

THE *pakistani american*

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends:

This is my second report to you this year through our newsletter, *The Pakistani American*, the first one contained in the earlier issue of September 1999.

In that month, Pakistani American Congress was represented by Dr Naeem Rathore, advisor, and Mr Shahid Ahmed Khan, treasurer, in the Overseas Pakistanis Convention held in Islamabad. On September 30, I met alongwith other leaders of the Pakistani American community the then Foreign Minister, Mr Sartaj Aziz, at our Embassy in Washington DC. Detailed discussion was held on US-Pakistan relations subsequent to the Kargil situation in Kashmir.

By the end of September 1999, about 70 US congressmen had sent letters to President Clinton urging him to appoint an envoy to mediate between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir dispute since it may lead to a nuclear confrontation between these countries. More than 16,000 citizens had sent petitions to the President and Congressmen urging them to send a fact finding mission to the Indian occupied Kashmir in order to investigate very tragic violations of human rights there.

Dr Wasiullah Khan and I met and had a long conversation with Mr Abdul Ghani Lone, executive member of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference of Kashmir. Mr Lone addressed the ISNA and American Muslim Alliance conferences in September/October 1999.

After the change of Government in Pakistan on October 12, I had a chance to visit my family in Pakistan which facilitated a long meeting with my personal friend, Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar in Islamabad. The weekly *Pakistan Today* carried a detailed report of this meeting in its December 17, 1999 issue. We thoroughly discussed Afghanistan, Pakistan-US and Pakistan-India relations, relations with other countries of the region, the imperative of Pakistan's economic revival and other issues.

Our Executive Committee had a long and fruitful meeting in Edison NJ on Sunday, October 24, 1999 in which six of the seven members participated. The Executive Committee confirmed the appointment of a nine member committee to consider amendments in the PAC constitution. Five of these

members met in Philadelphia PA on Saturday, December 4, 1999. Chaired by Dr Arshad Mirza, Dr Hafeez Malik, Dr Zaheer Chaudhry, Dr Wasiullah Khan and myself did a thorough job of proposing amendments in our constitution. Minutes of that meeting were drafted by Dr Hafeez Malik, Chairman of our Advisory Council and the proposed amendments will be presented for adoption in a special meeting of our Board of Directors. The same day Dr Hafeez Malik also chaired a meeting of our seven member Advisory Council in which Dr Naeem Rathore, Dr Zaheer Chaudhry, Dr Ashraf Toor and myself participated. Dr Arshad Mirza and Dr Wasiullah Khan attended the meeting by special invitation. The discussion focussed on what PAC and its now more than thirty affiliate organizations can do for those Pakistanis who do not belong to the privileged industrialists, businessmen and professionals groups. Many of them need help in achieving legal status, higher education, jobs etc. The local organizations of Pakistani-Americans also need to work with other ethnic communities to focus on local issues and provide charitable services.

With the new year, many stressful situations developed. The hijacking of an Indian Airlines plane to Afghanistan in December 1999 stirred anti-Pakistan lobbies to malign and demonize Pakistan and blame it for all "terrorist" activities. Some anti-Pakistan resolutions were moved in the US Congress. *Alhamdulillah* the PAC leadership rose to the occasion and all these nefarious efforts were thwarted.

Our new Ambassador Dr Maleeha Lodhi called a major conference of the Pakistani-American leadership on Saturday, January 29, 2000 at the Embassy in Washington DC. About 20 office-bearers and directors of PAC from ten states met the Ambassador at noon separately, and then participated in the three-hour general meeting. The Ambassador pleaded that in view of the India-US relations getting stronger and aggressive campaigning of Indian lobbies Pakistan has to be properly positioned. The country's economic revival, nabbing widespread corruption, cohesion among the four provinces and a satisfactory defence potential are the new government's highest priorities. She said Pakistani-Americans need to convince the White House and state Department staff and the US legislators that President Clinton must include Pakistan in his March 2000 visit to South Asia. You are well aware of the success of efforts we all made for this purpose.

The Executive Committee had decided last year that PAC

THE PAKISTANI AMERICAN CONGRESS CO-SPONSORED and its treasurer Mr Shahid Ahmed Khan led a team of dedicated Pakistani-Americans to organize the first Pakistan Millennium Conference on October 9, 1999 on the campus of Boston University in order to discuss issues of education, technological development, healthcare, economic growth etc. which face Pakistan. Eminent Pakistani-Americans like Mr Shaukat Aziz of Citicorp, Dr Shahid Javed Burki, Dr Ishrat Hussain and Dr Pervez Hasan of the World Bank, Dr Shahid Hussain of UNDP and Mr Safi Quraishy of Skyline Ventures participated in the conference. The program included four panel discussions. Over 250 persons, including prominent professionals, entrepreneurs and educationists attended the conference. The banquet session was addressed by Mr Ahsan Iqbal,

Pakistan Minister of Planning and author of *Vision 2010 for Pakistan*, and Ambassador Tariq Fatemi.

Some of the conference resolutions focussed on increasing the number of information technology professionals and export of software, developing the country's infrastructure, increasing social spending, and utilizing the resource pool of overseas Pakistanis. The conference was widely acclaimed.

PAC TREASURER MR SHAHID AHMED KHAN HAS been appointed by Governor Cellucci of Massachusetts on the state's Asian American Commission. Congratulations.

PAC'S CHICAGO CHAPTER, INDUS SOCIETY, ORGANIZED a successful fundraiser for Congressman David Bonior on Monday, March 6, 2000 at East-West University. About \$8,000 were raised. Eminent leaders of the Muslim communities of Chicago participated.

INDUS SOCIETY'S 13TH PAKISTAN DAY EVENT WAS organized on Saturday, March 25, 2000 in a local high school hall. The new executive headed by Dr Ajaz Alvi took over from Mr Tasleem Raja, the past chairman. Chairman-elect Dr Wasiullah Khan proposed that Pakistani ladies should form an organization called "Daughters of the Pakistan Movement." He also said the concept of an Islamic republic should be redefined to focus on large-scale economic prosperity, higher levels of educational and technological development, longer life-spans of men and women through better health care, family and neighborhood organizations to promote good and to curb evil, justiciable fundamental rights and freedoms, political and administrative institutions promoting justice and benevolence for all, and defence capability to combat aggression and oppression everywhere. Over 600 persons attended and enjoyed the program which included poetry and music

presentations.

A PAC DIRECTOR, MR SYED RIFAT MAHMOOD HAS BEEN nominated by the California Republican Party to contest for the 18th (Alameda County San Francisco Bay Area) seat of the California State Assembly in the November 2000 election. He is an active member of the California Republican Party. Congressman Tom Campbell was the first to endorse his candidacy. Syed Rifat Mahmood is a former president of UMA (United Muslims of America) and a founding member of the Islamic Society of East Bay. He is an entrepreneur and successful small businessman of Union City, California. He came to the US from Pakistan in 1969 and earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Armstrong College.

M WASIULLAH KHAN

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should start organizing one or two conferences and seminars every year in Pakistan in order to meet government officials, think-tank groups, intelligentsia and politicians, and focus on the problems our fatherland is facing. To that end, we had a highly acclaimed gathering in Lahore on April 23, 2000 in honor of visiting US Congressman David Bonior. Elsewhere in this newsletter, a detailed report of this event is being reproduced which highlights its success. The next day, April 24, the PAC delegation met for two hours the Punjab Governor Mohammad Safdar and discussed transfer of information technology, development of higher education and other important issues. On April 27, I separately met Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar and members of four think-tank groups in Islamabad. On May 1, I

met the Chief Executive General Pervez Musharraf for over an hour at his residence. This was an exceedingly important meeting in which all aspects of Pakistan's internal and external situation and the role of Pakistani-Americans were discussed in detail.

We plan to hold our first annual conference in Islamabad this fall.

Very soon you will be receiving information about the "Eighth Pakistan Day at the Capitol Hill" event scheduled for June 6 and 7, 2000. Individually and collectively, we should do everything to make this event an unprecedented success.

I am very grateful to my colleagues of the PAC for all the efforts they have made in the organization's activities.

May God Almighty bless you all. *Pakistan Paindabad*

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India does not deserve UN Security Council seat: Bonior

LAHORE: April 23: US Congressman David Bonior on Sunday opposed the moves to make India a permanent member of the UN Security Council, saying a country which had not followed the UN resolutions should not become the permanent member.

Mr Bonior, a Democratic whip in the US Congress, was addressing a reception hosted by the Pakistani American Congress, a US based organization of Pakistanis living there, at a local hotel. He is considered to be a friend of Pakistan and has helped Pakistani cause in difficult times.

The reception was attended by Lahore Corps Commander Lt-Gen. Khalid Maqbool and a select gathering of politicians, doctors, lawyers, educationists, Pakistanis living in the US and officials of the American consulate in Lahore.

Prominent among them were Mian Muhammad Azhar, Mian Afzal Hayat, Fakhre Imam, Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri, Ejazul Haq, Ahsan Iqbal, Chaudhry Anwar Aziz, S M Zafar, Dr Murtaza Arain and Mr and Mrs Waheed Akbar.

Pakistani American Congress President Dr Riaz Ahmad introduced the US Congressman who, he said, had been helping Pakistan on issues like the post-nuclear test US sanctions and passing of the Brown Amendment.

During his three-day stay in Pakistan, Mr Bonior has met Chief Executive General Pervez Musharraf and visited camps of Kashmiri refugees in Azad Kashmir. He was scheduled to leave for India on Monday and to visit the Occupied Kashmir.

Addressing the reception and replying to questions Mr Bonior said the Security Council should be expanded, giving representation to developing nations of the South. And India should be given a chance to claim the seat only if it addresses the Kashmir issue, he said.

Mr Bonior said it was the duty of India and Pakistan to maintain peace in

the region. But by recently increasing its defense budget, New Delhi wanted to escalate tension, he said.

"I have met General Musharraf who is willing to talk to anybody who wants to discuss the Kashmir issue any time," he said.

He acknowledge the concern shown by a participant that President Clinton's recent visit to South Asia had given the impression that Washington was tilting towards New Delhi.

"Mr Clinton had talked to the Indian and Pakistani governments directly and strongly on the Kashmir issue which is a question of what Kashmiris want and not what New Delhi and Islamabad want. We understand the dilemma there.

"We could have done a better job by making things more clear while talking to the Pakistani nation. And it is correct that India exploited the situation after Mr Clinton's visit. But it's a mistake on its part if it fails to understand the point," Mr Bonior said.

He said he will highlight the real situation on the Kashmir issue clearly and talk to Mr Clinton on the impressions being created after his visit to South Asia.

Mr Bonior said efforts should be made for an opening of a dialogue on the Kashmir issue. But at least there should be an immediate cessation of hostilities and violence against civilians by Indian troops and paramilitary forces and shelling and shooting across the LoC.

"We need go stop violence on both sides. I will go to India with hopes that we can at least start talking on the issue," he said.

Mr Bonior said like the people in Middle East, Northern Ireland and Balkan states, Kashmiris deserved peace and justice. "Every hand was raised when on Saturday I asked the refugees in Azad Kashmir who among them had lost a dear one in the Occupied Kashmir," he said.

He said the issue of Kashmir had not been able to gain world attention because of the lack of interest shown to it by the international press.

Regarding the US-Pakistani relations, Mr Bonior said it had been a long journey. "But now we are at a critical juncture of it as militarization, democratization and economic deprivation may confront us. I will do whatever I can to improve the relations," he said.

He hoped that the day for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan was not very far. In America, he said, the democratic experience had been a work in progress where initially the voting right was given only to the white males owning property.

"We find that democracy is not a destination but a journey whose path is uneven most of the time."

Mr Bonior said democracy in Pakistan was now a controversial issue. He said he was happy to observe that the present government was addressing the issues of human rights, honor killing, child labor, devolution of power and reduction of voters age to 18 years.

Replying to a question regarding the charge of terrorism against Pakistan, he said Islamabad had been strongly opposing terrorism. Pakistani people wanted to invest in basic education, health services and basic infrastructure and wanted to attain the status of a great nation in the world.

The US Congressman quoted Allama Iqbal and the Quaid-I-Azam and said a change would occur and "is occurring in Pakistan".

He said he would visit the held Kashmir which, he said is known for its beauty and suffering of men and women struggling for justice.

Intikhab Hanif
Dawn
April 24, 2000

A Brief Introduction

HISTORY AND MISSION: The

Pakistani American Congress was established in the inaugural convention held in March 1991 in Chicago as a national organization of Pakistani Americans in the United States. An ad-hoc committee of interested Pakistani Americans was, however, formed in Washington DC in July 1990 to prepare for this inaugural convention. Over thirty organizations of Pakistani Americans in various urban areas of the US are affiliated to the Congress and function as its chapters in various states of the nation. The objectives of the Congress include representing and promoting the interests of Pakistanis residing in the US, preserving and fostering Pakistani culture and heritage, building communication networks, information clearing houses and think-tanks of talent and expertise involving and serving Pakistani Americans and their organizations, and fostering friendship, understanding and cooperation between Pakistanis and the American society and institutions.

ACHIEVEMENTS

◆ Launched a nation-wide successful campaign in 1993 to keep Pakistan from being declared a terrorist state.

◆ Since July 1993, holds an annual Pakistan Day at the Capitol Hill, Washington DC, in which scores of US congressmen and senators participate and address on the importance of US-Pakistan relations. This activity has led to strengthening the Pakistan Caucus of US congressmen and senators.

◆ Undertook a Kashmir project in 1994 which produced a book: *Kashmir – a Happy Valley, a Valley of Death* by Prof. William Baker, and which led to many resolutions of the US Congress on Kashmir and India-Pakistan conflict.

◆ Led a campaign for the passage of Brown Amendment in the US Senate in 1995 which got arms worth hundreds of millions of dollars released to Pakistan.

◆ Vigorously participated in many successful campaigns for the replacement of anti-Pakistan senators and congressmen by more friendly ones.

◆ Subsequent to nuclear tests of May 1998, held effective meetings with high level State Department officials and top Pakistani leadership.

◆ Launched successful campaigns in 1999-2000 to counter Indian lobbies' effort to malign Pakistan in the case of hijacking of the Indian Airlines plane to Afghanistan and in other "terrorist" activities, to thwart many anti-Pakistan resolutions moved in the US Congress, and to convince US legislators and the White House and State Department staff for President Clinton's visit to Pakistan in March 2000.

◆ Organized as well as co-sponsored seminars and conferences on important issues in various cities of the US and Pakistan.

◆ Promoted relations between the US and Pakistani think-tanks to contribute to more effective policy formation for better US-Pakistan relations and the overall development of Pakistan.

◆ Contributed to effective coverage in the print and electronic media on issues and views important and beneficial to Pakistan.

There is no question that much more needs to be done. The Congress invites all Pakistani Americans and their organizations to join in a united effort to pursue successes which other ethnic and religious minorities have already achieved. **MWK**

THE PAKISTANI AMERICAN CONGRESS

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