



SOUTH ASIA PARTNERSHIP CANADA

SOCIETE ASIATIQUE DES PARTENAIRES

PAKISTAN TODAY:

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

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OTTAWA, CANADA

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ROUNDTABLE OBJECTIVES

South Asia Partnership Canada took the initiative, on behalf of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, to hold a Roundtable discussion on Pakistan at the International Development Research Centre on May 24, 2000. The purpose of the Roundtable was:

- to hear a spectrum of views from a group of Canadians, each interested in and concerned about the situation in Pakistan, on what Canada and Canadians might do to promote democracy for all people in the country.
- to provide a summary of the Roundtable discussion to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, as a sampling of views on the matter, and to make it publicly available to interested organizations and people.

During the event, participants heard from the Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan on his view of the political, economic and social situation in Pakistan following the 1999 military take-over of government and from a senior official of DFAIT with a summary of the Commonwealth's present position toward Pakistan.

By agreement, and in order to make discussion more free-flowing, statements and comments made during the Roundtable were not to be attributed in this summary, with the exception of the statements made by High Commissioner Ferry de Kerckhove and Joseph Caron, Assistant Deputy Minister (Asia Pacific and Africa) and the opening remarks from Richard Harmston, Executive Director, South Asia Partnership Canada. Organization of the Roundtable was managed by Isabelle Valois, SAP Canada's Pakistan Program Manager.

OPENING REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

First, I would like to provide the setting for today, and to outline the intent of our meeting.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade is constantly reviewing the many issues it needs to address, considering new factors and updating its policy as appropriate. Relations with Pakistan in general, and its state of governance after the military take-over in particular, are of course among the concerns. Some non-government groups and Civil Society organizations are also anxious about the issue. Beyond them, many individual Canadians have deep concerns about the democratic process in the country and its relationship to the well-being or ill-being of its people, particularly the tens of millions who live in a state of social and economic disadvantage.

Although the Department is in contact with a number of you, in various capacities, officials there thought it would be useful to listen to a group of Canadians from a variety of different backgrounds, and relating to a range of organizations and people in Pakistan, discuss the features of democracy and the conditions for it in that country and, in particular, to hear what ideas and suggestions this group might have toward its taking root and blossoming.

This, then, is our purpose today: to gather views on what Canada might do to encourage democracy in Pakistan. It is the reason we have invited you to this Roundtable and we hope it is the basis for your acceptance. In one sense it is a presumptuous goal: should we care, or are we meddling in another country's affairs? I will let each of you answer this question in your own way. But in a complex and interdependent world, our government has seen fit to address the issue and is now asking our views on where we go from here. And you are free to take a wide sweep and long-range perspective in your interventions. There are no limiting definitions here.

Recognizing an open-ended discussion, we could have a framework for this discussion to include the following points:

What features of Pakistani society and what factors in its regional situation do we consider in forming our views of Pakistan, and what constitutes democracy in this context?

How should Canada engage with Pakistan to affect its governance and the well-being of its people?

- For our Government, what should its immediate or short-term position be?

- What position or interventions should it adopt for the long term to help the building blocks of a democratic society?
- And what actions can Canadians, apart from government, undertake as individuals or in organizations?

I do not need, with this group, to emphasize the seriousness of the issue we address today. Some in Canada hold deep convictions about it. I hope we can use our convictions, our passion and our understanding to forge a constructive discussion and to raise ideas that can stimulate reflection and action beyond our meeting.

The Department could have organized the meeting itself. This would have resulted in a dialogue, a flow of discussion back and forth between officials and participants outside government. Its preference on this occasion was to request a non-governmental organization to convene and manage the meeting so that officials could more easily listen to and learn what you have to say.

Why South Asia Partnership? Because our self-defined role is that of a forum in Canada to address South Asian development issues. We do not pursue a single interest but reflect a diversity that composes our membership and constituency. We are involved in Pakistan through our partners there and, whereas they have strong views on the situation, we in SAP Canada do not believe we have struck a narrow or partisan position on the issue. We advocate, but primarily through the voices of others in debate and dialogue.

Richard Harmston

Executive Director

South Asia Partnership Canada

PROCEEDINGS

• TAKING STOCK: PAKISTAN TODAY

Ferry de Kerckhove, Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan

In giving the view from Islamabad, it is more difficult than last year when I was explaining why the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was doing badly. The jury is still out on what the military regime may achieve. There is a triple deficit in Pakistan: an ethics deficit, a security deficit and a democracy deficit. If we help General Pervez Musharraf's administration, can it help to reduce any of these deficits?

In economic terms, a poor person is born in Pakistan every 14 seconds – there are 40 million people in absolute poverty, out of a population of 140 million. To climb out of this trough, the country needs to achieve a 6 percent growth rate and also to institute tax reform to broaden the tax base. The resource base is narrow, with its reliance on agriculture and a current period of drought, which may be cyclical. The public sector is virtually bankrupt and beset with corruption, but the financial sector is vibrant. A curb on business confidence, notably in this sector's operations is the present drive for accountability, as making or having money is thought to be a sin.

In social terms, the estimated illiteracy rate is 38 percent, and there is a demographic bulge with young people of 25 years of age or less representing 60% of the population. Crime is notably high in Karachi. There is a general indifference in society about human rights, with profound inequalities – women are at best second-class citizens. Society is desensitised to violence and injustice, and is plagued by conservative interpretations of Islam. Islam enters into every discussion in Pakistan – you never have any final answers in these discussions, but Islam is a factor you cannot possibly ignore.

Politically, the mainstream parties are discredited – so how to rebuild democracy? A military government is at the foundation of the problem – much of the military is reactionary and not open to any new regional ideas about security. It has an obsession with Kashmir. On top of this, there is an overflowing of Taliban ideology from Afghanistan.

China is seen as a 'white knight', and the Chief Executive (General Musharraf) is travelling a great deal, rather than attending to the main problems at home. Contrary to previous military establishment in Pakistan, this military government has very little linkage to the United States, or to earlier military regimes – it is a spontaneous generation! It

is looking for new friends, and the airline hijacking led to a foreign focus in its thinking. Only Kashmir and Kargil close future options in foreign policy. There is a certain commitment to progress here but there is also an obstacle to progress, as the Indian government is reluctant to pick up any signals, doubting Musharraf's capacity to deliver. The regime's overall interest lies in fostering national unity, which may explain its relations with the Sri Lanka government, to which it has supplied arms.

There is about the new regime a sincerity of purpose. It is not a bad team, and not rudderless – but it is not unified. The financial team under [Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz] is a capable one, but he is a banker not an economist and the team lacks a certain degree of imagination. There are former NGO leaders in both provincial and national governments. The heart of reform thinking is in the National Reconstruction Bureau, which offers good advice but it cannot replace government. However, generally the regime has limited vision. Its seven-point plan (see Appendix A) could fit many countries and political parties, even the Canadian Alliance! There is limited resolve to solve problems and get out. Indeed, there's no precedent for doing so. And the habit of attacking the old regime and its performance simply demonises the whole political system.

The Supreme Court decision gave the government a framework of three years and 90 days to take the country to civilian elections. By doing so it indemnified, or legitimised, the regime – and it gave the government an exit strategy. There is a longing among people for institutional stability.

There is some movement in reform: elections to local bodies, and the strengthening of the election commission, talk of re-balancing the federation and of expansion of the tax base – there are only 1.2 million taxpayers. The Chief Executive did denounce honour killing, at a conference on human rights and dignity and, on that occasion, announced a change in the application of the blasphemy law. Yet, under pressure from the religious groups, he withdrew the change, which created considerable concern about his commitment as well as about the religious parties influence.

Where to help? Canada could help the election commission and give advice on re-balancing and on parliamentary reform. It could help with practical matters like the creation of identity cards, and possibly with the accountability initiative. It could encourage the International Financial Institutions not to give up on Pakistan. And of course there is the aid coming from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Joseph Caron, Assistant Deputy Minister (Asia Pacific and Africa)

Canada needs some ‘constants’ to frame its policies to distant countries. Change comes vicariously at times through such factors as the CNN or Newsworld effect on public opinion, but ‘constants’ remain. Canada has a pre-disposition to co-operate with Pakistan, which is not true of our relations with all countries. These are some of the ‘constants’:

- Joint membership in the Commonwealth.
- Co-operation through official development assistance (ODA).
- The influence of many Pakistani-Canadians.
- Pakistan’s commercial potential and its infrastructure needs.
- Its geostrategic importance, as the nexus binding India, Afghanistan and the Middle East.

At present, Pakistan is not an easy country with which to work. Reasons include nuclear proliferation, bellicosity over Kashmir, friendship with the Taliban and its situation of debt owing to the Paris Club members. DFAIT has only limited resources, and foreign policy comes down to economic choices.

The Commonwealth is gaining credibility and propounding a set of moral principles. The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) is working on the Program of Action set down in the Millbrook Declaration of 1998. At the May 2000 meeting of CMAG there was a formal discussion on Pakistan (see Appendix B), and the new Commonwealth Secretary-General is visiting Pakistan this summer. Heads of Commonwealth Governments at their Brisbane summit, after suspending Pakistan from the Council of the Commonwealth, gave a framework of two years for Pakistan to return to civilian rule – one year shorter than that subsequently set down by Pakistan’s own Supreme Court.

Determinants of Canadian policy in the coming months will include:

- Commitments of the Pakistan government – there have been encouraging signals from Islamabad, but how far can it deliver?
- Benchmarks to define the steps Pakistan and India must take in mutual security to return to the family of nations – these include signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Canada has an obligation here because of Security Council resolution 1172 (see Appendix C).
- Social stability (which introduces the ‘Newsworld factor’).
- What role civil society may be able to play, especially in women’s rights?

These determinants will help decide whether Canada should be more supportive of the regime and favour a policy of constructive engagement, whether it should take a soft or a harder line in its policies reflected bilaterally and through CMAG. Pakistan's position in the Islamic world provides a central prism to look through in Canada's daily management of its relationship, but the driving framework has to remain values and interests of Canada. Some suggest that Canada does not care about Pakistan and cite the suspension of its Commonwealth membership and the fact that India offers the bigger commercial market; but it is not a question of *caring*. What matters are *interests*?

GENERAL DISCUSSION ON THE SITUATION OF PAKISTAN TODAY:

There was a general recognition that Pakistan faces profound and severe social, economic and political problems. Discussion among the participants fell under four themes: ambivalence about the status of the regime; the program of the regime; what is missing from that program; and Islam's place in society. (These topics had all been partially explored in the statement by the High Commissioner, and during the question-and-answer period that followed, which in this summary has been rolled into his statement.)

- *Ambivalence about the status of the regime.* Participants agreed that there was no serious condemnation, within the country, of the military for its take-over of the administration. There was, indeed, at least an echo of relief at the ending of a corrupt government. The present regime needed to be given some time to prove effectiveness and commitment to reform. On the other hand, the military was seen as part of a "feudal stranglehold" on the country, alongside bureaucrats and the feudal landed elite. It was also said that the military was itself corrupted from having enjoyed long periods of rule or behind-the-scenes control. Its power was illustrated by the story that, when she was prime minister, Benazir Bhutto had wanted to be briefed on the state of the military and had to submit to being given a secret briefing. More than once it was remarked that the military regime lacked ability or moral power to make reforms, and in particular did not possess the confidence or the trust to tackle parliamentary reform.

As for international recognition, the official view is that military coups are essentially bad, and other governments should endorse none. Participants generally approved the attitude expressed by several governments, including Canada, of non-acceptance of the regime's legitimacy, despite the decision of the country's Supreme Court. Further, there should be serious concern about the Supreme Court decision,

misgivings about the judges taking an oath, which appeared to validate the coup, and about the regime being given the opening to alter the constitution. It was on this basis that participants approved the tactic of “critical engagement”, maintaining relations with the regime and offering co-operation in various fields, but keeping a watchful and critical eye on its performance. There was some criticism of Mr. Axworthy’s immediate reaction as well as the measures undertaken by the Commonwealth – one participant called it a “knee-jerk reaction” – to suspend Pakistan’s membership.

- *The regime’s program of reform.* Discussion focused on two particular points of the program: the accountability initiative and the reorganization of local government. Each came in for criticism. Participants took note of the charge by critics that “accountability is being used as a stick with which to beat political enemies, a stick that does grave injury to the rule of law”. In a sharp phrase, “Revenge, thy name is accountability”. At the same time it was suggested that accountability “underscores a principle of good governance – democracy and the rule of law”.

There was not the same division of opinion over the local government issue. There were general misgivings that Islamabad was going ahead with this process without consulting and working with provincial authorities, and it was seen (by Canadians steeped in federal-provincial relations) as a strongly centralized move which would weaken an important middle level of governance and add to a stressful relationship with the provinces. This could hardly help any steady move toward a more democratic society.

In a broader comment on economic policy, one participant said that for Pakistan to “follow the market system will be counterproductive”. It was, he said, “the social philosophy of greed” and quoted John Maynard Keynes as saying “modern capitalism is absolutely irreligious”. There should be, in an Islamic state, a redistribution of income and power to the less fortunate; workers with better housing and fairer wages will then work harder.

- *What was missing from the program?* Obviously a long list of missing items could be made from any government’s agenda, especially from one that had come to power through a military coup and not through electioneering with a policy platform. The points that were most often mentioned were: action to extend the tax base, action over land reform, and measures to tackle social needs, particularly women’s rights.

Several participants mentioned obstacles in extending the tax base. Landlords sit in parliament, and would presumably vote down tax

reforms. Since the big landowners were conspicuous in resisting such reforms, this discussion merged with talk of land reform, and there was some difference of opinion over whether this was a matter mainly for the Sindh province or extended to the Punjab. Others noted the need for progressive labour laws, and argued that structural adjustment programmes had weakened the foundation for democracy in Pakistan.

In talk about social measures, it was said that Pakistanis are “a very insecure people, and lack trust” – a personality or psychological factor that hindered the empowering of people. Several references were made to the injustices oppressing women – divorce, property rights, lack of education – and even educated women who lack problem-solving skills. This line of discussion inevitably merged with the debate on the role of Islam in Pakistan society, a theme that permeated every stage of the daylong roundtable.

- *Islam's place in society.* It was agreed that the Koran, when interpreted in a narrow fashion and with selective passages, was a curb on societal change. Misgivings were also expressed about the fundamentalism that can seep in from Afghanistan and the Taliban influences on parts of Pakistan. But it was explained by one speaker that there were several dialogues running through the Koran – an argument eloquently put by the poet Mohammad Iqbal (1861-1921) who was several times cited. The Koran refers to “men of understanding who watch the trends of history; so a believer should finally follow his own judgement”. Islam, it was said, is “50 percent predestination and 50 percent free will” so there is as much scope for change in Islam as in other religions. Indeed, since Islam derives ideas from both Judaism and Christianity, there was no reason for oppression. The Koran treats all believers as equals, and does not condone elitism. Nor does it condone the suppression, and certainly not the honour-killing, of women. To be precise, it speaks of the need “to admonish, not chastise, women after errors”. It also advocates societal change in striking terms. The Koran speaks like Shelley after seeing the horrors of the Industrial Revolution. It says, “the poor have a rightful claim on the incomes of the rich”.

This liberal interpretation of the Koran was widely welcomed, but it raised the question of how to put an interpretation of theoretical principles into practice in a new Pakistan. One critic said that Islam could not offer ideas on governance and change; for one thing, men are the interpreters of the Koran. Another participant pointed out that women between the ages of 30 and 50, who might and should be playing a role in the broader society, felt disenfranchised from any participation. In any case, said a third participant, the intellectuals neglected the very material issues surrounding the struggle of the poor. As for the “mullahs”, while

they may not rule the country, they could prevent others from reforming institutions to function more fairly.

These arguments were turned on their head as a participant noted that, even from the experience of the 200 mosques around Toronto, sermons were mostly repetitions of a well-known discourse. With a similar situation in Pakistan, mosques could offer a place to attempt to interpret principles from the Koran for a new Pakistan. “The mosque could become a laboratory or centre for social change – and for grassroots participation.” In the days of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the PPP demonstrated how that important institution, the mosque, could be captured for political purposes. They did not take charge of mosques in Lahore and elsewhere to preach social change, but why should that not happen? For example, suggest steps that people can take to build new schools and health centres, which could reach women in rural areas. “I want new discussion, and small changes multiplying can catch fire. It will take time, but Pakistanis must ask themselves first what they can do.” A popular groundswell will eventually come, and society will change. Many participants referred to the suggestion that the mosque be used as a vehicle to spread democratic ideas, providing “qualified mullahs” could be identified. Related to the place of Islam were concerns about rights of religious minorities, particularly Christians and Ahmedis. The regime’s tergiversation on Blasphemy laws was seen as a disturbing signal. The ongoing use of separate electoral rolls for minorities was identified as an abuse, which deepened the social exclusion. Sectarian strife within Islam, as well as ethnic-linguistic and regional tensions (the sub-national question) further complicate the situation.

2. ACTIONS FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

The following section is broken down among four different sets of actors or arenas, where in each there might be both short-term and long-term initiatives. If one limits the short-term to four or five years for example, there have to be measures to bring about civilian elections. It would take longer than that to build solid foundations for new political parties. Again, in the short term there should be a revival of the South Asia Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) as a useful forum for regional dialogue, but it will take longer for dialogue to ease tensions. Woven through the four categories of actors described below are suggestions for both short- and long-term actions.

These are the four arenas for action that permeated the discussion:

- Actions by Pakistanis, who have prime and ultimate responsibility.
- Dialogue and actions in the South Asia region through SAARC.
- Measures and assistance through the Commonwealth and CMAG.
- Bilateral assistance and examples offered by the Canadian Government, and by NGOs and other individual Canadians.

Actions by Pakistanis:

As suggested by Richard Harmston in his opening remarks, it would be presumptuous for Canadians to offer too much advice to Pakistanis about what they should do to find a road, or roads, to democracy and societal change. There were, however, several Roundtable participants who saw themselves as both Pakistanis and Canadians, and could speak from either viewpoint. Accepting that a popular groundswell had to come before change was accepted as necessary by the power elites, discussion focused on ways by which a groundswell might be created. The idea of using the mosques, in both urban and rural areas, to preach small but incremental steps for change has already been noted. Several participants said that issues of public health and child mortality were ‘entry points’ for engaging both women and men in debate on social questions leading to action.

There was considerable debate about honour-killings and disfigurement. Both symbolized the lack of women’s rights in an extreme form. This issue was highlighted by the appalling story of the disfigurement of Zahida Perveen, told in the *Washington Post* on May 8 (and reprinted in *The Guardian Weekly*). This article illustrated how according to the States of Human Rights 1998/1999 (published by Human Rights Commission of Pakistan), more than 850 women in the province of Punjab were killed by their husbands, brothers, fathers or other relatives in 1998 and 1999. According to the same source, another 560 women were burned at home. Moreover the Progressive Women’s Association had tracked 3,560 women who were hospitalised after being attacked at home with fire, gasoline or acid between 1994 and 1999. General Musharraf said: “The government of Pakistan vigorously condemns the practice of so-called honour killings. Such acts do not find a place in our religion or law. Killing in the name of honour is murder and it will be treated as such.” However, these strong words have not been followed by action to increase investigations or prosecutions.

In this context it was suggested that public health programs, which the military could hardly oppose and indeed should support, would make a

difference. Centres for such programs – including special units for burn victims - should not wait for the return of civilian rule. These centres could serve several purposes besides medical treatment. They could gather accurate statistics about these crimes and provide publicity about crimes against women. They could educate women about their rights, attack gender inequality, work with like-minded NGOs and help dependent children.

A basic factor in such grassroots work is the teaching of literacy. While the High Commissioner had quoted a 38 percent literacy rate throughout Pakistan, a participant suggested that might be the figure for those who could simply write their name. The real literacy rate, according to the same participant, was under 20 percent (and lower for women). He further stated that the “mullahs” exploited religious illiterates and that universities should be involved in literacy programs. He mentioned that Pakistan would go nowhere unless literacy rates were improved, military spending reduced and the budget spent on education increased from its miserable two percent.

A diagram, entitled “Pakistan: Ecology of Governance”, was circulated by one participant. The diagram intended to illustrate the tensions in Pakistan society and the positive ‘area of consensus’, which he said was “a small area and getting smaller” and needed to be enlarged and focused upon. The participant argued that: “governance consists in the management of a series of tensions, not their elimination”. Elimination is a zero-sum game, which “produces revolution, and then stagnation”. There was, he thought, no future for Pakistan society without an influential part being retained by the military – but this must be reconciled with the rule of law. The diagram came in for some criticism from one participant who argued that Islam was not in opposition to any other group, that the rule of law had both Sharia and secular sides, and that ‘civil society’ was too broad a concept to be useful while NGOs – as small organizations operating in various fields – were generally discounted as a major factor. Most participants saw it as a useful, if simplified, clarification of the forces in play in Pakistan.

Regional dialogue through SAARC:

Several participants felt that it was important to see Pakistan in a regional context, since security and national unity were common concerns for every country in South Asia. Conversely, the military breeds upon national insecurity, and justifies its paramount position by the need to face dangers from neighbours or insurgents within the country. If civilians are to be in charge in stable societies, the dangers that threaten national security and national unity in every country in the region need to

be addressed and resolved. Sometimes it is better to tackle one source of tension at a time although sometimes tensions compound each other and some kind of package deal becomes the only solution. For example, both Pakistan and Sri Lanka have security concerns linked to India. Bangladesh has worries over river systems that originate in Nepal and India. It is possible that, through dialogue under SAARC auspices, that all these countries may be able to put their difficulties in a regional context, think with some pride in a regional way and agree on some interlocked solutions. One participant suggested that it was possible for India and Pakistan to be jointly persuaded, in such a forum, to sign both the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Measures and assistance through the Commonwealth:

It was noted that the two-year timetable, set by the Commonwealth for Pakistan's return to civilian rule, was in conflict with the three years-plus goal later set by the Supreme Court of Pakistan. There was agreement with Joseph Caron's statement that between now and the next meeting of CHOGM, there will be various assessments made of the progress achieved by Pakistan on the road to democracy, which may affect perceptions of the difference between the two time-tables. Furthermore, it was recognised that the Commonwealth was gaining some political credibility since the 1995 creation of the CMAG, although it was recalled that there was more opposition than agreement over the Commonwealth's role on human rights at the Heads of Government meetings in the early 1990s.

In the May 2 Statement of CMAG on Pakistan (*see* Appendix), the Group "expressed concern about the proposed exclusion of political parties in the local government elections and at the continued suspension of the Constitution." It also expressed "the Commonwealth's readiness, in the context of meaningful democratic process, to assist Pakistan with technical assistance in the area of democratic institutions and electoral reform, including the strengthening of the Election Commission of Pakistan." One participant, with much experience in elections and international affairs, suggested that 'restoring democracy' was too much related to the holding of elections. "There's not much talk about workable political parties". "The way to get to democratic rule is by educating the people." Mr. Caron replied by saying that Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy suggested that CMAG explore ways of helping Pakistan to develop more democratic parties. He agreed that democracy was "an emanation of society" and there was a need to nurture a disinterested middle-class first – perhaps through the work of NGOs. This was seen as a long-term effort.

One suggestion for short-term Commonwealth action involved running, a “Commonwealth Forum on Strengthening the Norms and Institutions of Parliamentary Democracy”. As a participant explained it, “the aim of the program would be to facilitate in-depth Pakistani discussion on key areas of repeated political failure, including government-opposition, parliament-executive and civil-military relations, and the reform of political parties. The program should concentrate on sharing the experience of both the newer and the older Commonwealth democracies.” On the other hand, the Musharraf regime should not be encouraged to reform parliamentary democracy. “The military government has neither the legitimacy nor the competence.”

Among the discussion about “milestones” in measuring Pakistan’s route to change, rather than looking at an imposed timetable of two to three years, there was the feeling that it was important to acknowledge the difference between CMAG’s other charges (Sierra Leone, the Gambia) and Pakistan. The military coups in the first two countries (which brought them under CMAG’s purview) had limited effect outside their own borders. Whereas Pakistan was a major player in a vast and populous region. Pakistan had to be treated in a more sophisticated and circumspect way, as a result. There were differing views, nevertheless, on whether the Commonwealth and Canada should keep up pressure on the Musharraf regime to honour or accelerate its timetable for the return to democratic rule. Against the regime’s view that it becomes a lame-duck administration the moment it names a date, many Pakistanis argue that previous its failure to do so “eroded its credibility by arousing fears that it will cling to power for as long as possible.” There was an echo of such views at the Roundtable.

Bilateral assistance and examples from Canada:

The first, and enduring, point made was the importance of maintaining linkages to encourage “agents of change” (especially women’s groups and human rights groups and those concerned with honour-killings) and to have ‘critical engagement’ with the military regime.

There were, in addition, at least half-a-dozen ways in which it was suggested that Canadian examples and experiences can be shared and Canadian assistance extended.

- *Technical advice and sharing of experience in maintaining national unity through some flexibility in federalism (including re-balancing) as well as showing pride in pluralism.* Canada can also offer technical advice on institutional and electoral reform.

- *Dialogue about ways to reduce the possession of small arms.* Pakistan is concerned about ‘de-weaponization’, and Mr. Axworthy has made it a special issue at the United Nations. There are good and bad lessons from Canada’s own experience.
- *Economic links and investment.* One participant, in calling for “a new road-map” in relations with Pakistan, suggested there was a major economic role here for Canada. Progress would be made, he said, if the Kashmir issue was resolved; further, if economic stability is achieved, the political will to undertake social reforms will follow – not *vice-versa*. Overseas Pakistanis can be a significant player in this field, making investment in the country’s development. It was also suggested Canada can offer experience and advice about revenue collection and taxation (GST experience is especially relevant).
- *Technology transfer for building infrastructure.* More basically, Canada can support indigenous efforts in public health and literacy programs. The training of nurses was one area in which Canada or Canadian-supported NGOs like the Aga Khan Foundation of Canada can help. The Aga Khan hospital in Karachi was cited as an excellent institution.
- *Speaking up in G7 Summit and Finance Ministers meetings about Pakistan and about the West’s past responsibility (in the Cold War) for the country’s entrenched power structure.* This could lead to using what influence this has gained in Islamabad to promote land reform, meanwhile using influence in the G7 and IFIs to ameliorate the effects of the structural adjustment program in Pakistan.
- *Continuous dialogue in broad terms between Pakistani-Canadians and their counterparts in Pakistan.* The propagation of Canadian values within Pakistan, including respect for democracy not merely its trappings.

The participants, noting that this list may appear to be a “grab bag” of activities and linkages, argued for the importance of building as coherent a set of policies as possible over the next several years, based on the principle of ‘critical engagement’. Participants and organizers hoped that the holding of the Roundtable and this summary of its discussions may contribute to a greater coherence of policies.

APPENDIX A

Text of General Pervez Musharraf's Speech

ISLAMABAD, Oct 17: The following is the text of speech by Chief Executive Gen Pervez Musharraf delivered on Sunday.

“Bismillah-Ar-Rehman-Ar-Rahim”

My dear countrymen,

Asalam-o-Alaikum. "Pakistan today stands at the crossroads of its destiny - a destiny which is in our hands to make or break. Fifty-two years ago, we started with a beacon of hope and today that beacon is no more and we stand in darkness. There is despondency, and hopelessness surrounding us with no light visible anywhere around. The slide down has been gradual but has rapidly accelerated in the last many years.

Today, we have reached a stage where our economy has crumbled, our credibility is lost, state institutions lie demolished; provincial disharmony has caused cracks in the federation, and people who were once brothers are now at each other's throat.

In sum, we have lost our honour, our dignity, our respect in the comity of nations. Is this the democracy our Quaid-I-Azam had envisaged? Is this the way to enter the new millennium?

Let us not be despondent. I am an optimist I have faith in the destiny of this nation; belief in its people and conviction in its future. We were not a poor nation as generally perceived. In fact we are rich. We have fertile land that can produce three crops a year. We have abundant water to irrigate these lands and generate surplus power. We have gas, coal and vast untapped mineral resources - and above all a dynamic and industrious people. All these await mobilization. We have only to awaken, join hands and grasp our destiny. For Allah helps those who help themselves.

My fellow Pakistanis, as you are aware I took over in extremely unusual circumstances - not of my making. It is unbelievable and indeed unfortunate that, the few at the helm of affairs in the last government were intriguing to destroy the last institution of stability left in Pakistan by creating dissension in the ranks of the armed forces of Pakistan. And who would believe that the Chief of Army Staff, having represented Pakistan in Sri Lanka, upon his return was denied landing in his own

country and instead circumstances were created which would have forced our plane either to land in India or crash.

Providence ultimately intervened. Praise be to Allah that the plane landed safely when barely seven minutes of fuel was left. I salute all my officers and men for acting courageously in the supreme interest of the nation. Most of all I salute our people who stood solidly with their armed forces at that critical hour.

Quite clearly, what Pakistan has experienced in the recent years has been merely a label of democracy not the essence of it. Our people were never emancipated from the yoke of despotism. I shall not allow the people to be taken back to the era of sham democracy but to a true one. And I promise you I will Inshallah.

My dear countrymen. The choice before us on 12th October was between saving the body (that is the nation) at the cost of losing a limb (which is the Constitution) or saving the limb and losing the whole body. The Constitution is but a part of the nation therefore, I chose to save the nation and yet took care not to sacrifice the Constitution. The Constitution has only been temporarily held in abeyance. This is not martial law, only another path towards democracy. The armed forces have no intention to stay in charge any longer than is absolutely necessary to pave the way for true democracy to flourish in Pakistan.

Ever since 12th October I have deliberated, carried out consultations and crystallized my views about the future course to be adopted. I wish to share these with you today.

My dear countrymen, our aims and objectives shall be:

- Rebuild national confidence and morale.
- Strengthen federation, remove inter provincial disharmony and restore national cohesion.
- Revive economy and restore investor confidence.
- Ensure law and order and dispense speedy justice.
- Depoliticise state institutions.
- Devolution of power to the grass-roots level.
- Ensure swift and across the board accountability.

Good governance is the prerequisite to achieve these objectives. In the past, our governments have ruled the people. It is time now for the governments to serve the people. The government I plan to institute shall comprise:

- Firstly: The President. On my request, President Rafique Tarar has very kindly agreed to stay.
- Second: A National Security Council headed by the Chief Executive with six members. These members will be Chief of Naval Staff, Chief of Air Staff, a specialist each in Legal, Finance, Foreign Policy and national affairs. A think tank of experts shall be formed as an adjunct to the National Security Council, to provide institutionalised advice and input.
- Three: A Cabinet of Ministers who will work under the guidance of the National Security Council.
- Four: The Provinces to be headed by a Governor, functioning through a small provincial cabinet.

All these appointments shall be made purely on the basis of professional competence, merit and repute.

Revival of Economy is critical. Our economy is in deep trouble and revolutionary steps are needed to put it back on track. The Pakistani people were subjected to betrayal of trust. Their hard earned money was frozen or taxed in violation of State commitment. We need to restore this trust.

To revitalize our economy in addition to measures like recovery of the looted national wealth – a task that will be ruthlessly be pursued, I am identifying policy guidelines.

Some of which are:

- Rebuilding of investors' confidence through stability and consistency in economic policies, and economic security. The objective is to encourage the local investors, overseas Pakistanis and foreign investors.
- Increase domestic savings.
- Carry out Pragmatic tax reforms.
- Turn around the state enterprises towards profitability.
- Boost agriculture and revive industry.
- Strict austerity measures.

Next aspect is accountability. Lack of accountability has resulted in corruption of horrendous proportion, threatening the very basis of our society. The term 'Ehtesab' has been abused to an extent that it has lost its meaning. There is thus a need to re-establish faith in the process of accountability.

The process of accountability is being directed especially towards those guilty of plundering and looting the national wealth and tax evaders. It is also directed towards loan defaulters and those who have had their loans rescheduled or condoned. The process of accountability will be transparent for the public to see. My advice to the guilty is to return voluntarily national wealth, bank loans and pay their taxes before the hand of law forces them to do so with penalty. As a last chance I urge all defaulters to come forth and settle their debts within a period of four weeks, after which their names will be published and the law will take its due course. They owe this to Pakistan and I expect their spirit of patriotism to guide them.

Cementing the Federation is very vital. This will be achieved through devolution of power, from the centre to the provinces and from the provincial to the local government as actually enshrined in the Constitution.

Media forms an integral part of statehood in this era of information. I have great regard and respect for the media; I trust it to play a positive and constructive role. I am a firm believer in the freedom of the press and am even considering to liberalise the policy on the establishment of private television and radio channels.

And now a few words on exploitation of religion. Islam teaches tolerance not hatred, universal brotherhood and not enmity, peace and not violence, progress and not bigotry. I have great respect for the Ulema and expect them to come forth and present Islam in its true light. I urge them to curb elements which are exploiting religion for vested interests and bringing bad name to our faith. I would like to reassure our minorities that they enjoy full rights and protection as equal citizens in the letter and spirit of true Islam.

I wish to reassure the International community that there is no change in our foreign policy. We will continue to honour international obligations and commitments as in the past. It will remain our constant endeavour to promote peace and stability in our region. We would like to maintain our policy of nuclear and missile restraint and sensitivity to global non-proliferation and disarmament objectives.

As for relations with India, let me at the outset congratulate Mr Atal Bihari Vajpayee on assumption of office as the Prime Minister of India. I welcome his offer for friendly relations and positively reciprocate.

At the turn of the century, South Asia stands at a crucial juncture of its history, 20th Century saw our transition to independence but the region has unfortunately remained mired in conflicts and economic deprivation.

Together Pakistan and India can change this scenario. For this objective both must sincerely work towards resolving their problems especially the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir. The people of Kashmir have made

great sacrifices for the achievement of their rights promised to them by the United Nations. We shall continue our unflinching moral, political and diplomatic support to our Kashmiri brethren in their struggle to achieve their right of self-determination. India must honour the UN resolutions and its own commitment to the people of Kashmir. It must also end its repression of the Kashmiri people and respect their fundamental human rights.

Pakistan would welcome unconditional, equitable and result-oriented dialogue with India. While, our armed forces are fully equipped and ready to defend our national sovereignty and territorial integrity, it is our desire that the situation on our borders with India and on the Line of Control should remain calm and peaceful. I take this opportunity to announce a unilateral military de-escalation on our international borders with India and initiate the return of all our forces moved to the borders in the recent past. I hope this step would serve as a meaningful confidence building measure.

"My dear countrymen, to conclude my address let me say that; We have hit rock bottom. We have no choice but to rise, and rise we will, Inshallah. Our actions shall Inshallah speak louder than words.

Therefore, my countrymen let us rise to the occasion and seize the opportunity.

"Before I close, I would like to give you a personal commitment. I hereby undertake to declare my tax returns and assets to be documented and open for public scrutiny.

And now I would like to share a prayer that I wrote for myself:

O Allah I promise my nation sincerity, honesty, integrity and unflinching loyalty. Give me:

- The vision to see and perceive the truth from the false.
- The wisdom to comprehend the problem and find its solution.
- The courage to do justice and the strength to do the right.

May Allah be with us all: Aameen

APPENDIX B

STATEMENT of CMAG, MAY 2, 2000

On PAKISTAN

Recalling the Communiqué of the Durban Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and the Report of the CMAG Ministerial Mission to Pakistan, CMAG reviewed developments in Pakistan since the Durban CHOGM. In the context of its mandate it decided to keep the situation in Pakistan under review and to recommend further measures if there was no speedy progress toward the restoration of democracy.

The Group noted that while the military regime had announced a timetable for non-party local government elections to be held later in the year, it had given no timeframe for provincial and parliamentary elections. The Group expressed concern about the proposed exclusion of political parties in the local government elections and at the continued suspension of the Constitution; as well as with regard to various restrictions imposed on democratic activities, processes and institutions, particularly the prohibition on demonstrations.

The Group also expressed concern over the circumstances surrounding the trial and sentencing of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the removal of senior judges following their refusal to take an oath of allegiance to the military regime.

In the absence of tangible progress towards a speedy restoration of democracy, CMAG decided to remain engaged with the Pakistani regime in pursuit of a definite commitment on a clear timetable for a full restoration of democracy.

The Commonwealth Secretary-General would visit Pakistan for the purpose of apprising the military regime of the Commonwealth's concerns. CMAG also decided to invite the Foreign Minister of Pakistan to the Group's next meeting to clarify Pakistan's intentions in regard to holding democratic elections at the provincial and national levels.

The Group expressed the Commonwealth's readiness, in the context of meaningful democratic process, to assist Pakistan with technical assistance in the area of democratic institutions and electoral reform, including the strengthening of the Election Commission of Pakistan.



United Nations

APPENDIX C

S/RES/1172 (1998)

6 June 1998

RESOLUTION 1172 (1998)

Adopted by the Security Council at its 3890th meeting
on 6 June 1998

The Security Council,

Reaffirming the statements of its President of 14 May 1998 (S/PRST/1998/12) and of 29 May 1998 (S/PRST/1998/17),

Reiterating the statement of its President of 31 January 1992 (S/23500), which stated, inter alia, that the proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction constitutes a threat to international peace and security,

Gravely concerned at the challenge that the nuclear tests conducted by India and then by Pakistan constitute to international efforts aimed at strengthening the global regime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and also gravely concerned at the danger to peace and stability in the region,

Deeply concerned at the risk of a nuclear arms race in South Asia, and determined to prevent such a race,

Reaffirming the crucial importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty for global efforts towards nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament,

Recalling the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and the successful outcome of that Conference,

Affirming the need to continue to move with determination towards the full realization and effective implementation of all the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and welcoming the determination of the five nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their commitments relating to nuclear disarmament under Article VI of that Treaty,

Mindful of its primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security,

1. Condemns the nuclear tests conducted by India on 11 and 13 May 1998 and by Pakistan on 28 and 30 May 1998;

2. Endorses the Joint Communiqué issued by the Foreign Ministers of China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America at their meeting in Geneva on 4 June 1998 (S/1998/473);

3. Demands that India and Pakistan refrain from further nuclear tests and in this context calls upon all States not to carry out any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion in accordance with the provisions of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty;

4. Urges India and Pakistan to exercise maximum restraint and to avoid threatening military movements, cross-border violations, or other provocations in order to prevent an aggravation of the situation;

5. Urges India and Pakistan to resume the dialogue between them on all outstanding issues, particularly on all matters pertaining to peace and security, in order to remove the tensions between them, and encourages them to find mutually acceptable solutions that address the root causes of those tensions, including Kashmir;

6. Welcomes the efforts of the Secretary-General to encourage India and Pakistan to enter into dialogue;

7. Calls upon India and Pakistan immediately to stop their nuclear weapon development programmes, to refrain from weaponization or from the deployment of nuclear weapons, to cease development of ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons and any further production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, to confirm their policies not to export equipment, materials or technology that could contribute to weapons of mass destruction or missiles capable of delivering them and to undertake appropriate commitments in that regard;

8. Encourages all States to prevent the export of equipment, materials or technology that could in any way assist programmes in India or Pakistan for nuclear weapons or for ballistic missiles capable of delivering such weapons, and welcomes national policies adopted and declared in this respect;

9. Expresses its grave concern at the negative effect of the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan on peace and stability in South Asia and beyond;

10. Reaffirms its full commitment to and the crucial importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty as the cornerstones of the international regime on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and as essential foundations for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament;

11. Expresses its firm conviction that the international regime on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons should be maintained and consolidated and recalls that in accordance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons India or Pakistan cannot have the status of a nuclear-weapon State;

12. Recognizes that the tests conducted by India and Pakistan constitute a serious threat to global efforts towards nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament;

13. Urges India and Pakistan, and all other States that have not yet done so, to become Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty without delay and without conditions;

14. Urges India and Pakistan to participate, in a positive spirit and on the basis of the agreed mandate, in negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, with a view to reaching early agreement;

15. Requests the Secretary-General to report urgently to the Council on the steps taken by India and Pakistan to implement the present resolution;

16. Expresses its readiness to consider further how best to ensure the implementation of the present resolution;

17. Decides to remain actively seized of the matter.

APPENDIX D

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

CHAIR:

Mr. Richard Harmston
Executive Director
South Asia Partnership Canada
1 Nicholas Street, Suite 200
Ottawa, ON K1N 7B7
Tel.: (613) 241-1333
Fax: (613) 241-1129
E-mail: sap@web.net

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS:

Mr. Joseph Caron
Assistant Deputy Minister
(Asia Pacific and Africa)
Department of Foreign Affairs
and International Trade
125 Sussex Drive
Lester B Pearson Tower A5
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2
Tel.: (613) 996-5095
Fax: (613) 994-1471

His Excellency Mr. Ferry de
Kerckhove
Canadian High Commissioner to
Pakistan
Canadian High Commission
Diplomatic Enclave, Ramna 5
P.O. 1042
Islamabad Pakistan
Tel.: 92-51-279-100
Fax: 92-51-279-110
Email: [ferry.de-kerckhove@dfait-
maeci.gc.ca](mailto:ferry.de-kerckhove@dfait-maeci.gc.ca)

Ms. Ingrid Hall
Department of Foreign Affairs
and International Trade
Director General
South and Southeast Asia Bureau
125 Sussex Drive
Lester B Pearson Tower A5
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2
Tel.: (613) 992-3372
Fax: (613) 996-5897
Email: ingrid.hall@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

INVITED PARTICIPANTS:

Mr. Tanveer Ahmed
National Federation of
Pakistani Canadians
2354 Ogilvie Road
Gloucester, ON K1J 7N6
Tel.: (613) 741-8881
Fax: (613) 745-4696

Mr. Kaleem Akhtar
Human Concern International
P.O. Box 3984, Station C
Ottawa, ON K1Y 4P2
Tel.: (613) 742-5948
Fax: (613) 742-7733
Email: hci@istar.ca

Ms. Mubarka Alam
Canadian Guild of Pakistani Women
16 Deerford Road
Willowdale, ON M2J 3J2
Tel.: (416) 491-3272 Fax: (416) 491-
1399 Email: sralam@interlog.com Mr.

Mohamed Bhabha
International Development and
Refugee Foundation
424 Freeman Circle
Oakville, ON L6H 4R3
Tel. & Fax: (905) 849-8083 Email:
mbhabha@home.com

Ms. Nusrat Jamil
International Network for the Rights of
Female Victims of Violence in
Pakistan
39 Thornbury Crescent
Nepean, ON K2G 6C5
Tel.: (613) 226-6706
Email: jami7866@yahoo.com

Mr. Abdul Aziz Khan
Pakistani Association of Quebec
7895 Rostand
Brossard, QC J4X 2R6
Tel. & Fax: (450) 466-0764
Email: khanaz@hotmail.com

Mr. Mohammed T. Khan
Pakistan-Canada Association
13039 Huntley Avenue
Surrey, BC V3V 1V1
Tel.: (604) 830-7706 cell 830-7706
Fax: (604) 594-0082

Mr. Tariq Amin Khan
South Asia Left Democratic Alliance
762 Annamore Road
Mississauga, ON L4Y 2V7
Tel.: (905) 949-0165
Fax: (905) 949-0247
Email: tariqk@yorku.ca

Ms. Zarina Khan
Canadian Council of Muslim Women
54 Haven Hurst Crescent
Ottawa, ON K1T 3G5
Tel.: (613) 247-0347
Fax: (613) 998-1241
Email: zkhan@vac-acc.qc.ca

Mr. Shadab E. Khokhar
International Christian AWAZ, Canada
227 Vodden Street East
PO Box 23504
Brampton, ON L6V 1N2
Tel: (905) 796-0718
Fax: (905) 456-9681
Email: icacan@aol.com

Mr. Nazeer Ladhani
Aga Khan Foundation of Canada
360 Albert Street, Suite 1220
Ottawa, ON K1R 1A4
Tel.: (613) 237-2532
Fax: (613) 567-2532
Email: nazeer@akfc.ca

Ms. Micheline Lévesque
Rights and Democracy
1001 De Maisonneuve Est, # 1100
Montréal, QC H2L 4P9
Tel.: (514) 283-6073
Fax: (514) 283-3792
Email: mlevesq@ichrdd.ca

Hon. Flora MacDonald
1103-350 Queen Elizabeth Driveway
Ottawa, ON K1S 3N1
Tel.: (613) 238-1098
Fax: (613) 238-6330

Mr. Naseem Mahdi
Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam,
Canada
10610 Jane Street
Maple, ON L6A 1S1
Tel.: (905) 832-2669
Fax: (905) 832-3220

Mr. Feroz Mehdi
CERAS
3680 rue Jeanne-Mance, bureau 440
Montréal, QC H2X 2K5
Tel.: (514) 982-6606
Fax: (514) 982-6122
Email: ceras@alternatives-action.ca

Mr. Andy Merchant
Canada-Pakistan Business Council
825 Bayview Avenue, Suite 1410
Thornhill, ON L3Y 7N2
Tel.: (905) 763-8281
Fax: (905) 763-8104

Mr. Robert Miller
Parliamentary Centre
255 Albert Street, Suite 802
Ottawa, ON K1P 6A9
Tel.: (613) 237-0143 ext. 303
Fax: (613) 235-8237
Email: miller@parl.gc.ca

Ms. Wendy Quarry
COWATER International
P.O. Box 22, Burritt's Rapid, ON K0G
1B0
Tel.: (613) 269-4500
Fax: (613) 269-4388
Email: wquarry@magma.ca

Professor Khalid Bin Sayeed
170 Fairway Hill Crescent
Kingston, ON K7M 2B4
Tel.: (613) 544-9480

Ms. Sadeqa Siddiqui
South Asia Women Community Centre
1035 Rachel East
Montréal, QC H2J 2J5
Tel.: (514) 528-8812
Fax: (514) 528-0896
Email: sawcc@cam.org

Professor Elliot Tepper
Carleton University
36 Inverness Avenue
Nepean, ON K2E 6N7
Tel.: (613) 225-8076
Fax: (613) 225-6775
Email: etepper@ccs.carleton.ca

Ms. Lynne Racine
Country Program Analyst
Pakistan/Afghanistan,
Asia Branch, CIDA
200 Promenade du Portage
Hull, QC K1A 0G4
Tel.: (819) 997-4747
Fax: (819) 953-0956
E-mail: lynne_racine@acdi-cida.gc.ca

OBSERVERS:

Ms. Janet Chater
Pakistan and Afghanistan Officer
South Asia Division
Department of Foreign Affairs
and International Trade
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2
Tel.: (613) 996-4097
Fax: (613) 996-5897
Email: janet.chater@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

Ms. Isabelle Valois
Pakistan Program Manager
South Asia Partnership Canada
1 Nicholas Street, Suite 200
Ottawa, ON K1N 7B7
Tel.: (613) 241-1333
Fax: (613) 241-1129
E-mail: sap@web.net

RAPPORTEUR:

Mr. Bruce Gallant
Privy Council Office

Mr. Clyde Sanger
299 First Avenue
Ottawa, ON K1S 2G7
Tel.: (613) 233-7133
Email: csanger@cyberus.ca

Ms. Pauline Kehoe
Director
Pakistan/Afghanistan,
Asia Branch, CIDA
200 Promenade du Portage
Hull, QC K1A 0G4
Tel.: (819) 997-0956
Fax: (819) 953-0956
E-mail: pauline_kehoe@acdi-cida.gc.ca

Mr. Scott Proudfoot
Deputy Director South Asia Division
Department of Foreign Affairs
and International Trade
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2
Tel.: (613) 996-4098
Fax: (613) 996-5897
Email: douglas.proudfoot@dfait-maeci.gc.ca