

## Text of President Pervez Musharraf's address to the nation on November 29, 2007.

(In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful)

My dear countrymen, brothers and sisters,

I am extremely happy that I have taken oath as a civilian President. The promise of complete democracy that I had made with the nation stands fulfilled today. Eight years ago we had taken stock of our failure to establish democracy and had made a determination to restore democracy in three phases. The first phase was spread over three years, from 1999 to 2002. During this period our first priority was to confront the economic crisis and pull Pakistan out of it. In these three years we ran government under a centralized authority and I retained four positions i.e. I was President, the Chief Executive, the Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Chief of Staff of the Army. I am proud of our performance during this period as we were able to pull the country out of economic crisis and now it is economically very strong and the development activities are progressing with full vigour. During this period, in 2001 we established the system of local government by holding elections.

The second phase started from 2002 and ended in 2007. During this phase democracy was restored in full by first empowering the people through the local government set-up investing them with financial, administrative and political authority and making them autonomous to enable them to undertake development of their district by providing them the required resources.

We empowered women by allocating fixed seats for them and also allowed them to contest on general seats against men. In this way there are nearly 30 per cent women representatives in the local government. The women have fixed seats and joint seats and in the dissolved National Assembly they had 22 per cent seats. Apart from that we empowered the minorities by allocating reserved seats and they enjoyed double advantage. We empowered the youth as we reduced the voting age from 21 to 18 years. That is how we established real democracy and held elections to the Senate, National Assembly and provincial assemblies. So an elected parliament and elected government came into being. We gave freedom to the media and decided to open private television channels. Now you see dozens of private television channels operating alongside PTV.

During these five years I retained dual position of President and Army Chief that enabled me to effectively handle the supervisory role. I was overlooking the governments at the federal level as well as in the provinces so that wherever required I could render a helping hand.

The third phase is now in progress in which Presidential elections were to be held followed by tackling the uniform issue and holding general elections. I was fully determined and was declaring since three months that I shall act in accordance with the Constitution. The Presidential Elections were to be held between 15<sup>th</sup> September and 15<sup>th</sup> October. The uniform had to be retained till 15<sup>th</sup> November and General Elections were scheduled within two months of the completion of the Assemblies' tenure.

I was determined to implement this programme but unfortunately a conspiracy was hatched to undo all this and derail the country. That is what I felt. I feel sorry that it was conspired to impede the legal and constitutional process under which the parliament had elected me as President with 57 per cent votes. When on the one hand impediments were being created in the way of the sovereignty of the Parliament on the other terrorism was on the rise and from FATA a new spate of terrorism was entering the settled areas of NWFP, especially Swat and some areas of Southern districts. We had to check that onslaught. It was also observed that apart from the NWFP, suicide attacks were launched all over Pakistan which took a heavy toll of life. When all this was happening I am constrained to point out with a heavy heart that some elements in the media fanned that fire. To me the situation was posing a grave danger to the security and integrity of the country.

Efforts were being made to hinder sovereignty of the Parliament and spread political uncertainty. Terrorism was being unleashed with deadly perils and some elements in the media were heightening it which was detrimental to the stability and integrity of the country. To cope with the grave situation it had become absolutely essential to take an emergent action as half measures could not yield any result.

In these circumstances I held in-depth consultations with Government functionaries, all politicians, businessmen, industrialists and military commanders and finally under absolute compulsion decided to impose emergency. This decision was taken by me in keeping before me the motto "Pakistan First" as I was seeing with my own eyes that whatever we had built was facing the danger of demolition. I was also sensing that the economic edifice which we had built with such hard labour was tumbling down.

I say with pride and a sense of elation that due to the steps we took the country is back on the path of democracy. It had been derailed but it has been again put on the rails. My election had been declared legal and I have taken oath as President. Election date has been fixed as January 8, 2008. Exactly in accordance with my promise I have retired from the rank of Chief of Army Staff and General Ashfaq Pervez Kiani has been invested with this responsibility. I consider him an officer and commander who possess the required professional attainment. I shall always pray for his success. I take pride in saying that I have relinquished this office after 46 years of service including nine years as Army Chief. Whatever I am is due to Almighty Allah's kindness, the good wishes of the people of Pakistan and Pakistan's Armed Forces. This Army is the protector of Pakistan's integrity. I am proud of this Army.

My brothers and sisters! The emergency has not only preserved democracy but has helped successfully fight terrorism. Due to the kindness of Allah military operation in Swat is continuing successfully and terrorists' back has been broken. I am confident that complete peace will return to that disturbed area. At this moment I thank the people of Swat and Mingora and also convey to them the gratitude of Pakistan Armed Forces for their willing cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

Now these are things of the past that democracy was being derailed under a conspiracy and how we succeeded in putting it back on the rails. Let us now think of the future. As I had said earlier, for the country's future, national consensus, political reconciliation and good governance are indispensable. If we wish to maintain the continuity of rising Pakistan, that challenge has to be understood through national consensus and met through political reconciliation and with good governance we will have to take the country's economy to

great heights. That is the only way that the country can progress and the journey to prosperity maintained.

It is in this context that Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif have returned and level-playing field has been provided to the Peoples Party and Pakistan Muslim League (N) and the democratic process is going on. Now it is the responsibility of these two parties as well as all other political parties to fully participate in the elections. As I see the situation has taken a turn for the better. The democratic system is functioning as per the programme terrorism has been controlled to a great extent. I wish to make an announcement. It is my firm opinion to lift emergency on 16<sup>th</sup> December. PCO would be withdrawn and elections would be held in a fair and transparent manner under the Constitution. On this occasion I wish to express the hope that any destabilization of the democratic process or any impediments in its way would not be allowed. God willing (Inshaullah) elections will be held on January 8 as per the Constitution. Please do not create hurdles in this respect. I would like to ask the elements who are talking of boycott to leave such talk and instead go for the election campaign and take full part in the elections.

My brothers and sisters! At this moment I wish to pay my tributes to Ex-Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, his cabinet and all-Ex-Chief Ministers and their cabinets. I am grateful to them for running the government for five years in difficult circumstances and keeping Pakistan on the path of progress. I thank them from the depths of my heart. In the end, my brothers and sisters! I wish to tell the whole nation and the people very sincerely that whatever I have done so far and whatever I shall do in future will be in consonance with the principle of "Pakistan before everything else". That is my promise with you which I will always fulfill. Almighty Allah may help you and grant you success and keep you in his protection. Pakistan "Paında Bad"