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Chairman Tierney Keynotes at Harvard International Relations Conference on Pakistan

Washington, D.C. – On Saturday, Congressman John F. Tierney (D-MA), Chairman of the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, keynoted at The United States-Pakistan Foreign Relations Conference: The Way Forward. This event was organized by Harvard Extension International Relations Club (HEIRC) in collaboration with the Harvard International Relations Council (IRC).

As Chairman of the National Security and Foreign Affairs Subcommittee for the House Oversight Committee, Tierney has embraced his role as an investigator to attack waste, fraud and abuse, and to help to secure our long-term national security. Since becoming Chairman of the Subcommittee, Congressman Tierney has held over a dozen hearings on issues facing U.S. policy in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and broader South Asia. In addition, he has traveled to the region on several occasions, including visits to Islamabad, Karachi, and Peshawar. In Washington, DC, Congressman Tierney frequently meets with Pakistani politicians, government officials, aid workers, and professionals to get their first hand assessments of local developments.

A copy of Chairman Tierney's speech as prepared for delivery is below:

United States-Pakistan Foreign Relations: The Way Forward

Harvard Extension International Relations Club Harvard International Relations Council Harvard Medical School

October 17, 2009

Remarks by Rep. John F. Tierney Chair, Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign
Affairs Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

As Prepared for Delivery

Good morning. Thank you, Irfan, to you and your staff – and to the Harvard Extension International Relations Club and Harvard International Relations Council – for hosting this important event. And thank you all for the opportunity to be here today to speak about U.S.-Pakistan foreign relations.

I am honored to be joined today by my good friend Ambassador Haqqani. I very much look forward to hearing from him and the many other distinguished speakers present today.

The bona fides of many of the other participants are well-established, but let me take a brief moment to address my own background in this area. I have served on the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs of the House Oversight Committee since 1997 and been Chair since 2007. Since then, a significant portion of the Subcommittee's attention and resources have been devoted to oversight of U.S. expenditures to and relations with Pakistan and Afghanistan. I have also led three congressional delegations to Pakistan and Afghanistan and held over a dozen hearings on oversight issues in the region.

At the outset, I want to address the topic that has been the focus of so much controversy over the past two weeks: the Kerry-Lugar bill signed by the President this week. As you know, the legislation provides for \$7.5 billion in economic and development assistance and additional military assistance to Pakistan over the next five years. As someone who worked closely with Chairman Berman to craft the House version of the bill, let me clearly state that Congress's intent behind the legislation was to demonstrate U.S. commitment to the people of Pakistan and to lay the foundation for a long-term strategic partnership between our two nations.

The bill includes conditions that require the President to certify that Pakistan is cooperating with U.S. efforts to dismantle, disrupt, and defeat terrorist networks in Pakistan. Many in Pakistan have interpreted these conditions as an impingement on Pakistani sovereignty. These criticisms represent genuine concerns and our friendship demands that I and my colleagues address them fully and frankly. In short: Congress did not and does not intend for U.S. assistance to impinge in any way on Pakistani sovereignty. Toward that end, I support Chairman Kerry's and Chairman Berman's joint explanatory statement that accompanied the legislation.

Let me also provide further context for congressional thinking behind the accountability provisions within the legislation. From Congress's perspective, one reason for the conditions concerns the separation of powers between Congress and the President – which of course has nothing to do with Pakistan. One of Congress's most important constitutional prerogatives is the power of the purse – the exclusive ability to appropriate funds from the U.S. Treasury. Neither the President nor the federal courts can spend a dollar that has not been appropriated by the U.S. Congress. Naturally, we guard this power jealously.

In response to historical Pakistani concerns that the United States needs to demonstrate that it will not walk away from the region, both Congress and the administration determined that the legislation must transcend annual legislative cycles. In order to make a multi-year commitment of funds, however, Congress must sacrifice some of its ability to control how the President spends those funds in the future. Requiring presidential reporting and certification is an important way for Congress to keep a check on the Executive and preserve some of its appropriations prerogative.

Notably, Pakistan should know that it is not being singled out for conditions – Congress frequently uses conditions on funding as a means to positively influence policy. Such conditions are often used in grants of federal money to the fifty states. For example, federal highway funds for the states are conditioned upon the states setting their driving laws consistently with national expectations. State sovereignty is not impeded as there is no obligation that they accept the funds. Conditions on aid are also commonly used for U.S. international assistance. In other words, Pakistan is being treated no differently than Massachusetts, Mexico, or the United Nations.

That said, the conditions on assistance are not meaningless. Like Pakistan, the United States is itself under extraordinary economic strain. Families are struggling to make ends meet and the Federal deficit is busting at the seams. As the representative of the Sixth District of Massachusetts and the chairman of the subcommittee charged with oversight and accountability of foreign affairs, I must be able to justify every dollar spent by the Federal government to the struggling fisherman in Gloucester and the laid-off ironworker in Peabody.

Since 2001, the American people have expended considerable resources – over \$15 billion, of which over \$10 billion was for security assistance – to the people of Pakistan. These conditions reflect Congress's serious expectation that Pakistan will unambiguously engage in the fight against terrorist networks within its borders.

Here it is appropriate to express my sincere appreciation for Pakistan's many sacrifices in this struggle, particularly to those members of Pakistan's security services who have lost their lives, or been seriously injured, in fighting extremists, as well as to their families. There can be no understatement of the commitment evidenced by those brave servants. Yet even as we acknowledge those sacrifices, it must be noted that observers often feel that Pakistan – largely under previous rule – has periodically and inexplicably engaged in accommodation, or inaction, in addressing serious advances by extremist elements into Pakistan's or others' communities.

It is not in either country's best interest to focus on the past, but suffice it to say that many in Congress have been deeply troubled by reports of Pakistani army and ISI support for the very extremists that constitute the mutual threat to both nations.

The Kerry-Lugar legislation is Congress's way of making our expectations of mutual cooperation crystal clear. That does not mean that Congress or the administration will micromanage how Pakistan engages in the fight against extremists or that we will impinge on its sovereignty. It does mean, however, that the United States expects real results at the end of the day and that we anticipate accountability for spending targeted toward those results.

The U.S.-Pakistan alliance is a long-term strategic partnership facing a radical terrorist menace that threatens the fundamental security of both nations. It is not, as some would have it, a fragile teenage romance that rises and falls on the vicissitude of rumor and gossip. In a strategic partnership, both nations, acting as equals, must make clear their mutual expectations. Just as Congress has made clear that it expects Pakistan to fully cooperate in the fight against terrorist networks, Pakistan has made clear that it expects a long-term, stable U.S. commitment to the region. The five-year unconditional developmental aid commitment addresses that expectation.

We also understand that Pakistan has lived in a perilous state of hostility with India since its inception – peril that has only been exacerbated by the proliferation of nuclear weapons on the sub-continent. For a time, Pakistan perceived some strategic expedience in aligning with elements of the Taliban in order to assure Pakistan's strategic depth. 9/11 changed all that, and the Kerry-Lugar legislation is a significant down payment on a long-term, strategic partnership that should alleviate any perceived need to turn to virulent extremists.

To close on this topic, let me also suggest how important it is for Pakistan to accept the Kerry-Lugar assistance. Miscommunication about the legislation's conditions aside, it reflects

several years of hard work by the Congress and the administration, and is the best opportunity to lay a long-term foundation for mutual cooperation. Such opportunities must be seized when they are ripe for they do not come around often.

Let me now turn to the situation in Pakistan itself. The past two weeks' reports of suicide bombings and sieges from Lahore to Peshawar make clear that Pakistan is in a struggle against militant extremism that could impact its destiny and shape the region for decades to come. Despite Pakistan's success this Spring in displacing the extremists from Swat and the surrounding Malakand region, we are only at the beginning of a long and ugly trial. From this morning's reports, it appears that Pakistan has finally committed forces to directly take on extremists in South Waziristan. I applaud that effort.

Some in Pakistan have succumbed to the patently false, but unfortunately widespread, view that a strategic partnership with the United States is the root cause of extremist violence against Pakistani governmental institutions. We can make no mistake, as we saw in Swat, that the uncompromising ideology of these extremists is inherently incompatible with Pakistan's civil and military institutions. I suspect that recent extremist outrages will help focus these views. There is now reason to believe that Pakistan can harness the sustained willpower to fully and forcefully confront the extremist threat.

However, willpower alone will not ultimately secure long-term peace in the North West Frontier Province, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas [FATA] – and increasingly, Balochistan and Punjab. As the United States discovered in Iraq and Afghanistan, clearing extremist militants from an area does not in itself create long-term security. Long-term security will require a comprehensive strategy to secure and eventually rebuild these areas. Further, it will require

political, legal, and economic enfranchisement of populations that have been isolated for far too long. We appreciate Pakistan's recognition of its need to engage in a concerted campaign to win the hearts and minds of many of its own people, and that it may require a fundamental shift in how both the civilian government and military engage with these regions.

So, what can the United States do to bolster Pakistan's civilian government and military in the face of such seemingly intractable challenges?

First, the Kerry-Lugar assistance package, notwithstanding the challenges just discussed, is a good starting point. Executed properly, the assistance will significantly bolster Pakistan's counterinsurgency capability, adding significant additional military aid to support counterterrorism and counterinsurgency efforts as it simultaneously provides tangible economic relief to the population. It is incumbent upon us to find ways to expedite and improve oversight of contractors and NGOs and to find ways to get Pakistanis meaningfully involved in the process and in performing as much work as possible in development projects. As a member of the Education and Labor Committee, I place a major emphasis on those issues, and I recently helped secure an additional \$75 million in education funding for Pakistan.

Second, the United States must work to alter its footprint in Afghanistan and find a way to help the Afghan people take charge of their own destiny, while efforts are pursued to stabilize that country. The President and the Congress face very difficult decisions on how to proceed there.

The August presidential election was a major setback that badly damaged the legitimacy of the Karzai government. It is crucial that any run-off plebiscite gain the public's and international community's confidence so that a legitimate government exists at the end of the day. I note that UN and ISAF officials are already working diligently toward that end. They must be successful.

The U.S.-Pakistan strategic partnership is vital to the national security of both nations. Security cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan and the international community is equally important. As a friend of the Pakistani people, I will always endeavor to be open and honest, ready to learn, and to offer constructive criticism, where necessary. And I expect and appreciate the same from my counterparts here in this room and in Islamabad. Together, we can build the foundation for a safer future.