

US-PAKISTAN RELATIONS IN THE BACK-DROP OF KERRY-LUGAR BILL

International Seminar Organized by: The World Sindhi Institute (WSI)

Middle East Institute, Washington, DC

1761 N Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-2882

Friday, November 13th, 2009

2:00 PM to 5:00 PM

“Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009” also known as the Kerry-Lugar Bill, has now become a law, governing all U.S. economic assistance to Pakistan for the next five years. Under the pretext of strengthening democracy and civilian institutions, the KL Bill’s litmus test is the successful dismantling of the terrorist infrastructure. Obama administration at home is hard pressed to achieve results in Afghanistan where it relies heavily on Pakistan’s assistance. Pakistan’s young democracy meanwhile struggles to strike a balance among various competing interests. The key questions are:

- 1) What are the long term costs of the US assistance to Pakistan and can we do without it?
- 2) With Obama administration are we seeing a new beginning?
- 3) Will US assistance make any difference in the life of common Pakistani’s?

The purpose of the seminar is to encourage dialogue amongst students, academics, scholars, and activists alike, on the US-Pakistan foreign relations and its wider influence on the human development in the region.

Panelists

Ambassador Wendy Chamberlin

Wendy Chamberlin has served as President of the Middle East Institute since March 2007. She previously served as Ambassador to Pakistan (2001) and to the Lao Peoples Democratic Republic (1995-98). She was the Deputy High Commissioner for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (2004-2006). She served as Assistant Administrator for the Asia Near East Bureau in USAID from 2002 until she retired from the US diplomatic service in 2004. Ambassador Chamberlin is on the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Diplomacy, The Hollings Center, and the Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center. She is a graduate of Northwestern University. Chamberlin has a MS in Education from Boston University

and participated in the Executive Program at Harvard University. She also holds an honorary PhD from Northwestern University and meritorious awards from the US State Department.

Dr. Manzur Ejaz

Writer, Economist, Journalist 'Daily Times': Originally from Pakistan, Dr. Manzur Ejaz was the founder member of 'Nationalist Students Organization' (NSO). This was the main progressive student's organization in Punjab. He completed his Masters in Arts from Punjab University and later taught in the same institution at its New Campus in Lahore during '70s. Dr. Manzur Ejaz has a Ph.D. in Economics from Howard University, Washington, DC. He is the founder of a Punjabi magazine 'Eur Lekha' and a publishing house 'Punjab Adabi Markaz'. A collection of his poems has been published with the title, 'Nazman'. He has written for numerous newspapers and magazines. Presently, he writes for Wichaar, Daily Times, Pakistan Post, BBC and other magazines.

Zahid Makhdoom

Member World Sindhi Institute's Board of Directors is based in Vancouver, Canada, where he works as a Justice at the Provincial Court of British Columbia. Born in Sindh, Makhdoom has persistently struggled for human rights of people of Sindh, for which he was imprisoned in 1971-72 for ten months. Zahid Makhdoom has extensive knowledge of politics and culture of South Asia, particularly Sindh, Pakistan. His subject of interest is indigenous people all over the world and their political relations with states.

"The reason PPP leaders appear defensive on television is not because their party is the first to let the Americans interference in Pakistani affairs. They are feeble on screen because they don't have the guts to admit that Pakistani sovereignty was not an America-proof jar they inherited. There are sixty-year-old holes in it and they are likely to remain irrespective of the wishful assertions of TV anchors."

Haider Nizamani, Daily Times, November 02, 2009.

The Kerry-Lugar Bill signals a dramatic shift in how American power seeks to engage with Pakistanis. While even moderate Democrats in Washington DC are alarmed by how many Cold War bunnies President Obama has in his diplomatic arsenal, it is also true that the Obama people have a fundamentally different worldview than the one that motivated the actions of the Cheney-Rumsfeld cabal of the Christian Taliban. Rest assured the era in which that gang of neocon torturers and war-profiteers was allowed to sleep serenely in beds that Gen Musharraf and his enablers made for them is over.

Mosharraf Zaidi, "Kerry-Lugar Bill: The Fruition of 62 years", Official Website of Mosharraf Zaidi, September 30, 2009.

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