

Pakistan-Afghanistan Parliamentarians Dialogue

March 29-30, 2011: Islamabad, Pakistan

Parliamentarians from Afghanistan and Pakistan met on March 29-30, 2011 in Islamabad and discussed issues of importance that impact the relations between the two neighbouring Islamic countries.

A delegation of 20 Afghan Parliamentarians, belonging to the Senate and National Assembly of Afghanistan (Meshrano Jirga and Wolesi Jirga respectively) had a detailed dialogue with their Pakistani counterparts on issues of mutual interest including Terrorism, Afghan Transit Trade and the role of media in bringing the two countries closer to one another.

Delegates from the two sides laid great emphasis on joint efforts to tackle the problem of terrorism which has not only caused death and destruction in the region but has been the major impediment in the development of both Afghanistan and Pakistan. They urged cooperation of each other's Parliament to bring to the notice of their respective Governments problems identified by the other side for immediate remedial action. This, they thought, would greatly help in bringing the two countries further closer to each other.

The two sides felt the need of establishing a Joint Commission, established already, to identify problems between them. The task of the Commission would be to find solutions to these problems which will help in cementing brotherly relations between the two neighbours.

The intelligence agencies of the two countries, Parliamentarians felt, were pursuing their own individual interest whereas terrorism was a common enemy demanding collective action by the agencies of the two countries.

Parliamentarians expressed concern on longer delays for clearance of goods under Afghan Transit Trade which was causing huge financial loss. They agreed on finding a solution to this long over-due problem for streamlining business relation between the two countries.

Parliamentarians felt the need and importance of media in moulding public opinion. It can play a positive role in bridging the trust deficit that unfortunately still exists somewhat between the people of the two countries.

The two sides agreed to hold their next meeting in Kabul in May this year.