



FOREIGN POLICY
CASE STUDY No. 2

April 2004

Development of Pakistan's
Foreign Policy:

**Case Study on
Comparisons of Lahore,
Agra and Islamabad Summits**

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FOREWORD

Development of Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Case Study on Comparisons of Lahore, Agra and Islamabad Summits, is a special presentation by PILDAT in the context of the PILDAT Short Course for Parliamentarians and Politicians on The Foreign Policy Process in Pakistan. This case study is developed by PILDAT, as a part of the Pakistan Legislative Strengthening Consortium - PLSC, supported financially by the USAID.

Authored by Mr. Abdul Sattar, Former Foreign Minister, the case study aims to enhance the knowledge and awareness of parliamentarians on Pakistan India Relations as developed in the context of the three summits.

The author, PILDAT and its team of researchers have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the contents of this paper. PILDAT, however, does not accept any responsibility of any omission or error as it is not deliberate.

The views expressed in this case study belong to the author and are not necessarily shared by PILDAT, PLSC or USAID.

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PROFILE OF THE AUTHOR



Mr. Abdul Sattar served as Foreign Minister in President Pervez Musharraf's cabinet, 1999-2002, and in Prime Minister Moeen Qureshi's interim cabinet, 1993.

In a 39-year career, he held posts of Foreign Secretary, 1986-88, Additional Foreign Secretary (South & East Asia) Director General (South Asia) and Director (Arab Affairs), in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He was Ambassador to India, 1978-82 & 1990-92, USSR, 1988-90, and Austria, 1975-78 when he was also Representative to IAEA and UNIDO in Vienna. Earlier, he worked as Political Officer in embassies in New Delhi, Jeddah, Washington and Khartoum, and as Vice Consul in San Francisco. He was a member of the delegation at the Simla Conference, 1972, and participated in the Agra Summit in 2001 as Foreign Minister.

He wrote a long paper on 'Reducing Nuclear Dangers in South Asia'. Based on research at US Institute of Peace in Washington where he was a Distinguished Fellow in 1994, the paper was published in The Non-proliferation Review in USA and in a series of installments in Dawn, Karachi. Another article - 'Simla Agreement: Negotiating Under Duress'- was published in Regional Studies, Islamabad, and a journal in New Delhi in 1995.

He is co-author of a book 'Pakistan in Perspective, 1947-97' which was edited by Rafi Raza, and published by Oxford University Press, Karachi. He has also written numerous articles in Dawn and The News during 1995-99. The latest one on 'Responsible Nuclear State' appeared in Dawn of February 23, 2004.

He studied at Islamia School, Narowal, Forman Christian College, Lahore, and University of Punjab, receiving degrees of B.Sc. (Hons) and M.A. in Geography. After selection for the Foreign Service in 1953, he attended Fletcher School of Law and a series of instalments in Diplomacy in USA and received the degree of M.A.

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Introduction

There could be no more appropriate a season to talk about the current state of Pakistan-India relations. When the sap begins to run again, bare branches begin to sprout, fresh green leaves and the big first roses splash a riot of colours, and the air is fragrant with intoxicating scent of blossoms, we would surely agree with Emily Dickenson:

*A little madness in the Spring
Is wholesome even for the King*

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, himself a poet, would agree with. But not only he; also the other kings of our time and the "jamhoor" are gripped with that "little madness", dramatically illustrated in the cricket series.

Peace and goodwill have broken out all over Pakistan and India. Hardly a day passes without one leader or another, on this side of the border or the other, praising the positive change and projecting promise of friendship and cooperation.

Vajpayee is reputed as a man of moderation and goodwill, and has on more than one occasion taken the lead to recommence dialogue with Pakistan. Also in the vanguard of the pursuit for peace is President Pervez Musharraf. Knowing, as all of us should, of the consequences of war, he has been bold in identifying the underlying cause of tensions and tireless in urging its resolution.

Both sides have moderated the rhetoric on Jammu and Kashmir and President Musharraf has taken the lead in arguing for flexibility. Prime Minister Vajpayee has repeated the thought: "In this fast changing world, we cannot afford to remain shackled by history" and exhorted, "Let us be willing to look at innovative ideas."¹ Deputy Premier L. K. Advani, once a hardliner and dubbed as the "saboteur of Agra"² has promised, "We will try to find a meeting ground" and are ready for "give and take."³

Leaders play a crucial role in the life of nations, as this study of the Three Summits will show. The study will also show that statesmen have to assimilate and understand the imperatives of the time. The Islamabad agreement best illustrates that realisation. Even more so does the response of the people.

Three Summits

Three times in less than five years, leaders of Pakistan and India met at the summit⁴ level to confer on ways to change the course of bilateral relations. None of them took up any of the many disputes between them even for negotiation. Discussions were limited to the sole object of commencing or recommencing the dialogue between the two countries and setting priorities for the subjects to be taken up in the dialogue for normalization of relations.

The first of the recent Summits took place in Lahore from February 20-21, 1999 between Prime Ministers Nawaz Sharif and Atal Behari Vajpayee. The second summit conference was held between President Musharraf and Prime Minister Vajpayee on July 15 and 16, 2001 at Agra. And the third was a meeting between the same leaders in Islamabad on January 6, 2004.

Each of the three summits took place in qualitatively different domestic and international political environment. At the time of the Lahore summit Pakistan, too, had a democratically elected Prime Minister, stood internationally isolated due to its friendship with the Taliban, was overtly nuclearised and pushed to the brink of financial insolvency.

When the Agra summit was held nearly two years later, General Musharraf now held the helm. By mid-2001 Pakistan's economy had achieved significant recovery despite aggravated sanctions imposed due to overthrow of democracy.

By the time of the third meeting in January 2004, Pakistan's domestic and international position was transformed. Instead of international isolation, it now enjoyed the goodwill and support of the United States and European Union. Nuclear and democracy sanctions were waived, foreign aid was resumed, debt substantially rescheduled, and increase in exports and remittances built up exchange reserves to an unprecedented level of 12 billion dollars. Also, Pakistan was now on the democratic path with a Prime Minister as Head of Government following the election in 2002.

The three summits ended with contrasting result. The Lahore Summit, which began with a splurge of publicity on the inauguration of Lahore-Delhi bus service, was a grand success. Equally spectacular was the sudden and

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unexpected collapse of the Agra Summit, which attracted even greater media interest worldwide. Different from both was the Islamabad meeting, which ended with an agreement soon to be called a “breakthrough”.

The Lahore summit was prolific in the number of agreements, including a Declaration signed by the leaders and a Memorandum of Understanding by Foreign Secretaries in addition to a Joint Statement. The documents were the most comprehensive and covered the whole gamut of issues of bilateral interest ranging from commitment to “intensify their efforts to resolve all issues, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir”, to “condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations” and to “undertaking national measures to reduce the risks of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons.”

The success of the Lahore summit proved ephemeral. Statements of Indian leaders on return to New Delhi making light of the commitment regarding peaceful resolution of Kashmir widened the pre-existing doubts in Pakistan. Division of opinion as to the efficacy of the Prime Minister's policy was manifest in the vociferous popular demonstrations that shook Lahore even before the conference ended. Lack of sincerity and seriousness on the part of India, confirmed in the interpretations they gave to the Lahore agreements, provoked a search for an alternative approach. While confusion and controversy still surrounds the question as to responsibility for the mini-war in Kargil, the policy detour and its depressing outcome aggravated the difference between the Prime Minister and the Army high command.

The Agra Summit met a similar fate and this time due to difference of opinion within the Indian political hierarchy. At a meeting in the early afternoon of July 16, 2001 President Musharraf and Prime Minister Vajpayee, who had met mostly one-to-one, called in the Foreign Ministers and instructed them to finalize the draft of a declaration providing for the commencement of a multi-level dialogue process. The task proved easy, as Foreign Secretary Inam-ul-Haque and his Indian counterpart had already prepared an excellent draft. The Foreign Ministers simply deleted the parts of the draft that had remained unsettled between the officials, and agreed to the text ad referendum but confident of higher approval. The Pakistan President accorded the approval. On the Indian side, the text got mired in

controversy and division within the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs.⁵ First, they asked for an amendment to one sentence but even though that was accepted by the Pakistan side virtually as proposed,⁶ the Committee remained deadlocked. Evidently, it was not the amendment that blocked agreement. One or more of its members evidently opposed to the very idea of the agreement.⁷ The Pakistan side was curtly informed of the Indian decision to terminate negotiations, without disclosing the reasons.

In response to the Pakistan President's expression of disappointment during the farewell call at about 10 p.m., Vajpayee only told him the time was not favourable and that he would visit Pakistan later to finalise the proposed agreement.

President Musharraf told the media, “I came back empty-handed but the Summit was not a failure.”⁸ Prime Minister Vajpayee also underlined the progress that was made “towards bridging the two approaches in a draft joint declaration.”⁹ The Indian External Affairs Minister who was the first to address a media conference after the Summit on July 17 said, “I do not characterise it [the Summit] as a failure. I do term it as yet another step in our march towards finding lasting peace, amity and cooperation between the two countries.”¹⁰ On the same day, the Pakistani Foreign Minister gave a similarly positive appraisal: “The Agra Summit remained inconclusive but it did not fail.”¹¹ It was *natamam*, not *nakam*.”

The projected next meeting was, however, never held. Before the Indian Prime Minister could resolve the internal difference, the international situation was transformed by 9/11 outrage. India decided to exploit the new “zero tolerance” for violence against civilians, which now extended even to bona fide freedom struggles.¹² Attacks on the Assembly building in Srinagar on October 1, 2001, and a couple of months later at the premises of the Indian parliament on December 13 were used by India to ratchet up the tensions, mass forces on Pakistan's border and build up a threat of war.¹³

Relations between Pakistan and India remained on a knife's edge through the year 2002. Then, all of a sudden India announced a pull back of the forces to peacetime locations. India's decision against a war on Pakistan was attributable to two main factors. One of these certainly was the strategic balance. No less important was the international

environment. The United States, the European Union, Russia, China and Japan acted to restrain the dogs of war. Their leaders publicly exhorted the two countries to resume talks for peaceful settlement of bilateral issues. Pakistan repeatedly proclaimed its willingness to hold talks "at any time, any place, any level." But India refused unless Pakistan stopped infiltration across the Line of Control.

In April 2003, Prime Minister Vajpayee publicly hinted that India was prepared to consider resumption of dialogue. Still, however, there was no sign of consensus in New Delhi on holding unconditional talks with Pakistan. Even Vajpayee's decision to attend the SAARC Summit in Islamabad was at first declined from a meeting with Pakistani leaders on bilateral relations.

Islamabad Meeting

Not until after his meeting with President Musharraf on January 6, 2004 did it emerge that the courtesy call was in fact a substantive meeting. The two leaders reached agreement to recommence the composite dialogue for "peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir." The brief Joint Press Statement was notable for Vajpayee's statement emphasising that "violence, hostility and terrorism must be prevented" and Musharraf reassuring that "he will not permit any territory under Pakistan's control to be used to support terrorism in any manner."

The agreement was greeted with worldwide acclaim. Recommencement of dialogue was seen as opening up a prospect of settlement of Kashmir. Political parties and people in Pakistan echoed the same assessment and few seemed to note or care for the rather terse and jarring tone of the Joint Statement which juxtaposed Vajpayee's admonishing exhortation on terrorism and the President Musharraf's response assuring that he would prevent use of the territory under Pakistan's control for acts of terrorism. While that is no more than a statement of the principle of international law, Pakistan's usual formulation of position on this issue conforming to the stance in the United Nations has "condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations."¹⁴ Nevertheless, the agreement was surely a tribute to the maturing of opinion in Pakistan and a realistic assimilation of the sea change that has engulfed the world in the wake of 9/11. No valid comparison of the Lahore Summit and the Islamabad meeting can ignore that

transformation.

The net result of the Islamabad meeting is India's agreement to resume dialogue. That change after a hiatus of two years is part of the transformation in global and regional affairs since the Agra Summit. Meanwhile, Pakistan had undertaken the proverbial "painful review" of important aspects of policies by Pakistan, foreign as well as domestic, which called for courage and foresight on part of the leadership.

Policy Reform and Rectification: Impact on Pakistan-India Relations

Policy Towards Taliban.

Even before 9/11, Pakistan's close relations with the Taliban regime had begun to sour. The price of complete international isolation we paid in recognising their government proved too heavy. Our vaunted influence over them proved a figment. They turned a deaf ear to our intercessions against extremism, which alienated opinion even in the Muslim world. Blind to the consequences of harbouring Osama bin Laden and his cohorts who were accused of masterminding terrorist attacks against the United States, Mullah Omer dismissed the dé-marche by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, made at a highest level in 1998, and then by the President of Pakistan personally in early 2000, urging him to expel Osama.¹⁵

The Taliban persisted in courting disaster by refusing to heed the sanctions adopted by the UN Security Council after the terrorist attacks on the U.S. embassies in Nairobi and the US Naval Ship USS Cole off the port of Aden. Pakistan, too, was adversely affected by the terrorism sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter, which added to the burdens¹⁶ Pakistan carried on account of its Taliban policy. Islamabad decided to distance itself from the suicidal course pursued by the Taliban, which became manifest in the President's public condemnation of their decision to destroy the unique Buddha statues in Bamian in February 2001.

The crisis created by 9/11 and the predictable consequence for the Taliban, compelled Pakistan to make quick appraisal and immediate decision. Weighing the factors realistically even before receiving any demands from Washington, Islamabad decided to join the international consensus. The advantages of the correct choice were multifarious and far-

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reaching. Relevant to this study was the restraint international support for Pakistan imposed on Indian adventurism.

Jihadi Culture

After 9/11, the world community decided on “zero tolerance” for violence against civilians. Major Powers blurred the distinction between terrorism and bona fide freedom struggles. While USA and EU also imposed sanctions against some militant groups in Europe and other continents, popular and even official opinion in these powerful States saw the Palestinian intifada, the Kashmir struggle for azadi and the conflict in Chechnya through the distorting prism of “extremist Islam.” Terrorist attacks on the Assembly building in Srinagar and the Indian Parliament were condemned worldwide. India exploited the incidents to focus blame on Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Tayeba. In a letter to the President of Pakistan, the India Prime Minister warned, “There is a limit to the patience of the Indian people”¹⁷ and publicly threatened to attack Mujahideen training camps across the Line of Control.¹⁸ After December 13, 2001 the Indian rhetoric became more inflammatory. New Delhi recalled its High Commissioner from Pakistan, imposed 50 per cent reduction on High Commission personnel strength, severed bus and railed links, and suspended overflights by the PIA. More menacing was India's decision to move strike formations to wartime locations and mass forces on Pakistan's borders.

Pakistan was also under mounting international criticism for its tolerance of medaris that indoctrinated youth with extremism and lashkars and sipahs that advocated jihad and openly recruited, trained, financed and armed men to join what they considered legitimate causes and struggles at home and abroad. They were never given the protection of laws but operated openly and seemed to enjoy impunity. The benign neglect was no longer defensible, however. Recognising the danger, President Musharraf announced on January 22, 2003 measures to contain extremism, regulate religious schools and prevent organisations from indulging in terrorism in the name of Kashmir. Lashkar-e-Tayeba, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Sipah-e-Sahaba and Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi were banned. Proactive steps were taken to prevent violation of the Line of Control.

Domestic Reforms

President Musharraf's government also undertook comprehensive reforms at home to ensure fiscal discipline

and austerity, improve governance, curb corruption, promote political stabilisation and restoration of democracy, gaining economic strength and international commendation. As foreign policy is inevitably a reflection of a nation's inherent strengths and weaknesses, the reforms and the gains that have been achieved have made an impact also on relations also with India.

Lessons

One: Progress and stability at home are a prerequisite for a successful foreign policy.

Two: Even superpowers may not get away scot-free by ignoring consensus but for middle and small powers international isolation is a recipe for disaster. The Taliban incurred foreign intervention and overthrow. Pakistan exposed itself to serious setbacks on more than one occasion.

Three: Defiance of international norms provokes censure and costly sanctions. For allowing abuse of Afghan territory for terrorist activities, the Taliban paid a heavy price. Pakistan's pleas of autonomy of tribal areas cannot win immunity from responsibility to enforce law on its territory.

Four: Extremism is dangerous, provokes fasad and confrontation. Itadal and moderation is the golden rule for harmony and peace. Saadi Shirazi said, “Two words are the key to felicity in this life and the next: kindness to friends and courtesy to enemies.”

Five: The moral dictum “might does not make right” does not govern policies of all States. The international system has not yet progressed from the Hobbesian “state of nature” to a civilisation based on supremacy of law.

Six: Good fences make good neighbours. Deterrence prevents wars and restrains States disposed to threaten or use force to impose their will on the less powerful States.

Conclusions

The Islamabad agreement to resume dialogue marks a necessary new beginning. It opens the possibility of a peaceful settlement of outstanding issues between the two countries. The opportunity has, however, to be grasped if the new beginning is to mark a turning point in Pakistan-

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India relations.

Pakistan and India have traversed a tortuous road since independence and witnessed more downs than ups. The record has not been encouraging but there is no alternative to persistence in efforts for a future better than the past. Our founding fathers envisioned good neighbourly cooperation with India and contemporary imperatives have reinforced the logic of peaceful coexistence.

Good wishes and good intentions are not enough, however. A provident approach requires understanding of the reasons and obstacles to the realisation of the objectives both countries have professed in every meeting and affirmed in every agreement. The Simla Agreement affirmed a mutual resolve to "put an end to conflict and confrontation." The Lahore Declaration held out the "vision of peace and stability" and in order to achieve that aim the two sides made the commitment "to intensify efforts to resolve all issues, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir." But all these pledges remained only on paper. Why were they not translated into action?

The answer is traceable to the failure to resolve the disputes between the two countries and their divergent approaches to peaceful resolution. Pakistan hoped for observance of the logic of the UN Charter, which envisages settlement of international disputes by peaceful means and consistently with the principles of justice and international law. The peaceful means include negotiations as well as conciliation, inquiry, mediation, arbitration and adjudication. Implementation of Security Council resolutions is an obligation assumed by UN members.

India has rejected what it calls "third party intervention". In doing so it evidently hopes to exploit power disparity to impose unilateral preferences, which is neither consistent with principles of justice and international law nor conducive to amicable relations between States. As a result of the opposing approaches to dispute settlement, negotiations on even some of the eminently resolvable issues have remained sterile.

Take, for example, the question of Sir Creek. While the dispute over the boundary in the Rann of Kutch was settled and a thousand or so kilometer long boundary was actually demarcated in 1969, the residual question of whether the boundary lies on one of the sides of the creek or in its middle

has defied settlement. Repeated attempts at reaching a negotiated solution have proved futile. Meanwhile, the poor fishermen suffer. Every year for the past thirty-five years scores of them are arrested on charge of transgression in to the claimed waters of the other side, kept in protracted imprisonment and often their boats are impounded.

Is this failure to resolve issues and the indifference to suffering of humanity caught in the crossfire ascribable to some inborn animus? No doubt the clashing visions of the Congress and the Muslim League before independence and the horrible massacres around that period are part of the explanation.

No less important, and more long lasting, however, is the clash of inherited instincts of more and less powerful States, the former tending to seek domination and the latter wanting conduct of relations on basis of principles of law and justice. This struggle is part of the history of human civilisation, and progress can be measured by the extent of the transition from might-is-right to right-is-might.

Today, the more powerful States in the European Union pose no threat to the security of their smaller neighbours, both urges and fears of domination have receded and all of them are engaged in mutually beneficial cooperation. A tribute to the maturing of nationalisms in Europe, that transition has, however, followed centuries of tension and wars.

We must hope that the tempo of history in our region will be accelerated and that not merely strategic deterrence but also imperatives of economic development will moderate anachronistic tendencies that generate tension and conflicts. The international environment is conducive and domestic opinion in Pakistan as well as India supports a rapprochement. But the opportunity has to be grasped in order to guard against the danger of a slide-back.

Kashmir has been the "core issue" and the "underlying" cause of tensions between the two countries. At stake moreover are the recognised right of self-determination and azadi of the people of Kashmir. Without a settlement conforming to their aspirations, neither they can be expected to give up their struggle nor Pakistan to abandon their legitimate cause. It continues to cloud the prospect for better relations.

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Realism has been manifest in President Musharraf's pronouncements. In March 2004, he once again emphasised the need to move forward on Kashmir as well as resolve other issues. Otherwise, the momentum generated by confidence building measures could lose its momentum.¹⁹

To return to the metaphor of the seasons, spring is always welcome but seasons change. Humanity has learnt to moderate the rigours of summers and winters. We must hope that leaders of Pakistan and India will bring the wisdom and determination necessary to maintain the progress towards a future better than the past.

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References

1. Dawn, Islamabad, 23 March 2004.
2. The epithet was first used by the magazine India Toady in 2001.
3. Dawn, Islamabad, 13 March 2004.
4. Like a court of last appeal, a summit conference is a diplomatic means of last resort where heads of State or Government meet specially to deliberate on key issues of international relations. The aims of bilateral summits usually range from preservation or restoration of peace to post-war normalization and strengthening of existing friendship and cooperation. The Tashkent Conference held in 1966 and the Simla Conference of 1972 were convened with the specific aims of addressing issues created by Pakistan-India wars, conversion of ceasefire in to peace agreement and beginning of a process of normalization of bilateral relations.
5. Members of the Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, were Ministers of Commerce, Defence, External Affairs, Finance, and Home Affairs. The portfolios of Defence and External Affairs were both held by Jaswant Singh.
6. Paragraph 1 in its first version agree by the Foreign Ministers read, "Settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir issue would pave the way for normalisation of relations between the two countries." After the compromise agreement, it read, "Progress towards settlement of Jammu and Kashmir issue would be conducive towards normalization and will further the establishment of a cooperative relationship in a mutually reinforcing manner."
7. When a Pakistani journalist asked in an interview with Prime Minister Vajpayee on January 1, 2004, if the agreement was sabotaged by some elements in the Indian cabinet, Vajpayee said "the draft was written
8. President Pervez Musharraf, Record of Press Conference, 20 July 2001.
9. Prime Minister A. B. Vajpayee, Text of Statement in the Indian Parliament, 24 July 2001.
10. Jaswant Singh, External Affairs Minister of India, Transcript of Press Conference, 17 July 2001. .
11. Abdul Sattar, Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Press Statement, 17 July 2001.
12. While USA and EU also imposed sanctions against some militant groups in Europe and other continents, popular opinion in these powerful States too often associated terrorism with "extremist Islam."
13. India massed forces on Pakistan's border after the attack on the Indian parliament on December 13, 2001. Comparing the event to the Nine Eleven terrorist attacks in the United State, it tried to create a rift between Pakistan and the United States, and perhaps also to win US acquiescence for a war on Pakistan. However, it had no evidence and the allegation that the five attackers were Pakistanis was exposed as false. Also, Pakistan was now a partner in the "war on terrorism." Although the alarm bells rang more than once, India did not carry out the threat and pulled the forces back after a year.
14. The Lahore Summit documents contain such a statement.
15. In September 1998, Pakistan's Interior Minister and Prince Turki bin Faisal went to Kandahar to persuade Mullah Omar to expel Osama bin Laden. He insulted the royal envoy, denouncing the Saudi regime, and though he promised to heed the advice he later reneged on the promise to expel Osama. The inefficacy of our influence was exposed once again in April 2000 when President Musharraf personally met Mullah Omar but failed to persuade him to expel Osama. Dispatch by Anwar Iqbal on the report of the US government to the Commission investigating Nine Eleven, in Dawn, Islamabad, 28 March 2004.
16. Still another factor that weighed on Pakistan was the growing antagonism with Iran. The two traditionally friendly countries supported and assisted opposite Afghan factions leading to a proxy war. When in 1997, Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan complained against Iranian arms supplies to the Northern Alliance, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told him, "Pakistan is in danger of being isolated because of its support for the Taliban." Dawn, Islamabad, March 29, 2004.
17. The text of letter sent in October 2001 was released to the press.
18. Vajpayee, public statement on October 11. 2001.
19. Dawn, Islamabad, April 1, 2004.

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