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For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
March 4, 2006

President and Mrs. Bush Attend State Dinner in Pakistan

Aiwan-e-Sadr
Islamabad, Pakistan

[President's Visit to India and Pakistan](#)

8:10 P.M. (Local)



VIDEO Multimedia

Mrs. Bush's Remarks

[view](#)

PRESIDENT MUSHARRAF: Mr. President, and the First Lady, Mrs. Laura Bush, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, it indeed gives me immense pleasure to extend to you, Mr. President, and to the First Lady, and your entire delegation, a very warm welcome to Pakistan. Your presence in our midst is a special occasion that reaffirms the vital importance of our friendship and cooperation for the good of our peoples, and for the peace and progress of our region, and indeed, the entire world.



Mr. President, we have always admired the generosity and compassion of the American people. This wonderful spirit was manifest in the response to the worst ever natural calamity that we suffered last October. We thank you and the American people for your solidarity and support in our hour of need.

Mr. President, six decades ago we had our relations and had many -- these relations had many phases. History shows that when we remain engaged, our two countries benefitted. We stood together during the years of the Cold War and global confrontation. In the '80s, together, we helped shape the time for freedom in the world. Today, in the face of new challenges, we have forged an enduring partnership on the basis of principles and mutual respect and in the interest of a peaceful, secure and a better world.

Pakistan and the United States are allies in combating terrorism, the new pervasive threat to the world. Fighting extremism and terrorism is a moral imperative, dictated by our own deeply cherished values and our vision of building a moderate and a very progressive society in Pakistan.

We similarly reject hate and prejudice that have recently targeted Islam and Muslim societies. More than ever before, we need to work for interfaith harmony and effectively discourage sinister acts of sacrilege and blaspheme intended to cause hurt and offense to other people.

Mr. President, we are dedicated to promote a peaceful environment and bringing to a close the unfortunate chapter of conflict and tension in our region. We are engaged in a dialogue process with India to resolve all disputes, especially the Kashmir dispute. The conducive international environment, and improved relations between Pakistan and India offer a unique opportunity to find a settlement acceptable to all sides, especially the Kashmiri people who have suffered far too long.

The world community, especially the United States, Mr. President, can help by encouraging all sides to move forward towards that goal. Mr. President, the technologically transformed and globalized world of today offers unprecedented opportunities provided we overcome the challenges of old conflicts and new threats to peace and harmony.

In our effort for development, we seek partnership with you. We deeply appreciate your assistance, and look forward to further expanding and strengthening our multifaceted cooperation. Pakistan is now firmly on the path of economic growth, social progress, and democratic development. You can further assist our efforts to fortify our reforms process.

Mr. President, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, strategically located at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia and West Asia, Pakistan has the potential to become the hub of economic activity and a catalyst for progress of a larger neighborhood. We are determined to pursue this destined role and are implementing plans for the development of infrastructure, communication and energy corridors. The strategic partnership that we have affirmed today will contribute towards our success in realizing our common aspirations for peace and development in this critically important region of the world.

With this, ladies and gentlemen, I would now like to invite you all to join me in wishing health and happiness to President George Bush and First Lady Mrs. Laura Bush, and everlasting friendship between Pakistan and the United States. I thank you all. Ladies and gentlemen. (Applause.)

PRESIDENT BUSH: Mr. President, and Mrs. Musharraf and distinguished guests, Laura and I thank you for the warm and gracious welcome. It's such a pleasure to be here in Pakistan. We've had a fantastic day. I was fooled by a googy. (Laughter.) Otherwise, I'd have been a better batsman. But it's been a full day, Mr. President, and your hospitality has overwhelmed us, and thank you.

I bring greetings from my fellow citizens, in particular the thousands of Pakistani Americans who call my land home, folks who have really made a

tremendous contribution to the United States of America.

Our nations are strong allies, Mr. President. We're allies in the war on terror, and we're allies in laying the foundation of lasting peace. In the struggle in the war on terror, Pakistan and America has lost many good citizens. And we ask for God's blessings on their families. Pakistan's efforts to enhance peace and security have earned the respect and the admiration of the American people. When the terrorists are defeated, and when the peace is won, our two nations will share the peace together.

The American people care deeply about the people of Pakistan. We watched with horror and great sorrow as last year's earthquake devastated this ancient land. Americans have experienced the trauma of natural disasters in our own country, and we've witnessed the power of friendship to rebuild lives and to restore hope. I'm proud of the U.S. relief efforts. I want to thank those officials who are here to help the people of Pakistan.

I'm pleased that our helicopters earned the name "angels of mercy" from those who were anxious for help in the mountains. I'm proud that our government and businesses and private organizations and individual families also saw your need, and gave their time and treasures to help rebuild this vital nation. Our donations reflect the compassion of our country, the respect we have for Pakistan. And we will make good on our donations, Mr. President.

We have confronted great challenges together, and we will continue to do so. Americans will support the Pakistani people as they take further steps toward democracy, expand educational opportunities for boys and girls, and create prosperity through innovation and global trade. Pakistan has a bright future because of its proud people, and because of the hard work of a strong leader. President Musharraf, you've proved yourself to be a man of courage and vision. I appreciate the honor of being your partner in working for peace and security.

And so, Mr. President, with gratitude for what we've accomplished, and with optimism for what we will yet accomplish, I offer my respect to you, to your gracious wife, and to the people of Pakistan. (Applause.)

END 8:19 P.M. (Local)

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