at the preeminent newspaper of Vietnam, 'Nhan Dan Daily', which is the organ of the Central Committee of Vietnam Communist Party and before I introduce the members of this distinguished delegation from Pakistan, which is the first ever parliamentary delegation in the history of Pakistan-Vietnam relations to visit Vietnam, I just want to make

a personal note. In September 1969, when the Vietnam war was at its peak I was student in Pakistan and when I learnt about the death of the legendary Ho Chi Minh, one of the greatest leaders of 20th century of Asia, I wrote a personal letter of condolence addressed to the Editor of Nhan Dan Daily because I did not know anybody else. I knew Nhan Dan Daily because it was quoted in the international media. I must say, I was impressed. I got a response also of that letter of condolence. I also have personally very fond memories what I wrote 30 years ago and the response I got.

This is a very unique and a distinguished delegation. It has 9 members and they span all political



July 1, 2008: Meeting with Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Nhan Dan Newspaper at Hanoi.



“In September 1969, when the Vietnam war was at its peak I was student in Pakistan and when I learnt about the death of the legendary Ho Chi Minh, one of the greatest leaders of 20th century of Asia, I wrote a personal letter of condolence addressed to the Editor of Nhan Dan Daily because I did not know anybody else. I knew Nhan Dan Daily because it was quoted in the international media.”

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed

ideologies, all parties, all provinces and of course, gender also. So, this is a quite representative broad-based pluralistic delegation. And there are 5 political parties representatives and among this delegation there are people who are writers also, men of letter who wrote books also and so this is very important element of this delegation. This delegation has both intellectual depth and professional expertise and of course, the political experience is there manifold.

Before we begin, I would like to present a copy of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Report. I have been a former journalist so even in politics I maintain my journalism in limited manner and we issue regular

reports. This is the first parliamentary committee in the history of Pakistan which is issuing regular reports without interruption and we have issued almost 18 reports till 1st July, now and these reports are based on our Committee work and our visits. When we complete our visit to Vietnam we will have a report on visit to Vietnam. So, this is a report based on our visit to Sri Lanka and it gives me great pleasure to present it and you can find it on our website. The website address is: www.foreignaffairscommittee.org and it's all there. As a journalist, you know the importance of PR and this is also a part of PR. I give you two other copies, one for your Director General and the other is for your library and I will be very grateful if it is maintained in the library and displayed prominently as a memento of our visit, which is historic and unique visit.

As you have a rainfall in Vietnam, you can see our delegation is like a rainbow. The rainbow has different colours, so, there are different colours in our delegation, colours in terms of views, ideologies, parties, provinces, gender and, I think, that represent Pakistan's society today – unity in diversity. I think my friends share the warmth exuded not just in your kindness in waiting for us, although we are late by 15 minutes for which we sincerely apologize, but also it is evident in the ambiance of patience exhibited through the sweet lychees. Lychees are among



our favorite fruits.

Mr. Thuan Huu: On behalf of Nhan Dan Newspaper, I would like to welcome the delegation to Vietnam and also to the Nhan Dan Newspaper. The first word I would say is, wish you good health and success in your visit to Vietnam. We would also like to say thank you for your very sincere sentiments for our great leader Ho Chin Minh and to the people of Vietnam. And we would like to thank you for your copy of the Report of your Committee for our library. And we learnt that our Prime Minister and Chairman of Foreign Affairs Committee had meetings with you yesterday, that's why we have put that news in our newspapers today. This newspaper is the mouthpiece of our government and of relations between Vietnam and Pakistan. Now if you have any proposal or any question to Nhan Dan Newspaper, we are happy to answer.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: I would like to ask if the policy of the Newspaper is still set by the Central Committee and who in the Central Committee. Do you have a propaganda department or an ideology department, as they have in the Communist Party in China or the Communist Party in Cuba?

Mr. Thuan Huu: Nhan Dan Newspaper is the newspaper of the Communist Party, Government, and the people of Vietnam and it has the largest circulation. All the

“The Pakistani society is very dynamic, very vibrant, especially you can see it in the role of lawyers, civil society, the media, the women activists and the NGOs and the dynamism is reflected in certain kind of freedom which is there because we have a media revolution in Pakistan. There is proliferation of media channels.”

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed

information in Nhan Dan Newspaper is based on the policy of Communist Party of Vietnam.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: I would also like to mention, because you are a newspaper person, that there are certain similarities between Vietnam and Pakistan and sometimes, because of international political reasons facts are distorted by the media, and fiction is promoted. So, I just want to briefly say, because I can see your sources of news are often Western media, sometimes they can be have distortion in that as you know from your own experience. And you can see sometimes, political interests influence the kind of coverage and reporting, and if political interests are not compatible with the interest of certain countries then their media presents coverage in a certain



manner. I will give you an example which you can understand from history. In the 60s, the West and Americans promoted the Domino theory. They said that if they do not fight the Communists in Saigon, they will have to fight them in San Francisco. That's how they justified their invasion and occupation through a falsehood and they also used the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in 1964. So similarly, the same method now is being applied in our part of the world. Now, they are saying, "if we do not fight against terror in Iraq, Afghanistan and Waziristan, we will have to fight that in Washington or in London". So they are justifying their invasion and occupation by linking events in our part of the world with their own security as they did in case of Vietnam. In Vietnam they also lied in the Gulf of Tonkin and now they have created this incidence of weapons of mass destruction. This was also based on a lie. So there are similarities in what happened in Vietnam 40 years ago, and what is happening in our part of the world, in the so called 'war on terror'.

We have problems like any developing country. We have economic problems like inflation, we have the problem of extremism and terrorism but these are problems which have been there with us carrying over previous Afghan war in which the West was the participant. And we have the capacity and will to resolve those problems over a period of time. That

is a process which will take time. That does not mean that Pakistan is a centre or haven for all kinds of negative things that are happening in the region, as the West is portraying. On the whole, the Pakistani society is very dynamic, very vibrant, you can see especially it in the role of lawyers, civil society, the media, the women activists and the NGOs. The dynamism is reflected in certain kind of freedom which is there because we have a media revolution in Pakistan. There is proliferation of media channels. There are over 50 television channels which are giving news coverage freely and they are in all local languages, the national language Urdu, as well as English. So there is this kind of diversity which is very rare in the third world countries.

We are very happy that peace has returned to Vietnam, to Indo-China after so long, after decades of conflict and war and our yearning is that peace returns to our part of the world in South West Asia and that peace also returns to our part of the world because Pakistan has been in the eye of the storm for the last 30 years. The area in which we are located has been hit by violence, instability, and rocked by revolution and interventions. We have border areas like Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, China, India and the Gulf. That is where the action has strategically been for the last 30 years. So, you can understand after these predicaments that we have tried to



navigate our policy and our role as an independent sovereign state in very turbulent times and through difficult waters. Thank you very much and the floor is open for any of my colleagues.

Senator S. M. Zafar: Thank you very much. We are grateful for this meeting. Our Chairman has very eloquently and in a precise form mentioned to you the predicament and the problems Pakistan is facing and the point of strength and the future and the hope and we are grateful to him the way he expressed his view about this Newspaper. Our Chairman referred to me as an old wise man. I am neither, because I am young at both heart and mind and since I have come to Vietnam and I have fallen in love with Vietnam for many different reasons. And I am not wise because I still adventure into mistakes. I pose a question to you, which is introducing to my mind. The way Americans came into this part of the world and the way they bombed and committed many other cruelties that is part of history, the question I am asking you is how you look at America today in 2008? I only make one mistake at one time – no second question.

Mr. Thuan Huu: Before I answer your question, I would like to express the views of the leader of the delegation that Vietnam was also the victim of war therefore, we share the similarities with Pakistan.

“In the 60s the West and Americans promoted the Domino theory. They said that if they do not fight the Communists in Saigon, they will have to fight then in San Francisco. So, that's why, they justified their invasion and occupation through a falsehood and they also used the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in 1964. So similarly, the same method now is being applied in our part of the world. Now, they are saying, "if we do not fight against terror in Iraq, Afghanistan and Waziristan, we will have to fight that in Washington or in London". So they are justifying their invasion and occupation by linking events in our part of the world with their own security as they did in case of Vietnam and in Vietnam they also lied in the Gulf of Tonkin and now they have created this incidence of weapons of mass destruction and this was also based on a lie. So there are similarities in what happened in Vietnam in 40 years ago and what is happening in our part of the world in the so called war on terror.”

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed



The source of information is based on the view of our party and our Government respects the views of Pakistan. We understood when the leader of the delegation said that information on Pakistan is not reported correctly. Similarly, views about Vietnam are, at times, not published correctly. Vietnam was a victim of war and America was the oppressor but Vietnam won and that is history and no one can change history but we keep our view that Vietnam wants to be friend with all countries of the world. Our objective is global peace and cooperation.

Senator Talha Mahmood: I have some questions. First of all, I want to know about the circulation of your Newspaper. Secondly, do you have any other language newspaper in Vietnam? My third question is how many TV channels operate in your country?

Mr. Thuan Huu: We have several publications which are daily, weekly and two electronic publications. In Vietnam we have many newspapers which are in English, French and Chinese. We have nearly 100 TV channels.

Senator Talha Mahmood: Do you need a licence to start a television or radio channel?

Mr. Thuan Huu: We do not have private TV channels. We have party and government channels. Once permission is granted then the government does not check.

Senator Talha Mahmood: We will be happy if the picture of our delegation is printed on the front page of your newspapers because we do not understand the language.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: All politicians like their picture on front page. I would like to say that Senator Nisar A. Memon has a unique record in Pakistan. He is the only Pakistani in the history of Pakistan who has been Information Minister 3 times in 14 years.

Senator Nisar A. Memon: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am delighted to be here with the delegation under the chairmanship of Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed. I must add that Information Minister in three transition governments. We have in our country parliamentary democracy and have elections every 5 years. In February, we had elections to the Parliament and we have a new Government now.

I will not repeat what the Chairman has said but we have three ways to defend ourselves. One is the defence of the country, by arming ourselves so if there is any aggression, we respond. No.2 is strong economy like Vietnam. Our GDP grew at the rate of 8.56% last 3 years from 7%. We also protect the interests of the weaker segments of the society like the minorities in Pakistan are protected



by law and the Constitution.

Recently, the Parliament passed laws for protection of women. So, politically there is a representative government, economically strong and having good relations internationally and socially protecting all the segments of the society. We have press laws to register newspapers. We also have freedom of information so that citizens can acquire information from the government. We also have the Press Council where the press people are represented to protect their professional interests.

My question to you is that is there is any law to protect the 5% or 10% people who are not in the Communist Party?

Mr. Thuan Huu: Yes, we have 700 newspapers and nearly 100 TV channels and for the minority group we have three channels and newspapers and the information given is factual.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: Thank you very much. Mr. Sami-ul-Haq has a question. He will ask this question in national language Urdu and I will translate it into English. He told me before we came here that when he was a student about 40 years ago, in his institution his teacher used to tell them about Vietnam and Ho Chi Minh. So he is broadly familiar with some aspects of Vietnam and its traditions.

“The oppressed world is facing machinations from the US in the name of terrorism which is being used as a pretext for pursuing their nefarious designs. We have examples of oppressed people struggling for a just cause in Palestine, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Venezuela. We understand the situation of countries which face pressures, bullying and beating by big powers and after the process is over then they have a pragmatic policy of rapprochement and friendship.”

Senator Maulana Sami-ul-Haq

Senator Maulana Sami-ul-Haq: In the name of Almighty Allah, the most companionate and the most merciful. I will not repeat what my distinguished colleagues have already stated but since you are heirs to the glorious legacy of a great man, I will focus on that. As my colleagues have already pointed out that they learnt about President Ho Chi Minh, an outstanding statesman, I also learnt during my youth, what work Allah Almighty took from him which very few people are blessed with, namely, changing the destiny of his own people for good. I would like to extend my heartiest congratulations that God Almighty has



“We are very proud of your achievement in fighting against American imperialism and defeating American imperialism as well as French colonialism and Japanese aggression and we want to learn from your example which is a living example of inspiration for all the oppressed people.”

Senator Maulana Sami-ul-Haq

liberated your country and you have moved on to become a peaceful country but unfortunately the travails that you faced 40 years ago in the form of foreign intervention, aggression and occupation, we unfortunately, in our part of the world seem to be going through the same phase. The oppressed world is facing machinations from the US in the name of terrorism which is being used as a pretext for pursuing their nefarious designs. We have examples of oppressed people struggling for a just cause in Palestine, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Venezuela. We understand the situation of countries which face pressures, bullying and beating by big powers and after the process is over then they have a pragmatic policy of rapprochement and friendship. So I testify that your relationship was after the achievement of your objectives, your goals and after your victory in the

liberation struggle and that victory is now part of history. So, now you have moved on which is what nations should do. We are very proud of your achievement in fighting against American imperialism and defeating American imperialism as well as French colonialism and Japanese aggression and we want to learn from your example which is a living example of inspiration for all the oppressed people.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: Excellency, since we have a very useful opportunity, we have two final questions before we leave. I know you are very busy man. I, being a journalist myself, know deadlines are very important. So there will be two final questions from my delegation. Since Pakistanis and also as humans and Muslims we believe in the equality of man and woman, so one lady and one gentleman in the last discussion.

Senator Nilofar Bakhtiar: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Women's rights movements in Pakistan have been supported by media tremendously and we have been able to achieve a law because of the support and help of the media. I would like to know, do you also, as a leading Newspaper of Vietnam, support the Vietnam women's rights movements, and secondly, I would also like to know a little bit about the women's rights movements of Vietnam. There is a specific



July 2, 2008: Senator Mushahid Hussain presenting Report of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to the Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Nhan Dan Daily.

legislation about women rights, if you could throw some light on that.

Mr. Thuan Huu: I would like to say thank you for your information about Vietnam. Regarding your question, we have one Women Association here in Vietnam. In Vietnam, we have equal rights for men and women in all spheres of society and seats are reserved for women in the Parliament. We have one of the highest representation of women in parliaments in the world. Here in Vietnam Parliament,

we passed a law to protect women rights and to protect women against domestic violence.

Senator Nilofar Bakhtiar: We also passed a law in our Parliament about Women's Rights. I would like to know more about your law. Is there any punishment if a husband beats his wife? What is the punishment?

Mr. Thuan Huu: We have certain regulations in our law that if the husband violates the regulations then he is punished. If a woman beats her husband it is treated



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Thuan Huu

accordingly. If the husband gets injury the wife is punished.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: Ok. Thank you. Before we leave, Senator Latif Khosa will ask the last question. I must add that he is very famous in Pakistan as a trial lawyer for his retractable skills in the courts, especially in the Supreme Court, so over to you, Senator Latif Khosa.

Senator Latif Khosa: Thank you. It's a great pleasure to be here and part of the illuminating discussion. I am a member of the Central Executive Committee of the Pakistan Peoples Party. My party was formed by Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, whose theory was that power lies with the people. We believe in Islamic socialism because Islam preliminary believes in socialism where distribution of wealth is equal. We have idealized your system and Ho Chi Minh, your great leader, is one of the towering personalities who changed the destiny not only of Vietnam but all poor people of this

world. Pakistan Peoples Party, under the dynamic leadership of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, not only changed the political system of Pakistan but also sent the first ambassador to Vietnam in November, 1972. Ambassador Ashfaque Ahmed was from my hometown and he was made the first ambassador in Vietnam from Pakistan.

We lost Ms. Benazir Bhutto, daughter of Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, unfortunately, in the war on terror. Peoples Party and its leadership has been the victim of this aggression which has been unleashed unfortunately in that part of the world and most of the world is now under the risk of terrorists' attacks. We would certainly love to be guided and we would love to learn from the experiences of Vietnam, whereby you got rid of imperialists power and brought peace to your country and you got rid of the guns and the arms.

Despite the economic crunch all over the world, your economy has progressed at 8.6%. You are second in Asia, particularly after China. Despite the fact that the inflation and oil prices in the world have gone sky high, still how you maintained your GDP growth at 8.6%? On behalf of the ruling coalition, I invite you to visit Pakistan so that the reciprocity in human relationship increases between the people of Pakistan and the people of Vietnam. We have fallen in love with people of Vietnam, so, on behalf of the people of Pakistan and on behalf of



the Government, I invite you to visit Pakistan so that on the journalistic front also we have more interaction and we learn from the experiences of each other. Ho Chi Minh is godfather to Pakistanis. He is a symbol and beacon who saved humanity and we not only idealize him but we also love him.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: He will ensure that the Ministry of Information sends a written invitation within a month from Pakistan.

Mr. Thuan Huu: Regarding your question, I would like to say that the people of Vietnam are peaceful and we were forced to hold guns but the world like to hold flowers. We have a very good direction of the Communist Party and there is strength of the people of Vietnam which is bringing this development of 8.5%. Moreover, we have stable political situation. We would like to thank you very much for your invitation and we look forward to receive your invitation letter.

Senator Tahir Hussain Mashhadi: I have the honour to present MQM which has the 4th largest representation in the Parliament on the floor. For us, the great leader, the honourable President Ho Chi Minh, is a source of inspiration and the brave and the greatest people of Vietnam are a great example what weak nations can achieve and if they have right leadership and if they have courage

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Senator Latif Khosa

then they can get independence and freedom.

It's a great honour for me to witness with my own eyes a very healthy and developed and loving nation which has emerged out of the freedom war and I believe that Pakistan and Vietnam have a lot in common. We can learn a lot from you because we need to develop on the same lines and we hope that the relations between the two countries would improve through the parliamentary level and on people



and we look forward to a long and lasting friendship with this great nation and its great people.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: Thank you very much for your passion and your time and I personally enjoyed the Lychees and there is a small gift from our side on behalf of our delegation.

(A group photo was presented to Senator Mushahid Hussain at this moment.) This is a beautiful photograph with a 300 years old tree. It will be presented in our report on Vietnam. Thank you, very kind of you.

Mr. Thuan Huu: Thank you for your coming and very open discussion. Thank you so much.



July 1, 2008: A Group photo with 300 years old Tree.

Meeting at the Institute of International Relations & Diplomacy, Vietnam.

July 4, 2008

Professor Dr. Duong Van Quang: We welcome you to Vietnam. We were informed only today that we have a meeting with you. First, let me give a brief introduction of my colleagues. To my left are Dr. Nguyen Vu Tung, Deputy Director, Institute of Foreign Policy and Strategy Studies. Next to him is Mr. Nguyen Hung Son, Research Associate on foreign policy.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: Good morning to all of you. It's a great pleasure to be here on the last day of our path breaking visit. I call it a path breaking historic

visit because this is the first delegation of parliamentarians from Pakistan to visit Vietnam since the establishment of diplomatic relations in November, 1972 – 36 years ago. Our delegation had a very productive visit, we have learned a lot, we have been inspired by Vietnam's economic progress and we are always impressed by Vietnam's glorious history of resistance to foreign occupation. So this is a good opportunity before we go to the fruitful thought regarding your foreign policy and I am very grateful your Board of Directors, who were kind enough to instruct you to come



July 4, 2008: Meeting with Vietnamese Think Tank and Experts.



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and give us a briefing on your country’s foreign policy despite your pressing prior engagements of final examination, which are an important element in any educational institution.

Our delegation from Pakistan has very distinguished public representatives, distinguished public figures and experts and has a very strong intellectual content as well. You can see from the composition of the delegation that it is like a very nice rainbow, there are different colours, different views, different orientation and that is what Pakistan society is - unity in diversity.

We went through a very rough patch last year in Pakistan. There were difficulties the country faced but, like the Vietnamese people, Pakistani people have a certain resilience that is one of the main characteristics that they face crisis, they combat crisis and then they bounce back of the crisis and they move on. And one of biggest was the tragic martyrdom of Ms. Bhutto, which took place on 27th of December 2007, due to the act of terrorism, which shows that in Pakistan we are facing this as a major enemy and a major challenge. This challenge has no religion, no particular party and it is a threat to all humanity. Pakistan has played a role in countering this threat both at home and abroad.

We are very fortunate that we had a peaceful election, a democratic election and as a consequence of elections there was transfer of power. The party, which was in Government lost the elections and they became the party in Opposition and the party which had been in Opposition they became the party in Government. Right now, it’s a coalition, which includes the Party of Senator Khosa, Party of Senator Mashhadi and party of Senator Talha Mehmood and also a couple of other parties, so, it’s a grand coalition. There are two Houses of Pakistan Parliament, the Senate and the National Assembly and we represent the Upper House, which is Senate.

Pakistan has been facing these challenges for the last three



decades. We have been in the eye of the storm since 1979. In 1979, two of our neighbouring countries were totally facing turmoil, violence, revolution and transformation. There was revolution in Iran, which overthrew an old monarchy. There was occupation and invasion of Afghanistan, which overturned the old order. The monarchy was already overthrown a few years earlier. As a consequence of that intervention we faced a big influx of 3.5 million refugees. So, Pakistan hosted the world's largest ever refugee population, which has never happened in the history of mankind that almost 25% of a country's population leaves and goes to the neighboring country. 3.5 million Afghans went to Pakistan and 2 million went to Iran. We hosted them but 2.5 million Afghans still remain in Pakistan and I would like to add for your information that this is another characteristic of Pakistani people that they are very warm and welcoming. This has been a unique relationship which had been friction-free. Today, I was listening to BBC and there was an apology by the South African Government to foreigners killed in anti foreigners riots in South Africa last month. 62 people were killed as you know, but in Pakistan we had no such riots. We welcomed refugees from Bosnia, refugees from other countries, even Palestinian students used to study in Pakistan. And I think that is a unique characteristic of Pakistan that they are very warm, welcoming and hospitable nation, hospitable to

foreign visitors also. So that has been a major element of our country.

This destabilization continued for ten years. There was Afghan war by the West, and this was the last big battle of the Cold War. Pakistan was the pivotal player in the last big battle of the 20th century which ended the Cold War. And the first big battle of the 21st century, after 9/11, the fight against terrorism and extremism is also being fought in Afghanistan. Again, we are the centre of gravity, we are the focus. It is Afghanistan, of course, that all have been reversed, now instead of former Soviet Union, the US and NATO forces are there. So our country is involved in that. We are a partner in campaign against terrorism but we also feel that these Western countries sometimes put blame of their failures on countries like Pakistan. We are worried that a war, which is taking place in Afghanistan, may spread across the border into Pakistan that might destabilize the parts of Pakistan that are neighboring to Afghanistan.

Another important development has been the nuclearization of the region. We did not start the nuclear arms race. The nuclear factor was injected by India in 1974. In response, the Pakistani prime minister of that period who was also the founder of Mr. Khosa's party, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, then launched Pakistan's nuclear programme and this was in response to the Indian



program and 24 years after launching that program when India went nuclear on May 11, 1998 Pakistan followed suit on 28th of May, 1998. But there is an important difference in the perspective which I need to point out for your information. India went nuclear for its status, while we went nuclear for our security because we are medium size power. We have faced aggression on three different occasions in our history. India faced no threat. In 1998, they mentioned China but in 1998 they had very good relations with China. They always had very good relations with Soviet Union, now Russia, and also now with the United States of America. So this is an important element for the preservation and protection of our national security and independence. We were forced to go nuclear purely for defensive purposes and as a deterrence. As a consequence of nuclearization of South Asia, started by India followed by Pakistan, you have a South Asian version of the balance of terror which has preserved peace in South Asia for over a decade now. As you know, after World War-II there was balance of terror between the two superpowers – the Soviet Union and the US, during the Cold War in Europe which maintained peace in Europe.

So, in Pakistan and India also, this situation is there and this is why we have now a peace process. It may be still embryonic but it has moved on despite changes of governments

in both countries and the people are keen for rapprochement, for normalization of relations and they want normalization to continue with the resolution of longstanding disputes like the dispute of Jammu & Kashmir which, as you know, is still part of the United Nations agenda. There were United Nations resolutions and we are only keen that those resolutions should be resolved, should be implemented by the United Nations because they implemented resolutions on Kuwait, Kosovo, Myanmar, but they are selective, sometimes, on Palestine and Kashmir and we feel it should be across-the-board implementation of those resolutions. So, we are very keen for a process to continue and Pakistan, for its part, remains committed to that. We also want to end the human rights violations in Kashmir, as you would be aware because you are experts in foreign policy. Since 1989, there has been a popular, indigenous, spontaneous and widespread uprising in Kashmir. Kashmir is a disputed territory with one-third under Pakistan's administration and two-third under India's administration. In Indian part of Kashmir, they have the highest soldier-to-civilian ratio in the Kashmir valley. They have five armed Indians for every adult male Muslim. There are seven hundred thousand troops in Indian-held Kashmir. We feel that Kashmir should be treated as a human issue – humanity first. The violations of human rights should be ceased because so far since 1989, one

hundred thousand people; men, women and children, have been killed by the Indian occupation forces.

Excellencies, I would also like to bring to your notice that there have been only two instances after World War-II where rape has been used as a weapon of war. One is Kashmir and the other is Bosnia in Europe during the 90s. So we feel this is the situation which is repugnant to all accepted norms of civilization, all accepted norms of democratic conduct and it is also a violation of the United Nations Charter and the International Law. So that must end. We have now peace process which is there and which we want to continue. The leadership of the new coalition government of Pakistan has promised to continue the peace process and is hoping for the resolution of all these disputes. We feel that the dispute should be resolved and then we can move on because one-fifth of humanity resides in South Asia. South Asia is a large community.

Finally, I would like to add a new trend which is there, because we talked about India, we talked about terrorism there. A positive thing which is happening is that in this region of change two very positive trends are evident; one, domestic in both countries and the other, regional. In terms of domestic, there is the power of public opinion which is making itself felt and is bypassing governments and established

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Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed

leaderships. I give you four examples which you might find instructive:

- In Nepal, you had victory of the Maoist Party through democratic elections. They were out in the jungles for the last fifteen years. They have overthrown the existing political parties, bypassed the Nepali Party Congress and other parties. They have overthrown a 254 years monarchy as well. So, that shows



the power of public opinion is pervasive. Demonstrations in the streets manifested in elections and then the formation of a new democratic government.

- In India, in 2005, the centerpiece of India–US relationship was this nuclear agreement between India and America which has been touted by the establishment in Washington and New Delhi, as a new beginning. But that has been scuttled by the power of public opinion in India. The Communist Party of India (CPI), the Communist Party of India (Marxist - CPM) plus opinion of opinion leaders, NGOs and civil society, all refused to accept that. That shows that even established political parties have to give way to these new forces what I call public opinion.
- In Pakistan, we have had a longstanding movement, a judiciary movement, which has been spearheaded by people like Senator Khosa, supported by Senator S.M. Zafar, who is a leading advocate for human rights; regarding judiciary their party is also active in various ways, Ms. Nilofar Bakhtiar has been there also. This involved the people of Pakistan, media, lawyers, civil society, NGOs and the resurgent, assertive and articulate middle-class in Pakistan because for the last four to five years we have had 7.7% growth rate and a booming economy that

spawned a new middle-class, which is now politically assertive, politically active and no longer passive and they are out on the streets. So that power of public opinion weakened the strong military president, led to a new environment in Pakistan and election results surprised a lot of people in Pakistan. This is the example of power of public opinion.

- In Turkey, there is another example. The American forces wanted to use Turkey as a base to attack Iraq. The Turkish Parliament said, "we do not accept that". The power of public opinion was there. The Turkish army wanted to prevent the candidacy of Mr. Abdullah Gul for presidency but he is the President now.

So this is the new phenomenon which have taken place in many Asian countries and I think this is very healthy development for Asia. We talk of an Asian century; I think this would be one of the driving forces for the new emerging assertive Asia.

The second element, which is again, very positive that I would like to mention, is the new regionalism which is emerging – regional cooperation, driven by energy and economy. You have China, South Asia, Central Asia and West Asia. We have regional organization like South Asian Association for Regional

Cooperation (SAARC). Afghanistan is now a member of SAARC. China is an observer of SAARC. Iran wants to join SAARC. Then there is Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) of Russia, China, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan. Pakistan, India and Iran are now observers of SCO. Then we have pipelines. Iran-Pakistan-India pipelines. Then we have a new pipeline in offing, like Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline. Then we are talking of Qatar-Pakistan-India pipeline. So there is so much talk of pipelines that a joke is going round, saying a 'Pipelinistan' may be in the offing. This is a good sign that countries are cooperating regionally with each other, countries which were previously in conflict, based on energy and economy. So this energy and economy is the driving force to bring these great civilizations, cultures and regions together. I mentioned China, South Asia, Central Asia and in that Pakistan, because of its location geographically and its role, since we are a pivotal player. We are the bridge between East Asia and Central Asia and we are the shortest outlet to sea for Central Asia as well. These countries are land-locked, including Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan. And from tomorrow we are going to Azerbaijan from here.

The whole region is in a move and unfortunately the only country we find which has an ideological foreign policy in the region is the United

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States of America because of the neocons in Washington, because of their ideology; not China, not Iran, not Russia, not Pakistan not India, not Central Asia. This often causes problems but we hope with the change of administration in America after the new elections, obviously Mr. Bush is gone after November, there will be either McCain or Obama; we hope and expect a review of the US foreign policy priorities because this infatuation with the use of force has to come to an end.

The world is facing a new kind of enemy, unique enemy – faceless, stateless and this will become an unwinnable war without ends. Our concern is dialogue, negotiations; after all when you had the Vietnam War, how did it end? There were five



years of Paris Peace Negotiations. All the parties were there. The Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam), the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), the United States and the Provisional Revolutionary Government, representing South Vietnamese revolutionaries. So, you have to talk to them whether they are Taliban, and some people even say Al-Qaeda, or whatever resistance people, you have to talk to them. If Israel can talk to Hamas and Hizbollah, if India can talk to the Kashmiri Mujahideen, we will have to have discussions.

I will end on that note and I thought since this is your first exposure to a Pakistani delegation at an intellectual scholarly academic level, it is important for you to get input about Pakistan; how we are thinking. We are friends of Vietnam, we are friends of ASEAN and want closer cooperation. We seek your support to become a full dialogue partner of ASEAN. You have given us support to ASEM. We are very grateful for that. We have given you full support in the UN Security Council. Today, Vietnam is the President of UN Security Council for the month of July. We have given you full support for the WTO (World Trade Organization). Pakistan and Vietnam have no, and I repeat, absolutely no conflict of interests. Rather, I would say compatibility of objectives and interests because we are Asian countries. We have suffered war, we are still suffering war, and we are

developing countries. Our people yearn for a better tomorrow and that future is linked with one-fifth of humanity which resides in South Asia. Thank you.

Professor Dr. Duong Van Quang: Thank you very much for inviting me. I agree your discourse raised interesting points for our research on the emerging regionalism in South Asia. It is one of the very few occasions that we can have direct contacts with our Pakistani delegation and with such high-ranking delegation. We would like to invite you first to raise questions and we would respond to them.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: My first question would be, and I have only one question, my colleagues can ask other questions; what do you consider as your three key and major priorities in your foreign policy and with which country you do not have good relations? Thank you.

Professor Dr. Duong Van Quang: I would like to briefly answer. We have three main priorities; 1) national security, 2) economic development, and 3) international status. This is not prioritized in this order. There is a dynamic relationship between the three. It is involved in different phases in our foreign policy since 1986 when we started the reforms e.g. from 1986 to 1995 national security was No. 1, economic development No. 2 and international status No. 3. The



reason is that we were isolated at that time and we had to normalize relations with big powers and we had to normalize relations with the neighbouring countries. So by 1995, we moved to the next step, where economic development became No. 1, supported by need for national security followed by international status. Since 2000, we have had good relations with many countries. So, we enshrined economic development and we think of international status. This is why you see our efforts to become the permanent member of the United Nations. So, that is the priority for the present phase when international status has been accorded more priority. So, in short phases the three priorities have been present in our foreign policy but with a focus on specific phases.

Since 1988 we had renewal of thinking in the foreign policy. We introduced the policy of having fewer enemies and more friends. In 2001 we introduced the policy of being a friend to all. So, in terminology of foreign policy, we would like to have foreign policy with, 'friend to all and enemy to none'. That is another way to answer your question.

What is the threat to our national security, what is the extra concern for the foreign policy to deal with? I think it depends on the success of the foreign policy which is different from the old foreign policy. We have territorial disputes with China and other countries but they are being

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discussed, so it does not mean that we do not have security concerns. The Party is pursuing the policy of fighting “poverty” which is classified as enemy No. 1. We are trying to reduce the developmental gaps among the regions in the entire context. We have to reduce the poverty and expand external relations.

Dr. Nguyen Vu Tung: I think it is now clear that national security, economic development and international status are the priorities. We think we can best achieve national security by creating secure environment, not just within but also in the region and we are doing so by these two priorities. We first focus on bilateral relations with our immediate neighbors. We try to fix any problem that remains with these countries, and at regional level, we are trying to create the best possible



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secure environment that we can and we are doing so which you probably heard – the ASEAN security and political community. We are putting every effort to building successfully that community because to ensure environment not only in South East Asia but also between South East Asia and its partners including Pakistan.

Secondly, we are trying our best to achieve economic development and we are doing so, again, by having the policy which is multi dimensional foreign policy. We are trying to expand our foreign relations to as many directions as possible with many partners. We also pursue economic integration policy which

is, to actively engage in multi-national economic institutions like WTO, of which we became a member one year ago. We now actively participate in other economic arrangements such as Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum which diversify our economic relations with the region. Our first priority is to improve our status internationally so as to become non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. These are the priorities of our foreign policy.

Mr. Nguyen Hung Son: I want to add one point following your question; whether Vietnam has enemies. Our perception of friends and enemies has changed tremendously. From our perception there are no permanent friends and permanent enemies, only the national interest is permanent. We always consider two elements in our relationship; element of cooperation and element of differences, which have to be minimized by the two sides. One example relating to our relationship with the United States, had we considered the United States as enemy which caused suffering to the people of Vietnam and imposing its value of human rights and democracy, we could have never benefited from our economic cooperation with the US. We consider US as our friend and our partner and, on one hand, we have to try to maximize areas of cooperation and, on the other hand, try to minimize our differences with the US.



Senator Sardar Latif Khan Khosa: It is amazing that you have literacy rate of plus 93 percent. What is the minimum criterion for a person to be classified as educated? Secondly, how did you achieve this target of plus 93 percent literacy? Because obviously the education and population adds to the grandeur of the nation and your strength lies in the education of your population. How is it that you achieved 93 plus target and creeping to 100 percent; what is the minimum criteria of education in your point of view?

Professor Dr. Duong Van Quang: We have a law under which all the school age children have to complete secondary level. This is the minimum level of education to enable a person to be called educated. It is a very lofty goal for us. Two problems are encountered; one is that children in the rural and mountainous areas cannot afford to complete the target system because they have to support their families in terms of economy. The other problem is the desire to go to university. Many people think that university education is something like precondition for success. So many people are trying to complete university education and today there is the first round of national examination for university admissions. 90% of the school leavers want to study in a university.

Senator Mrs. Nilofar Bakhtiar: Is it free?

“There were United Nations resolutions and we are only keen that those resolutions should be resolved, should be implemented by the United Nations because they implemented resolutions on Kuwait, Kosovo, Myanmar, but they are selective, sometimes, on Palestine and Kashmir and we feel it should be across-the-board implementation of those resolutions.”

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed

Dr. Nguyen Vu Tung: Yes and No. We saw that till 1986 that education was free. We gave stipend for books, as a type of financial assistance but this is not the case now because the universities must become more financially independent and they must get tuition from students but that is minimal.

Senator S. M. Zafar: All three of you are very conversant in the English language. Did you learn English in Vietnam or overseas?

Professor Dr. Duong Van Quang: I studied in Vietnam and graduated in International Relations from Vietnam.

Dr. Nguyen Vu Tung: I got Masters Degree from Fletcher School of Law and Ph.D. from Columbia University, New York.



“Pakistan and Vietnam have no, and I repeat, absolutely no conflict of interests. Rather, I would say compatibility of objectives and interests because we are Asian countries. We have suffered war, we are still suffering war, and we are developing countries. Our people yearn for a better tomorrow and that future is linked with one-fifth of humanity which resides in South Asia.”

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: Interestingly, my sister went to Fletcher and my wife went to Columbia.

Senator S. M. Zafar. I would like to have your response on the clash of civilizations theory. The second one closely related; in the second decade of our century, 2008-2020 do you see the unipolar world, or other centers of powers? I am not talking of the regional cooperation for economic development but centre of power other than the unipolar and which you believe would be those. Our Chairman very specifically mentioned Bosnia, and elaborated the human rights situation there. You fought a long heroic war for the right of self determination and, of course, people

of occupied Kashmir are also fighting for the right of self determination for themselves. I would like to have your response on this for the people of Kashmir. And the last question he asked about your education. I understand your education here is in the national language. Do you think it produces the best of the best or does it create problems in international competition?

Professor Dr. Duong Van Quang: I would like to answer your third question first. A person who has completed 12 years of education and has graduated from senior secondary school is considered an educated person but now the perception is also changing. The question of who is an educated person, I think it should be put in the wider context of what is the role of the intellectual of Vietnam for the cause of industrialization and modernization because we are in process of developing a resolution to highlight the role of the intellectual for serving the cause of industrialization and modernization. At the moment, there are two schools of thought; one school of thought is that an educated person is one who has completed Bachelors degree, Master degree or Ph.D. degree and can help in the country's economic development. The second school of thought is that he or she has not necessarily been educated in the formal education sector but he or she has made actual contribution in economic

development. For example, farmers in the delta region developed a machine which improved crop production although they were not educated in the formal education sector. You know we are member of the United Nations and we are following the Millennium Development Goals, and we have achieved some MDGs including the literacy goal, which is a high rate of 93 percent literacy.

Mr. Nguyen Hung Son: We have the high literacy rates because we have subsidized the education sector. We provide free loans for building schools and controlled the price of the cost of education by controlling the price of books, for example, we have strong development in economic policies to support education.

Now the question of clash of civilizations. I do not know if we are fortunate or not but we have not been in the direct line in the crossfire of the debate on clash of civilizations. However, being a bit away from the contemporary debate, we can have a neutral view on the debate and what is happening in the region is that the region or ASEAN is trying to see what they can do to help the two sides to come to dialogue and I am happy to note that in the regional forum context one of the major programs they are designing is to have inter civilizations dialogue within the context of the regional forum and that will be the regional contribution

“We also want to end the human rights violations in Kashmir, as you would be aware because you are experts in foreign policy. Since 1989, there has been a popular, indigenous, spontaneous and widespread uprising in Kashmir. Kashmir is a disputed territory with one-third under Pakistan’s administration and two-third under India’s administration. In Indian part of Kashmir, they have the highest soldier-to-civilian ratio in the Kashmir valley. They have five armed Indians for every adult male Muslim. There are seven hundred thousand troops in Indian-held Kashmir. We feel that Kashmir should be treated as a human issue – humanity first. The violations of human rights should be ceased because so far since 1989, one hundred thousand people; men, women and children, have been killed by the Indian occupation forces.”

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed

to the debate on the issue.

On the question of configuration of power in the next decade of this



“If the cause is liberation and independence and the way out is terrorism, the cause is important. We have been fighting with America for independence. People who were fighting with arms, the Americans called them terrorists, but we called them martyrs as they were fighting a noble cause, so the cause is important. Our freedom fighters used tactics of assassination for freedom, and we considered them heroes but they were fighting occupation power. Our heroes were fighting against aggression. If the cause is noble then whatever way you got that goal is right.”

Professor Dr. Duong Van Quang

century, I think no one has the right answer but everybody is talking of the rise of China and India. It will have a bit impact on South Asia and South East Asia.

On your question of Kashmir, my view is that it is very unfortunate that this issue has not been resolved and we share the same sympathy with the two countries involved. While we are not too familiar with the issue we do share your concern on the humanitarian aspect of the conflict and whatever initiatives you

can put on to resolve the human crisis, we will be very supportive by the international community for there is no politics in human crisis.

Professor Dr. Duong Van Quang: I am also not familiar with issue of Kashmir but I would like to see Pakistan dealing not only with the issue of Kashmir but engaging more widely with the region focusing on economic development. From the management books that I have read we should deal with something which is urgent but also something which is important. I think sooner or later the issue of Kashmir will be resolved.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: Thank you, I think that is very satisfactory answer. The urgency was only because of the danger of war, this is why, it is important. It is a legacy of history and international law but urgent because this trespasses a new contradiction of war. India and Pakistan are both nuclear powers and they cannot afford a new war. This is why it is both urgent and important.

Senator Maulana Sami-ul-Haq: There is a lot of talk about terrorism. What is the difference between genuine liberation struggle and terrorism because after 9/11 the two have been mixed up which is very unfortunate. Can some of us, who have been through this process, do something to ensure there is a certain distinction drawn between a genuine struggle for liberation by



the oppressed people against oppression and terrorism?

Professor Dr. Duong Van Quang: I would like to go back to the four questions that you asked. 'The Clash of Civilization' theory is both interesting and wrong. The question of unipolar world or multipolar world; I think one thing we are sure that unipolar moment for the US has passed. We think we have a big problem of the educational system is to have a literate labour force to attract foreign direct investment.

About liberation and terrorism; If the cause is liberation and independence and the way out is

terrorism, the cause is important. We have been fighting with America for independence. People who were fighting with arms, the Americans called them terrorists, but we called them martyrs as they were fighting a noble cause, so the cause is important. Our freedom fighters used tactics of assassination for freedom, and we considered them heroes but they were fighting occupation power. Our heroes were fighting against aggression. If the cause is noble then whatever way you got that goal is right.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed: Thank you very much.



Appendix

- Vietnam: A Brief Introduction
- National Assembly of Vietnam





VIETNAM: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Vietnam is one of the few existing socialist countries in the world ruled by single communist party system. Since 1986, in the backdrop of severe economic crisis it decided to embark upon a reform process in administrative and economic system of the country, while maintaining the status quo in the political structure of the state. It also started a process of normalization with its neighbours which ultimately led to regional integration and became member of ASEAN, ASEM and APEC. It has been successful in turning around its economy and from rice importing country it transformed to the second largest rice exporting country at present. Its exports reached over US \$ 36 billion with an increase of 20% , only in 2006. Its GDP grew by 8.2% in 2007 with per capita income of US \$ 800.

Increasing economic clout as a result of over 7% GDP growth rate in the past decade enabled Vietnam to adopt a more proactive role in its foreign relations both at regional as well as global level. It continued opening up to new regions and expanded its diplomatic relations with other countries. Its foreign policy was primarily directed to achieve the objectives of economic development. Vietnam had primacy in its foreign policy at regional level, while, it achieved its much desired objective of first ever election to the UN Security Council's non permanent

seat for the term 2008-09. Adoption of ASEAN Charter was a major breakthrough not only for Vietnam but all member countries.

The changes in global politics and world order by the end of 90s provided an opportunity to both the countries to re establish diplomatic contacts and Pakistan re opened its Embassy in 2000. This was followed by the first ever visit of the highest level from Pakistan by the then Chief Executive of Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf. Former President Tran Duc Luong visited Pakistan in March 2004. Vietnam has re opened its embassy in Islamabad in December 2005. Vietnam Trade Office was established in Karachi in November 2005.

In order to alleviate the sufferings of the victims of the massive flooding and storms in central provinces of Vietnam in November 2007, the Government of Pakistan announced relief assistance of US \$ 125,000 as a gesture of goodwill.

Pakistan and Vietnam have immense opportunity in the field of trade and economic cooperation. The volume of two way trade is increasing very fast since 2000, when both countries had only US \$ 14 million two-way trade which crossed US \$ 75 million in 2005 and reached over US\$ 100 million by the end of 2006. The total increase



only in the year 2006 remained 36%. Pakistan imports rubber, tea, cashew nuts, pepper, chemical products, machinery and coal from Vietnam. Pakistan exports to

Vietnam products from crude oil, raw materials for leather, textile, cotton, fiber, medicine, cloth, animal feed and materials for production.

Key agreements between Pakistan and Vietnam:

- Trade Agreement between Pakistan and Vietnam was signed in May 2001.
- An Agreement for establishment of Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) was signed between the two countries in Islamabad in April 2002.
- Agreement on promotion and protection of investment.
- Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation between the State Bank of Pakistan and State Bank of Vietnam in 2004.
- Agreement on cooperation in the field of science and technology between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in March 2004.
- Memorandum of Understanding between the two Chambers of Commerce and Industry in 2004.
- Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in 2004.
- Agreement for cooperation in the field of agriculture between the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock of the Government of Pakistan and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Vietnam was signed in June 2006 during the visit of Vietnamese delegation headed by Vice Minister of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Vietnam.
- Visa Abolition Agreement for holders of Diplomatic and Official Passports between the Government of Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF VIETNAM

All State power belongs to the people. Citizens nation-wide elect the National Assembly to represent and reflect their will and expectations in discussing and deciding important issues of the nation.

On January 6, 1946, citizens nation-wide successfully concluded the General Election that established the first mandate period of the National Assembly of Vietnam. The 12th mandate period from 2007-2011 was elected on May 2007.

Functions of the National Assembly:

Legislative Function:

The Government takes the primary role in presenting legislative initiatives, although this right also belongs to several other actors. The government drafts bills and submits them to the National Assembly for appraisal, discussion, consideration and approval, based on the will, expectations and interests of the people and the nation. Citizens can share their opinion on drafts of bills directly with Deputies to the National Assembly or indirectly via mail, the press or the National Assembly's website.

Supervisory Functions:

The National Assembly supervises the executive bodies to ensure that

law provisions are enforced and the interests of the people and the State are defended. The National Assembly exercises supervisory function during and between its sessions. The National Assembly considers working reports and exercises the right of questioning agencies and individuals under its supervision. Between two National Assembly sessions, the Standing Committee of the National Assembly meets so does the Ethnic Council and other Committees of the National Assembly hold sessions. Moreover, delegations of the National Assembly Deputies organize specialized supervision on specific issues.

Decision-making function with respect to important issues of the nation:

The National Assembly is the only body which has the power to decide important policies relating to citizens lives, the country's development and national interests. The clearest instance for the exercise of this function is that the National Assembly makes decisions on national level projects and works and decides on the State's annual budget.

The National Assembly convenes twice a year. It discusses and decides important issues on the basis of majority vote.



Between sessions, the activities of National Assembly are carried out by the Standing Committees of the National Assembly, the Ethnic Council Committees of the National Assembly, the Boards of the Standing Committees, the Delegations of the National Assembly Deputies and the individual National Assembly deputies.

Deputies to the National Assembly represent not only voters of the electorate unit that has elected them but also voters nation-wide. Deputies to the National Assembly are elected on a 5-year term. During those 5 years, the Deputies represent the people in making decisions on issues relating to national and individual interests. The duty of the Deputies is to represent and protect the interests of the voters. All citizens from 21 years of age and having met all requirements as set out by the law can be nominated in the National Assembly election and become Deputies to the National Assembly.

Criteria of Deputies of the National Assembly:

- i. Being faithful to the motherland and the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, striving to implement the renovation process for the course of State industrialization and modernization, creating a wealthy people, a strong country, and a fair, democratic and civilized society;
- ii. Having good conduct, moral values and ethics, and being exemplary in complying with the law, being determined in fighting against all sins of bureaucracy, public power abuse, corruption and other malpractices;
- iii. Having a sufficient level of qualification and capacity to fulfill the duties of a Deputy to the National Assembly and be involved in making decisions on substantial issues of the nation;
- iv. Maintaining close contact with the people, attentively listening to their voice, and enjoying the trust of the people;
- v. Being capable of participating in activities of the National Assembly.

The law provides that it is the duty of Deputies to the National Assembly to meet and keep close contact with voters. Meetings between Deputies and voters mainly take place before and after sessions of the National Assembly. Meetings before sessions are designed for collecting voters' opinion, expectations and recommendations to the National Assembly. Meetings after sessions are designed for reporting to voters the results of the sessions and disseminating the contents of legal documents and resolutions adopted during the sessions.

Voters can keep contact with Deputies to express their views and



desires as well as to contribute their ideas for the activities of the National Assembly and its Deputies through different channels, the most common of which include:

- Voters' meetings;
- Office of the National Assembly;
- Office of the Delegation of Deputies to the National Assembly;
- Telephone calls; and
- Mail.



PHOTO GALLERY





July 1, 2008: Visit of Mausoleum of President Ho Chi Minh in Hanoi.



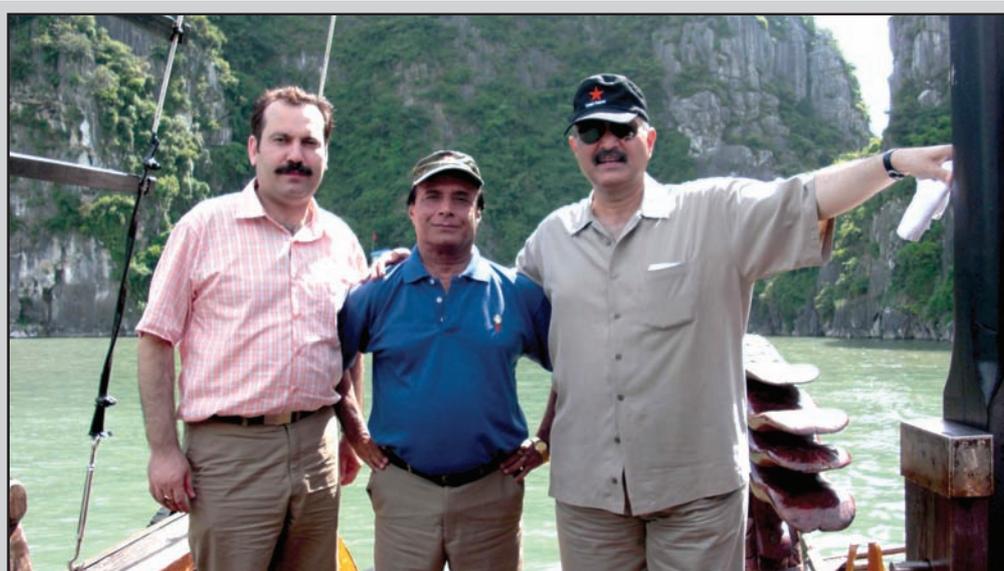
July 1, 2008: Visit of Army Museum - photo with statue of President Ho Chi Minh.



July 4, 2008: A group photo at the Embassy of Pakistan, Hanoi.



July 4, 2008: Signing Visitors Book at the Embassy of Pakistan in Hanoi.



July 3, 2008: (From right) Senator Mushahid Hussain, Senator Latif Khosa, Mr. Idrees Mahsud, Charge d' Affaires, at Ha Long Bay near Hanoi.



July 3, 2008: Visit of Ha Long Bay near Hanoi: (From right) Senators; Naeem Hussain Chattha, S.M. Zafar, Latif Khosa & Nisar A. Memon.



Profiles of the Chairman and Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee





Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed
(PML - Federal Capital)
Chairman of the Committee

Mushahid Hussain Sayed is currently a Senator and Chairman, Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate. He is also Secretary General of the Pakistan Muslim League. He has been a Cabinet Minister, Journalist, university teacher and political analyst. As Information Minister from 1997 to 1999, Mushahid Hussain was the country's principal spokesman and appeared frequently on international television and radio channels to present Pakistan's position on issues ranging from nuclear weapons to Islam and foreign policy. He was also Leader of Pakistan's Delegation to the UN Human Rights Commission at Geneva in 1993.

After October 12, 1999, Mushahid Hussain was held without any charges as a political prisoner for four hundred and forty (440) days, including a period in solitary imprisonment. The world's leading human rights organization, Amnesty International, declared him a 'Prisoner of Conscience' making him the first such Pakistani to be honoured for the year 2000.

Mushahid Hussain has a Master's degree from the School of Foreign Services in Georgetown University at Washington. While studying in the US, he was President of the Pakistan Students Association and was awarded a Congressional Internship to work in the United States Congress. After completion of studies in the United States, he returned to Pakistan and became Member, Directing Staff of the country's prestigious training institution for civil servants, the Pakistan Administrative Staff College, training new diplomats. He then joined Pakistan's oldest seat of learning, the Punjab University, as Lecturer on International Relations in the Political Science Department, from where he along with three other teachers was removed on political grounds during Martial Law.

In 1982, at age 29, he became the youngest Editor of national English daily, 'The Muslim', published from capital Islamabad, which was respected for its independent positions.

As a specialist on international political and strategic issues, he has lectured widely and his articles have been published in various national and international publications including 'The New York Times', 'The Washington Post', 'International Herald Tribune', and 'Middle East International'. He was elected Co-Chairman of the NAM Media Conference of 100 countries, held in New Delhi in December 1983 and he is the first Pakistani journalist to have started a syndicated column in the Indian media, writing regularly in the 'Times of India' and the 'Hindustan Times' in 1989.

Mr. Mushahid Hussain is the author of three books. He is also Chairman of the Board of Governors of Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), a leading Think Tank.

He is also the Vice President of the Centrist Democrat International (CDI) Asia – Pacific Chapter. On January 27, 2006, he was awarded Congressional Medal of Achievement by the House of Representatives of the Republic of the Philippines. He served as Pakistan's Representative to the 15-member Commission of Eminent Persons of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) tasked with preparing a Plan of Action & Reforms for the Muslim World by the Summit of Islamic Leaders held in Malaysia in October, 2003.

Membership of the Senate Committees:

- Committee on Foreign Relations, Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas (**Chairman**)
- Committee on Defence and Defence Production.
- Functional Committee on Government Assurances.

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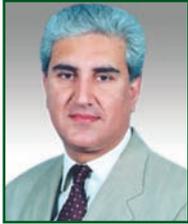
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Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi
Foreign Minister
Ex-Officio Member

- Academic Qualification: M.A. (CANTAB)
- Educational Institutions attended:
 - (i) Aitcheson College, Lahore, Pakistan
 - (ii) F.C. College, Lahore, Pakistan
 - (iii) Cambridge University, U.K.
- Marital status: Married with three children.

Political Positions:

- Federal Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Pakistan (1994 – 96)
- Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Food and Agriculture, Pakistan (1993 – 94)
- Minister for Planning and Development, Punjab, Pakistan (1988 – 90)
- Minister for Finance, Punjab, Pakistan (1990 – 93)
- Chairman, Prime Minister's Task Force on Agriculture (1993)
- Chairman, Institutional Reforms Group, Government of Pakistan (1994 – 96)
- Deputy Secretary General, Pakistan Peoples Party, Pakistan (1997)
- Spokesman to the Chairperson, Pakistan Peoples Party, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto (1996)
- Member, Central Executive Committee, Pakistan Peoples Party (1997)
- Chairman, Policy Planning Committee, Pakistan Peoples Party, Pakistan
- Chairman, Multan Development Authority (2001)
- Chairman Market Committee, Multan (2001)
- President, PPP – Punjab (2006)
- President Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD), Punjab



Senator Wasim Sajjad
(PML - Federal Capital)
Member

Mr. Wasim Sajjad was born on 30th March, 1941. He went to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar in 1964 from where he obtained the Degrees of M.A. (Jurisprudence) and B.C.L. He is a Barrister-at-Law from the Inner Temple London and an Honorary Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford.

He has a highly distinguished career in politics and public service and has held the offices of :

President of Pakistan (July to November, 1993 and December, 1997 to January, 1998).

Chairman, Senate of Pakistan (24th December, 1988 to 12th October, 1999). Elected in 1988 and re-elected in 1991, 1994 and 1997.

Federal Minister for Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs (September, 1986 to December 1988). Has also held the portfolio of the Federal Minister for Interior & Narcotics Control.

Leader of the House in the Senate of Pakistan, 2003 - 2008.

Leader of the Opposition in the Senate of Pakistan, 1988.

He was elected as Senator from Punjab on a technocrat seat in 1985. Re-elected in 1991, 1994, 1997 and 2003. As a Lawyer by profession, he is presently heading his own law firm (Sajjad Law Associates) having its Head Office in Islamabad.

He is also the President of the Foundation for Advancement of Science & Technology and Chancellor of the National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences.

Mr. Wasim Sajjad has travelled extensively and visited over fifty countries. He is married and has three children.

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Senator S. M. Zafar
(PML - Punjab)
Member

Senator S. M. Zafar is a prominent lawyer and former Federal Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Pakistan. He is involved with various aworks and is Chairman of the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency - PILDAT's Board of Advisors, Chairman of the Human Rights Society of Pakistan as well as of the Senate Committee on Human Rights. He was President of the High Court Bar Association Lahore (1975) and President of the Supreme Court Bar Association (1979). He is also Chairman of the Cultural Association of Pakistan. Senator Zafar has visited the US, Canada, UK, France and Germany. He enjoys farming and has three sons and a daughter.

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Senator Muhammad Ali Durrani
(PML - Punjab)
Member

Senator Muhammad Ali Durrani, former Minister for Information and Broadcasting, is a leading political activist and grass roots organizer of his party who founded the youth movement "Pasban". He was Secretary General of the National Alliance, a coalition partner of the ruling party. He is also the President of the Wise Education Society and Women Welfare Society. He is the Founder of the Institute of Afghan Affairs (1985) and Education for All (EFA). He has launched campaigns for the Kashmir cause, free employment (1997), Shaukat Khanum Memorial Trust Hospital, collective marriage ceremony, true freedom (2000), and for relief on foreign debt (2001). He played a leading role in the establishment of IJI (1988), Millat Party, National Alliance and the Grand National Alliance. Senator Durrani has visited Europe, Asia and Africa and is married with three sons and a daughter.

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Senator Prof. Khurshid Ahmad
(MMA - NWFP)
Member

A world renowned research scholar, an educationist, an economist, a versatile writer and a preacher of Islam, Prof. Khurshid Ahmad was born on March 23, 1932 at Delhi, India. He holds a Bachelors degree in Law and Jurisprudence, Masters degrees in Economics and Islamic Studies and an Honorary Doctorate (Ph.D) in Education. Prof. Khurshid Ahmad has held the portfolio of the Federal Minister of Planning and Development and has been Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission in the Government of Pakistan from 1978 to 1979. He has written around 30 books in English, over 20 in Urdu and contributed to a large number of magazines. Senator Ahmed was elected as member of the Senate in February, 2003, and is a member of the Senate's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Kashmir Affairs and Northern Affairs. He previously served as member of the Senate from March 1985 till March 1997. During that tenure he was also Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs from 1991 till March, 1997. He is Vice President (Naib Ameer) of Jama'at-e-Islami Pakistan and Founder and Chairman of both Institute of Policy Studies, Islamabad and the Islamic Foundation, Leicestershire, UK.

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Senator Nisar A. Memon
(PML - Sindh)
Member

Senator Nisar A. Memon is the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Defence & Defence Production. He is also the former Chief Executive of the IBM Pakistan. Mr. Nisar Memon previously served as Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting three times (1993, 2002 and 2007); as President of the Overseas investors chamber of Commerce & Industry Pakistan (1994); and as Chairman Board of Directors, Engro Chemicals Limited, Pakistan (2001-2002). He is a Syndicate member of Karachi University and President of The Reformers. Senator Memon has visited Europe, USA, Canada, Middle East, Africa and Central Asia. He is married with two daughters and enjoys reading and playing Golf.

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Senator Maulana Sami-ul-Haq
(MMA - NWFP)
Member

Senator Sami-ul-Haq completed education from Jamia Darul Uloom Haqqania Akora Khattak, and received a degree in Tafseer from spiritual leader Maulana Ahmad Ali Lahori. He was awarded an honorary degree from Darululoom Deoband India and Jamia Makka Muazzama, serving as Chancellor and Teacher of Hadith. Senator Maulana Sami-ul-Haq is a central leader of MMA and runs Dar ul Uloom Haqqania, a religious seminary at Akora Khattak, NWFP. He is also the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Religious Affairs and Minorities Affairs, and has been serving in the Senate of Pakistan since 1985. Senator Sami-ul-Haq is the Secretary General of the JUI-S, and Senior Vice President of the Islamic Democratic Alliance. He is Founder and Secretary General of the National Uniformity Council (A common council of all religious political parties). He is also the founder of the monthly Jamia Haqqania Al-Haq, and has authored several religio-political books in Urdu.

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Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood Aryan
(MMA - NWFP)
Member

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- Standing Committee on Petroleum and Natural Resources.
- Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas.
- Functional Committee on Government Assurances.

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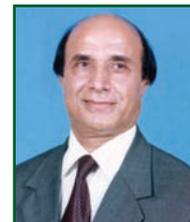
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Senator Sardar M. Latif Khan Khosa
(PPPP - Punjab)
Member

Senator Sardar Muhammad Latif Khan Khosa, Attorney General of Pakistan, is one of the country's leading lawyers who has actively defended constitutional and political cases of his party leadership. He was President of the High Court Bar Association thrice (1981-82, 1987-88, 1995-96), Member Pakistan Bar Council since 1995, Chairman Executive Committee P.B.C. (1995-96), Chairman Appeal Committee Punjab-1 (1996-2000) and Member Tribunal P.B.C. (1995-2000). He is a Lifetime Member of the High Court Bars of Lahore, Multan and Rawalpindi. He is also lifetime Member of the Supreme Court Bar Association, and Chairman of Khosa Law Chambers. Senator Khosa has visited the USA, Canada, France, UK, China, Ireland, Dubai and Saudi Arabia. He is married with four sons and two daughters and enjoys cricket, and music.

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Address 3: Rawalpindi: Flat No.3, 1st Floor, Satellite Plaza, Six Road Chowk, Satellite Town.



Senator Gulshan Saeed
(PML - Punjab)
Member

Senator Gulshan Saeed, Chairperson, Senate Standing Committee on Ports and Shipping, is a long-standing political activist and she runs an NGO called Roshan Pakistan. She is currently the Vice President of the Women's Wing of Pakistan Muslim League, and member of its General Council. She has held assignments of Punjab Social Welfare Board, Bait-ul-Mal Punjab and Chairman Zakat Committee Lahore. Senator Gulshan Saeed has visited the UK, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, France, Holland and USA. She is married with two sons and two daughters.

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Senator Col (R) Syed Tahir Hussan Mash'hadil
(MQM - Sindh)
Member

Education:

- BSC (Hons)
- PSC (Command and Staff Course Quetta)

Achievements:

- Ex-Chairman, District Karachi East.
- Ex-Town Nazim, Jamshed Town, Karachi.
- Columnist, Political Analyst, articles frequently appear in leading English language newspapers and periodicals.
- Retired Army Officer.

Membership of Senate Committees:

- Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges. **(Chairman Committee)**
- Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas.
- Standing Committee on Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs and Tourism.
- Standing Committee on Education and Science and Technology.
- Standing Committee on Interior.
- Special Committee of the Parliament on Kashmir.

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Senator Saadia Abbasi
(PML-N - Punjab)
Member

Membership of the Senate Committees:

- Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas.
- Standing Committee on Industries & Production and Special Initiatives.
- Standing Committee on Interior..
- Standing Committee on Ports and Shipping.
- Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges.
- Standing Committee on Defence and Defence Production.

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Profiles of the Committee Officials





Mr. Iftikhar Ullah Babar
Secretary Committee

Mr. Iftikhar Ullah Babar is Additional Secretary at the Senate of Pakistan and is currently working with the Parliamentary Committees of the Senate.

Mr. Babar completed his Secondary School and Higher Secondary School from Burn Hall School Abbottabad and Abbottabad Public School respectively. He attended Edwardes College Peshawar for his Bachelor's Degree and University of Peshawar for a Master's Degree in Economics. He also holds a Master's Degree in Development Studies from the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in The Hague, The Netherlands.

Mr. Babar attended the 13th Advance Management and Development course at the National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA) Peshawar and the 76th National Management Course at the Pakistan Administrative Staff College (PASC) Lahore.

Mr. Babar has authored a number of research articles on wide ranging topics namely, the Eighth Constitutional Amendment, Research support to Parliamentarians, the Parliamentary Committee System in Pakistan and Parliament and Financial Control. He has written numerous reports for the Committees, which were presented in the Senate.

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Mr. Tayyab Siddiqui
Consultant
Ambassador (R)

Mr. Tayyab Siddiqui joined the Foreign Service of Pakistan in 1967 and served as Ambassador of Pakistan to Zimbabwe (1986-1990), with concurrent accreditation to Zambia, Botswana and Namibia; to Indonesia (1992-1996), with concurrent accreditation to Papua New Guinea; to Egypt (1997-1999); and to Switzerland (1999-2003), and also to the Holy See and Liechtenstein.

In a 35 - year career as a diplomat, he also served in Pakistan missions in Amman, Beirut, Colombo, Berlin (GDR), Athens, Dhaka and Washington D.C. He was a member of Pakistan delegation to the UNGA for four years (1977-1980).

Ambassador Siddiqui is currently a regular analyst on international affairs with Radio Pakistan and PTV and other private channels. He is a regular contributor to English dailies - 'Dawn', 'The Nation' and 'The Post' on current international issues. He also contributes a regular column entitled "Harf-e-Haq" to the Urdu daily, ' Ausaf'. The selection of his columns was published in March, 2005.

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Muhammad Imtiaz
Private Secretary

Mr. Muhammad Imtiaz, Private Secretary, Senate Secretariat has been associated with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee since 1995. He holds Bachelors Degree in Arts with majors in Journalism and English (University of the Punjab - 2003) as well as a one year Diploma in Information Technology (Skill Development Council, Govt. of Pakistan - 2003). The main area of his activity is related to preparation of the reports of the Committee in the book form which involves proof reading, editing, acquiring certain information related to the report and finally designing, printing and dissemination of the report to various quarters in public and private sector. Additionally, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee website, which was developed under his supervision, is also administered and updated by him.

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Foreign Relations Committee

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