



National Assembly of Pakistan

**Report of
the Committee on Foreign Affairs**

Dec 2013–Jun 2014

Presented by
Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari,
Chairman



Report of National Assembly Committee on Foreign Affairs

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Report of National Assembly Committee on Foreign Affairs



FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK



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From the Chairman's Desk



“It is my pleasure to present the first report of the Standing Committee of National Assembly on Foreign Affairs. In fact, it is an honor for me that this Standing Committee is the first to launch its report in the newly elected Legislature. I also feel highly privileged to hold the Chairmanship of this important committee. Keeping in mind the significance of issues under the jurisdiction of this committee, I am eager to set new standards for improved performance of the committees in the policy process in lieu of their increasing influence in this regard. I am committed to pursue my responsibilities with transparency, parliamentary oversight and have public accountability in the entire ambit of the committee's work.

I envision to re-activate the committee from scratch since it has been largely inactive in its previous tenures. I am grateful to all the distinguished members of the committee for their generous confidence in me to hold this important position. Since my election on December 6, 2014, I have endeavored to ensure that the committee's work is always representative of its diverse membership. It is evident from this report that the Foreign Affairs Committee is the first to take the initiative of sharing a work plan for the year 2014.

As an emerging democracy, Pakistan does not have an established norm of Public Hearings in the committees. We consider that public input is very important to strengthen the committee system. Since it is pertinent for this strategic committee to provide input to the government on issues of national importance, we have started a process of holding Panel Discussions. In this regard we invited noted experts from the academia to share their insight on our relations with major countries of the world. We started with countries with which our relations are the most crucial from the security perspective. Deliberations on Afghanistan, United States and China have already been held. We also produced a policy document to direct our relations with Afghanistan. We are committed to continue this practice in future and add more countries to our area of focus.



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It is my pleasure to inform the committee of the first-ever website of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, which can be accessed at the following URL:

<http://www.na.gov.pk/foreignaffairs/>

I am thankful to the Honorable Speaker, Sardar Ayaza Sadiq, for supporting and empowering the committees. I am also keenly grateful to Ministry of Foreign Affairs for being at our disposal whenever we request information. I am also thankful to the Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Relations, Mr. Sartaj Aziz, for his comprehensive briefings to the committee and conveying the Ministry's input. We look forward to the continued support of the National Assembly Secretariat, which has been very cooperative, especially the input and experience of Syed M. Jawad Murtaza Naqvi, Secretary Committee.

I appreciate the efforts of Ms. Sonia Sadaf, Young Parliamentary Associate working with the committee, who compiled this report.”

Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari

Chairman



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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Executive Summary

This is the first report of the Standing Committee of National Assembly on Foreign Affairs after its reconstitution and the election of Mr. Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari as its Chairman on December 6, 2014.

The report covers the limited span when the committee was just taking off after its formation, i.e. from December 2013 to June 2014.

During the period covered in this report, eight meetings have already taken place. The minutes of the meetings present the meaningful discussions held under the umbrella of this committee, ranging from budgetary to foreign policy recommendations.

The most significant parts of this report are the ‘analysis by the Chairman Mr. Leghari on Pakistan’s foreign policy’ and the ‘agenda for the year 2014’, which he prepared in consultation with his colleagues.

Another worth-mentioning aspect of this report is the comprehensive policy document on Afghanistan, which was prepared after holding three meetings dedicated to thoroughly exploring the related issues. An in-depth analysis of issues pertaining to our long-term and stable relationship with Afghanistan was carried out.

The meetings of the Chairman with foreign delegations and his correspondence with representatives of other states is also a testimony of the fact that a more pro-active role is being pursued to enhance our ties with the international community. Meetings of the Chairman with the Indian High Commissioner, Dr. T.C.A. Raghavan, German Deputy Head of Mission, Peter Felton, Turkish Ambassador, S. Babür Girgin, and, Chief Representative, JICA, Mr. Mitsuyoshi Kawasaki, are also featured in this report along with the Chairman’s correspondence with the Head of National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of Islamic Consultative Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This committee also has the honor to be the first one in the Pakistan’s parliamentary history to host a foreign ambassador in its meeting. The Chinese Ambassador, Sun Weidong, was invited by the Committee to have an interactive session with the committee members.



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Given the significance of transparency in the committee's processes, media reporters were also invited to participate in most of the meetings of the Committee. Unfortunately, we could not host the media during our in-camera meetings on Afghanistan, the US and China in lieu of the sensitivity of information. This was unavoidable in order to fulfill our commitment to present the public with well-prepared findings.



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ANALYSIS BY THE CHAIRMAN ON PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY



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Analysis by the Chairman on Pakistan's Foreign Policy

The goal behind the re-constitution of the Foreign Affairs Standing Committee was to strengthen its role, to have it adopt a more pro-active stance. It is hoped that we would lay biyearly reports before the House. At this point, I would also like to invite those committee members -- who would like to contribute -- to feel free to write briefs on key developments and concerns and other regional and international issues they feel are important to bring to the notice of the parliament and the Foreign Ministry.

Our shared work plan for 2014 reflects the same spirit of inclusiveness encouraging participation and having a number of voices onboard to develop understanding and improving perspectives.

Keeping this in mind I would like propose the continuation of expert panel discussions on key issues. Our initiative to invite ambassadors and diplomatic staff to our meetings and discussions is a healthy precedent and useful, not only for widening our perception of the others' concerns but also as an important diplomatic tool to improve relations with our allies and friends.

Take for example our meeting with the Chinese Ambassador whose candid talk on areas that need improvement have been noted. While Pakistan-China's political, economic and defence ties are on the right track, cultural and social ties need more work. This is something the Foreign Ministry should include in its dossier on the two states' bilateral relations. We plan to expand it to include other countries.

As mentioned in my message, our website will offer more detailed information on meetings with foreign delegations and on the seminars and discussions we host, which will prove to be a useful tool for researchers, journalists and foreign think tanks.

Our discussions on Afghanistan and the consequent policy document merits study, because of the in-depth analytical discussions involving academia, experts and Foreign Office officials pertaining a key diplomatic relationship. With the exit of the International forces from Afghanistan and the takeover of a new government in Kabul, which may be more vocal than even the Karzai administration in holding Pakistan responsible for the security situation there, it is vital that we continuously assess the developments on a regular basis and have follow up



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meetings. I intend to flag this issue with other respected members as it is an evolving relationship and improvement in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations are key in bringing stability to both countries.

The ongoing operation in North Waziristan is also in my opinion expected to have a bearing on our relations with Kabul. Afghanistan has long stressed on our alleged reticence to have a large scale operation against militant strongholds on that agency, which they allege hosts many of the Haqqani insurgents and key members of the Mullah-Omar led Taliban. We had to bear a lot of criticism internationally about the delay in this operation that the international community, particularly the United States and Afghanistan, felt would be the deal breaker in crushing the Taliban. It is unfortunate that our allies, especially those who we have been helping throughout this difficult period were hostage to such a myopic perception. The logistical arrangements and more importantly the political consensus are two vital ingredients to make any operation a success. The success the military operations obtained in other parts of Fata (Swat, Bajaur, Mohmand and South Waziristan) are clear examples of how the civilian administration and military working in conjunction can help defeat militancy and reintegrating tribal areas that had come under militants control back into the mainstream.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's government has always been a proponent of peace and it is commendable that the PM allowed considerable time for talks with the Taliban. Launching an operation against insurgents on home territory is never easy as civilian casualties and displacement of civilians are issues that cannot be avoided. But because of the obduracy of the Taliban and their refusal to desist from launching terror attacks, the decision to launch the operation was taken in June.

It is hoped that Kabul will also cooperate and help Pakistan in delivering Pakistani Taliban currently on the Afghan side to make the operation a success. Because of the porous nature of the border and the strong ethno-tribal linkages between the Afghan side and our side, it is extremely difficult to monitor and seal the borders. It is important that we stress on the need for cooperation with our Afghan counterparts.



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On the political side, we need to have more interaction with the Afghan parliamentarians to avoid misperceptions and dispel the air of mistrust that has crept in because of the security situation.

This is especially important, as there has been a sharp rise in mistrust and a lot of blame has been leveled against Pakistan's security establishment for aiding the Taliban insurgency in the country and also for abetting terrorism there. We must engage more and help reduce this crippling mistrust.

While Pakistan wants to improve relations with India, we must also remind ourselves that a firm but friendly stand with New Delhi will be more beneficial for our national interests in the long term. Though Mr. Sharif's reaching out to PM-elect at the time Narendra Modi paved the way for an invite to New Delhi and some easing of the tension that had been building up before the Indian general election in anticipation of a hostile BJP government under Modi, relations between us and New Delhi are far from ideal. We would like to see more trade and stronger economic ties as well as liberal visa regime allowing more people to people contact, but, we must not forget that key issues continue to pose deterrents. It is my recommendation that the Foreign Ministry upon advice of the PM, and in consultation with other members of the committee chalk out clear guidelines on Pakistan's policy on key issues like Kashmir, Sir Creek, Siachin and a very key issue of water distribution when we hold discussions and engage with media. A contradictory and uncertain stance on these issues especially when it comes to talks with Indians has cost us some loss of credibility. Our engagement with the media must also include relaying the message that certain lines cannot be crossed. A show of solidarity is important on these issues.

We must bear in mind that we cannot afford to ignore any usurpation of rights on our water supply from shared sources. A possible meeting between Prime Minister Sharif and Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the United Nations General assembly in New York in September will be a good opportunity to highlight the need to move relations forward without compromising on Pakistan's national interests. On the issue of terrorism, Pakistan can offer more counter-terrorism cooperation and must stress on the need to first investigate and jointly work together in



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case of a future attack. The political environment in India is highly charged and it is unfortunate that the dynamics, which are shaped by a highly volatile media have the power to influence policies in lieu of any terrorist attack with a suspected Pakistani hand even before investigations are completed. We must stress on this issue and have guidelines integrated in both countries' foreign policy to avoid getting entangled in mindless blame game and let this affect political, economic and socio-cultural ties.

Similarly, Pakistan must reassess its relations with Iran, which is not only a neighboring Muslim state but which would be a vital economic partner as well, given the potential in trade and the energy resources Iran is blessed with. Improving relations with the international community has made Iran regain its standing since it entered into nuclear talks with the United States, aimed at curtailing its nuclear enrichment capabilities to below that of military purposes as well as ceding to international inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency .

Given how these talks have progressed under President Hassan Rouhani, it may not be too far-fetched to assume that more sanctions on Tehran will be lifted. This opens a whole new chapter in Pakistan's economic relations with its Persian neighbor. It is vital to have more political and economic dialogue with Iran and more contact with key people in the government and business community to tap the potential this relationship offers, once sanctions are lifted.

The rise in diplomatic tensions over kidnapping of Iranian security officials by miscreants in Balochistan must not mar these ties. It is important that Pakistan safeguards its neighbor's interests and takes strong action against any such groups operating on its territory.

Iran's influence in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq is also important and it is vital that Pakistan maintains a neutral policy and takes a stand against sectarian politics and conflict in the international arena. Pakistan's importance as a nuclear power in the Muslim world and an important regional player cannot be stressed enough. But unfortunately we have become so embroiled in our immediate neighborhood that we do not seem to have a clear-cut policy on the current conflicts happening in the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) region. Though distances exist, the militant connections linking Pakistan and Afghanistan to Yemen, the Gulf and the MENA region cannot be ignored. We must look into strengthening our counter-terrorism



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cooperation with these states as the conflict ridden areas, first Syria and now Iraq are witnessing an influx of fighters and so called Jihadists, many of them migrate from Europe and others from Gulf and South West Asia including Pakistan to join the fight against Syrian regime of President Bahsar Al Assad and/or fight along with radical Al Qaida affiliated groups like ISIL (Islamic state of Iraq and Levant), which is currently amassing control in Iraq and posing a momentous security challenge to Prime Minister Nouri Al Maliki's government.

The more alarming situation is of the emergence of a polarized, sectarian-based radical narrative. This has the destructive capability of engulfing societies and creating conflict beyond the boundaries of Syria, as was witnessed in Lebanon, and Iraq. The Gulf states are particularly vulnerable and rightly concerned about stemming the rise of such dynamics in the Arabian Peninsula and it is vital that Pakistan helps in countering this by offering support in terms of intelligence and security expertise and in extending intelligence cooperation as well.

Pakistan should use its influence with Saudi Arabia and Iran to mitigate any tensions between the two that have arisen over Bahrain, Yemen and Syria.

Coming towards our foreign policy, I feel we must adopt a more comprehensive approach. Currently and reflecting past policy formulations, we have been too focused on our immediate neighbors, the GCC states, United States, China and the EU. We should open new chapters by looking eastwards towards Indonesia and Malaysia, South Korea for example and westwards towards Africa and even South America. There are enormous opportunities to learn and grow. Not only will this put Pakistan on the map for business investors in these regions, we will also learn from their successes in healthcare education, industry and agriculture. Africa's potential in terms of agriculture, booming industrial development in some parts and mining must be tapped into. It also offers a huge market for our workforce that faces limitations because of a number of factors in the traditional expat heavy markets such as Gulf States. With stringent visa restrictions and other entry requirements, the West now offers very limited potential for Pakistan's majority of labor force. It only offers limited options for professionals. This leaves almost 90 % of the work force of skilled and unskilled laborers grappling to find jobs elsewhere, many of them



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resort to illegal entry into Gulf States and often end up behind bars, as a result this places additional strain on the state to repatriate them.

We could help open bigger markets in raising expat incomes and consequently remittances if we look at the options Africa and South America present and of facilitating the movement of workforce as well as trade by working towards MoU's aimed at enhancing such arrangements.

There is a lot that needs to be done and it is vital that this committee looks beyond set parameters to find solutions and also open new doors for the country's foreign policy agenda. Since the international environment is in a state of constant flux, it is important we keep a flexible stance on issues such as trade, economic cooperation, cyber security, technology, food security etc while at the same time commit to upholding our key foreign policy agendas that have been set in line with and to support our national interests. It is equally important to have contributions from honorable committee members and to also invite other committees to give their input to help us devise a dynamic and well integrated advisory panel, which will have an impact on the shaping of our foreign policy in line with the changing dynamics.

I look forward to having more contributions in terms of discussions, agenda proposals and briefs from members.

Thank You



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OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS



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Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao



“The working thus far of the current Standing Committee of the National Assembly on Foreign Affairs is a marked improvement from that of its predecessor of the last parliament which ended its tenure in 2013. From the outset we have witnessed an increased frequency of meetings, constructive discussions and contributions by all members; and within the first year the Committee has already built consensus amongst its members to finalize and put forward recommendations to the Federal Government on Pakistan’s foreign policy related to Afghanistan. These are all healthy developments and I look forward to seeing the Committee continue to work with such commitment and

effort.

2014 marks the beginning of a very important new phase for our region. It is important to create a roadmap for this new phase and plan ahead for the future. It is imperative that we realize the need to develop a sound and independent foreign policy with a special focus on our neighboring countries. In doing so, we must avoid focusing too much attention on the changing administrations of other countries such as Afghanistan and India and then wait to react to the policies of these new regimes. Instead, it is important that we concentrate on developing a strong, independent and balanced foreign policy which is in the interest of our country and correlates with the sentiments of our people. By establishing such a policy and showing strict adherence to it, the effect of the policies of other countries on us will be mitigated.

It is very unfortunate that a lot of negativity still exists internationally against Pakistan. It is essential that we make every effort to dispel this negativity which will require active engagement of the international community (in particular the European Union with which we have so far lacked a meaningful interaction). With the immense losses and damage suffered by us over the years as a result of the global fight against terrorism, it does not appeal to logic that we should have to bear the brunt of such negativity. It is important that Pakistan’s point of view is effectively communicated at every available forum. The sacrifices of our country and our people must not go to waste and we must ensure that Pakistan is given its due respect and attains its rightful and honored place amongst the comity of nations.”



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Marvi Memon



“Pakistan’s foreign policy needs to be viewed in the context of its overarching internal policy goals. As a developing nation Pakistan aims to increase the dignity, quality, security and productivity of life of its citizenry. As such it is only but logical that the foreign policy of Pakistan should support these overarching internal constitutional commitments to its constituents. In this context, Pakistan’s relations with all member states of the UN either through bilateral or international organization relations need to be focused around these goals. Along with this Pakistan also needs to continue to demonstrate responsible international civic behavior whilst taking positions on international issues, challenges and

conflicts in and via such organizations.

Currently the focus of Pakistan’s foreign policy is three pronged and rightly so. Firstly, to maintain peace and security through responsible policies in its volatile terrorism prone neighborhood. Secondly, to pursue economic diplomacy for the wellbeing of its populace. Thirdly, to read, predict, deal with and react responsibly to the trends, opportunities and challenges that arise either with or without advance warning in the international arena.

Before evaluating how the National Assembly Standing Committee on Foreign Relations has assisted the government or how the government ought to pursue such a strategy, it is more important to place it in a structural context. A neo realist paradigm is the most appropriate where it is assumed that states will pursue their national interests including maximizing natural resources and value added resources over and above all other goals. Cooperation will occur on areas of fighting terrorism and a Machiavellian thirst for capital, human and knowledge based resources.

Having established the above contextual framework, Pakistan’s priority foreign relations focus areas in 2014-15 that the parliamentary committee will ensure oversight over the Ministry of Foreign affairs including maximum usage of its missions, will remain the following:

- 1- Containing terrorist threats emanating from neighbouring states and ensuring non exportation of the same to them. Including a strict monitoring of our porous borders through better border management.*
- 2- Ensuring a positive role for the democratic transition in Afghanistan post draw down.*



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- 3- *Pursuance of the elements of the composite dialogue (irrespective of the label) with an emphasis on promoting trade with India as well as showing respectable progress on longstanding bilateral disputes including Kashmir.*
- 4- *Ensuring sound economic management through the assistance of financial institutions so as to reestablish Pakistan as a responsible financial player in the international arena and a profitable destination for foreign direct investment.*
- 5- *Ensuring that Pakistan's geo strategic position is capitalized through infrastructure projects so as to be able to maximize its energy resources and so as to benefit from those around its neighboring resource rich countries. With a special cooperation with trusted friends like China. But not excluding new friends like Russia.*
- 6- *Exporting Pakistan heritage, increasing trade through targeted strategies and maximizing the benefits of promoting a knowledge based economy using its demographic dividend and avoiding a demographic disaster.*
- 7- *Continue to maintain high standards of responsibility as the only Islamic nuclear state and ensure a giver versus taker in the Islamic Ummah states.*
- 8- *Establishing Pakistan as the lead exporter of skilled human resources whilst ensuring maximum poverty reduction strategies through international best practices. Showcasing the innovative spirit of the Pakistani population in the international community."*



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Naeema Kishwar Khan



“I appreciate the Foreign Affairs Committee and its efforts. I appreciate Chairman of Foreign Affairs Committee, Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari, and other senior members who are working very hard to improve the foreign policies of Pakistan. Panel discussions by experts and briefings from Foreign Office are very appreciable. Unfortunately, the foreign policy of our country is very weak or, in other words, it is nill. I am hopeful that In Shaa Allah this committee will support government to make good foreign policies in future.”



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ANNUAL WORK PLAN FOR YEAR 2014



Annual Work plan December 2013 - December 2014

A. Briefings

- i. Briefing by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on:
 - a. Foreign Policy of Pakistan with special focus on the current state of relations with **India, Afghanistan, Iran and United States of America.**
 - b. Future prospects in these relations.
 - c. Challenges and opportunities in foreign relations with the above countries.
 - d. The impact of the planned 2014 drawdown of the NATO / ISAF forces from Afghanistan, and
 - e. Current and possible complications in relationship due to drone attacks and blockade of NATO supplies to Afghanistan.
- ii. Briefing on Pakistan-China relationship especially in the light of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's latest visit to China and the agreements / understandings reached and announced during the visit and subsequent to that. How to further improve an already solid relationship.
- iii. Briefing on relations with Muslim countries in general with specific reference to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Turkey; and Pakistan's position on the Syrian Conflict.
- iv. Briefing on the previous and current year's annual report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Next year's annual plan with reference to Medium Term Budgetary Framework (MTBF)



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- v. Briefing by Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Budget Proposals of the Ministry for the year 2014-15
- vi. Briefing by the Institute of Strategic Studies on its role, past performance, and future plans

B. Public Hearings & Consultations

- i. Public Hearing on key foreign policy challenges of Pakistan and to identify ways to successfully face these challenges. Interactive sessions of 3 to 5 key foreign policy experts and analysts on specific issues.
- ii. Consultation with leading International Relations experts in the academia and regular input from institutes of International Relations and Foreign Policy in Pakistan.
- iii. Public hearings on how Pakistan can best cope with the likely post-2014 challenges

C: Reports to be compiled and published

- i. Report on key foreign policy challenges faced by Pakistan based on the Public Hearing indicated above.
- ii. Report on Role of Parliamentary Diplomacy in resolving issues in relations between Pakistan and the US.
- iii. Report on how Pakistan can best cope with the likely issues arising out of post-2014 drawdown of NATO / ISAF forces from Afghanistan based on the public hearing on the subject.



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D. Committee Website:

A website of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Foreign Relations to be made functional by March 2013.

E. Expert and Research Interns:

Efforts to be made to induct at least one senior Expert and two research interns for the Committee, who will be available to all Committee Members for their research & talking points on Foreign Relations-related issues.

F. Committee Meetings

Target: A Minimum of 24 meetings during the year.

G. Study Visits & Interactions with Regional/International Experts

Thematic Study Visits and interaction with counter-part Committees in focus countries; receive visiting MPs/delegations and hold interactions; invite visiting international experts to interact with committee.

Involvement in international conferences/seminars/ track II talks where participation and representation is very important. Academia must be brought on board to represent Pakistan and in a positive light.



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COMMITTEE MEETINGS



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(1)

➤ **Minutes of the meeting of Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs held on December 6, 2013**

Agenda:

Election of the Chairperson of the National Assembly Committee on Foreign Affairs

Venue:

The first meeting of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs was held on December 6, 2013 at 10:00 am in Committee Room No. 07, Parliament House, Islamabad.

The following members attended the meeting:

1. Mr. Danial Aziz
2. Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari
3. Sahibzada Muhammad Nazeer Sultan
4. Mr. Muhammad Khan Daha
5. Dr. Shireen Mehrunnisa Mazari
6. Mr. Ghous Bux Khan Mahar
7. Mr. Mahmood Khan Achakzai

The following officers attended the meeting:

1. Shahid Hussain Jilani,
Additional Secretary (Com),
National Assembly Secretariat, Islamabad
2. Ch. Afzaal Ahmad,
Joint Secretary (Comm),



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National Assembly Secretariat, Islamabad.

3. Syed M. Jawad Murtaza Naqvi,
Deputy Secretary (C-II)
National Assembly Secretariat, Islamabad.

The meeting commenced with recitation from the Holy Quran. Additional Secretary (Committees), National Assembly Secretariat welcomed the Members and briefed them about the procedure of election of Chairman/ Chairperson. Thereafter, he invited Members to propose name for the Chairman/ Chairperson.

Mr. Ghous Bux Khan Mehar, MNA proposed the name of Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, MNA for Chairman whereas Sahibzada Muhammad Nazeer Sultan, MNA seconded his proposal.

Consequently, Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, MNA was declared as Chairman of the Standing Committee unopposed.

Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, MNA/Chairman was invited to chair the meeting. All the Members felicitated the Chairman being elected unopposed and extended their full co-

operation. The Chairman thanked the Members of the Standing Committee for reposing confidence in him and assured them to work in accordance with the aspirations of the Members of the Standing Committee.





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(2)

➤ **Meeting of Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs on
December 18, 2013**

Agenda:

Comprehensive briefing on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Venue:

The second meeting of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs was held on December 18, 2013 at 3:00 pm in Committee Room No.2, Parliament House Islamabad

The following members were present in the meeting.

1. Mr. Danial Aziz
2. Sahibzada Muhammad Nazeer Sultan
3. Mian Najeebuddin Awaisi
4. Muhammad Khan Daha
5. Ms. Marvi Memon
6. Makhdum Khusro Bakhtyar
7. Rana Muhammad Afzal Khan
8. Dr. Fehmida Mirza
9. Amir Haider Khan
10. Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Hussain Qureshi
11. Dr. Shireen Mehrunnisa Mazari
12. Ms. Naeema Kishwar Khan



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The following officers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs participated in the meeting:

1. Mr. Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Additional Secretary (UN&EC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
2. Ms. Tasnim Aslam, Additional Secretary (Europe), M/o of Foreign Affairs
3. Naghmana A. Hashmi, Additional Secretary (Americas)
4. Syed Ibne Abbas, Additional Secretary (Admin), Ministry of Foreign Affairs
5. Syed Zulfiqar H. Gardezi, Director General (Americas), Ministry of Foreign Affairs
6. Syed Haider Shah, Director (Afghanistan), Ministry of Foreign Affairs
7. Tipu Usman, Director (spokesperson), Ministry of Foreign Affairs
8. Nauman Bahsir Bhatti, Director (UN-II)
9. Bakht Baidar, Director NASA

Preliminary Proceedings:

The Standing Committees' meeting commenced with the recitation from the Holy Quran. In his opening remarks, the Chairman Standing Committee, Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari thanked his party and the members of the Standing Committee for reposing confidence in him to be the





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Chairman of this important Committee. The Chairman opined that the Committee has an uphill task ahead, as the Committee will be taking a very close look at the country's foreign policy on behalf of the Parliament and would reflect the sentiments of the Parliament especially of this Committee publicly and candidly for the benefit of the country. He further said that our geo-political position makes us a very important country in the region. The role of major powers and relations with other countries vis-à-vis Pakistan will be discussed. There is an appetite of improving relations with other countries and that demands the Standing Committee to play a proactive role in order to help the Foreign Office in the formulation of an improved Foreign Policy for the country. He sought guidance and help from the Committee Members to come up with out of box solutions so as to clarify existing popular misperceptions. He informed the Committee that Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Advisor to the Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs would not be able to brief the Committee as he was summoned by the Prime Minister. Thereafter the Chairman, the Committee Members and Officers/Officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs introduced themselves.

Before the ministry's briefing, Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Hussain Qureshi, Member of the Standing Committee, pointed out the absence of Secretary Foreign Affairs and Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Advisor to the Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs, and opined that the session of the Committee should have been deferred due to the absence of these two personalities as the Parliament takes precedence to any other commitment. He also pointed out the absence of Additional Secretaries from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Chairman Standing Committee responded to the queries of the member and said that the members' points and apprehensions are relevant and directed the Additional Secretary of the Ministry to be more careful in future, regarding the apprehensions of the member. The Minister of State for Commerce, Engineer Khurram Dastgir Khan, added to the comments by the Chairman and told the Committee that Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Advisor to the Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs was unable to make it because of his last minute engagement with the Prime Minister and the Additional Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been approved by the Prime Minister to



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be the new Foreign Secretary. He also said that the Prime Minister has also charged him to give answers on Foreign Policy and related matters in the Parliament.

Briefing by the Ministry:

The Additional Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs briefed the Committee on key Foreign Policy issues. Giving his input on the regional and global environment he told the Committee about United States' increased focus on Asia Pacific and US-India strategic partnership, China's increasing political and economic influence, issues related to Afghanistan, India and terrorism. He said that the present government's focus is on having a peaceful neighborhood and the government also intends to have a proactive approach regarding trade with the Western Countries. And we have to have a consensus approach to fight the menace of terrorism. He briefed the Committee on relations with neighboring countries and how the government is pursuing a Three Tracks Policy, which includes the composite dialogue, confidence building measures and back channel diplomacy. He also briefed on bilateral relations with other countries. The Committee was also told about the multilateral diplomacy, administrative/protocol matters and public diplomacy.

Findings:

The Chairman Standing Committee asked the Secretary, M/o Foreign Affairs, to provide a brief on the agenda items, five days prior to the meeting. He also opined that although the briefing given by the Additional Secretary is encompassing and covers every aspect of the Foreign Policy, there are areas, which need to be probed in detail and discussed by the Standing Committee. The Chairman gave the floor to the Members to ask questions and point out lacunas if any in the presentation given by the Ministry. Dr. Shireen Mehrunnisa Mazari, MNA found the briefing bland and said that there are some important areas, which have not been covered by the Secretary in his briefing. She pointed out that the Secretary completely missed out on extra regional forces which are impacting the country heavily and causing instability and that the South Asia Region, except India, and ASEAN has been completely ignored by him in his



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briefing. She also said that the role of Saudi Arabia in the proxy war being carried out in our country has also not been discussed. Other important issues concerning Afghanistan, India, China and the US are also missing from the briefing and she would like the Secretary to give a comprehensive briefing on all these issues in the upcoming meeting of the Standing Committee.

Amir Haider Khan Hoti, MNA requested the Chairman that the next meeting agenda to specifically focus on Afghanistan and directions be given to the Ministry that all related issues needs to be addressed in detail. He also sought comments of the Ministry on the total cost incurred on the Economic corridor and the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project. Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Hussain Qureshi, MNA complimented the Foreign Office on the GSP Plus certification and said that this is an achievement by the Foreign Office. He also requested the Chairman that the meeting of the Standing Committee be held on a regular basis to address all-important issues.

Ch. Danial Aziz, MNA appreciated the briefing given by the Ministry but he commented that there is no clear Foreign Policy on relations with our neighboring countries and Foreign Office must devise a clear cut Foreign Policy regarding this. Makhdoom Khusro Bakhtiyar, MNA also complimented the Foreign Office and added to the remarks given by Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Hussain Qureshi and opined that FO is probably the finest Division of the Government of Pakistan. He also wished the Standing Committee to work in tandem with Foreign Office, and an indepth briefing on Afghanistan, Pakistan-Iran and relations with the US. Sahibzada Muhammad Nazeer Sultan, MNA congratulated the Additional Secretary for his nomination as new Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and requested the Chairman to have frequent meetings to address all important issues and an in-camera briefing on Afghanistan and US-Iran agreement.

Dr. Fehmida Mirza, MNA and Ex-Speaker of the National Assembly congratulated the Chairman on being elected unopposed and the Additional Secretary being appointed as new Secretary, M/o Foreign Affairs. She showed dissatisfaction on the briefing given by the Ministry and vowed that all members regardless of their affiliation will help the Government to make a stronger and effective Foreign Policy. She wished to have a more candid and meaningful



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briefings from the M/o Foreign Affairs. She also commented that the people be made aware of the role of the Parliament in attaining the GSP Plus status. Mr. Muhammad Khan Daha, MNA congratulated the Government on the GSP Plus status and said that different sectors and areas be tasked to avail the benefits of GSP Plus. He also wished to know the Foreign Office stance on Dams and water reservoirs made by India on Pakistani rivers. Ms. Marvi Memon, MNA lauded the Officers for coming up with a comprehensive briefing and wanted to zoom in on different areas in subsequent meeting of the Standing Committee. She also wished to have Sub-Committees to be headed by different Members in order to share the workload of the Committee. Ms. Naeema Kishwar Khan congratulated the Chairman on his election and wanted to have a more elaborate discussion on Afghanistan and Pakistan-India relations.

The Chairman also shared his proposed work plan with the members ranging from December 2013 to December 2014.

Recommendations:

- i. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs to give briefs five days prior to the meeting of the Standing Committee.
- ii. Issues relating to Afghanistan will be taken up as the agenda item in the forthcoming meeting of the Standing Committee.
- iii. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs to brief the Committee on the previous and current year's annual report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Next year's annual plan with reference to Medium Term Budgetary Framework (MTBF).
- iv. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs to brief the Committee on Budget Proposals of the Ministry for the year 2014-15.

The meeting ended with a mutual vote of thanks.



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➤ **Meeting of Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs on
January 9, 2014**

Two meeting of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs were held on January 9, 2014 in Parliament House, Islamabad.

First Session (Morning):

The first session was held at 10:00 am in Committee Room # 7 of the National Assembly.

Agenda:

*In-camera interaction of the Committee Members with a
panel of experts on Afghanistan*

The following Committee Members attended the meeting:

1. Mr. Danial Aziz
2. Sahibzada Muhammad Nazeer Sultan
3. Muhammad Khan Daha
4. Ms. Marvi Memon
5. Rana Muhammad Afzal Khan
6. Mr. Amir Haider Khan
7. Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Hussain Qureshi
8. Mr. Ghous Bux Khan Mahar
9. Ms. Naeema Kishwar Khan
10. Mr. Mahmood Khan Achakzai
11. Mr. Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao



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Panel of experts:

i. Mr. Saleem Safi



He is associated with Jang and Geo TV, Pakistan's largest media group, as an anchor, columnist and analyst. He is currently hosting a show with the name of Jirga, and writes in the News and Jang with the same name. In 2004, Saleem's first book, Afghanistan: The Role of US, Taliban and Pakistani Religious Parties, received widespread acclaim.

ii. Mr. Imtiaz Gul



He is the Executive Director of Center for Research and Security Studies that he founded in December 2007, with the support of Germany's Heinrich Boell Stiftung. The Center is a research and advocacy outfit, focused primarily on security, radicalization and governance. He has been contributing to international and National print media; Foreign Policy, USA, Wall Street Journal, The Friday Times (weekly), Pulse (weekly), Islamabad, Daily Express Tribune, on issues such as militancy, border regions, Afghanistan, and Indo-Pak relations.

iii. Mr. Aziz Ahmad Khan



He is a seasoned career diplomat who joined the Foreign Service of Pakistan in 1969, and has served in several countries. Aziz Ahmed Khan has the unique distinction of being Pakistan's Ambassador to Afghanistan and High Commissioner to India concurrently. Both countries are Pakistan's neighbors having significant strategic importance for her.



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❖ **Gist of the meeting:**

Mr. Leghari, the Chairman Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, welcomed members of the Committee and the panel of experts. After explaining the agenda of the meeting, he asked the Panel of Experts to express their point of view on the Afghan issue and provide concrete recommendations to the Committee for onward discussion.

The experts thanked the Chairman for inviting them for briefing. Later on, the panelists gave their point of views on the said issue.

Mr. Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao, MNA, said that a Parliamentary delegation visited Afghanistan under his leadership. The declaration made by the delegation will be provided to the Committee whereby a number of recommendations have been made. It would be better if the Committee looks at those recommendations before making its own final recommendations on the situation of Afghanistan.

Mr. Aziz Khan stated the main factors that will be affecting the developments in Afghanistan:

- i. Presidential Election in Afghanistan
- ii. Withdrawal of US/NATO forces from Afghanistan
- iii. Post withdrawal scenario in Afghanistan
- iii. Reconciliation with various parties in Afghanistan.
- iv. Neighboring Countries sharing borders with Afghanistan
- v. India factor in Afghanistan

He told the members that Abdullah is the strongest candidate today. On the case of NATO withdrawal, he said that the withdrawal will take place but the important factor is what next after the withdrawal?

He states that he has no clear idea about links of Pakistan and Taliban. International Community thinks that Pakistan has influence over Taliban, but as per his view, Pakistan has a very little influence over the Taliban. He stated that there are clearly two entities / groups of



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Taliban i.e. Tehreek Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Afghan Taliban having totally different agenda. He said that there is no need to have negotiation with Taliban by Pakistan.

He emphasized that the neighboring countries, Pakistan and Iran, and the regional powers, India, Turkey, Russia, need to give a loud and clear message of ‘no return to Taliban days’. The concern of increasing Indian influence in Afghanistan is justified but exaggerated. India can’t hurt Pakistan through Afghanistan as long as the Tribal Belt is with us.

While concluding his briefing he said that Pakistan should sincerely try to help the reconciliation process in Afghanistan. However, the Afghan Government would require a little more pressure on the Taliban.

Mr. Imtiaz Gul pointed the New Delhi as the key to our issues because the negative perception of Pakistan is shaped in there. He stated that the narrative about India taken from National Security Establishment of Pakistan is parroted by most of our politicians and media persons which is not a good sign. He stated that Non-State instruments of Foreign Policy are a source of negative perception of Pakistan in the whole world. This is the responsibility of our Parliamentarians to dis-entangle the Non-State instruments from the Foreign Policy.

He said that we must act as confident sovereign country. The use of force and use of external force is not a solution to indigenous localized problems. We must stop proxies in Afghanistan because it is affecting the foreign investment and external confidence in this country. We need to safeguard our geo-political interest.

He opined that non-states instruments of foreign policy are the reasons for bad perception and these tools of foreign policy are not desirable anymore. He advised to stop looking at NS through the eyes of security agencies and the military. Presenting the Turk model, he suggested Pakistan to free our policies of the Islamist elements.

While concluding his briefing he stated that there is a clearly defined need of refining the civil-military relations.



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Mr. Saleem Safi pointed to the shifting political, security and economic landscape of Afghanistan after withdrawal of US-led NATO forces and Afghan elections. He stated that after withdrawal / drawdown of US/NATO forces from Afghanistan, the security matters will fully be controlled by Afghan Government (Afghan Army and Police). Talking about the Presidential election in Afghanistan he said that Abdullah Abdullah is the strong candidate in this regard.

He said that another main changing in Afghanistan is the change in economic front because the economy of Afghanistan was under the control of foreign donors earlier. After withdrawal of US/NATO forces from Afghanistan, the U.S will only give the committed financial help to Afghanistan for their Army and Police.

Speaking about Taliban he said that they cannot be accommodated in political structure of Afghanistan because their attitude is not reconcilable. He denied any difference between TTP and Afghan Taliban when he told that all ameers of TTP are from Afghan Taliban. He said that both the Taliban groups are one unit because they are working on one agenda. Afghan Taliban are having strategic depth through TTP. Describing the situation at ground, he told that the north in Afghanistan accepts all but Taliban and Pakistan can't help to accommodate Taliban in any Afghan setup.

He criticized Pakistan for not having its foreign policy for Afghanistan. He also indicated the following dangerous developments, which can be alarming for Pakistan:

- i. The Afghan Taliban will use the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan against Pakistan.
- ii. The morale of militants will boost-up from Kabul to Karachi because the Taliban are confident for their success in Afghanistan.
- iii. Civil and Military leadership of Pakistan is not on one page about Foreign Policy.
- iv. New patch-up between Iran and USA regarding transit trade.

He cautioned that all the stakeholders, the United States, China, Iran, India, are preparing for the building developments but, unfortunately, Pakistan is not ready.

He also informed the Committee about the following three new developments in Afghanistan which are in favor of Pakistan:

- i. Pakistan having good relations with the people of north Afghanistan.



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- ii. Pakistan having good relations with America from the last few months.
- iii. Pakistan having good relations with Afghanistan Government

He gave the following proposals to the Committee for better relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan:

- i. The militancy should not be used as a tool of our Foreign Policy.
- ii. The Military and Civil leadership should truly come on one page on Foreign Policy
- iii. Pakistan should manage its borders with Afghanistan.

He also gave the following short term and long-term solutions of the Afghan issue.

Short Term Solutions:

- i. Pakistan should take a final decision about Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan without further delay.
- ii. Pakistan should make efforts for intra-Afghan reconciliation, otherwise, post-withdrawal situation would be a disaster for Afghanistan.

Long Term Solutions:

- i. The ideological concepts of Jihaad and Qataal should be clarified.
- ii. The strategic aspects of the foreign policy of Pakistan for Afghanistan and other neighboring countries should be clarified, which should not be destabilizing to any country.
- iii. The political coordination of Pakistan with Afghanistan should be on merit by political and military leadership.
- iv. Economic opportunities like establishing industries for the people for enabling them to live a prosperous life
- v. The issue of Pashtun and non-Pashtun in Afghanistan should be addressed by Pakistan. He recommended Pakistan to reach out to all groups of Afghanistan through Parliament across board with the people in the process and even more to the ethnicities who feel left out.

Underlining the urgency to mend our relations with Afghanistan, he said that this year is the only opportunity for Pakistan because it wouldn't be possible after withdrawal.



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He advised the politicians to increase their stake and information on Afghanistan. He remarked that the Foreign Office is not in good shape because of difference between Sartaj Aziz and Fatmi. We need to cope with all these issues as soon as possible to strengthen this important office.

While concluding their briefings, the panel of experts said that the main responsibility lies on this Standing Committee and the M/o Foreign Affairs to resolve such issues.

Mr. Leghari expressed his gratitude to the expert from him and from the Committee for giving such scholastic guidelines on Afghanistan situation. The meeting ended with a mutual vote of thanks to and from the Chair.



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Second Session (Afternoon):

The second session was held at 3: pm in Committee Room # 2 of the National Assembly.

Agenda:

In-camera briefing and discussion on Afghanistan by Advisor to the Hon. Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sartaj Aziz, and other officials from the Foreign Ministry.

The following Members attended the meeting.

1. Danial Aziz
2. Naeema Kishwar Khan
3. Mahmood Khan Achakzai
4. Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao
5. Sahibzada Muhammad Nazeer Sultan
6. Muhammad Khan Daha
7. Marvi Memon
8. Rana Muhammad Afzal Khan
9. Amir Haider Khan
10. Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Hussain Qureshi
11. Shireen Mehrunnisa Mazari
12. Ghous Bux Khan Mahar

The following officers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs participated in the meeting.

1. Mr.Sartaj Aziz, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs
2. Mr. Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Additional Secretary (UN&EC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs
3. Mr.Sohail Mahmood, Additional Secretary (Afghanistan)
4. Syed Haider Shah, Director (Afghanistan)



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5. Bakht Baidar, Director NASA
6. Shah Nazar Afridi, Deputy Director
7. Syed Farukh Mahbood, Deputy Director

✧ **Gist of the meeting:**

Mr. Leghari, Chairman Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs welcomed Mr. Sartaj Aziz and other officers from the Foreign Ministry. He informed them about the first session of the committee with a panel of experts on Afghanistan.

Mr. Aizaz Ahmad, Foreign Secretary, started the briefing by appreciating the Committee for its important and timely focus on Afghanistan because the year 2014 will be a consequential year for Afghanistan and the developments in Afghanistan can deeply affect Pakistan.

The Foreign Secretary also stated that the Afghan situation is uncertain due to volatile nature of sectarianism. Pakistan needs to play its role by training, advising and assisting Afghanistan in post-2014 scenario. He told the participants that the deadline to sign the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) is February this year, which needs to be signed by Afghanistan to retain a limited number of US troops and continue to get financial assistance. Russia, China and Iran as well as Taliban have objected the BSA. This agreement has implications for the neighbors.

He predicted that Taliban would want another push to central Afghanistan by 2015. If Afghanistan degenerates into ethnic divisions, it will have serious apprehensions for Pakistan in the form of refugees, narcotics, and trans-border crimes for Pakistan. As war economy would suffer a setback post-pullout, an influx of refugees is expected to Pakistan in search of income. He shared the Pakistan's policy is to support the peace process and ensure the honorable return of refugees. He also quoted a Wall Street Journal article that breaks the news of Afghan intelligence operating in Pakistan.



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He said that Pakistan's national stance across political divide for the sake of national interest, beyond self-interest, would have a determining impact on the future of Pakistan's relations with its neighbor.

The Foreign Secretary, while concluding his briefing, said that this Standing Committee is an important platform for us to interact with the Parliament and the Foreign Ministry can seek guidance from this Committee.

In order to finalize recommendations for government, Mr. Leghari suggested constituting a sub-committee. Hence, the committee constituted a sub-committee with the following composition and Terms of Reference:

Composition:

a. Mr .Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao,MNA	Convener
b. Mr. Danial Aziz,MNA	Members
c. Ms. Marvi Memon,MNA	Member
d. Dr. Shireen Mehrunnisa Mazari,MNA	Member
e. Mr. Amir Haider Khan,MNA	Member
f. Ms.Naeema Kishwar Khan, MNA	Member

Terms of Reference (ToR):

“To propose, within next 14 days, specific recommendations to the committee to consider the Foreign Policy concerning Afghanistan”



(4)

➤ **Meeting of Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs on
January 29, 2014**

Agenda:

*To discuss and finalize the recommendations proposed by
the sub-committee headed by Mr. Aftab Ahmad Khan
Sherpao, Convener of the sub-committee.*

Venue:

An internal meeting of the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs was held on January 29, 2014 at 2:30 pm in Committee Room No.2, Parliament House, Islamabad.

The following members were present in the meeting.

1. Sahibzada Muhammad Nazeer Sultan
2. Muhammad Khan Daha
3. Ms. Marvi Memon
4. Makhdum Khusro Bakhtyar
5. Dr. Fehmida Mirza
6. Syed Asghar Ali Shah
7. Amir Haider Khan
8. Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Hussain Qureshi
9. Dr. Shireen Mehrunnisa Mazari
10. Dr. Muhammad Farooq Sattar
11. Ms. Naeema Kishwar Khan
12. Mr. Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao



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❖ **Gist of the Meeting:**

Mr. Leghari, Chairman of the committee, requested Mr. Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao, the Convenor of the sub-committee on Afghanistan issue, to brief the committee on the recommendations finalized by the sub-committee. Draft recommendations presented were deliberated and finalized with minor changes.

The Chairman, Standing Committee drew the attention of the members to the sub-rule (6) of Rule 201, of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the National Assembly, 2007 and said that each Ministry is bound to submit its Budgetary proposals relating to PSDP, for the next financial year, to the relevant Standing Committee not later than 31st January, for scrutinizing and suggesting amendments.

Hence, the committee constituted a sub-committee with the following composition and Terms of Reference:

Composition:

i.	Ms. Marvi Memon	Convener
ii.	Dr. Fehmida Mriza	Member
iii.	Mr. Amir Haider Khan	Member
iv.	Dr. Shireen Mehrunnisa Mazari	Member
v.	Ms. Naeema Kishwar Khan	Member
vi.	Dr. Muhammad Farooq Sattar	Member

Terms of Reference:

“To look into and finalize the budgetary proposals of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the financial year 2013-2014”.



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The Committee also vowed to discuss the recently held Pakistan-US strategic Dialogue in the United States in the next scheduled meeting of the Standing Committee.



Recommendations of the Standing Committee

1. This Committee welcomes the elections scheduled to take place in Afghanistan this year and hopes that a democratic transfer of Government in Afghanistan, in accordance with the true will of the Afghan people, will take place in a peaceful manner.
2. The Government must continue to fully support the reconciliation process in Afghanistan and must offer all possible assistance to the Government of Afghanistan to build an environment of peace through dialogue.
3. With the withdrawal of ISAF troops from Afghanistan this year the Government must focus on bilateralism when it comes to Pakistan's relationship with Afghanistan as opposed to the past. The Government must undertake concerted efforts to find constructive, meaningful and lasting solutions to improve and strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries.



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4. The Government must realize that there is a small window of opportunity in terms of time that exists for both Pakistan and Afghanistan to realistically address the issues that may emerge from the proposed 2014 withdrawal of ISAF from Afghanistan. A lack of appropriate decisions by Government in Pakistan and Afghanistan at such a stage may result in a more disastrous scenario post 2014.
5. Terrorism and militancy remain formidable challenges faced by both countries and joint and sustained efforts are required by the two states to overcome these challenges.
6. The Government must work with Afghanistan on an immediate basis to put in place comprehensive and effective measures for border management. In this regard, the Government must install biometric systems along frequented routes between the two countries to ensure a thorough screening process of cross-border movement. For unfrequented routes, efforts must be undertaken to strengthen tribes on both sides of the border and evolve a mechanism of border jirgas whereby tribes on each side work jointly to check unwanted cross-border movement and other illegal activities such as the drug trade.
7. The Government must also initiate efforts to engage all regional stakeholders and work towards developing a cooperative strategy to bring peace and stability to the region.
8. The Government must recognize that despite historical ties the trust deficit that exists between the two countries continues to act as a serious impediment in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations. In this regard, the Committee recommends that:
 - i. The trust deficit needs to be addressed by encouraging exchanges at three levels; i.e. the Government level, the Institutional level and People to People contacts. Such contacts must be among all stakeholders/ political groups including regular contacts between the two Parliaments.
 - ii. The Pak-Afghan Jirga Process that was initiated in 2007 needs to be followed up and the joint recommendations proposed therein should be implemented.
 - iii. The Government must enter into a comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement with the Government of Afghanistan that would include, *inter alia*,



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- mutual assurances that the soil of one country would not be used for activities that are detrimental to the interests of the other; and an agreement to enhance cooperation and undertake joint efforts to eradicate terrorism and militancy in both countries.
- iv. A task force comprising experts should be constituted on Afghanistan, reporting to the Cabinet Committee on National Security (CCNS) and Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs of Parliament. There is a need to create linkage between the CCNS and Afghanistan's National Security Council (NSC) on Pakistan-Afghanistan relations.
 - v. The Government must work with the Government of Afghanistan to create business opportunities in the public and private sectors on both sides and enhance trade between the two countries. Both governments should work towards initiating joint projects of mutual benefit particularly in, but not limited to, the hydel and mining sectors.
 - vi. The Government must focus on the role of the electronic and other news media in both countries and must proactively support research based reporting that can promote peace and business between Pakistan and Afghanistan on a long-term basis.
 - vii. The Government must work with the Government of Afghanistan to introduce a relaxed visa regime that allows multiple entry visas for citizens of each country as well as prioritizing business visas.
 - viii. Both countries should make efforts to understand each other's perspectives and positions in, multilateral fora.
9. The Government of Pakistan recognizes the sovereign right of Afghanistan to make any bilateral international agreement; however, where such agreement has the potential to impact Pakistan's Security, as in the case of Article 6 of the BSA, the Government of Pakistan must ensure its national interests and the territorial integrity of the country.
 10. The Government needs to urgently address the critical issue of rising water scarcity both in Pakistan and must undertake serious efforts to enter into a water sharing treaty with Afghanistan in order to safeguard Pakistan's lower riparian rights.



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11. The Government must also address the humanitarian aspects of border management and special attention should be given to the problems being faced by Displaced Persons (DPs) from amongst the border tribes on both sides. The Government should introduce special relief packages for the rehabilitation of residents affected by the conflict.
12. The Government must work with the Government of Afghanistan to prepare a comprehensive roadmap for the honorable repatriation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan to Afghanistan in 2015 in accordance with the tripartite agreement.



(5)

➤ **Meeting of the Sub-Committee of Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs on February 28, 2014**

Agenda:

“To look into and finalize the budgetary proposals of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the financial year 2014-2015.”

Venue:

A meeting of the sub-committee of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs was held on February 28, 2014 at 10:00 am in Committee Room No. 07, Parliament House, Islamabad under the Convenorship of Ms. Marvi Memon, MNA.

Ms. Naeema Kishwar Khan was the member other to attend the meeting.

✧ **Recommendations of the sub-committee:-**

The following unanimous recommendations were given by the sub-committee;-

- i. In the future no design changes should be allowed once a project has been approved since that leads to cost escalations and delays. Bad designs on lifts, toilets and open vs closed spacing has led to this disaster of cost escalation due to Ministry of Foreign Affairs not having prevailed on their requirements in the first instance.
- ii. Whilst the Earthquake 2005 did require changes due to new building codes this process could have been done faster by the CDA leading to less cost escalations.



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- ii. Delays due to utility relocations should have been better foreseen by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and all costs related to those have proved to be further burden on exchequer.
- iii. Releases versus allocations continue to haunt government expenditures. The disparity between the two leads to escalated costs, which should be avoided. The same is foreseen for the year 2014-2015, where whilst it is claimed Planning Commission has approved Rs. 255 million, it is foreseen that this might not be fully released leading to further delays and cost escalations.
- iv. Cost escalation and delays due to being in Red zone should have been better planned for.
- v. The Special Projects division of Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue to be haunted with these unless the above recommendations are not adhered to.

The meeting adjourned with a vote of thanks to the Chair.



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➤ **Meeting of Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs on March 4, 2014**

Agenda:

- i) *To consider the report of the sub-committee on budgetary proposals of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the financial year, 2014-2015.*
- ii) *Interactive session on America with the following Panel of Experts*

Venue:

An in-camera meeting of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs was held on March 4, 2014 at 2:00 pm in Committee Room No. 07, Parliament House, Islamabad.

Panel of experts:

a. Dr. Maleeha Lodhi



She is Special Adviser for international affairs to Pakistan's largest media conglomerate, the Jang/Geo Group. She twice served as Pakistan's Ambassador to the US (1993 – 1996, 1999 – 2002) and as High Commissioner to Britain (2003 – 2008). She served as a member of the UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Affairs from 2001 to 2005. Dr Lodhi was a Public Policy Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars in Washington in 2010 and a Fellow at Harvard University's Kennedy School in 2008. She is the recipient of the President's award of Hilal-e-Imtiaz for Public Service in Pakistan. She is the author of Pakistan: Beyond the Crisis State, Pakistan's Encounter with Democracy and The External Challenge.



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b. Mr. Riaz Muhammad Khan



He joined Pakistan Foreign Service in 1969. He is a former Wilson Center Pakistan Scholar. He has been Foreign Secretary of Pakistan (2005-2008), Pakistan's ambassador to China (2002-05), to European Union, Belgium and Luxembourg (1995-98) and to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (1992-95). He has also been Additional Foreign Secretary responsible for international organizations and arms control and disarmament issues (1998-2002), Foreign Office Spokesman (2000-01) and Director General responsible for Afghanistan and Soviet affairs (1986-92). He negotiated a number of important bilateral and multilateral agreements on behalf of Pakistan during his service. He is the author of 'Afghanistan and Pakistan: Conflict, Extremism and Resistance to Modernity', 'Untying the Afghan Knot: negotiating Soviet withdrawal', and 'Pakistan: Glimpses of Vistas, History and Culture'.

c. Syed Najam Rafique



He is currently Director Americas/Programmes Coordinator at The Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad. He has served The Institute of Strategic Studies as Acting Chairman and Acting Director General in 2013. His area of concentration is US Foreign Policy & Politics in South Asia.

The following Members of the Committee were present in the meeting:

1. Muhammad Asim Nazir
2. Mian Najeebuddin Awaisi
3. Mr. Muhammad Khan Daha
4. Ms. Tahmina Daultana
5. Ms. Marvi Memon
6. Rana Muhammad Afzal Khan
7. Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi



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8. Dr. Shireen Mehrunnisa Mazari
9. Ms. Naeema Kishwar Khan
10. Mahmood Khan Achakzai

✧ **Gist of the Meeting:**

Mr. Leghari, Chairman of the committee, welcomed the experts are requested them to provide a briefing on Pakistan-US relations. Dr. Maleeha Lodhi, Gen. Jahangir Karamat and Riaz Muhammad Khan paid gratitude to the Chairman for inviting them to the committee meeting.

Dr. Maleeha Lodhi paid gratitude to the Chairman for inviting her to the Committee meeting. She shared that it is an honor for her to be invited in the Parliament of her own country while she has testified in UK and USA Parliaments earlier in her personal capacity.

Enlightening the committee on Pak-US relations, she termed the relations as the most critical bilateral relations that our country has. She added, Pakistan has had long and turbulent relations with US, which at present are tentative and transitional. Dr. Maleeha Lodhi recapped, “we never had two things co-exist side by side i.e. Intense engagement and intense estrangement; usually we had cycles of intense engagement and intense estrangement. Usually this estrangement was benign because when US walked away then it walked away.” “This time it is quite different”, she pointed, “we are having both these at the same time”. As the relations have recovered from the turbulence of 2011, she advised the Government of Pakistan to seize this opportunity to influence the future direction of our relations.

She reminded that Pakistan described itself the frontline ally of USA three times in the history of these relations i.e. during the Cold War, during Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and after 9/11. In these relations, positive transformation was driven by extraneous events, nothing intrinsic has occurred during the last three to four decades.

Dr. Maleeha Lodhi highlighted the following four key areas that will influence and shape the relations in the years ahead. Firstly, Afghan end game; common goals but different equities. Secondly, dynamics of triangular Pak-India-US relations; the increasing relations between US



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and India do not impact Pakistan but security impact of this relations is of serious concern for us! India might be given dominant role in post-withdrawal Afghanistan. Although Dr. Lodhi didn't think that it would happen but we advised to bear this in mind. Thirdly, US ambitions to engage and contain China, simultaneously; the stance of US on South China Sea dispute shows that pivot is in action. US has moved its major naval assets to Pacific. This behavior of US for China has implications for Pakistan. She doubts that India would be willing to play the role of strategic counterweight to China but India would leverage to get what it could. Dr. Lodhi did not agree to the common rhetoric that India might become Pakistan of 1960s, when it was under US blessings. Lastly and most importantly, how Pakistan repositions internally, effectively conducts its foreign policy, and strengths domestically.

Dr. Lodhi stressed that constructive engagement with the US is an imperative to Pakistan-China relations. Both the US and China fulfill different needs and are thus not interchangeable. She emphasized the point that Pakistan needs to retire from the idea that it is a US war. We need to own this war, more appropriately, a battle.

She proposed that Pakistan needs to expand its foreign policy space by not formulating only US-centered policies and reduce our dependence on US. The US and Pakistan have shared goals, including defeating Al-Qaeda and Afghan stabilization, but lack in shared approach. Proposing do's and don'ts for our relations, she advised Pakistan not to nourish unrealistic expectations and pursue broad-based engagement and transparent relations because there is more to gain by working together. Dr. Lodhi concluded by asserting that Pak-US relations have a positive trajectory but

- a. Both need to recognize each other's legitimate concerns
- b. Mutually shared and acceptable rules of engagement
- c. Principle of reciprocity
- d. Identify elements on which to base post-2014 relations

Mr. Riaz Muhammad Khan also agreed that Pak-US relations are 'sordid, transactional and accident-prone', which have experienced three periods of engagement, i.e. containment of



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Communism during cold war, reversal of Soviet invasion in 1990s and fight against terrorism after 9/11, but no identity of interest. Pakistan's concern during the whole period has been the same i.e. security. The cause of disconnect between US and Pakistan during 1950s was India, during 80s was nuclear program and during post-9/11 period is Taliban.

During periods of engagement, there were mistaken expectations from Pakistan's side. The relationship has been security oriented and it wasn't broadened beyond military unlike India-China relationship. Informal institutes of democracy like academia should be promoted. He gave the example of China and India.

On the issue of US military presence in Afghanistan after 2014, he said that Afghanistan is stuck on the question of US military presence after 2014. He appreciated that Pakistan has taken a neutral stance on this issue and this is good for Pakistan.

He reiterated that the US has a discriminatory approach for Nuclear Pakistan vis-à-vis India. The United States' Civil Nuclear Deal with India poses serious question mark on our relations. The US considers India a big player and Clinton reiterated the US inclination to India by saying "India is a natural ally". The US does place importance to Pakistan but only in the region. He remarked, "Only nuclear assets aren't enough for us to be a big league players. We need to boost up our economy to earn us our due status in the world."

On the point of US assistance, he supported Dr. Maleeha's stance by saying, "we can do without US assistance but we need it because it is important". He cautioned Pakistan that it can't afford to adopt hostility against US.

Giving the example of strategic convergence of US and India, Mr. Riaz proposed, 'remain frank, candid and credible in dealings with US because', he warned, 'it is not possible to be clever with super power'. He warned that anti-US rhetoric is touching dangerous level and it is mirrored in US as well which needs to be avoided. He suggested Pakistan to moderate its narrative for not only US but also the entire international gamut.

He supported reconciliation in Afghanistan because the Afghan crisis is hurting Pakistan more than any other country of the world. Pakistan needs to move with confidence in its foreign policy without the influence of conspiracy theories.



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In response to Rana Muhammad Afzal Khan's comments on the dilemma of delicacy and need to balance our relations, Mr. Riaz proposed Pakistan to give hard look on our own military and need to decide what is enough as nuclear threshold to keep nuclear deterrence. In spite of running the arms race, he suggested, we need to channelize our resources for other priorities.

On the question of the Mr. Leghari about the way the Coalition Support Fund was handled, Mr. Riaz criticized the CSF negotiation where Pakistan tied compensation with the number of deployment. He said that Pakistan should have fixed compensation with each base given to the US.

Mr. Riaz disagreed to the common rhetoric that everything good or bad which happens to Pakistan is due to the US. He reiterated that most of Pakistan's problems are our internal problems and we need to solve them ourself.

Mr. Najam Rafique stressed the criticality of relationship with the United States and need to take it forward. Describing the level of mistrust between the two countries, he quoted the statement of Former U.S. Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, who questioned the role of Pakistan as an ally by asserting, "they are really no ally at all".

He recommended that Pakistan needs to work in these three broad areas. Firstly, War on Terror; we can either create hurdles or ease the withdrawal from Afghanistan. It will depend upon whether we want to extricate ourselves from this thirteen-year long war or to linger on. Secondly, bilateral relations with the US through Strategic Dialogue; follow concrete projects through serious trade and investment. Thirdly, improved relations with India and Afghanistan.

On the question of post-withdrawal scenario, he said that Pakistan needs to be ready for a third case scenario of a military rule in Afghanistan in the coming years.



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On Mr. Leghari's question about the seriousness of US to withdraw from Afghanistan, all the experts agreed that the US wants to leave Afghanistan to end this long war. They also agreed that the United States wants BSA signed with the Afghan government but Dr. Lodhi said that the US can consider zero option as well.

At the end of the meeting, Mr. Leghari thanked the panelists to educate the committee members on Pakistan's relations with the US and stated to consider their recommendations while proposing the committee's recommendations on foreign policy to the government.



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➤ **Meeting of Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs on
March 7, 2014**

Agenda:

*An interactive session on China with the following panel
of experts*

Venue:

An in-camera meeting of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs was held on March 7, 2014 at 2:00 pm in Committee Room No. 07, Parliament House, Islamabad.

The following Members of the Committee were present in the meeting:

1. Dr.Shireen Mehrunnisa Mazari
2. Makhdoom Khusru Bakhtyar
3. Mian Najeebuddin Awaisi
4. Mr.Mehmood Khan Achakzai
5. Mr.Muhammad Khan Daha
6. Ms.Naema Kishwar Khan
7. Rana Muhammad Afzal Khan



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Panel of experts:

a) Mr. Fazalur Rehman



He is Executive Director of the ‘Pakistan Council on China’, a Think-tank exclusively focusing on China and Pakistan-China relations. He is also Director of Strategic Studies Institute Islamabad. Previously he has served at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) from September 1986- January 2013. His last position at the ISSI was Director, China Study Centre and East Asia. Mr. He is among the founding members (Trustees) of - “Pakistan Council on China” (PCC), “Foundation for Fundamental Rights” (FFR), and “Peace Education and Development Foundation” (PEAD).

b) Engr. Dr. M. Akram Shaikh



He is currently Professor Emeritus at the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Islamabad, Pakistan and Advisor (Planning and Development) to some strategic national organizations in addition to being Advisor to the International Steels Limited, a Pakistani multinational Joint Venture. He is former Deputy Chairman / Federal Minister Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan

c) Mr. Riaz Muhammad Khan



He joined Pakistan Foreign Service in 1969. He is a former Wilson Center Pakistan Scholar. He has been Foreign Secretary of Pakistan (2005-2008), Pakistan’s ambassador to China (2002-05), to European Union, Belgium and Luxembourg (1995-98) and to Kazakhstan and Kyrghyztan (1992-95). He has also been Additional Foreign Secretary responsible for international organizations and arms control and disarmament issues (1998-2002), Foreign Office Spokesman (2000-01) and Director General responsible for



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Afghanistan and Soviet affairs (1986-92). He is the author of “Afghanistan and Pakistan: Conflict, Extremism and Resistance to Modernity”, “Untying the Afghan Knot: negotiating Soviet withdrawal”, and Pakistan: Glimpses of Vistas, History and Culture.

✧ **Gist of the meeting:**

Mr. Riaz Muhammad Khan provided an overview of Pakistan’s relations with China. The relations that started from 1950, when Pakistan extended recognition to the People’s Republic of China, witnessed neither much warmth nor any hostility for nearly a decade, he described. But in 1962, when US tilted towards India, Pak-China relations also started to strengthen after the border agreement.

He mentioned the consistent and reliable Chinese support during our hard times. China stood by us in 1965 and 1971. In fact, 1971 was a test for China because China had always been against the use of veto before joining UN. China stood by us in that crisis as well. He also mentioned some important Chinese projects in Pakistan, which were initiated in early 1970s like Heavy Mechanical Complex and Karakoram highway.

He stated that in 1980s, the post-Mao era, China got a new orientation as it followed two policies, modernization and opening to the West. China is an economic giant now with global trade of \$ 2.5 trillion.

China has had a strong and consistent policy of ‘interest in a peaceful neighboring environment’, over at least two and a half decades. He remarked that China has been very wise on settling the boundary disputes by signing boundary agreements with its neighbors including Central Asia states and Russia. Long-term thinking is very evident from Chinese policies.

Mr. Riaz said that the most important region for China is not South Asia or Central Asia, rather it is Asia Pacific. US pivot is a source of concern for China but they are careful not to upset the current economic situation, which has achieved the economic transformation in China. US is the biggest trading partner of China, with over \$550 billion of annual trade.

With regard to India, the relations got hostile from 1962 but it started changing after Rajiv Gandhi’s visit in 1988. It led to an agreement between the two countries to resolve the boundary



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issues between the two countries. Today, China is the largest trading partner of India with over \$70 billion annual trade.

Mr. Riaz informed the committee that China used to support Pakistan's stance on Kashmir issue earlier, i.e. it should be resolved through self-determination of Kashmiri people, but now it has adopted a more diplomatic stance that it should be resolved through bilateral means.

Describing the current nature of Pak-China relations, he said that these are still high value qualitatively but not quantitatively.

As a result of rising terrorism in China, East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) is becoming a major concern. China looks up to us for full cooperation as regard to counter the rising terrorism.

He said confidently that Pakistan can trust China as an important and steadfast friend when it comes to standing by us internationally. For example, in 1971 when China cast her first veto on the behest of Pakistan. But he reiterated that we need to be clear that China would not get into our war.

He reminded the committee that China is very important for Pakistan because: firstly, it is the largest reservoir of surplus capital with great potential to invest in Pakistan, and, secondly, it is the most accessible source of technology for Pakistan, especially sensitive technology.

Highlighting the weaknesses of the relationship, he mentioned the miniscule trade of less than \$6 billion per annum. Although trade agreements have been signed but Pakistan couldn't benefit because of her own limitations. He said that security is the biggest impediment and we can have at least tent times more business if security situation improves.

He lamented the meager interaction at people-to-people level due to which the new generation does not have that experience as the past. Each year, around 30-40 million Chinese go abroad for tourism but hardly a few of this figure come to Pakistan due to unfavorable environment of our country.

Mr. Riaz appreciated the close consultations at leadership level, close cooperation at international fora, and strategic cooperation. He remarked, "Political foundation our relationship



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is sound, with unique convergence despite separate socio-political systems, but the soft power today is part and parcel of relations among states in this globalized world.”

The challenge for Pakistan lies in engaging China through commerce, economic enterprise, science, technology and people-to-people interaction.

Mr. Fazlur Rehman underlined the problem area of our relationship. He encouraged the national consensus in Pakistan on relations with China. The backbone of our relations until 1998 was military and political understanding. But in the recent past, both the countries realized the need to focus on economic sector as well. In 2000, bilateral trade was \$1 billion while latest figures are \$12.8 billion.

He described the last decade as ‘the decade of consolidation of Pak-China relations’ through regular exchange of high level visits. He told that things are steadily consolidating under the Joint Declaration on Direction of Bilateral Cooperation and Treaty of Friendship and Good Neighborly Relations signed in 2003 and 2005 respectively. Some clauses of the later document do not bind but take a commitment from China to defend Pakistan’s interests in case of a danger to its sovereignty.

During this period, Currency Swap Agreement to use local currency for bilateral trade further facilitated mutual trade. He also mentioned Pakistan-China Energy Forum, Joint Economic Commission, Pakistan-China Bilateral Trade Agreement, Free Trade Agreement, Gawadar project and the recent, Pakistan-China Economic Corridor, as some important initiatives to strengthen the bilateral relations. He appreciated the Pakistan-China Economic Corridor project and termed it ‘a marshal plan for the recovery of Pakistan economy’. He mentioned that China is associating this project with de-radicalization in Pakistan by improving the economy of Pakistan. “Pakistan would be at great loss if it couldn’t benefit from this multi-billion project”, he added. He reminded Pakistan that China has high expectations from Pakistan in terms of coordination in this project. He informed the committee that a Pak-China Economic Secretariat has been formed in the Planning Commission of Pakistan but it needs more resources and authority to function properly. It has been over 8 months since the signing of this agreement.

He highlighted the following problems in our bilateral trade relations:



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- China is investing in assembly lines, not in industry.
- The range of exportable items of Pakistan is very limited.
- Pakistan does not get those tariff rates in FTA with China which ASEAN countries get. We do not need only export of goods from China we also need export of capital.

He advised Pakistan to keep its market open for investment from all sources and not to suffer from dependency syndrome by focusing on one or a few country only.

Coming to the security aspect of Pakistan-China relations, he said, “If there is any threat to Pak-China relations, it is terrorism in Xinjiang”. China has zero-tolerance on this issue and doesn’t want Pakistan to become a sanctuary for terrorists. A dangerous thinking is developing in strategic academic circles of China that Pakistan is not countering militants to counter the increasing Indo-China relations. China’s major concern is the export of radical ideology from Pakistan to Chinese Muslims.

China is concerned that Pakistan should provide security to Chinese personnel. He recommended Pakistan to take care of them. “Pakistan should take the developing opportunities seriously and address Chinese apprehensions”, he added.

Mr. Akram Sheikh stated that Pakistan has not benefited to the fullest from the opportunities from the Paki-China relations. He added that Gawadar has been a place with huge potential but we haven’t benefited from it to the fullest.

He recommended that we should strive to integrate our two economies. He said only China can help Pakistan to deal with the water crisis by building dams. He condemned international tendering as a big fraud and recommended that tenders should be given to China for better and successful projects. Nuclear power plants, IPPs

He remarked, “China is the future not only for the world but also for Pakistan.” He advised Pakistan to take the relationship very seriously.



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➤ **Meeting of Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs on April 4, 2014**

Agenda:

“In-camera briefing and discussion by the Advisor to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sartaj Aziz, and officials of Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Syrian situation in the context of intra-GCC conflicts, Saudi-Iran tensions and Pakistan’s policies on these issues.”

Venue:

An in-camera meeting of the National Assembly’s Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs was held on April 4, 2014 at 2:00pm in Committee Room No.2, Parliament House Islamabad.

The following members were present in the meeting:-

1. Mr. Daniyal Aziz
2. Mr. Muhammad Khan Daha
3. Ms. Tehmina Daultana
4. Ms. Marvi Memon
5. Makhdoom Khusru Bakhtyar
6. Dr. Shireen Mehrunnisa Mazari
7. Ms. Naeema Kishwar Khan
8. Mr. Mahmood Khan Achakzai



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❖ **Gist of the Meeting:**

The Chairman welcomed the Advisor to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Mr. Sartaj Aziz and officers of the ministry. The Chairman invited the Advisor to give his input/ views on the agenda item.

Mr. Sartaj Aziz thanked the Chairman and invited the whole committee for a comprehensive briefing on Foreign Policy issues and objectives being pursued by the Government in Foreign Office. He said that the thrust of present Government is on economic revival and having a peaceful neighborhood. The Government is pursuing the policy of non-interference in other countries' affairs. On Syrian crisis, he opined that it has become a huge humanitarian crisis and a stigma on the Muslim world as one hundred thousand people have been killed, 2.5million people have been displaced and the casualties are on the rise day by day. Its fallout is now being felt in every Muslim country. Initially some Western and Middle-East countries wanted the regime of President Bashar Al-Asad changed by helping opposition parties and insurgents in Syria but, later on, they realized that it was a wrong decision as Al-Qaeda and other extremist organizations infiltrated the opposition parties. The situation in Syria has become complex as the solutions given in Geneva-I were practical and applicable but that has not happened in the case of Geneva-II Conference. As far as a diplomatic solution of the crisis is concerned, there is a stalemate as none of the parties is showing any flexibility in their stance. Pakistan is pursuing a neutral policy which is evident from Geneva-I accord in 2012 and the resolution in UN Security Council in September 2013.

Perception given by the media is that Pakistan being a close friend of Saudi Arabia might as well support the stance of the Saudi Government, which is not true as Pakistan is still sticking to its policy of being neutral. There is a difference of opinion even in the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries, and then there is a dimension of Iran-Saudi Arabia rivalry to this conflict. Pakistan needs a very careful approach to this whole situation and it is still suffering from the interferences that have been done in the past. Pakistan intends to play a balancing role between



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Iran and Saudi Arabia and is hopeful that the relation of two brotherly countries will get better with the passage of time.

The Advisor further elaborated on the Government's resolve not to support any brotherly country such as Saudi Arabia at the cost of any other brotherly country. Although Saudi Arabia and some other Middle East countries believe that Pakistan, being an old ally of them, will toe their line as regards to Syrian crisis, but Pakistan is firmly committed to keep a neutral stance. He told the committee that he discussed this issue in detail with the Secretary General OIC, who happens to be from Saudi Arabia, and told him that tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran will not only affect the region but also the whole Muslim Ummah. It is, therefore, high time that OIC must develop a strategy to resolve these issues, and Pakistan would not only support to ease the tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran but would also like to see a peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis. He also told the committee that Pakistan has got nothing to do in response to the aid of \$1.5 billion aid given by Saudi Arabia as this was also given in 1998 to the then Government and it is not quid pro quo as per the perception and hype created by the media. It was also told to the committee that the Prime Minister will be visiting Iran very soon, and Saudi Arabia can't object to that.

The Chairman Standing Committee thanked the Advisor for sharing his views and the Government's policy on Syrian crisis with the Standing Committee and asked the members to raise queries/questions if any from the Advisor. Dr. Shireen Mehrunnisa Mazari opined that Pakistan is in fact moving away from the non-Interference stance/ principle as is evident from the joint statement issued during the visit of Prince Salman Bin Abdul Aziz al Saud to Pakistan. It is also in the news that Pakistan will be selling arms to Saudi Arabia which then eventually will be used by the militants in Syria. She also questions that is there any agreement according to which the Saudi's will not be selling arms to other country or groups. She was also of the view that Iran has taken a stance against neo-imperialism of America and is not against any Sunni or Shia State. The thing that concerns most is the money coming from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and UAE to madrasah's in Pakistan and which ends up with extremist groups and Taliban. This is eventually fueling sectarianism in Pakistan. She also told the Committee that according to a news



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item, retired army personnel are recruited for Bahrain and which is endangering the lives of Pakistanis in Bahrain. She opined that we should not become a party to Saudi independent and sectarian-based policy.

The Advisor on Foreign Affairs Mr. Sartaj Aziz responded to the contention of Dr. Shireen by telling the Committee that there is no ambiguity or conflict on Pakistan's stance on Syria and the joint statement issued with a Saudi Crown Prince is in accordance with the Geneva-I accord. He also said that mostly the people have been going to Bahrain for employment purposes and are doing it in their private capacity and there is not an agreement between the two states. He added that Pakistan is only giving small arms to Saudi Arabia and not the sophisticated weapons or hand shoulder missiles which Dr. Shireen has claimed to be given to Saudi Arabia, and the real cooperation between the two countries is restricted to training. He further added that we are safeguarded internationally as we obtained end user certificate from any country whom we sell the arms, not to sell to any other country. In response to the question of foreign funding fuelling sectarianism, he said that very soon Anti-Money Laundering Bill will be introduced in the National Assembly through which we will be able to check and trace any kind of money coming into Pakistan. The Chairman Standing Committee raised a question from the Advisor that whether the Anti-Money Laundering Bill will be able to track the money and do the embassies of Pakistan have any information about organizations or individuals sending money to Pakistan? The Advisor negated and said the embassies do not have any kind of information of this sort.

To the question of Ms. Marvi Memon he replied that there is no deviation on neutrality on part of Pakistan and on the issues with Iran he said there is already a joint commission working to resolve them. The Pak-Iran Gas Pipeline Project is in limbo and will be discussed in the forthcoming visit of the Prime Minister to Iran. He also answered the question of Ms. Tehmina Daultana that madrasahs had been receiving funds in past for imparting religious education to students but from now onwards it will be checked whether the same money is used for any other purpose. The Chairman Standing Committee remarked that funding from most of the GCC countries are sect based and are not given across the board. Ms. Naeema Kishwar Khan said that there have been madrasahs who have been imparting education with utmost sincerity and money-



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laundering bill will definitely be able to check the flow of money. She also asked from the Advisor about the fate of the labor community who are facing serious issues in Saudi Arabia as they are being repatriated back to Pakistan and Embassy there is not helping them and also the deceased laborers. The Chairman Standing Committee remarked that the Standing Committee as a whole has concerns over this issue and would like the Foreign Office to issue directions to missions abroad, especially in GCC countries, to facilitate the laborers from Pakistani origin and to help for bringing the dead bodies back to Pakistan.

The Advisor told the committee that the Pakistani Mission in Saudi Arabia has done a remarkable job in getting around 900,000 laborers regularized and only three to four thousand laborers were repatriated and most of them have been back to Pakistan. Saudi Arabia has favored Pakistan in regularizing the laborers.

Mr. Mahmood Khan Achakzai opined that it has always been the American strategy to destabilize any organized state which can stand up to the state of Israel and which supports the cause of Palestinians and Saudi Arabia has been a tool of America, supporting the American hegemony and Pakistan, somehow, has been supportive of Saudi policy in this context. Mr. Achakzai gave the examples of very few individuals who had the courage to stand up against this neo-imperialism and arrogance of America, and how they were removed from power and crushed. He was of the view that Pakistan is next in line who will be facing onslaught of this Zionist agenda.

Mr. Muhammad Khan Daha and Makhdoom Khusru Bakhtyar were of the opinion that Pakistan must keep a balance between relations with two brotherly countries Saudi Arabia and Iran. Mr. Daniyal Aziz also raised a query on the American and European dependence on Middle East oil. The Advisor said that there is no denying that American, European and Chinese dependence on Russian as well as Middle East oil & gas reserves is lessening after the discovery of Shale Gas in America, China and other parts of the world. That is one of the reasons of the American rapprochement with Iran. He also pointed out that the Pak-Iran Gas Pipeline was a badly negotiated deal which will definitely impact our relations with Iran and, Pakistani Government is trying to resolve this issue with a better negotiated terms and conditions.



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The Chairman Standing Committee observed that it is true that most of the remittances are coming from Saudi Arabia and there have been better relations with Saudi Arabia as compared to Iran in the near past, but with Syrian Conflict in milieu and Pakistani Government accepting the Saudi gift of US \$1.5 Billion, that hasn't this been a source of embarrassment for Pakistan in the international community as it is getting difficult to justify Pakistan's stance against its critics. The Advisor said in response that Pakistan received a similar kind of gift back in 1998 in the form of oil and it is the same now and we should not feel embarrassed on receiving a gift from a brotherly country.

Ms. Marvi Memon drew the attention of the committee towards a serious matter of fishermen belonging to Thatta in Sindh Province, being picked up and taken to the neighboring country where they are tortured and labeled as terrorists. MOFA has always extended its support on this issue but it is time it should be raised by MOFA at a diplomatic level.

The Chairman Standing Committee thanked the Advisor on a comprehensive briefing on a very sensitive issue. He further requested the Advisor to host the meeting of the Standing Committee scheduled for April 7, 2014 at 2:00 pm to be held in the precincts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Tuesday April 8, 2014 at 04:00 pm with the agenda unchanged. The Advisor agreed to it but said the confirmation will be given to the Secretariat within hour or so.

The meeting thereafter adjourned with a mutual vote of thanks to and from the Chair.



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➤ **Meeting of Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs on
May 15, 2014**

Agenda:

Address of H.E Ambassador of China to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and for the Chinese Ambassador to give his input on Pakistan-China relations and how to further enhance the cooperation between the Parliamentarians of both countries.

Venue:

Meeting of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs was held on May 15, 2014 at 03:00 pm in Constitution Room (old Committee Room # 5), 2nd Floor, Parliament House, Islamabad.

The following Members attended the meeting.

1. Mr. Daniyal Aziz
2. Mian Muhammad Asim Nazir
3. Sahibzada Muhammad Nazeer Sultan
4. Main Najeebuddin Awaisi
5. Mr. Muhammad Khan Daha
6. Makhdum Khusro Bakhtyar
7. Ms. Marvi Memon
8. Rana Muhammad Afzal Khan
9. Syed Asghar Ali Shah
10. Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Hussain Qureshi
11. Dr. Shireen Mehrunnisa Mazari



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12. Mr. Ghous Bux Khan Mahar
13. Mr. Mehmood Khan Achakzai
14. Mr. Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao

Officers from Foreign Office also attended the meeting.

❖ **Gist of the meeting:**

The Chairman Standing Committee, Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, warmly welcomed the Excellency, Sun Weidong, Ambassador, for People's Republic of China, on behalf of the members of the Committee and National Assembly secretariat, he further expressed that it was the first time that an Ambassador was invited in the august committee's meeting, in order to have input on Pak-China bilateral relationship. He reiterated that this practice will also be continued to invite Ambassadors of other key States to get their valuable suggestions and input on foreign relations.

Mr. Awais Leghari gave an overview of the Committee's work to the participants. He told the guest that the Committee holds discussions with experts and proposes recommendations to Foreign Office.

Mr. Leghari remarked that Pakistan-China relationship is the



most important and Pakistan has full faith in the relationship. He further said that China has a very important role to play for stability and security in the entire region. There is a need to



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further strengthen people-to-people contact and exchange of delegations from both countries, he added. He further said that experts were invited in the Foreign Affairs Committee meetings to get their valuable recommendations on the bilateral relations with China. He shared that the experts commended the qualitatively strong relationship.

Excellency, Sun Weidong, Ambassador said that it was a great pleasure and honour for him that he was the first Ambassador to address the Parliament's committee on Foreign Affairs and thanked the Chairman Standing Committee and Members on giving him the opportunity to address the Committee. He gave a detailed presentation on Pak-China relations and highlighted the latest development in Pak-China relations. Pak-China diplomatic relations since 1951 have gone from strength to strength. He emphasized, "We want to give new momentum to our glorious past." He termed the Pak-China friendship as all-weather friendship and time-tested friendship. It is a cross-nation friendships that never changes with the change of governments and this friendship is as strong as iron. He also cherished the memories of the visit of Chinese Premier in 1996 during the tenure of President Sardar Farooq Leghari, father of Mr. Awais Leghari. Chinese Ambassador briefed the committee that China is assisting Pakistan in civil nuclear technology within the UN framework. He further stated that China is coordinating with Pakistan in following sectors:-

- a). Energy
- b). Water management
- c). Defense
- d). Agriculture
- e). Communication

He also briefed the Committee on the status of various projects being undertaken in Pakistan like Gwadar-Kashger economic corridor, thermo power projects at Port Qasim, Karachi, solar power plant at Bahawalpur, environmental friendly thermal power plants, and highways and motorways projects. He further said that China is transferring modern and latest technology for the above power plants, which is environmental-friendly and pollution free.

Chinese Ambassador said that during the present Government, the Prime Minister of



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Pakistan visited China twice and President of Pakistan also paid visit and he will again visit China to attend the CICA summit in China; this shows the attachment of the two countries. He also highlighted the recent visit of Chairman Senate to China and Pakistan youth delegation to Beijing. He said that Chinese youth delegation will also pay visit very soon. He further referred the two Chinese high level parliamentary delegations i.e. National People's Congress and China Political Consultative Committee paid very successful visits to Pakistan which has received very warm hospitality from the National Assembly and Senate of Pakistan and he emphasized that this kind of Parliamentary delegations should be continued to strengthen the relations between the two countries.

The Chinese Ambassador while referring the economic and trade cooperation informed the committee that the bilateral trade has reached \$14.2 billion in the last two years. He further said that Chinese investment reached \$2.2 billion and Pakistan is China's largest investment destination in South Asia.

He remarked that the planned road from Kashghur to Gawadar will enhance the prospects of business between the two countries. He added that the two countries are already working together in banking, agriculture, infrastructure, automobile and water sector. But more needs to be explored in other sectors.



On military relations, the Chinese Ambassador told that joint military exercises and training with code name Peace Angel



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2014 are held. He also informed that a visit of Pakistan military leader is also expected soon. He said that a new batch of JF 17 has already started production and Chinese cooperation in the defense sector will continue.

On a question regarding Afghanistan, he said that China is cooperating with Afghanistan and wants a stable and a peaceful Afghanistan. He said that it is the right of people of Afghanistan to choose their Government through transparent elections and China is deeply observing the situation there after the withdrawal of international forces.

The Chinese Ambassador also emphasized the need for promoting people-to-people contact to further cement the mutual bilateral ties and highlighted the efforts for promotion of Chinese language in Pakistan. He appreciated the enthusiasm of Pakistanis to learn Chinese, the second most spoken language in the world. Two Confucius institutions are working in Pakistan, i.e. one in Karachi and another in Islamabad. A third institute will start in Faisalabad. He shared that an exchange of 100 young delegates takes place between Pakistan and China each year.

He also expressed that China is cooperating with Pakistan to wipe out militancy. He further stated that China was also a victim of terrorism by East Turkmenistan Movement. Miss Marvi Memon informed the Excellency that the implementation process of MoUs is very slow so there should be a mechanism for quick implementation of MoUs signed by the two countries.

Mr. Leghari thanked the Chinese Ambassador and other participants for their valuable input. It will set a precedent for future activities. He appreciated the questions posed because it will help to propose recommendations. The members of the Committee said that such interaction with the Chinese Ambassador would help further boost the existing strong and strategic partnership between the two countries and appreciated the Ambassador of China on giving comprehensive presentation on Pak-China relations.

The meeting ended with thanks from the Committee and the Ministry.



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ACTIVITIES OF THE CHAIRMAN



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➤ Mr. Mitsuyoshi Kawasaki, Chief Representative, JICA, called on June 17, 2014

Mr. Awais Ahmad Khan Laghari Chairman Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs National Assembly, stated while welcoming Mr. Mitsuyoshi Kawasaki, Chief Representative of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), “Pakistan and Japan are good trading partners & the bi-lateral relationship will grow under the leadership of Prime Minister, Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, because the present government is focusing on creating business & investment friendly policies”.

While Briefing Mr. Mitsuyoshi Kawasaki about the achievement of the Standing Committee Mr. Laghari said that the Standing Committee is now operating as a think tank for the government of Pakistan on the issues relating the Foreign Policy. It advises the government on foreign policy issues and the



government takes its views seriously. The government of Pakistan is looking for building constructive relationship with the donor countries that contribute to the economy. Mr. Laghari appreciated the contribution & Cooperation of JICA fund in Pakistan.

Mr. Mitsuyoshi Kawasaki remarked, “Pakistan & JICA enjoy 60 years of Cooperation. JICA wishes to bring Japanese technology to Pakistan & support power & agriculture sector. The Japanese agencies invested more than 50 million US \$ in the power sector and also contributed 50 million US \$ for Polio eradication through W.H.O.”



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Mr. Laghari, while highlighting the visionary leadership of the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, said the first year of government has strengthened the business & economy in the country. The Prime Minister is taking personal interest in empowering youth and women along with other marginalized sections of the society.

Both sides agreed to hold a seminar in Islamabad for JICA & Members of National Assembly Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs to participate. In order to attract more Japanese investment in Pakistan, Mr. Laghari laid special emphasis on community participation for the development of micro-financing schemes at grass root level.

➤ **Turkish Ambassador, S. Babür Girgin, called upon the Chairman National Assembly Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs on 16th May 2014**

Meeting between Chairman Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Mr. Leghari, and the Ambassador of Turkey, S. Babür Girgin was held on May 16, 2014. Ms. Marvi Memon, Member Committee, also attended the meeting. The meeting started by exchange of greetings.



Chairman, Mr. Leghari conveyed his deep condolence for the tragic mine incident in Turkey which cost hundreds of lives. The Turkish ambassador appreciated Pakistan's concern over the tragedy exhibited by hoisting half flag.

Both sides shared that the two countries have maintained excellent political relations throughout the history. Both countries are working on various projects like to municipal services in Punjab and other provinces. The metro bus project and waste management project was also appreciated by the Chairman. Both sides highlighted the vast potential and self-sufficiency of



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Turkish defence industry and proposed that the two countries should cooperate to benefit from this strength. Pakistan can benefit from Turkish health industry as well. Ms. Marvi Memon also emphasized the role of media to bring the two countries closer by highlighting cultural similarities.

Mr. Lagari shared his learning experience from his study tour last year, when he met with the Turkish President and people from all walks of life. He told the Turkish Ambassador that the Foreign Affairs Committee is actively working to play the role of a think tank and provide policy recommendations to the Foreign Office. He also informed the Turkish ambassador that the committee holds meetings to discuss Pakistan's relations with various countries. Foreign Office briefing sessions and discussions with experts are also held in those meetings and the Committee is focusing on Turkey.

➤ **Mr. Leghari invited as Chief Guest at the Seminar on Opportunities for Dutch Business in the Water Sector of Pakistan on March 10, 2014**

Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari was invited as a chief guest by the Dutch Embassy to participate in a seminar organized with the help of Cleaner Production Institute (CPI) on March 19, 2014 at Serena Hotel, Islamabad. Dutch Foreign Minister for Foreign Economic Relations of the Netherlands, Mr. Simon Smits, attended the seminar. The purpose of the seminar was to explore investment opportunities for the Dutch companies to improve Industrial water management, Water supply & sanitation and Irrigation and flood control infrastructure of Pakistan.





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➤ **Mr. Leghari attended a roundtable on “The Pakistani Textile Sector in the International Arena” on May 24, 2014**

Mr. Leghari, Chairman National Assembly Committee on Foreign Affairs, participated in a roundtable on “The Pakistani Textile Sector in the International Arena”, jointly organized by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the ILO. The main objectives of the roundtable were to develop an understanding on the current situation of Pakistani textile sector and to identify areas where technical support would be required to make Pakistani textile sector compliant with international standards.



H.E Lillianne Ploumen, Minister for Trade and Development of Netherlands , who visited Pakistan on May 23rd and 24th, also attended the roundtable and shared Netherland’s interest in the development of textile sector of Pakistan. Her visit marked a transition in the bilateral relations of the two countries, which is moving from aid to trade. H.E Lillianne Ploumen shared her interest to promote free and sustainable trade with Pakistan. She also reminded the significance of complying with the 27 international conventions to get the maximum benefit of GSP+ status.

The roundtable concluded with a commitment from all stakeholders to work together to improve the working conditions in Pakistani exporting industries thus enhance trade opportunities for the country.



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➤ **Indian High Commissioner calls upon the Chairman National Assembly Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs on February 17, 2014**

Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Dr. T.C.A. Raghavan called upon the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly on Foreign Affairs, Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, at the National Assembly today. Both, during the meeting, expressed their firm desire and commitment to improve relations between the two neighboring countries. The Indian High Commissioner shared that an appetite for better relations is inhabited across the political divide in India.

He also signified the involvement of civil society and academia in a sustainable dialogue.

Mr. Leghari wished not to have Pakistan as an electoral issue in the negative sense. Political posturing in order to gain electoral dividends is something that should be discouraged on both sides.

Mr. Chair also mentioned the role Indian media is playing through its hostile coverage of Pak-India relationships. Signifying the critical role of media as a pillar of state, he proposed to make concerted efforts to improve this.



Mr. Leghari stressed that while economic and trade relations between the two countries are improving, the official political dialogue also needs to be resumed at the earliest.

The Indian High Commissioner expressed his resolve to coordinate with the new legislature, once the elections install a new



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government in India in May this year, and strive to foster interaction between the two legislatures.

➤ **Head of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of Islamic Consultative Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Iran congratulates Mr. Leghari for his election as the Chairman of the committee**

H.E. Alaeddin Baroujerdi, Head of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of Islamic Consultative Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Iran, has sent a congratulatory message through the embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran at Islamabad. In his letter, he underscored the importance of parliamentary collaboration for better ties between the two countries.



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Islamic Republic of Iran

Islamic Consultative Assembly

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Date: December 25, 2013

H.E. Mr. Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari,
Honourable Head of Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs,
National Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

I am pleased to present my best congratulations and felicitations on the appropriate election of Your Excellency as Chairperson Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs of the National Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

By underscoring on the important role of parliamentary collaborations in enhancing bilateral friendly ties, I hope by joint efforts, vast potential of two foreign relations committees could be utilized for strengthening and reinforcement of comprehensive friendly ties between the two countries.

By availing the opportunity I pray to Almighty Allah for glory and success of Your Excellency and welfare and dignity of the government and people of the friendly and brotherly country of Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Alaeddin Baroujerdi
Head of the National Security Committee
and Foreign Policy of
Islamic Consultative Assembly (Parliament)
of the Islamic Republic of Iran



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Mr. Leghari conveyed his gratitude to his Iranian counterpart:

Honorable Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Chairman Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs of the National Assembly of Pakistan, also sent a letter of gratitude to his Iranian counterpart and conveyed his firm commitment to collaborate with his committee to enhance cooperation between the two parliaments.



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SARDAR AWAIS AHMED KHAN LEGHARI
Chairman
Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF PAKISTAN

Islamabad, 10th March, 2014

H.E. Mr. Alaeddin Baroujerdi,
Head of the National Security Committee and
Foreign Policy of Islamic Consultative Assembly (Parliament),
Islamic Republic of Iran.

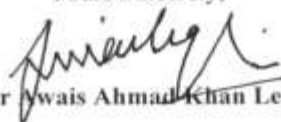
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

Please accept my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude for Your Excellency's warm sentiments on my election as a chairperson of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs. This letter reassures the great importance that our countries attach to strong relations with each other.

I envisage enhancing the interaction between our parliamentary committees. I am convinced that our committees should interact with each other so that we can influence the policy process in our countries to deal with the regional challenges mutually faced by our countries. This interaction is especially important at this time in the wake of changing regional scenario due to U.S withdrawal from Afghanistan and its implications on our countries. Further, collaboration at committee level will enhance our mutual trust, confidence and understanding to improve our relations in every field.

I look forward to working with Your Excellency and the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of Islamic Consultative Assembly, and I am fully confident that the age-old-ties of friendship, cooperation and goodwill between the two brotherly neighbors will strengthen in the years ahead.

Yours Sincerely,


Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari



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➤ **Mr. Leghari participated in a seminar organized by Khubaib Foundation and Measac Research Centre on 14 April 2014**

A seminar was organized by Khubaib Foundation and Measac Research Centre on April 14, 2014 at Marriot Hotel. Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, MNA and Chairman of Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, thanked the Khubaib Foundation and Measac Research Centre for arranging the seminar. He underscored the significance of mutual co-operation of academia by saying, “it is high time that analysts and researchers from Pakistan’s research centers and think tanks engage on a regular basis with their Turkish counterparts.”

Mr. Leghari had the opportunity to visit Turkey last year [2013] as a part of a study visit and later authored a paper on Civil Military relations and some aspects of Pakistan’s foreign policy. He highlighted some parts of the paper relevant to the theme of the seminar.

“It is important that Pakistan and Turkey also work towards improving regional ties and help each other in overcoming any tensions with other regional states”, he emphasized. “But there is more to bilateral ties than politics and security”, he added, and “it is high time that Pakistan and Turkey work on boosting cultural ties and promoting exchanges between educational institutes, facilitating businessmen from respective ties and have regular cultural shows and visits in each other’s entertainment industry and sports.”

“We have seen a stronger Turkish presence in Punjab with Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif pursuing economic and business ties between the two countries”, he remarked.

He stressed the need to enhance people-to-people contact and proposed each government to make bodies to facilitate this process.

He hoped that there will be a systematic policy designed to address any shortfalls currently existing and this will help both states to deepen cooperation at the state level as well. He recommended that more contact among the militaries and among the politicians and think tanks and other fora be held on a regular basis to promote this cooperation.



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➤ **German Deputy Head of Mission Called Upon the Chairman National Assembly Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs on February 17, 2014**



German Deputy Head of Mission, Mr. Peter Felton, called upon the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly on Foreign Affairs, Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, at the National Assembly on February 17, 2014. Both, during the meeting, expressed their firm desire and commitment to improve relations between the two countries. Various issues relating to enhancing mutual relationship came under discussion.



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Profile of Young Parliamentary Associate

Sonia Sadaf



Sonia Sadaf is working with National Assembly Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs as a Young Parliamentary Associate through IP3(Improving Parliamentary Performance of Pakistan) Project of European Union, implemented by British Council & PIPS. She joined this program in July, 2013 and got deployed to the Foreign Affairs Committee in January, 2014.

She is now pursuing her Master of Public Administration (MPA) at Cornell University as a Fulbright scholar. She has earned the degree of BBA Honors from University of Central Punjab with a gold medal. During her undergraduate studies, she spent one semester at University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, USA as an exchange student. She also took a summer course in 2012 offered by UNDP in Europe on “Sustainable Human Development”. Before joining the YPA program, she has been associated with some multinationals and NGOs for internships and volunteer work. Having keen interest in politics, social change, and public engagement, she also actively participates at different youth platforms, including National Youth Assembly, RotarAct Club, and Pak-US Alumni Network.