

## **President's Interview to Daily Times**

### **Q: Where is the Indo-Pak process going from here?**

**Musharraf:** More than any agreements or joint statements that we make, more than that is the intention of the leaders. Is there any intention to solve the problem? We reached so many agreements and declarations in the past but all ended in failure. All ended in another conflict. So more than the declarations, it is the intention of the leaders that is important. The second important thing is that when leaders reach an agreement and there is an understanding between two leaders, if within the tenure of those two leaders you don't reach an agreement then there is no guarantee that the next leader will be equally accommodating and will have the same understanding and perspective. So therefore it is very important to do these things now. Now we have a situation where I think the intentions are good on both sides. Certainly, I am clear about my side. And I am also reasonably sure that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's intentions are very noble. He wants to resolve all disputes including the Kashmir dispute. So I have been told that we shouldn't hurry and we should take our time. But my belief is if we don't resolve this dispute by ourselves – Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and myself – because we have such a good rapport, because we have such a good understanding, I am afraid we will have repeated the history of the failures of the past. And we will both go and the situation will remain unresolved. And there is no guarantee about the future. Now having said, where do we go from here? Well, we need to arrive at an amicable solution is acceptable to India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir. And in this there are statements by the three parties to the conflict: India says boundaries cannot be redrawn. I keep saying we cannot accept the Line of Control. And I also strongly believe the third element: that borders are becoming irrelevant. This is another statement from Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. We need to reconcile all these three statements because there are contradictions within these statements. How do you reconcile these? I can just give you a feel for the approach that I am inclined to take. We obviously need to take the whole of Kashmir and put it in front of us and see the sensitivities of all the regions of Kashmir. And identify some regions which need to be demilitarised. I think it's the presence of the military which causes all the irritants and disturbs the people there. And all the atrocities also, may I say, stem from the presence of the militaries in these regions. The human rights violations, the atrocities, these are quite natural when there are 600,000 troops involved. So demilitarisation. And the third issue is that we should address what kind of governance these regions should have. There are many in Kashmir who are demanding independence. Now can that be acceptable to Pakistan and India? Is it anything short of independence that can be accepted? India has been telling them that it is prepared to give them autonomy, maximum autonomy. Is that acceptable to us? Is there something between autonomy and independence, like self-governance, that might be acceptable? What would it imply? What are the implications of self-governance as opposed to autonomy? And when we talk of self-governance, who governs? Obviously, the Kashmiris should govern themselves. But if are not giving them independence, then should they be over watched over by all three parties. And what is the distribution of responsibilities between the Kashmiris and the other two in this "over-watch"? These are issues which I feel are do-able, irrespective of these three statements. I think they are very much doable; if we show a little bit of flexibility in our stands we can arrive at a midpoint acceptable to the people of Kashmir and India and Pakistan."

### **Q: Are you pressing India for a ceasefire in the valley?**

**Musharraf:** This is somewhat like the chicken and egg situation. We say that they must stop their atrocities and demilitarise the area. And the response that I get from the other side is that all "terrorist" activities inside the valley must stop first. So it's a chicken and egg situation. Who stops first? Maybe if there is goodwill and there is a move forward towards addressing the core issue this could be a good starting point.

### **Q: Are you in a position to enforce a ceasefire by the militants in Kashmir?**

**Musharraf:** If there is an agreement, up to a point one can try and do something. But I can't give a guarantee that there will no bullet fired. Absolutely not, that's clear. I don't hold a whistle which when I blow it will end all militancy. After all, look at the attack on that bus station. I am against it. We are going in a certain direction. Obviously, these are individuals who don't agree with me or with the India prime minister. Unfortunately, these elements will be there to create problems in the transition period. But they will die their own death if we reach a conclusion which the vast majority of Kashmiris and Pakistanis and Indians are willing to accept. If there is willingness on the part of the Indians to demilitarise, and if the requirement is that there is no militant activity there, then one could get involved in a discussion with all roots and try to persuade and influence them to stop this activity. But this has to be tied in with demilitarisation because there is so much of mistrust and these things can't be one-sided. It cannot be that you stop all your activities and we will stop or demilitarise later. This is not doable. It has to be taken as a package.

**Q: Who will represent the Kashmiris in the dialogue?**

**Musharraf:** This is another sensitive issue. I feel the true representatives of Kashmiris are the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, the APHC. We feel that there has to be a trilateral arrangement where Kashmiris become part of the dialogue process. Now the Kashmiris are the APHC and there are Pakistan and India. Now we have a breakthrough. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has allowed them to travel to Pakistan. So once they visit us and they also talk to the Indian government, which we will try to facilitate, we shall have a trilateral arrangement going. Let us start from here and see if there is any other group who also represents the Kashmiris and needs to be included. If so, then we let's bring them together. As I said, if you are moving forwards towards a resolution I am sure these are small issues that can be solved as we move forward. Let's move forward, as I said, towards demilitarisation and issues of governance.

**Q: Even Mir Waiz has accepted the fact that the APHC is not the exclusive representative of the Kashmiris that the PDP, Mufti Sahib, and the National Conference have their constituencies and also represent the Kashmiris.**

**Musharraf:** I do not want to be drawn into this debate on sensitive issues. I am not going to comment on it. To us the APHC is the sole representative. But if we see forward movement and flexibility on the other side, we would like to show flexibility on our side. But I will not show flexibility if I don't see flexibility on the other side.

**Q: So you expect to see a solution on Baglihar and Siachen and Sir Creek soon?**

**Musharraf:** On Siachen and Sir Creek, the intentions are very good on both sides and that is strongly reflected in the joint statement in New Delhi. Both of these are actually troublesome on both sides and they are unnecessary irritants which can be resolved. Now on the third issue, Baglihar, we have taken it to the World Bank. There is a mediator now, a Swiss gentleman who has been nominated. Let him decide. It is surprising that India should have dragged its feet so long on bilateral discussions that it pushed Pakistan to demand a neutral expert to adjudicate the issue. But it was always a do-able issue between us. They have a right to generate electricity from the river above our river. The issue is: what is the size of the pond needed to generate the required electricity? The size of the pondage according to the treaty is to be based on design parameters. The other issue is the operation element of the reservoir. If you work out the pondage on an operational basis, it comes to a much bigger figure than if you work it out on the basis of the design parameters. However, even if — and I told this to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh — Pakistan were to agree to India's demand for more electricity, we would have problems with the gates they are making at the bottom of the dam. I asked him to give me one good reason why they are making those gates at the bottom, because this is suspicious. This is mala fide. The only use of these gates is if you want to discharge the entire water of the dam and then close them and start filling again, it will

take at least 21 days or 27 days to fill. So you will end up denying water to Pakistan for 27 days. Otherwise for pure generation of electricity, additional electricity which they want, why have those gates? And there is no answer to this.

**Q: Is it possible to have a demilitarisation of Siachen to pre-1984 positions without having a demilitarisation in the Kashmir valley first?**

**Musharraf:** Yes, indeed, there was an agreement in 1989. And that agreement was based on relocation of Siachen. And in 1992 the relocation position was decided. And our secretary defence went from here to India for a signing ceremony. Two hours before the signing ceremony, they backtracked. I think it's a habit with them to backtrack at the last moment. And our secretary defence came back empty handed. Now I have told the Indian prime minister that this is clear decision, there is no problem. Let's decide on that.

**Q: Are they linking it with other issues, with the issue of Kashmir, with security in Kashmir for them?**

**Musharraf:** No, it's quite the opposite. We are linking it to the resolution of Kashmir. It is pinching them more than it is hurting us.

**Q: If you want to look ahead what do you see in next 12 months or so? Where do you see Indo-Pak relations going?**

**Musharraf:** I see them looking much better. My only hope is Prime Minister Manmohan Singh stays and is allowed to move forward. I am very glad to say that my interaction with the BJP leaders, Advani and Vajpayee, has been very good. The only thing that I said was: please don't oppose it because you are in the opposition. And then the coalition partners, the communist members who are very strong in the coalition, they are totally on board. We must resolve this issue. These are positive signs. If we move forward, which we can, if we have the courage I am very sure this whole issue can be put behind in 12 months.

**Q: But do you think the Indians share your sense of urgency?**

**Musharraf:** I said this in the banquet speech in New Delhi because Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said "we are incidental leaders". Yes, indeed. So I said, whether incidental or accidental, we are there and we have this moment to grasp. Grasp the moment. We don't know how much time we have. So therefore the earlier, the better. New leaders may have different perceptions altogether. I don't know, I haven't thought of this point, but maybe the peace process should be guaranteed by the international community. I think if we reach an agreement there should be something other than just bilateral guarantees. I think the international community should play a role in the guarantees. And this is a new thing that I am saying. We are talking of guarantees which go beyond us. If we reach an agreement and we are reasonably sure that it will be followed, there is no harm why we should be so stuck up. If we have sincerity in the permanence of whatever we decide, I think we will have better permanence if the international community is involved, finally, in the guarantee.

**Q: But suppose this optimistic scenario doesn't work out in 12-months time, what sort of pressure will you come under?**

**Musharraf:** Well, people will say why are we wasting time talking to them, why are we going ahead with CBM's when there is no movement on the core issue.

**Q: While there were signs of some internal-strife in the PML, you made a statement that the government was talking to the PPP. It created much confusion and insecurity in the PMLQ. Why did you make that statement at that time?**

**Musharraf:** I have got a very, very straight mind. I don't believe in showing left and hitting right. I believe in straight talk. If in the PML there are some problems, and I want to resolve

them, then I will never resolve them by saying something about the People's Party. I will get hold of them myself and look into their eyes and tell them. So I don't believe in this thing at all. I was asked by a journalist about contacts with the PPP. I didn't avoid the question because I am not like that at all. So I simply said that I talk to everyone; they are approaching us from all quarters. And I keep talking to everyone. I didn't say I am reaching a deal or anything with the People's Party. The next question the same journalist asked was on Osama bin Laden. And I said, All I know is that he is not in my pocket, and I walked out. Yes, I know that people get disturbed in the PML when this issue crops up. But what can I do? I am being approached from dozens of directions. Every second person is bringing me some kind of a message from some person or the other, who is purporting to be coming from some important person or the other.

**Q: How do you plan to co-opt Baloch and Pushtoon nationalists in the power loop order to remove their grievances?**

**Musharraf:** I think that is exactly what we have been doing wrong in the past. Is this the future of Pakistan? Is this tribalism, feudalism our future? I don't think it is our future at all. We must finish tribalism and feudalism from Pakistan society if are to progress. So certainly I am not here to appease them. Now they have been blackmailing every government. They become governors and they again blackmail the government. Being governors they used all kinds of pressure tactics. I am not into this game at all. I am for doing well to the people. Now I am prepared to do anything for the people – Marries, Bugtis, Mengals. All the Baloch people. You tell me you want water, you want electricity, you want roads, you want gas. Yes, indeed, we must spend billions there because we have ignored them in the past. There is no doubt in my mind about this. If they are for this, I have no dispute. We would like to do more than what we have done so far. I would like to do more. That is all what I want. We have given so many funds other than the mega projects. We are looking into increasing their gas royalty and making sure that a share of this gas royalty and gas development surcharge is given to the people of the districts. Unfortunately, I did not realize this before. I was also inclined to go only to the province. And, unfortunately, the province was not giving a share to the district. It's their job to give it tot heir districts. Again we had to come in to make sure that they will give this percentage to the districts. So we will do that. And we will ensure that the areas from where these resources are taken, they get developed, and they get their due share of development. All that is fair enough. In spite of the fact we are going to do all this and in spite of the fact that their demands of so-called 'national' rights – I call them separatists, I call them agitators actually, I don't know who has named them nationalists, nationalists are for the nation, they are small sub-nationals who have been demanding autonomy — I am for maximum autonomy. Lett's shed off this over centralisation. The other issue is of the National Finance Award. I am again for giving more funds to the provinces. Let's give them more. If we don't want to go to the IMF with a begging bowl, the provinces should not be coming to us with a begging bowl to the centre. Let's give them more. There is no dispute whatsoever. No government, no president, no leader has ever accepted all this autonomy, finance award, development, development of Balochistan, minor, mini and mega projects, everything. What is their problem? The problem only is that they are not personally part of the loop, so they will provoke disturbances. But I am fully confidant that the state has come into the equation now and that the people are not with them. I got a feel of that. They are with them because of suppression, because they are scared. The moment we can show that their writ is not stronger than the government's writ, the people will come with us. That's what I am trying to prove. Now don't disturb Sui, we are making a cantonment there. It's under construction. We are making barracks there. The army is there to stay. I am very glad that not a bullet has been fired in Sui since we are there.

**Q: Is it likely to come to that, the military confrontation?**

**Musharraf:** I hope not. And I don't think so. I think Bugti should understand that this will not be good for him. I know even in Dera Bugti his support is minimum. I have got a feeling actually that the people with him are very few. A majority is against whatever he is doing because he is extremely suppressive. About five thousand or six thousands militants are there; he pays them and arms them. Those are the people with him. Not the common folk. So

we need to isolate this man from the common folk because they are not with him, the Bugtis themselves. In any case there are two sub-tribes of Bugtis — the Kalpars and the Masooris. He has been so cruel to them. The leader of the Kalpars is Muhammad Khan Kalpar. His son has been killed. He is an old man now. They are out in the Frontier, in Dera Ghazi Khan, in Multan. They are living in tents for decades. The government gives them Rs 300 per family. And now I have increased it to Rs 500. But what is Rs 500 to a family? This is how he is cruel to his own people. To the Masooris, he caught 50 of their elders and shaved off their head and shaved off their moustaches, beards and eyebrows. Look at what he is doing to his own people. Just to show his own writ. He wants to have absolute control. Now it has to be shown that power lies with the government, not with an individual.

**Q: To what do you attribute to the recent increase in the activities of Taliban in Afghanistan?**

**Musharraf:** The elections are going to be held there. They will try to disrupt that. But I don't think there is a spurt. On both sides, we know the military picture and we are quite happy. And there are a lot of Taliban feelers that they want to join the Karzai dispensation and they want to come into the mainstream. So all that activity is also going on. Yes, I admit also that at the same time these extremists are still there.

**Q: How close are you to getting them under control?**

**Musharraf:** We have operated in South Waziristan Agency, which is one of the seven tribal agencies. And as far as South Waziristan Agency is concerned, they are on the run and they are in the mountains. But they are there in small numbers, in single figures. We have had a number of operations, while previously in the valley there used to be more than two hundred of three hundred. Now we have been told there are eight or ten or maximum twelve individuals, against whom we have to launch an operation. Our services are required there because we need to sustain this pressure so that they don't regroup. So to that extent we have to remain there to ensure they remain on the run and they remain on the defensive. And as I keep saying, their homogeneity, their vertical and horizontal linkages remain broken. So they can't reorganize.

**Q: Are you opposed to mixed marathons?**

**Musharraf:** I am positive. I would like to run with them. Having said that I don't think our society is prepared for that. Therefore, please understand our society. You and I may be not the majority of Pakistan. The majority of Pakistan is the man in the street. What does he perceive? I don't think he is prepared to see girls and boys running together in a marathon on the streets.

**Q: Girls separately and boys separately?**

**Musharraf:** There have been a lot of mixed marches for things like fund-raising. Nobody objected to that. There were a lot of men and women walking together. What happened in Lahore earlier, my feedback is that if this had not been stopped maybe some woman might have been killed by the extremists. This is my feedback. Now why do you want to do this? Even if there was only a small chance of this happening, what take the chance because I am told there were some people waiting to do this. Why do we want to do this? We are not the majority in Pakistan. So we have to do things for the majority. Take Afghanistan. I know Karzai is for enlightened moderation. But can you order the women to remove their burqa and walk in the street without the burqa? No Sir, if their society is not prepared to remove the burqa so why should we tell them to do such a thing? I think every society has an environment. Let us go gradually. And automatically society would change itself over time. You cannot impose liberal values. Look at what happened in Iran. In 1978, I drove through Iran from London to Pakistan. The Shah wanted to modernize Iran. What did he manage in his lifetime, in 30 or 35 years? He modernized Tehran, all right, and maybe one or two more

towns or cities. And I, especially, saw all of them were so backward. And the people there were very, very backward. I believe you cannot change the environment of any society in one generation. You cannot change mindsets in one generation. It will take two, three generations. And you can never do it by force. In the case of the Punjab government, it didn't want any disturbance of peace. And this event would have disturbed peace.

**Q: You initiated the marathon. The Punjab Government announced that it would organize six mixed marathons. Then they were called off. The CM justified the cancellation after what happened in Gujranwala.**

**Musharraf:** I didn't initiate it and I had nothing to do with it. But they planned it and I, frankly, thought it all right at that time. But you saw the reaction. Then I checked with people about what they felt about it. I don't think the people feel good about it. In Lahore it's OK. It is digestible for Lahore. But they cannot do it in the cities like Multan. In Lahore and Karachi, it's OK. But why do you want to create this problem?

**Q: These are safety valves to allow people to move on. Isn't that the sort of soft image of Pakistan that you want to create?**

**Musharraf:** The soft image should not show us fighting on the streets. A hundred people are running and four hundred policemen are guarding them. I am afraid this is not required. After all, shouldn't the majority view prevail? What do you think? Is that democracy? But as I said, I am in favour of mixed marathons personally. I would like to run with them. I have been running in FC College, starting from FC College, going out of the gate of the Home Economics College in Gulberg, then turning left towards Kinnaird, and so on.

**Q: What social changes might we see here in the name of enlightened moderation?**

**Musharraf:** As I see it, enlightened moderation is a strategic concept more than a tactical concept. As I always say, first set the strategy right. First set the overall issue right. The tactics will fall in line, automatically. Now what is the strategy? The strategy is very clear, reject extremism. So therefore all these extremist groups and parties – Jaish and Sipah and Lashkar and all that – they must be banned and curbed and controlled and finished. Then we should go for social and economic development and that is poverty, education, health, women, children, modify your syllabus and make it more congenial and progressive. These are issues. Take the Madrassa strategy. Let's take them on board, mainstream them. In the larger context, actually, let the whole of the Ummah reject extremism and take the path of social and economic development. It is a different and bigger game going on where we are playing a very important role. In fact, let me tell you that ten eminent persons are coming here to meet me. These people will work to restructure the OIC in line with the thesis and strategy of enlightened moderation. But within Pakistan, this is a beginning. If you are talking of whether girls should wear duppatas on television or no duppatas or they should be running marathon, then those are merely tactical signposts. Gradually, these will become all right.

**Q: How's the Madrassa project coming along?**

**Musharraf:** Yes, I know, it's going a little slow. But it's moving. The main Wafaq-ul-Madaris, this is the main Madrassa controller and the majority of Madrassas are under this Wafaq-ul-Madaris, they are onboard. They are prepared to teach all subjects. And they are prepared to take Board examinations. And they are prepared to mainstream their children. Having said that, we require capacity, that is, we have to give them teachers and funds, which we are generating. But the dispute is over which Board is going to test them. They have their own Board which tests them in religious subjects. This Board is extremely honest. Frankly, I didn't know it well enough but they much confidence in it. It is done centrally. Nobody knows who is making the paper. There is no cheating. So they are insisting that they will do it through this Board. The other point of view is that this Board should be knocked out and a new Board should be constituted. Let's not be rigid. There are tens of Boards in the country. So let there

be this Board, as long as the subjects they are testing in the books and syllabus are the ones that we give them.