"Foreign Policy in a Young Democracy"

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Bismillah ir Rahmaan ir Raheem.

Assalam o alaikum. Vice Chancellor Adil Najam, Members of the Board of Governors, members of faculty, students, staff members and friends,

It is a great honour for me to be here. It is an emotional moment. LUMS has meant a lot to us. Being asked to deliver a lecture in front of former teachers, like Arif Zaman, is not an easy task. I'm humbled by it. As the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, I've been proud to represent to Pakistan at many venues, and been asked to speak at many venues, most recently including Oxford Union and Chatham House, but this is an honour like none before.

I want to spend some time today talking about foreign policy, and about what we may need to be doing better. Why, after more than sixty years, it feels like we've not taken advantage of the resources and talents that Allah has put at our disposal. Why we have not been able to deliver opportunity, equal opportunity, to all Pakistanis, despite having these amazing resources. Some of which we get to see through LUMS' amazing National Outreach Programme.

It is a great privilege for me to be here today because LUMS is a wonderful testament to the amazing talent, innovation, drive, commitment and vision that Pakistanis have for this country. From Syed Babar Ali Saahib, to Mr. Razak Dawood and the entire board, from the long line of deans and vice chancellors, and the long line of teachers that have made LUMS what it is, from the small MBA classes in the late 1980s, to the first BSc batches in the late 1990s—I was one of them—all the way to today, with a School of Science and Engineering, and initiatives like the National Outreach Programme and the Abdus Salam Chair, LUMS is a long narrative of inspiration and success. We are all proud of it. I am humbled that I had the chance to study here. No academic experience compares to it, and nowhere are you expected to work as hard.

I want to speak to you today about foreign policy primarily because I think that this is a good time in Pakistan's young history to begin to imagine Pakistan not necessarily as it has been in the past or as its detractors would like it to be, but rather as a manifestation of Pakistan's present and as citizens and lovers of Pakistan would like it to be, how it can be, should be, and must be. Three words to define it.

Stable, peaceful and prosperous.

This is the simple short form version of Pakistan that we aspire to. I can speak a great deal about the trials, tribulations and troubles that Pakistan has gone through, we all talk about them, read about them. Indeed is going through, to have reached this stage, but instead, I'd like to focus on foreign policy as an instrument that can help achieve this aspiration, or this vision of a stable, peaceful and prosperous Pakistan.

Foreign policy is instrumental in achieving stability and peace in Pakistan because stability and peace in Pakistan are partially dependent on events, people, groups and governments outside Pakistan.

This is not blaming others for instability or violence in Pakistan. Quite the contrary. It is instead, recognizing that we live in a world that is inter-connected and interdependent. If something is happening in our neighborhood, it has an impact on us. We have to pay attention. This makes our neighborhood important. Foreign policy's job is to recognize this importance. I'm going to explain to you, just how we've tried to do this in the last several years, and especially in the last several months.

But before I do that, I also want to mention the vital importance of foreign policy in achieving prosperity and creating an environment that is conducive to a prosperous Pakistan for the long-run. The logic for this is not particularly complex. Pakistan needs to be able to conduct trade with other countries and both attract the investment of and send investors to other countries in order to build the capital for long-term prosperity. Foreign policy is how we talk to other countries and what we talk about. Increasingly, we

talk to other countries as trade and investment partners, and increasingly we talk about how we can increase trade, improve the terms of our trade and ensure greater investment. I'll talk in greater detail about this aspect of our foreign policy too. LUMS students, I suspect, would be particularly interested in economic diplomacy. So we'll talk a bit about that.

First, let's talk about the neighborhood.

The most important world capital for Pakistan is Kabul. Let me say this again, so that its absolutely clear how central Afghanistan is to Pakistani foreign policy.

For Pakistan, the most important capital in the world is Kabul.

The government of Afghanistan is our most important partner, the opposition parties in Afghanistan, and the civil society of Afghanistan are our most important audiences. You may ask why?

Let me explain. It is not only because we have a deep and abiding sense of family with our Afghan brothers and sisters. We do. But in fact, that is not the reason at all.

The reason is much simpler.

A peaceful and stable Afghanistan is an absolute pre-requisite for stability and peace in Pakistan. This is undisputable. The incontrovertible evidence for this is in over thirty years of conflict. It is in the effects of conflict in Afghanistan on drug use, on displaced people and refugees, on Afghan and Pakistani cities, on two generations of Afghan children, on the culture and ecosystem within which Afghan and many Pakistani children are growing up. We don't need any further evidence. What we need is a clear understanding that conflict in Afghanistan has a regional dimension that makes continued violence unacceptable. Pakistan is the first to suffer at the hands of strife in Afghanistan, and the first to benefit from peace in Afghanistan.

There is one more lesson however that Pakistan, and we hope the rest of the world too, has learnt from the last thirty years. And that is that the solution to Afghanistan's problems cannot come from other countries or well-meaning initiatives or conferences in important capitals outside Afghanistan. The solution to Afghanistan's problems has to come from inside Afghanistan.

Solutions for Afghanistan have to come from Afghans. They have to be lead by Afghans. They have to be driven by Afghans. They have to be owned by Afghans.

In my recent travel to Afghanistan has reinforced this view. Thanks to the excellent diplomatic work of our ambassador and team in Kabul, we speak to the range of actors in Afghanistan, and the consensus we hear in Afghanistan is that the solutions in Afghanistan must be derived from an intra-Afghan process. We cannot tailor solutions for Afghanistan, agree among outside stakeholders and then impose it on the Afghans. Quite the opposite.

No country, and especially not Pakistan, has the authority or the right to intervene or interfere in this Afghan process. The process of reconciliation and peace in Afghanistan can only be whole and true and sustainable when it is Afghan-lead, Afghan-driven and Afghan-owned.

This has many implications. Perhaps the most important is that the notion of strategic depth that *neem* Af-Pak specialists are burdened with is dated. It is done. It is over with. We are in an era of government-to-government relations with Afghanistan that transcend the errors and follies of the past.

Let me relate an anecdote here. In a recent parliamentary hearing I was asked to articulate Pakistan's plans for Afghanistan for the next ten years. I responded, we don't have any. It is not for Pakistan to have plans for Afghanistan. If Pakistan is going to insist that our sovereignty is respected, we must respect the sovereignty of Afghanistan.

The proof of the lessons learnt is manifest at all levels. The vision for this has come from the very top in Pakistan. Do you know who was the only foreign leader that was invited to President Zardari's inauguration ceremony? It was President Hamid Karzai. Who was the first country to condemn the April 15 terror attacks in Kabul? It was Pakistan. Come what may, Afghanistan and Pakistan are destined to share in both our sorrows and in joys – and what is good for one country is good for the other, and what is bad for one country, is bad for the other.

This unprecedented clarity in our relations with Afghanistan is the product of an approach to foreign affairs that privileges long-term stability and peace in Pakistan above all considerations. It is neither benevolent, nor idealistic.

The importance of our neighborhood in Pakistan's foreign policy is perhaps as clearly expressed through our approach to Afghanistan as it is in our approach to one of our other neighbors, the one closest to where we sit: that is India.

It goes without saying that the relationship with India has been anything but stable or peaceful. However Pakistan has sought to change this, indeed to transform this relationship by approaching it in a positive, rather than a negative manner.

This is where foreign policy's role in contributing to prosperity comes in.

In an era in which two of Pakistan's immediate neighbors, China and India, have enjoyed sustained near-double-digit growth, we need to ask questions about why we have not enjoyed the same. Some of the answers are reasonable and real. We've faced an insurgency and a terrorist campaign that has choked off much of the foreign investment that a growing economy needs. We've also struggled over many decades to implement a governance framework that engages and cultivates private sector growth in the way that it should. But perhaps most of all, we've failed to take advantage of the economic opportunities that God, through our geography, has blessed us with.

Normalizing trade with India has been an issue that no government, military or elected has wanted to touch for fear of raising the ire of hawkish folks that have neither a clear vision for Pakistan, nor any evidence to support their oft-bombastic claims. We decided we would look at the issue from a purely national interest lens. If trade normalization would help Pakistan become stronger, and more prosperous, we would look for a politically viable way to pursue it, whilst sustaining the principled positions we have taken on a range of issues with India.

When we ask the experts, the evidence on normalizing trade is overwhelming. Greater trade with India helps Pakistani consumers and helps Pakistani exporters. It helps grow Pakistan's GDP and we believe, as a bonus, it also helps make better a relationship that has for too long been based on mistrust and the baggage of history.

So, as we normalize trade with India, we do two things. First we serve Pakistan's vision for a stable, peaceful and prosperous Pakistan. Second, we put in place the conditions that will enable Pakistan to better pursue its principled positions on a range of issues, from Siachen, to Sir Creek, to a range of water issues to the most important of all, the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

As you can see, the essence of Pakistani foreign policy today, as it pursues stability, peace and prosperity, is rooted in the region. Afghanistan, India, and of course, China and Iran, make up the immediate region, and so relations with these countries are vital. But relations with countries with interests in the region are also vital.

That is why you will note, if you follow the subtext carefully, that Pakistan is constantly improving its relationship with countries like Russia, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, and indeed all of the Central Asian republics.

There is one other group of countries that is also deeply interested in the region, and our relationship with these countries is therefore, quite key to our foreign policy. These are, lead by the United States, the countries involved in NATO/ISAF in Afghanistan.

With the US itself, Pakistan's parliament itself has now afforded the executive with the go ahead to communicate to the American government, the Pakistani people's desire for ownership of an open and transparent bilateral relationship that helps each country achieve our mutual interests together. These interests are wide-ranging, and include things like counter-terrorism and things like economic cooperation. Our parliament and government however have made it very clear that this joint pursuit of common and mutual interests must not come at the expense of Pakistan's long-term interests, it must not come at all costs, through any means necessary. Pakistan has made clear its position on issues like drones and it has made clear how deeply the Salala attacks on Pakistani soldiers have impacted the Pakistani people. Now, as was the case last week with Ambassador Marc Grossman's visit to Pakistan, we are working with our American friends to establish an ecosystem in which we can both do for each other, the things that we can mutually benefit from. We believe there is a good ending here for both Pakistan and America, but most of all, there must a good ending for our Afghan brothers and sisters, from Mazar Sharif, to Panjshir, to Kabul, to Kandahar. All our Afghan brothers and sisters.

The other countries that make up NATO and ISAF are also of great importance to Pakistan. Recently, Pakistan was afforded a trade concession by the European Union, through the strong support of the UK and Germany, two countries that are also part of NATO/ISAF. Turkey is a country that Pakistan has a long and deep history of brotherly relations with. Turkey too is part of NATO/ISAF. The UAE is a country that is home to over one million Pakistanis, and a country that again is a historic and brotherly country, is also part of NATO/ISAF.

Our relations with all these countries are of vital importance—both for reasons of stability and peace in the region and in Pakistan, and for reasons of prosperity in the region and in Pakistan.

So what does all this have to do with democracy you may ask?

Everything.

For the long stretches of time during which Pakistan has been run by the military, the approach that Pakistan has taken to foreign relations and foreign policy has been deeply personalized, and not in a good way—not to the end of serving Pakistan's national interests. Other countries have pursued their interests with Pakistan through the person of the dictator of the day, rather than through the system designed to produce public policy—the parliament as the overarching provider of frameworks, and the executive as the provider of the details and the implementor.

Repeated dictatorial interventions have therefore undermined the institutional mechanisms designed to produce, and deliver public policy, and especially foreign policy.

So when Pakistan has had to contend with a crisis, the system has had to learn how to deal with it. During a dictatorship, there is no system. The dictator simply uses his whims to do what he thinks is best.

When we look at the legacy of this way of doing things, we're left with a pretty devastating picture. Each one of the major foreign policy crises that we have had to deal with can be traced to the autocratic method in which dictatorships deal with decision-making.

The alternative is democracy. Yes it can be painful. Yes, it can be chaotic. We've seen crisis after crisis dealt with by democracy in Pakistan with results that are nothing short of transformational.

The most recent iteration, which is the unanimously adopted parliamentary resolution of April 12, 2012 represents the pinnacle of this transformational change. This may not be the first time foreign policy was discussed in the parliament, but this surely was the first time we put a relationship on hold to allow parliament the time to synthesize the collective wisdom of the people of Pakistan—all 200 million of them—and define the parameters for this relationship.

The dual principals underlying the decision to empower parliament to provide the framework for a post-Salala relationship with the United States was simple.

First, the relationship was too important to be continued without the ownership of the people, and second, the Salala attack was too important to continue the relationship without a fundamental change in the way we, Pakistan and the US, relate to each other.

Today, while newspapers breathlessly report the failure of talks, and the crisis in the relationship, we are confident that we are better placed than ever before to conduct foreign policy with the United States. The parliament has resoundingly endorsed the need for Pakistan to have a strong relationship with the US. Whatever takes place in the future between our countries will be under the canopy of ownership of the people. In a democracy, nothing could be more powerful.

Of course, in a young democracy things are fluid and it is difficult to convince people that young and growing democratic institutions can deliver. And so the cynicism and skepticism of people is understandable, but it is not accurate.

Let's take yesterday's drone attack. You may have noted that Pakistan immediately condemned the attack.

Of course, in the unanimously adopted parliamentary resolution of April 12, 2012, parliament has asked that all foreign fighters be expelled from Pakistan. Pakistan shares many of the same counter-terrorism concerns as the United States.

But Pakistan has repeatedly stressed that the instruments used to fight militancy, insurgency and terror must be within the framework of international law, and must not add to the long-term burden of countering terror and extremism in the region.

Most importantly, the free and democratically elected parliament of Pakistan has repeatedly expressed its disapproval of drone strikes as an instrument of counter-terrorism in the region. The recent parliamentary review clearly also express the parliament's wish to see a complete cessation of drone strikes on Pakistani territory.

This is the delicate balance that Pakistani foreign policy must constantly seek to maintain – to articulate Pakistan’s positions to its friends, partners and neighbors, and to ensure that those positions are reflective of the will and collective wisdom of the people of Pakistan, as we would in any democracy.

Once again, let me just say what a joy it is to be here at LUMS today. I’m keen to have a productive and candid discussion with you all.

Thank you.