

## **America and Pakistan: A Partnership That Delivers**

Richard G. Olson, United States Ambassador to Pakistan

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry underscored the United States' long-term commitment to Pakistan during his August 1 visit to Islamabad. Secretary Kerry knows this commitment well since he was one of the authors of the Kerry-Lugar-Berman bill that authorizes multi-billion dollar funding to help Pakistan build energy infrastructure, roads, schools, health facilities, and create jobs. But a robust development program is only part of this commitment and, as Secretary Kerry said, the United States wants to ensure our relationship is broad and comprehensive, not dominated by any one issue. So we are working to advance an enduring partnership based on shared interests and mutual respect.

Our partnership has been strained at times, but its foundation is solid, built on a common long-term vision of peace, security, and a prosperous future for both countries. Secretary Kerry's visit marked a milestone in our bilateral relationship: the revitalization of the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue. With the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, we have an opportunity to work together even more closely. For example:

**Partnering for a stable region.** With tens of thousands of Pakistanis killed in terrorism related incidents over the past decade, no country knows the pain of terrorism better than Pakistan. As the International Security Assistance Force prepares to draw down in Afghanistan, it will be increasingly important for all countries in the region to help ensure peace and stability. We are not abandoning the region. We intend to train, equip, and mentor the Afghan security forces. We will continue to support the democratically elected Government of Pakistan and Pakistani institutions in their efforts to end extremism in the manner they deem appropriate. As the political and economic fates of Pakistan and Afghanistan are intertwined, Pakistan's support for Afghan-led reconciliation will be critical to create the necessary conditions for the region's development and growth. And we continue to support Pakistan's efforts to defeat terrorism within its borders, though the choice of approach is for Pakistan alone to decide.

**Partnering for prosperity.** The United States continues to work with the Government of Pakistan to cooperate on assistance programs designed to improve the lives of Pakistani citizens through support for energy, economic development, community stabilization, education, and health programs; investment in these areas also creates the conditions for the economy to grow. Our projects have supplied energy to over 16 million people by adding more than 1,000 megawatts of power to the national grid. Minister for Water and Power Khawaja Asif and I recently inaugurated the Gomal Zam Dam, which will bring irrigation to 30,000 farming families and power 52 villages in South Waziristan for the first time. Additionally, we have built or renovated 600 schools, provided 12,000 students with scholarships to local universities, built hundreds of kilometers of roads, including roads linking Pakistan and Afghanistan to facilitate

commerce, created jobs, and helped small entrepreneurs grow their businesses in communities throughout Pakistan. These programs meet immediate needs – like reducing load shedding – and transform the lives and communities of the people they reach. The programs also unlock economic potential: water availability, energy supply, and a healthy and educated work force are key requirements for economic growth and prosperity. Pakistan is now better prepared to advance the economic revival that the government has promoted and that both the United States and Pakistan support.

**Partnering for trade and investment.** The United States is Pakistan’s largest export market and one of Pakistan’s top sources of foreign investment. U.S. and Pakistani businesses are building relationships that will fortify our long-term bilateral relationship. With the sixth largest population in the world, the Pakistani market presents opportunities for investors and businesses alike. The U.S. - Pakistan Business Opportunities Conference that took place in June linked up American and Pakistani companies and provided a platform for the new government to explain its economic and investment agenda. We launched the Pakistan Private Investment Initiative, which will provide equity to Pakistani small and medium sized enterprises. The entrepreneurship programs that we are sponsoring and our combined efforts can create a better business/investment climate in Pakistan, foster transparency, and help unlock the economic potential I see in this country. This, along with the Pakistani government’s efforts to improve security, energy, and governance, will provide space for the U.S. and Pakistani private sectors to increase trade between our two countries and foreign direct investment in Pakistan, a goal that both of our governments share.

**Partnering our people.** The ties that bind the people of the United States and Pakistan are extensive. Our partnership draws strength from the Pakistani diaspora in the United States and the tens of thousands of Pakistanis who have participated in U.S.-sponsored exchange programs in the United States and returned to live and work in Pakistan. Because these linkages are so important, we are investing more in our prestigious Fulbright program in Pakistan than anywhere else in the world. These are the ties not only of cultural understanding, but of friendship and cooperation across every industry and in every corner of Pakistan.

While we might employ different tactics for reaching the same objective at times, the United States and Pakistan share a number of fundamental goals. We are working together to advance stability, spur economic growth, boost trade and investment, and cement the friendship between our nations. While the Strategic Dialogue that we reenergized during Secretary Kerry’s visit is an important mechanism for government-to-government coordination, the ongoing people-to-people and business-to-business exchange and communication are just as important. As I continue to meet Pakistanis across the country, I look forward to hearing about how we can work together even more closely to achieve our fundamental, shared goals: peace, stability, and prosperity for the people of Pakistan and the people of the United States of America.