

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 12, 2009

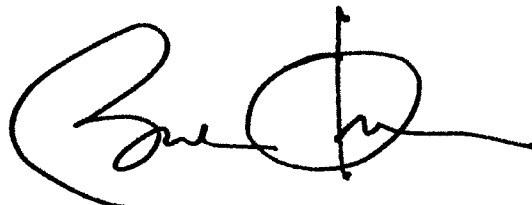
At the stroke of midnight on August 14, 1947, a new Nation emerged from the plateaus of Balochistan and the mountains of the North West Frontier Province. More than one hundred years after colonial rule had arrived, it departed. The Quaid-i-Azam would later explain, “The story of Pakistan, its struggle and its achievement, is the very story of great human ideals...” Over the course of its history, Pakistan has encountered and overcome great challenges, and Pakistanis have brought life to the great ideals that Muhammad Ali Jinnah described.

In the earliest days of the Independence Movement, Muslims, Hindus, and other religious groups banded together to turn back the yoke of British rule. In the early 20th century, many Muslims began to pursue a separate homeland for the subcontinent’s Muslims. This pursuit, led by the Muslim League, ultimately pointed a people towards self-determination and, out of this effort, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan was born.

Since its founding, Pakistan has changed a great deal, but its people still carry forward the proud traditions of their forbears. The unmistakable rhythm of the qawwali and melody of the ghazal reverberate and inspire audiences in Pakistan and across the globe. Pakistani artists and poets elucidate the human experience as they explore time-honored themes such as devotion and love. World-class cricket, field hockey, and polo players participate in regional and international competitions, impressing all those who witness their skill.

The United States has been a friend to Pakistan over the course of much of this storied history, and the American and Pakistani people share deep ties and common aspirations. Americans and Pakistanis have both made sacrifices in the service of justice, democracy, opportunity, and the rule of law. Our Nation knows well the heritage of Pakistanis because of our own proud Pakistani American populations. Living in cities large and small, from the shores of New York to the sands of Hawaii, Pakistani Americans enrich our Nation’s diversity. Their professional contributions, family values, and religious traditions have strengthened our economy and enriched our culture.

As Pakistan enters the next chapter in its history, the United States supports the great human ideals to which we both aspire. Our children deserve the opportunity to receive an education and to achieve their dreams. Our families deserve the right to live freely in peace, to practice their faith without fear of insecurity, and to enjoy respect for the full range of their human rights. Today, as we mark the proud birth of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the American people recognize our common future, and reaffirm our unyielding support for Pakistan’s democratic institutions and the Pakistani people. Working together, we can ensure that Pakistan rises above its challenges just as it has so many times before.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Barack Obama", written in a cursive style.