

Ambassador Richard Olson  
Concluding Remarks to 14<sup>th</sup> International American Studies Conference  
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AssalamuAlaikum.

I would like to thank our hosts from Quaid-i-Azam University, Dr. Masoom Yasinzai, vice Chancellor of Quaid-i-Azam, and Dr. Noman Sattar, Director of the University's Area Studies Center for Africa, North and South America. I thank you for your warm welcome and congratulate you on a successful and productive conference.

The United States places great importance on educational exchange in Pakistan. In fact, the largest U.S.-funded exchanges programs in the world are right here in Pakistan. This includes the Fulbright program, the newly established Centers for Advanced Studies program, and other major university partnerships. We are also committed to increasing access to university for young people through our Merit and Needs-based Scholarship Program, Global Undergraduate exchange program, and other academic exchange programs.

One of the concrete outcomes of this commitment to educational exchange, which we saw just this week, is the launch of a University partnership between Ball State University and Quaid-i-Azam University. This partnership will foster academic exchange, joint research, and curriculum development in American Studies. This is just one of eight University partnerships we are developing in disciplines including Business Administration and Management Sciences, Mass Communications and Media Studies, Psychology, Social Anthropology, and Women's and Gender Studies.

We place such an emphasis on exchange because we value our relationship with Pakistan. Exchange fosters mutual understanding, builds bridges and helps to create an environment where we can discuss our differences and build on common values and interests.

Americans sincerely want to see a strong, vibrant, Pakistan because a strong Pakistan can and must play a positive role in the region and the world. We want to see a secure and prosperous society, a strengthened participatory democracy that is responsive to the needs of the people, an economy that advances and creates jobs for Pakistan's growing population, and increased educational opportunities for all.

It is no secret that many in Pakistan do not believe that America is Pakistan's friend and partner. We have much work to do to overcome doubts, ill-will and misunderstandings. We are enormously gratified that there are people such as you who understand the United States and want to see our countries working in collaboration on our mutual interests of peace, prosperity, and security. And we are deeply grateful that you are willing to speak up.

In Pakistan, it is Pakistani citizens who are the best advocates of trust rather than suspicion, cooperation rather than conflict, engagement rather than estrangement between our two nations. I hope that every one of you is here because you believe in this.

We are honored and grateful that this link between you and our country can serve you as individuals and through you serve other Pakistanis as a force for good.  
Huda Hafez.