

Pakistan's Ambassador Husain Haqqani in Boston

Boston, MA, 18th October 2009 – The Harvard Extension International Relations Conference was held on 17th of October 2009 in Boston, where Congressman John F. Tierney and Ambassador Husain Haqqani delivered keynote speeches. One panel discussion was held to discuss the importance of health, education and the USAID, and the other panel was to discuss the significance of security and stability in Pakistan. The event was organized by Harvard Extension International Relations Club, in collaboration with other student bodies. Important guest attendees included the Honorary Counsel General of Pakistan, Mr. Barry Hoffman amongst many others.

Addressing the Conference attendees the Congressman, who also chairs the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, said that the Kerry-Lugar Bill is a part of the long-term commitment

of the Congress to the people of Pakistan. He dismissed the prevalent belief that through the Bill, the US intends to micro-manage Pakistan. Discussions about the most efficient employment of USAID promised in the Bill was also a key point of the speech delivered by the Congressman. Tierney also lauded the efforts and sacrifices made by Pakistan in the dismantling of terrorism.

Later, Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Husain Haqqani shared his views on the relationship between Pakistan and the United States. A concern raised by the Ambassador, which has also been voiced by the people of Pakistan, is the status shift the country faced previously from being a favored ally to being the most sanctioned ally.

He shared his views about the importance of the establishment of a US multi-dimensional approach towards Pakistan which should include security, economic, and



trade relations. Like other participants, his Excellency underlined the importance of democracy in Pakistan as the way forward towards strengthening the relations between the two countries.

Earlier, a panel of development experts discussed two of Paki-

stan's most pressing problems – one of the world's lowest literacy and one of the world's highest infant mortality. They stressed upon that spending aid on health and education programs is imperative to the health of the country. Additionally, recruiting locals for projects connected with civil society in Pakistan provides them with the ability to contribute to the economy making the nation more self sufficient and hence, less susceptible.

Members of the security panel included Mr. Ashan Iqbal, member of opposition (PML-N) Pakistan, and Mr. Hamid Mir, Executive Editor of a private News Channel in Pakistan. Sharing their thoughts, they mentioned that Pakistan, due to its voting patterns, is indeed a democracy and the people of the country vote for moderate forces during elections. They further added previous history of the U.S. support of a military ruler in Paki-

stan which fostered suspicions amongst the people of Pakistan against the United States. Discussing the Kerry-Lugar bill, they said that it is being read as intrusion in the country. It was said that Pakistan views U.S. as intruding in its security interests particularly the nuclear issue.

The event concluded after all the attendees had discussed their thoughts on how we can pave "the way forward". Building mutual trust through dialogue was encouraged during the event and most speakers and guests left with a new enforced vigor to do the same.

For additional information on the recently held International Relations Conference, please contact our media coordinator Sara Kaleemi – skaleemi@fas.harvard.edu or visit the official website for the event at <http://www.uspakconference.com/>

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