



Masood Khan speaking at the United Nations

EDITORS' NOTE Masood Khan was Pakistan's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations from October 2012 to February 2015. In this capacity, from October 2013 to December 2014, he represented Pakistan as a non-permanent member in the UN Security Council. He was also Pakistan's Ambassador to the People's Republic of China from September 2008 to September 2012, as well as Pakistan's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva from March 2005 to September 2008. Khan was Pakistan's Sherpa (Chief Negotiator) for the Nuclear Security Summit process from 2009 to early 2015. From August 2003 to March 2005, he worked as Director General (United Nations) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad. From September 2003 to May 2004, he served as Director General (Disarmament). In June 2003, he was appointed Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a position held until March 2005. From November 2002 to August 2003, he worked as Director General (East Asia and Pacific). He is a member of the Health Diplomacy Advisory Group (HDAG) to the WHO, a member of the Board of Advisors of the Nuclear Industry Summit, and a member of the Advisory Group on Peace and Development at Pakistan Ministry of Planning.

Would you discuss your tenure as Pakistan's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations?

It is a prestigious post for any country and any diplomat. When I moved to New York in September 2012, Pakistan was already a member of the Security Council, which meant more responsibility. The Council's agenda was dominated by war in Syria and a deteriorating situation in Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Central African Republic, and South Sudan, and eruption of fresh clashes between Palestine and Israel. There was no time to lose. In January 2013, I assumed the Presidency of the Security Council. We organized two debates: one on counter-terrorism and the other on peacekeeping, which culminated in a Presidential Statement and a resolution respectively. The resolution on peacekeeping was particularly significant because it drew up a blueprint for making, keeping, and building peace in conflict-ridden countries and regions. During this period, we also won election to the Human Rights Council with a record vote. At the UN, I worked

Pakistan's Strategic Opportunities

An Interview with Ambassador Masood Khan,
Director General, Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), Pakistan

very closely with Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Deputy Secretary General Jan Eliasson. As a member of the Council, I also had the opportunity to work with two outstanding U.S. Ambassadors to the UN, Susan Rice (now National Security Adviser) and Samantha Power.

In your current role as Director General of the Institute of Strategic Studies in Islamabad, Pakistan, what are your key priorities?

At the Institute, our priorities are to look at the entire spectrum of Pakistan's foreign policy, strategic stability in the region, nuclear deterrence, and national security in the broadest possible sense. We also look at the dynamics of our relations with neighbors and major powers. Naturally relations with China, India, Afghanistan, Iran, and the Gulf countries get a lot of attention. Then, of course, we work on our relations with the United States, Europe, and East Asian nations. We primarily focus on the security of Pakistan in a holistic manner. For that purpose we use three platforms – research, policy briefs, and public outreach. We are trying to make all three successful by improving the quantity and quality of our products.

How important of a role will the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) play in the development of both countries' economies?

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has been called a game changer and a fate changer for Pakistan, China, and the region. What one needs to understand is that the CPEC is a network of roads, railway, ports, airports, and telecommunications to create and deepen regional connectivity. Oil and gas pipelines through Pakistani territory to China will also be planned. Pakistan's Gwadar Port is being developed to connect China and Pakistan to West Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. As we implement multiple projects under CPEC, Pakistan will become both a conduit and a destination for investment, making Pakistan a regional hub for trade, transportation, and economic activity. There will be industrial production on a mass scale. Of course, the Corridor will immensely benefit China as it would cut China's distance to the Indian Ocean by one-third via land route passing through Pakistani territory. CPEC itself will connect to China's even bigger and more ambitious mega-project called One Belt, One Road that will rejuvenate land and maritime silk routes, joining China more closely with Asia, Africa, and Europe. Overtime, the most rewarding dividend of CPEC will be new linkages between East, Central, West, and South Asia, steering them all towards shared prosperity.

As the Ambassador of Pakistan to the People's Republic of China, did you find the business environment in China suitable and welcoming for foreign investors?

Leading U.S., Japanese, Korean, German, British, and French corporations are doing profitable business in China, which has also become a foreign investor in many parts of the world. In China, business, innovation, and growth are integral parts of the new economic creed. China also works with developing nations to promote bilateral trade and industrial partnerships. I witnessed constant efforts being made by the Chinese public and private sectors, as well as the Chinese Government, to identify and remove barriers to investment. To do business successfully in China, it is important for foreign investors to understand not just modern China but its traditional culture.

What opportunities are available for foreign investment in Pakistan?

Huge new investments are being made in Pakistan in industry, particularly in manufacturing, telecommunications, infrastructure development, and agriculture. A port, many new airports, energy plants, and highways are being built; and there is a construction boom in Pakistan. Pakistan's real estate and stock markets are outperforming their regional competitors. In the energy sector, the maximum scope is in hydropower, coal-fired power generation, and wind and solar energy. It would be good to advise foreign investors to look into oil and gas exploration, and modernization of the textile and leather industries. Pakistan's public and private sectors are also working on ways to improve ease of doing business across all sectors.

What steps is the Pakistani government taking to stabilize security conditions for local and foreign investors?

First, we are fighting terrorism. Second, we are taking on all types of violent extremism. We have had successes in both of these areas. The incidence of terrorist acts has gone down drastically. The tide of violence is abating. Karachi, our biggest metropolis, is calm. In Baluchistan, disaffected elements are returning to the provincial and national mainstream. Pakistan has raised one full division to protect CPEC. Pakistan would provide protection to other foreign businesses but the overall security situation will see a turnaround, gradually obviating the need for any special measures, though we would never lower our guard. ●