

fanatical extremism and where westernization squares off against the conservative traditional culture.

Governing Pakistan was labeled by some as one of the most difficult jobs in the world. September 11, 2001, multiplied these trials many times over, amplifying domestic issues and reshaping our international relations at a time when Pakistan was at the center of a global storm. I want the world to know the truth.

My life and my career had prepared me well for the challenges that lay ahead. But I knew little about governing a state or running an economy. I focused on sketching a

national reform agenda and gathered a credible group of professionals to guide me towards an economic turnaround, first of all. Through a process of brutally and very honestly confronting reality and facts on ground, we were able to come up with very homegrown solutions to address the malaise that the economy of Pakistan faced.

Having put the economy on an upsurge now, my undivided attention is focused on transferring the macroeconomic gains to the people of Pakistan. This involves poverty alleviation, job creation, improving the quality of life of ordinary people, the provision of basic utilities such as safe drinking water, electricity and gas, and uplifting the quality of our human resource through health and education.

I am a strong believer in the essence of democracy in the form of freedom of thought, information and action, and not just the facade of democracy through elections. For too long our so-called democratic governments have been rife with corruption and have been trampling on civil liberties. It may be ironic that I am being a soldier and a man in uniform am saying all this, but these are what I believe to be facts—were the facts in Pakistan which needed to be corrected.

My endeavor is to put democracy on a sustainable path relevant to Pakistan's environment and the ethos of the people of Pakistan. Elections were held on time in accordance with the Supreme Court's verdict, and power to govern handed over to a civilian elected government. We laid the seeds of grassroots democracy through devolution of power, through local government, empowering local mayors to focus on citizens' needs, empowering the marginalized segments of society—that is, the poor, the women, and the minorities—has been my single-minded focus. The poor for the first time have been empowered through political representation at the local government level. Women in particular had been hugely empowered through induction at every pillar of government. Women are also being economically strengthened through equally opportunity and being provided space in society through mainstreaming them into the national fabric. I find strength in this direction, in the founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah's vision.

On 11 August 1947, the founder of Pakistan clearly enunciated, and I quote, "You are free. You are free to go to your temples. You are free to go to your mosques, or to any other place of worship in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed. That has nothing to do with the business of the state."

Regarding women's emancipation, the founder of Pakistan had categorically said, and I quote again: "Tell your girls I'm a progressive Muslim leader. I therefore take my sister along with me to backward areas like Balochistan and North-West Frontier Province. And she also attends the sessions of All India Muslim League and other

public meetings. Pakistan will be a progressive country in the building of which women will be seen working shoulder to shoulder with men in every department of life," unquote.

Ladies and gentlemen, I've done something quite unprecedented in the history of Pakistan. I have treaded on a path which no leader had previously dared to go. I have actually liberated the media. From one state owned and operated TV channel in 1999, today there are 43 privately owned and independently operated TV channels, and there are more in the pipeline. Multiple radio stations have also emerged. Civil discourse has taken a quantum leap through open discussion on the air waves on issues related to state and society. This evolutionary process was certainly not easy—all that I've said—the going was extremely difficult. But I remained steadfast in my resolve throughout what were very troubling times for our country and the region at large. 9/11 changed the world, and in particular cast its shadow on

Pakistan. From being the front-line state in the war against communism 20 years ago, we were once again a front-line state—this time in the war against terrorism.

Al Qaeda shifted base from Afghanistan to Pakistan, and we had to fight them not only in our cities but also in the mountains of our tribal agencies. We broke the Al Qaeda network's back in Pakistan, and they now remain only a small disparate group operating in our tribal agencies—in a few of our tribal agencies. The cities have been cleared, but the fight still continues in the mountains. We have identified the problem of terrorism and extremism in all its dimensions, and are combatting it through a comprehensive all-encompassing strategy. As if all this was not enough, I was hit with a nuclear proliferation scandal of epic proportion. The misdeeds of an individual created an enormous distraction and threatened to undo what I was trying to achieve in our rural areas.

I walked a very tight rope in balancing domestic perceptions and satisfying international concerns. There is much work that remains to be done, and consolidating our progressive reform efforts will be work enough for any government. But we are faced with several international crises as well.

Our nation plays a key role in the evolving story of the 21-st century. What happens in Pakistan—socially, politically and economically—in the coming years will not only help decide the outcome of the global war on terror, but will also shape what the future will look like for both Islam and the West. It is a future I am determined to see peaceful and prosperous—not just for Pakistan, but for the entire international community. That vision is only possible if the Muslim world and the West, led by the United States, strive together towards resolving issues that confront us today.

In my five years at the helm of Pakistan, I have met all the world's important leaders. These encounters have refined my sense of the world's geostrategic reality and crystallized my views and understandings of key international issues.

One practical result of these meeting is what I call a strategy of enlightened moderation, which I hope will help usher a new age of world harmony. It is a two-pronged plan. In the first part, the Muslim world must reject extremism and work towards social and economic reform. The second part requires that the West and the United States in particular, resolve political disputes in the Muslim world justly. The path of enlightened moderation was unanimously endorsed by the Organization of

Islamic Conference and captured the rest of the world's imagination. With it I successfully managed to put Pakistan on the world stage with an image befitting its true nature as I see it. I have a vision for my country. This vision has all the human resources and the potential to become formed into a progressive moderate, prosperous Islamic state and thrive.

Pakistan, with its close relations with the entire spectrum of the Muslim nations, and its historical cordial relations with the West, is an ideal bridge to bring harmony within the Muslim world and between the West and the Muslim world.

The geostrategic location of Pakistan at the center of the Middle East, Central Asia, western China and South Asia makes the country an ideal hub for facilitating—create energy corridor between these regions.

I strongly believe Pakistan can serve as a model for socioeconomic emancipation of the Muslim world, and also in making the world at large a better and safer place to live in for our future generations.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in completing this book, the feedback—the feedback from my wife Sehba, my son Bilal, my relatives Huma and Hidayat Chishti ,Aftab and Shabnum Siddique were most helpful in the articulation of my thoughts. My personal thanks are also due to Humayon Ghauhar and Bruce Nichols for their editing contributions, and also to Chris Calhoun, my agent who guided me and advised me all through very effectively.

Most of all, I would be remiss if I did not express my very special gratitude to my aide, Brigadier Asim Bajwa for his painstaking and laborious efforts of both recording my thoughts and then transcribing them. Without his efficiency and devotion to me, the arduous task of completing the book would have been difficult to achieve.

My autobiography is my contribution to the story of our era. It is also of course my own story, a life where I look back and see the contours of an eventful, turbulent past with both luck and destiny playing very leading roles.

Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, by launching my book I dedicate this book to the people of Pakistan, those who toil, sacrifice and pray for their country and wait patiently for a better future. They deserve a commitment, selfless leadership which can help them realize their very boundless potentials.

And also to my mother, whose unwavering faith in me has been the driving force in my life. Her unconditional love and prayers remain my unlimited source of strength. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

I'm open to any questions.

Q: In your book you, if I understood it correctly, say that in the long run the answer to terrorism is to win the minds and hearts of the Muslim world, especially the poor in the Muslim world. So my question is how you feel the situation stands in that respect as compared to, say, five years ago, and what you think it's likely to be like five years from now?

President: I think the situation is getting more complicated, because of more fronts being open and because I feel we are only using the instrument of the military to combat terrorism, while terrorism in its entire complexity means terrorism and extremism. Extremism is the force which spawns terrorism. That needs a different strategy and a different understanding.

And when you talk of terrorism you are dealing with Al Qaeda. But now Taliban is another element which has sprung up. And when we are talking about Taliban, there is another element called Talibanization, which is a very obscurantist thought in which they want to impose on a progressive society. So we need to in its entire complexity understand the entire complexity of terrorism—extremism, Al Qaeda, Taliban, Talibanization and then we need to work out, see the environment in the world, in the region, in the respective countries, and address the core issues through a strategy, through a well thought out strategy, and then go in for the implementation of that strategy.

And within that, may I also say that when we talk of military, military will achieve only two things. One is buy time and the other is to create an environment. That is military's job. Military does not give you the ultimate solution. So why I said that it has complicated more: because other than use of military, till now, we haven't really pictured out the entire strategy, getting to the root of what are the issues, why is there terrorism, why the extremism is, and how to combat it in a strategic short-

term and long-term perspective. And while we open fronts like Iraq and now Lebanon we complicate the issue more.

Q: Could I ask you a related question, Mr. President?

President: Yes, please.

Q: In your book you say, "I never favored the invasion of Iraq, because I feared it would exacerbate extremism. The world is not a safer place because of the war in Iraq; the world has become far more dangerous." Without regard to the merits of having gone in, or whatever has happened since then, we are where we are right now. What do you think should be done going forward with respect to Iraq?

President: I think, Iraq, the root of all of them—whether Iraq or Afghanistan or Lebanon lies in Palestine. I think we should strike at solving Palestine first. That will create effect everywhere else, including on the whole of terrorism and extremism. It will create effect. And then we come on to other countries.

Now, if you're especially talking of Iraq, I would say if you are dealing with Iraq or Lebanon, we are putting the cart before the horse. Things will keep happening until we solve the original case of Palestine, which happens to be the core which is driving people to extremism and terrorism, which are driving people to these suicide bombs, which is even driving people to these subway bombings in London—or anywhere in the world. We need to get to the core, and that is Palestine.

In Iraq, obviously, it's quite clear it's more—the issue is difficult because of the division, polarization of three segments of the society; that is, the Shi'a, the Sunnis and the Kurds. Now, either Iraq can be held together through an autocratic system, or we need to have a proper democratic system which is equally represented. In this case I would say we need to—we are going on the right path, but we need to hand

over the security duties more and more to the Iraqi forces, reducing the visibility of foreign forces gradually in exchange for putting the Iraqi forces up; and also go on the political path, whatever we are doing. This is the best that one can do at the moment.

Q: It seems to me that I completely agree with you that there's a lot that needs to be done by other countries in order to help you do, Mr. President, what you're doing. Specifically what can the current American government and President Bush and his administration do differently? And what is it that they're currently doing that is not helpful to your cause?

President: As far as we are concerned, on a bilateral basis all that we are doing is going very well. We have excellent relations at the government level. However, I would say at the people level there is a problem. The perception of people of Pakistan, the man in the street, has been affected adversely because of happening between 1989 and 9/11—for 12 years. While we were strategic partners for 42 years, from '47 to '89; and we were the ones who were in the lead role to defeat communism, to end the Cold War, in the reunification of Germany. It was our victory in Afghanistan which was spearheaded by Pakistan which led to all that.

But then, between '89 and 2001, from the most allied ally of the United States we became the most sanctioned ally of the United States for 12 years. And that is what changed the perception of the people—the man in the street—of Pakistan. We need to recover that. We need to bring the perception of the people of Pakistan for the United States at the same pre-'89 level. Now, that means effort, and that—first of all, efforts again at solving disputes. My belief is that it is these

disputes, the political disputes around the world, especially Palestine, or in our case even Kashmir, and in Afghanistan, and in Iraq, and in Lebanon, which will create its impact on the man on the street. And also with bilateral issues being solved, like the F-16 issue, for example, which was in the minds of every man in the street that we were wronged—we were terribly wronged—where we had paid for the F-16 and our money was stopped and the aircraft were not delivered, et cetera. These are in the minds of the people. These will change gradually. It will take time.

But events like Lebanon, which are taking place now, further takes back the process of recovery of the thought process in the common man. So I think whatever we are doing, we are building long-term broad-based relationships, and this will ultimately lead to gradual improvement at the people's level also.

Q: If you could solve the Palestine problem—and how you solve that might be interesting to have you comment on—though you do address it here to some extent—would you not still have conflict between Sunnis and Shi'ites?

President: Sunnis and Shi'as? Yes, there has been conflict. But that has not really been so disturbing. If you see the period before 1979, there was not much of a problem at all even between Sunnis and Shi'as. These things got raised after I would say even the Iranian revolution played a part in making these differences a little bit more coming up to the front. But I think these are areas which can be tackled. They are not such issues which cannot be tackled.

On the issue of Muslims, the deprecation or sense of alienation of Muslims, the Shi'as, the Sunnis, they're all together on that. They have common views. So I think the core issue is these political disputes and the sense of alienation and the sense of anger that the Muslim world is suffering, irrespective of Shi'a or Sunni. The Shi'a-Sunni conflict can be managed. It will improve with more education, with time.

Q: Mr. President, if you deal with the tribes with Waziristan doesn't work, and the Taliban continues to be resurgent there, would you send troops back to that area? And, if you wouldn't, would you be surprised if the U.S. did?

And, secondly, President Karzai has complained that he gave your government phone numbers and GPS positioning of Taliban leaders in Pakistan and you didn't act. Can you tell us what happened there and why there was no action?

President: These are interesting misperceptions. First of all, ma'am, who has told you that the soldiers—not one soldier has been moved out. So what do you mean by bringing them back? They are already there.

There is no change in the ground military situation—not one soldier has moved out. We are in position. We have reached an agreement through a grand jirga, which means an assembly of elders, assembly of tribal elders. We have reached an agreement with them. And this agreement basically is to counter the Taliban—exactly to counter Taliban and Talibanization.

Al Qaeda is dangerous to the world, because they could carry out terror activities elsewhere. But from Afghanistan and Pakistan's point of view, it is the Taliban who are more dangerous, because Taliban are from the people. They are the same people who were in Taliban who raised in 1995—they came into permanence. And they took over 90 percent of Afghanistan in one or one and a half years. And then they ruled Afghanistan, 90 percent of Afghanistan, for six years till 9/11. These are the same people. They are not recognizable. Only the locals can recognize them.

So we have reached an agreement which I think is very practical which has seeds of success, because we will use the people to identify the Taliban.

Now, the important thing today—the most dangerous thing today that we—maybe I'm digressing a little from the question, but I thought this was a very important question for people to understand—the most dangerous thing that is happening in that region today, and it would be disastrous if the local ethnic majority—that is, the Pashtun—were to join the Taliban and convert these Taliban actions into a people's movement against foreign occupations, like whatever happened against the Soviets.

So, therefore, at this moment it is very important to differentiate between Pashtun and the Taliban. All Pashtun certainly are not Taliban, but our folly is if we start treating them as if they are all Taliban. That will push everyone into Taliban's lap. So, therefore, the idea of this whole treaty is get the people away from the Taliban and let them lead on to conquer the Taliban with all the force of the Taliban, the Frontier Corps, the constabulary, the levies all behind them. That was the idea.

Now, it has seeds of success, and it has—because if we succeed, I would say it should even be copied as maybe even across the border in Afghanistan. This is the

only way forward. Otherwise, if we carry on just using the military and not political and administrative and reconstruction action, we may fail there.

Now, if we fail—your question was if we fail will we bring the military back. The military is already there, so there is no change at all. We will start the same things that we were doing all along. So there is no stepping back. We have not gone back at all.

And then you ask the second part of your question about President Karzai, about giving the numbers. Intelligence, to be effective, should be immediate. Nobody—no target sits there waiting for your three months, “Come and catch me.” If you give telephone numbers which are three to six months old, this becomes ridiculous. And this is exactly what happened. He gave these numbers to me when he came with his intelligence boss also sitting on a presidential visit. And he handed over this to me. Right in front of him I actually was extremely rude to his intelligence boss. I said, “Is this your sense of intelligence that you were waiting for a presidential visit to hand over this file of numbers to me?” “That you couldn’t pick up the telephone and tell me there is this man on this number, and we get word of it?” Like what happened in London or what happened just now when they’ve seen some people and they got some telephone numbers which had links in Pakistan and a name—they immediately told our intelligence and we captured the man in four days. Now, if you give numbers do you know that on those numbers and those addresses we took the—(inaudible)—for your information, because I knew it was going to be all wrong. And most of them were absolutely nonsense. There was nobody there or there were peaceful people there. And we knew it because it made quite a joke of whatever those files was—there were houses which we had already raided and they were locked and sealed. It was unfortunate that there is this kind of bad mouthing that goes on against Pakistan.

The reality of the issue is we must understand at the moment the danger that we face from Taliban. It is unfortunate that President Karzai thinks that all this is happening from Pakistan. If we carry on being wrong in our assessments of the situation, our actions will fail. Taliban were an entity of Afghanistan in 1995. When they took over 90 percent of Afghanistan, they were not people from Pakistan. It is the same Taliban—no difference—Mullah Omar and his command echelon. Mullah Omar has never come to Pakistan in his life after ‘95. He was supposed to have come here on some matters when he was a young boy. Why would he be in Pakistan, his entire command echelon of Taliban, as they were in ‘95 onwards for six, seven, eight years? They fought everyone, fought you, and fought the United States. They are the same people in the southern region in Kandahar. There is support from our side and therefore we need to counter the Taliban from our side who go to support them. But everything is lying on our side go wrong and we will end up with the whole people—the Pashtun as a group rising.

May I also, now that he has said this, so let me also open out a little and give facts. Pashtun are the—50 to 60 percent of Afghanistan is Pashtun. In the history of Afghanistan, Pashtun have always ruled Afghanistan. Today, what is the situation? Since 9/11, for five years now, there is military action continuing for six years now. All development has taken place in the northern areas and the western areas that should be done. But here there is only military action and bombing. All Taliban, everyone being treated equally, and this is being done everywhere.

Now, if you land in Kabul, you see a life-size portrait of Ahmad Shah Massoud. Ahmad Shah Massoud is a Panjsheri. He's a Tajik—total percentage of Tajiks is 5 percent—Panjsheris may be 2 percent—I don't even know that.

President: But Panjsheris—Tajiks are also in Iraq. So, okay, this will be about 7 or 8 percent, 9 percent. Okay.

Now, this—if you go to the roundabouts, again Ahmad Shah Massoud, you go to the offices, again Ahmad Shah Massoud. Now, how do the—and Ahmad Shah Massoud has been a—(inaudible)—Pashtun. So what is happening now, ground reality? How do the Pashtuns, the 50, 60 percent of the people and in the Ministry of Defense, in their foreign office—sorry, in the Ministry of Interior and Intelligence—if 50 percent people are Panjsheri, now let's see what is happening. Now let us see the Taliban emerging and who will support that? How will the Pashtun, the 50 percent population of Afghanistan, feeling about it?

So we must take stock of the situation. We must take immediate action to the people, the Pashtuns, non-Taliban Pashtuns who are there who may be in majority—certainly in Afghanistan they are certainly a very big majority. Don't let them join the Taliban and fight a people's war against you. This must be understood, and as soon as President Karzai understands his own country's environment the easier it will be for him. We don't have a problem.

Q: My question, sir, has to do with Kashmir, which you refer to in passing. You indicated a preference for negotiated settlement with India. Where do you see that settlement coming? Do you see Kashmir as an independent state, part of which we are controlling, part of which India is controlling, part of which China is controlling? What do you see that future to be, especially because there is a worry in this country about a possible nuclear confrontation between India and Pakistan over Kashmir? Thank you.

President: I think let's not complicate an already complicated situation, part of which China is also holding. I think we will lend ourselves up into a non-negotiable and non-soluble problem. I think it's between India and Pakistan.

Now, here I feel—I have given many ideas, and I personally think that we need to talk of demilitarizing. We need to talk of giving self-governance to the people of Kashmir. And then we need to have an overall joint management body overseeing both sides of the line of control. We need to—this I feel the solution I've been giving is heretofore two elements which either side feel to be non-negotiable—like India thinks there can be no redrawing of boundaries. Pakistan feels there can be no solution based on the present line of control. We will not accept the present line of control as permanent. Therefore the solution lies, we thought, in making the line of control irrelevant. If we could have a mechanism which makes the line of control irrelevant, gives governance to the people, reduce or move out the military or garrison them at least in a place—that is the ultimate solution. And I think, having said that, one is open to any kind of idea. This is not a final idea. We have had—I have had a very good discussion with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The joint statement that we have issued is very positive. It is a way forward. We have discussed Kashmir, and we have laid down in that joint statement that we need to reduce the divergences and reinforce the convergences and move forward on

Kashmir, and also solve Siachen and Sir Creek. So I think with a positive attitude that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has certainly, and I believe he's a sincere person. I have faith and trust him. We should be able to move forward.

Q: Mr. President, the big challenge that's facing Muslim and Arab countries is job creation. In Pakistan, what are you doing about economic reform and what steps are being taken to create jobs? Because you have a young population and they need to have a higher standard of living?

President: Yes, indeed. I think that has been my focus for six, seven years now. We, first of all—we got onto the whole problem, having been almost declared a failed state and a defaulted state, we had to set the economy right, and we have set the economy right. Today our GDP growth over the last four years is 7 percent. Our GDP has doubled. Our per capita income has more than doubled. Today we are no more in the low-income category countries; we are in the middle-income category countries. And therefore—and this has—other than this, our industry, our exports have risen by 135 percent over the last four or five years. Our industry has been performing in double figures throughout this period, as a result of which today our industry—all our industries are running at 100 percent capacity. New industries are coming up.

We look at poverty and unemployment in three areas. We have an agrarian society, and we looked at agriculture, and we went for water projects, for huge intensification and area intensification, bringing more area under irrigation. And all our water projects are oriented towards that. We are trying to bring about a white revolution in Pakistan, because Pakistan is the fifth largest milk producer in the world. That is going on now. And, Nestle, by the way, is playing a leading role. We are also going for food and food processing. This will create jobs and increase the earnings in the rural areas.

In urban areas we went for educated unemployed, and we thought telecommunications and information technology is the source of getting them jobs fast. And we went strongly to promote these. Today I am very proud to say our success is a phenomenon. In the telecommunications sector, our teledensity was 2.9 percent. Today it is nearing 20 percent. The mobile telephones in Pakistan three years back was 600,000 only. With our giving two licenses to Telenor and Warid today sir our mobile telephones from 600,000 to 40 million mobile telephones in Pakistan. Nokia thinks that we will be the second largest Nokia market in the world.

In information technology we thought we should train manpower and create an IT environment. We see India doing very well—a multibillion dollar industry—and we are nowhere. We saw the malaise and we addressed it. We developed Internet connectivity which was only 40 cities of Pakistan; today 2,000 towns of Pakistan are connected by Internet. We gave fiber optics connectivity. Only 50 cities were connected. Today over 1,000 cities are connected by fiber optics. We reduced the bandwidth costs. It was \$86,000 for two megabytes. Today it is only \$1,400. This turned the situation and our IT business is doing tremendously well. This is for the educated unemployed.

For the uneducated unemployed we went for industry, for labor, and building and construction. Today there is a building and construction boom in Pakistan because of the facilitation that the government did. So we have created a tremendous amount

of jobs. Poverty has reduced from 34 percent today to 24.3 percent. We are now, with the economic gains, our priorities are basically what I am concentrating on, and I am supporting the government and backing the government up. Number one, poverty alleviation and unemployment control; number two, improve the quality of life of people by giving gas, electricity and safe drinking water; and, number three, improve human resource quality through health and education.

So we are going in a big way towards human resource development, job creation and poverty reduction.

Thank you,

Thank You Mr.President