

**The President's News Conference
With President Pervez Musharraf of
Pakistan at Camp David, Maryland**

June 24, 2003

President Bush. Good day, Mr. President. Thank you so much for coming. Laura and I are honored that you and Mrs. Musharraf are joining us here at Camp David.

President Musharraf is a courageous leader and a friend of the United States. America has a strong relationship with Pakistan, and we have benefited from the industry and the talents of Pakistani Americans.

Today, our two nations are working together closely on common challenges. Both the United States and Pakistan are threatened by global terror, and we're determined to defeat it. Pakistan's support was essential in our campaign against the Taliban.

Since September the 11th attacks, Pakistan has apprehended more than 500 Al Qaida and Taliban terrorists, thanks to the effective border security measures and law enforcement cooperation throughout the country, and thanks to the leadership of President Musharraf.

Today, both our countries are working with the Afghan Government to build a stable, democratic Afghanistan with secure border regions that are free from terror and free from extremism. Pakistan and the United States also share a determination to bring the security—the benefits of security and freedom to the people of Iraq. And I look forward to working with President Musharraf on this critical goal.

The friendship between the United States and Pakistan is vital to the security and stability of South Asia. I'm encouraged by the progress President Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee may have made in easing tensions between Pakistan and India. I'm hopeful that the two countries will deepen their engagement on all issues, including Kashmir.

In our meeting, we discussed the need to address extremism and cross-border infiltration, and I assured the President that the United States will do all we can to promote peace. President Musharraf has set out on an important mission. He's working to build a modern Pakistan that is tolerant and pros-

perous. Achieving this vision of moderation and progress will require movement toward democracy in Pakistan. The United States currently provides over \$31 million for initiatives in Pakistan aimed at broadening political participation and expanding educational opportunities, especially for women and girls.

Greater economic development is also critical to fulfilling the hopes of the Pakistani people. Since we met last year, the United States has cancelled \$1 billion of debt Pakistan owed our country. And today I'm pleased to announce that our nations are signing a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement, which creates a formal structure for expanding our economic partnership. In addition, I will work with the United States Congress on a \$3-billion assistance package to help advance security and economic opportunity for Pakistan's citizens.

For more than 50 years, the United States and Pakistan have worked together for the security and prosperity of South Asia. Today we reaffirm a friendship that has brought great benefits to our people.

Mr. President, I'm honored you are here.

President Musharraf. Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I am extremely grateful to President Bush for his gracious invitation to me to visit the United States. I am particularly honored and touched by his special gesture in arranging our meeting in Camp David.

This is my fourth visit to the United States, and as always, the United States' hospitality has been warm and exemplary. This special gesture by the President to come to Camp David and invite me here on a Tuesday is certainly a typical example of his warmth and cordiality towards me as a person and towards Pakistan.

We had wide-ranging and extensive discussions with President Bush in a congenial and most informal ambiance. These discussions have been highly productive, reflective of the very close and, indeed, special relationship that Pakistan today enjoys with the United States.

We have talked not only about our bilateral ties and the immediate situation prevailing in our region in South Asia but have also reflected upon and shared ideas of our common vision of a peaceful and prosperous

world. We have reviewed in depth with President Bush how to strengthen and expand the Pakistan-U.S. bilateral relationship and to give it greater depth and meaning.

Both sides have reaffirmed that our ties should be made more broadbased and multifaceted and placed on a long-term and predictable basis. The United States has accordingly agreed on a multiyear economic and defense-related package for Pakistan. This exemplifies the U.S. commitment to remain involved with us for a long term. We look forward to diverse programs of cooperation in the economic, commercial, political, and the defense sectors. We also expect greater people-to-people contacts and close interaction between the parliaments of the two countries to promote the cause of democracy.

As a result of this commitment, two important agreements will be signed during my visit to the United States. One relates to the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement, the TIFA, which would help move towards an eventual Free Trade Agreement, the FTA.

The other relates to an agreement on cooperation in the field of science and technology, which would provide impetus to growth and development. Our two countries have many common bonds and linkages. Our relationship is of longstanding and in the interest of the people of our two countries. We have cooperated closely in the global fight against terrorism, and we stand determined to rid the world of this menace.

We abhor terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. There is no cause that can be justified or promoted through terrorist acts, and Pakistan is moving against terrorism in its own national interest.

We also believe that our relations with the United States are a factor of stability in South Asia. We are grateful to the United States for its constructive engagement in our region and for its untiring efforts in diffusing tension and bringing about a dialog process between Pakistan and India aimed at the resolution of all outstanding issues, including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir. President Bush has assured me that he personally, and the United States, would remain firmly engaged

in South Asia towards the end of bringing peace and harmony in the region.

We also reviewed the situation prevailing in Afghanistan. We reiterated our firm support to the Bonn process and to the Government of President Karzai, which needs to be strengthened. It is important that the world community remains engaged in Afghanistan and lives up to its commitment towards the reconstruction and development of this devastated country.

We also discussed a number of other important issues, such as the situation in Iraq and the Middle East peace process. I have—I would like to, in front of this gathering, extend a very warm invitation to the President and Mrs. Laura Bush, may I say, to visit Pakistan and do us this honor and give us this opportunity of reciprocating the warmth and the cordiality that myself and my wife always receive very well when we visit United States.

President Bush. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Musharraf. Thank you very much.

President Bush. We will take two questions from each side, and we'll start with Tom Raum [Associated Press].

War on Terror

Q. For both Presidents, the war on terror that you're both engaged in, there are two principals that are still at large. Could you tell us anything about the whereabouts of Usama bin Laden? Is he back in business in Pakistan? And what about Saddam Hussein? Is he back in Iraq?

President Bush. Well, let me start off. There's more than two principals at large. There are terrorists who are—still have designs on destabilizing the Pakistan Government and are destroying innocent life. You've named two. There are others around too, and we're just on the hunt. And we'll find them. It's a matter of time.

Thanks to President Musharraf's leadership, on the Al Qaida front we've dismantled the chief operators of Al Qaida. If Usama bin Laden is alive—and the President can comment on that if he cares to—but the people reporting to him, the chief operators, people like Khalid Sheik Mohammed, are no

longer a threat to the United States or Pakistan for that matter.

As I said in my opening remarks, thanks to the leadership of this man and his Government, over 500 Al Qaida and Taliban terrorists are detained. They're no longer a problem. So slowly but surely, we're dismantling the networks, and we'll continue on the hunt. It doesn't matter how long it takes. It could take a day, or it could take a month. It could take years. It doesn't matter how long it takes, Mr. President, we will stay on the hunt, and we want to thank you for your cooperation.

President Musharraf. Thank you very much. All that I would like to say is that in search of all the Al Qaida operatives who are non-Afghan, non-Pakistani, pretty easy to identify, we have entered on the Pakistani side an area known as the FATA, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, areas where the Government never entered for over a century. This is the first time that the Pakistan army and our civil armed forces have entered this region. And we are in the process of opening up this region.

Now, if at all any Al Qaida operative is hiding in this region, we are after them. Now, whether Usama bin Laden is here or across the border, your guess, sir, will be as good as mine. So I wouldn't like to venture into a guess. But the possibility of his, maybe, shifting sides on the border is very much there. But as I said, we are fully inside the areas where—which are treacherous areas. We have an ingress there. And there is no doubt in my mind that the military, with every passage of time, will be able to locate any Al Qaida members hiding in this area.

President Bush. Do you want to call on somebody from your press?

President Musharraf. Yes, indeed. I think I'll take—[inaudible].

India-Pakistan Relations

Q. Mr. President Bush, it's a very positive statement for bringing peace into South Asia, which is already nuclearized, but during the 20 years of honeymoon period of India with Soviet Union, India is the one who launched nuclear program, and insecure and a smaller Pakistan, in search of its security, did the same thing. Now, when you are starting a

stable relationship with India, what kind of security concerns you are going to address about the territorial integrity of Pakistan and security concerns, because Pakistan is much smaller in the conventional weapons, and that's why they have gone nuclear?

President Bush. I think—look, we've spent a lot of time on this subject, not only today but during previous meetings. I assured President Musharraf that the United States wants to help toward achieving a peaceful solution. What you've just described is the reason why there needs to be a peaceful solution on this issue and other issues. Our role will be to be a—to aid the process forward. The decisionmakers will be the Pakistani Government and the Indian Government. Those are the Governments that have to decide how to resolve this issue, which is a—which has been a thorn in both people's sides.

One thing is for certain, that we all must work together to fight off terrorists who would like to prevent a peaceful solution. There needs to be a 100-percent effort on all parties' side; every party involved with this issue must focus on not allowing a few to undermine the hopes of many. And the President knows that I will remain engaged. I have—stand by, ready to help. But the truth of the matter is, for there to be a final agreement, it's going to require leadership from both the Pakistani Government and the Indian Government.

Q. May I have one more question?

President Bush. No, you can't. Thank you.

Democracy in Pakistan

Q. Mr. President, you mentioned you'd like to see a movement toward democracy in—

President Bush. What now?

Q. You mentioned that you would like to see a movement toward democracy in Pakistan. What would you like to see happen? There's a report that he might dissolve the Parliament there.

President Bush. Well, the President and I talked about the reforms that he's putting in place and the democracy to which he is committed. One of the things that he has done that is most impressive for the long-

term stability of Pakistan is to address education reform. A good education system is one that is going to mean more likely for any country, including ourselves, to be a freer country and a more democratic country.

And he is taking on the issue in a way that is visionary and strong. He's dealing with the Madrassahs in a way that is productive and constructive. He is working on a national curriculum that will focus on basic education. I'll let him describe his vision. But this country is committed to democracy, and we're committed to freedom. We're also committed to working with our partner to fight off the influences of terrorism. And we've had no better partner in our fight on terror than President Musharraf.

President Musharraf. Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to say a word on the previous question, also, before I address your—answer your question. Pakistan very clearly, obviously, is concerned—any country is concerned about its security. Pakistan follows a strategy of minimum deterrence. We are not into any arms race, but we do maintain forces to ensure this strategy of minimum deterrence.

And that is what we will keep doing to guard our honor and dignity. We have, as far as India is concerned, our sovereign equality to guard vis-a-vis India. And this is what we pursue whenever we are talking of any defense-related issues.

Coming to your question, sir, about democracy, let me assure you—it may sound rather odd that I, being a military man, am talking of democracy. But let me assure you that I am extremely concerned about introducing sustainable democracy in Pakistan.

Over the last 50 years, five decades, we have had dysfunctional democracy in Pakistan. And what I am doing, really, is to introduce sustainable democracy. Let me assure you, all the constitution changes, all the political restructuring that we have done, is in line with ensuring sustainable democracy in Pakistan. We will continue with this process to ensure that democracy is never derailed in Pakistan. This is my assurance.

President Bush. Final question, that you'd like to call?

President Musharraf. [*Inaudible*—yes, please.

F-16 Sales to Pakistan

Q. This is to President Bush. During the Indian Deputy Prime Minister Advani's visit last week, there were press reports of his claiming to have received assurances from your administration that Pakistan will not be provided with F-16s. This contrasts sharply with the positive relationship that Pakistan currently enjoys with the United States. The Pakistani public sets great store by the F-16s. So, Mr. President, should the Pakistani public believe Mr. Advani?

President Bush. Well, the—

President Musharraf. You are never going to escape this.

President Bush. No, I know. [*Laughter*] Let me just say—first, let me say, the President is not afraid to bring up the issue of F-16s. He has been a strong advocate for the sale of F-16s to Pakistan. In the package that we discussed, the 5-year, \$3-billion package, half of that money goes for defense matters, of which the F-16 won't be a part. Nevertheless, we want to work closely with our friend to make sure that the package meets the needs of the Pakistan people.

Thank you very much, Mr. President. We're honored you're here.

President Musharraf. Thank you.

President Bush. It's been a great meeting.

President Musharraf. Thank you, Mr. President.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:49 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Begum Sehba Musharraf, wife of President Musharraf; Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee of India; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and Khalid Sheik Mohammed, senior Al Qaida leader responsible for planning the September 11 attack, who was captured in Pakistan on March 1. President Musharraf referred to President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan. Reporters referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani of India.

Remarks in Celebration of Black Music Month

June 24, 2003

I'm feeling pretty energized. [*Laughter*] Thank you all. Welcome to the White House.