

OPENING STATEMENT FOR SENATE CONFIRMATION
HEARING OF AMBASSADOR ANNE PATTERSON
SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE
JUNE 20, 2007

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before the Committee. I am honored that the President and Secretary have expressed their confidence in me through this nomination.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will do my best to advance the multiple and related U.S. goals in Pakistan. The United States must maintain and enhance Pakistan's invaluable cooperation in the War on Terror and, if confirmed, it will be my most urgent task. It is my belief that these efforts will help prevent attacks on our homeland and on American and allied troops in Afghanistan, and reduce violence against civilians in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The United States must also encourage a democratic transition by supporting free and fair elections, respect for the rule of law and the systems that underpin it, and institutions such as a free press that are essential for democracy to survive and flourish. We should step up our efforts to assist the government of Pakistan in bettering the lives of its citizens, particularly in ungoverned parts of the country, so that terrorism and radicalism will not find fertile ground.

These goals are not contradictory but mutually reinforcing. In my previous assignments, I learned that criminals and insurgents cannot prosper if the government has a presence in the villages, provides the population with decent public services, and allows them a voice in their own future. We therefore have to move forward together with the Pakistanis on all fronts simultaneously.

U.S. relations with Pakistan were dramatically transformed after the September 11 attacks, when Pakistan made a clear commitment to stand with us against terrorism and extremism. The 9/11 Commission recommended the U.S. Government "support Pakistan's government in its struggle against extremists with a comprehensive effort that extends from military aid to support for better education..." As the Commission recognized, we have a strong interest in the success of Pakistan's ambitious program to enhance internal security and propel democratic reform. We also have a strong interest in a Pakistan that is secure in its borders and at peace with its neighbors. I believe we have the right plan in place to work with Pakistan on all of these fronts. The challenge is to maintain the right balance and implement the plan quickly and effectively.

There has been a lot of discussion about whether Pakistan can and should “do more” in the war on terror.

Pakistan’s contribution has been significant. Since 2001, the Pakistani Government has arrested hundreds of terrorist suspects, turning over to the U.S. such senior al-Qaida figures as Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, Ramzi bin al Shibh, and Abu Zubaida. 85,000 Pakistani forces are currently stationed on the rough terrain of the Afghanistan border, and more than 450 members of Pakistan's security forces have sacrificed their lives in support of anti-terror efforts. Pakistani security operations in the tribal areas are disrupting terrorist activities in an area where terrorists previously felt secure. One unfortunate indicator of the insurgents’ desperation to maintain their hold is the intimidation of the local population through targeting tribal leaders.

In many of these offensives against militants, Pakistani troops are using equipment and training provided by the United States. This assistance has been crucial to bolstering Pakistan’s anti-terrorism capabilities, and by extension, our own. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Department of Defense (DOD), with our Pakistani counterparts, and with Congress to ensure that the Pakistani forces have the necessary training and equipment to conduct these operations appropriately and effectively.

Also, much less frequently mentioned is Pakistani cooperation in facilitating the logistical support of United States and NATO forces deployed in neighboring Afghanistan. Most of our support for Coalition forces in Afghanistan pass through Pakistan. Without Pakistani support and cooperation, we would face severe difficulties in supplying, reinforcing, and protecting our and allied troops defending the democratically elected Afghan government.

The Government of Pakistan is committed to improving living conditions and expanding governance in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and this past February, the State Department briefed you on the United States Government’s multi-year plan to assist Pakistan in this effort. FATA has the worst social indicators in all of Pakistan, such as only a 3 percent female literacy rate. We believe this Pakistani strategy, supported by us and other international donors, will make these areas less hospitable to al-Qaida, the Taliban and other extremist groups, while improving the quality of life for the citizens in FATA.

At the same time, I am under no illusions concerning the difficulties faced by the Pakistan government in extending its writ into these territories or about al-Qaida and Taliban activities in this area, and the level of commitment required to prevent them from finding safe-haven there. I give you my personal commitment that this will always be a top priority.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to underscore to you and to the Pakistani people my firm commitment to fostering a fully-functioning, sustainable democracy.

Our partnership with the Pakistanis gives us an opportunity to support Pakistan's own efforts to become a modern, prosperous, democratic state, and a moderate voice in the Islamic world. This is the vision for Pakistan that President Musharraf has articulated. It is strongly in the U.S. national interest that Pakistan succeeds in realizing this vision.

President Musharraf has stated that he is committed to holding a free and fair election in the coming months. If confirmed, I intend to ensure that we are in position to assist Pakistan in this process and to help the Pakistani people strengthen their democratic institutions by participating in an open and honest electoral process. The Pakistani people deserve the same right we in the United States enjoy, the right to choose their leaders democratically.

But we in the U.S. also know that democracy means more than just holding elections, although elections are certainly a necessary component. Democracy means a free and vibrant press, the right to free assembly, a fair and impartial criminal justice system, active civil society organizations, and broadly participative and responsive political parties. Throughout the world, it is U.S. government policy to back democratic institutions with training, assistance and moral support, and I will look to intensify these efforts in Pakistan.

Social and economic development programs also play an instrumental role in nurturing democracy. U.S. development assistance in Pakistan is tailored to help build sustainable growth and improve living standards that promote the conditions for good governance, responsible citizenship, and foreign investment. In this context, our education programs are particularly important. The U.S. is supporting the Pakistani government's efforts to upgrade public education, placing emphasis on improving the quality and affordability of Pakistan's public schools. This will allow parents of limited means to pursue educational opportunities for their children beyond religiously oriented madrassahs.

I will also work closely with our Pakistani and non-governmental partners on key issues such as furthering women's rights and legal protection for ethnic and religious minorities, and combating forced child labor and human trafficking. Women's health appears to be a particular challenge in Pakistan, and my previous posts have shown me that the rate of maternal mortality can be lowered significantly with properly trained rural health providers.

Similarly, I intend to actively pursue our public diplomacy efforts inside Pakistan to ensure that we reach out to Pakistani citizens to share our own message, and help others understand American policies, views and values. The Pakistanis have not always had such a clouded picture of the United States as today; rather very early reaction toward American assistance in the 1950s was very encouraging. Americans continue to be generous in their willingness to help and reach out to Pakistanis. I was impressed and moved by the Pakistani reaction to U.S. earthquake relief, where the immediate and overwhelming support of the U.S. military and the donations of private Americans saved many lives. Nothing could have been more effective in demonstrating American values and disseminating a message of friendship between our peoples.

Mr. Chairman, Pakistan's good relations with neighboring states are also crucial to its progress towards a stable, peaceful, and prosperous democracy.

I will continue to work with the Pakistani government and my colleagues in Embassy Kabul to support efforts to build a stable Afghanistan. The joint statement issued by President Musharraf and President Karzai in Ankara this spring demonstrates growing cooperation between the two countries. But it is obvious that tensions remain. U.S. and NATO policies must continue to foster expanded Pakistan-Afghanistan bilateral dialogue, stronger economic and trade ties, and deeper cooperation between Pakistani and Afghan border security forces. With U.S. assistance, Pakistan is working to secure its border with Afghanistan to prevent the smuggling of arms, terrorists, and illegal drugs which are fueling the Taliban insurgency.

On the eastern border, we have been pleased to see renewed commitment to Indo-Pakistani reconciliation. Pakistan and India opened the fourth round of the Composite Dialogue this past March, a process originally launched in 2004. We continue to be ready to support and assist this important endeavor.

We also recognize the progress made by the Pakistan government in disabling the A.Q. Khan proliferation network and steps taken to ensure that such a network

cannot be reconstituted. During President Bush's visit to Pakistan in 2006, President Musharraf committed that Pakistan would take a leading role in international efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems, and related technology and expertise. We currently have a bilateral program through the Export Control and Related Border Security Assistance Program (EXBS) to help Pakistan bring its export controls in line with accepted international standards. In April, Pakistan established a Strategic Export Control Division within its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and earlier this month, Pakistan joined the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

We are gratified by these steps, however, we must continue to be vigilant and if confirmed, I will remain engaged with Pakistan on this issue of vital U.S. interest.

Finally, I am determined and will work to ensure that the substantial resources the American people provide to Pakistan are utilized efficiently and effectively. I will also work hard to ensure that the dedicated American employees in Pakistan have good security and working conditions that foster high morale.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress as we face the challenge of continuing to build a strong, enduring strategic partnership with Pakistan that reflects and protects these interests.

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