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Bridge-US September 2014

Connecting People - Building Bridges – Spreading Tolerance

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Bridge-US is published in dedication of Daniel Pearl. Dejectedly, the list of the US journalist is growing who are being murdered brutally around the world by the terrorists with the recent beheadings of James Foley and Steven Sotloff . These journalists travel to the most dangerous places to uncover truth and liberate people from tyranny, poverty and death. Our hearts and support go to the

bereaved families of these journalists. Goodbye James and Steve, you will always be remembered!
 Sleep tight brave hearts
 Sincerely

Syed Naeem Uddin

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United States Continues to Provide Food Assistance to Pakistan's Displaced Populations

The United States contributed an additional \$6 million to help the government of Pakistan meet the food and nutritional needs of the internally displaced people (IDPs) from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) on August 20. The contribution, provided through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Food for Peace (FFP), is part of the ongoing partnership between the Government of Pakistan, U.S. government and the United Nations' World Food Program (WFP) under the Twinning Program. "Twinning" is an innovative program that complements the Government of Pakistan's contribution of locally grown wheat by paying for milling, fortification, transport and distribution costs. The fortification process provides additional vitamins and minerals to address the dietary needs of vulnerable populations. This food is being used by WFP to support 1.4 million internally displaced people, including those from the North Waziristan Agency.

With this contribution, USAID is now the largest international donor to the program, providing a total of \$39 million in support - enough to transform over 60 percent of the 214,000 metric tons of wheat donated by the Government of Pakistan since 2013.

The United States has a long-standing history of, and commitment to, working together with Pakistan to provide humanitarian assistance and support human and social development. In 2014, USAID provided over \$60 million in food assistance to Pakistan, in addition to the Twinning Program. Since 2009, the United States has provided over \$1.4 billion in humanitarian assistance to Pakistan, making it the largest bilateral provider of humanitarian assistance. For a video documentary about the Twinning Program, please visit <http://vimeo.com/94153059>.

New Non-Immigrant Visa Appointment System

Islamabad, August 22, 2014

The Embassy and Consulate General of the United States of America in Islamabad and Karachi, Pakistan will transition to a new appointment and document delivery service for the non-immigrant visa unit as of August 24, 2014. This new system, which is being implemented in phases at U.S. Embassies and Consulates worldwide, is designed to be more comprehensive and user-friendly. It replaces the current appointment system of scheduling at Amex and Speedex locations in Pakistan,

though these contractors will also be involved in the new system.

In addition to the new online system, there will be a new call center with more hours for applicants to obtain information by phone, as well as by email. There is no charge for the call other than normal charges for a call within Pakistan.

Starting August 24, 2014, applicants can book a new appointment online:

<http://www.ustraveldocs.com/pk>. Beginning August 25, 2014, Call Center representatives will be available. Information on the call center hours and number will be released on the website.

The Embassy and Consulate General websites, <http://islamabad.usembassy.gov> and <http://karachi.usconsulate.gov>, will include general visa information and a link to the new scheduling website with significantly more information than before. These two websites and the Call Center are the only official sources of general visa information and are the only authorized methods to schedule a personal visa interview. Applicants who already paid an application fee under the old system but did not schedule an appointment with that fee should contact the call center to arrange an appointment outside of the new appointment system.

Some elements of the application procedure will be similar to before, and others will change. For example, the online application form remains the same. However, customers will need to create an account ID or have the call center create one, and pay the fee based on this profile, before making an appointment.

New Non-Immigrant Visa Application Procedure

1. Complete your DS-160 Online Visa Application at <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>.
2. Visit <http://www.ustraveldocs.com/pk> and create an account ID.
3. Pay the application fee using the instructions on the website.
4. Schedule an appointment for your visa interview online at <http://www.ustraveldocs.com/pk> or by phone through the Call Center. This service will be free of charge.
5. Appear at your selected location and time for your interview.
6. If the visa is approved, applicants will receive their passports with finished visas through the courier service.
7. If the visa application requires further administrative processing or more documentation, applicants will be informed of next steps at the interview.
8. If the visa application cannot be approved, documents and passports will be returned to the applicant immediately after the interview.

If you have additional questions, please visit our websites, <http://islamabad.usembassy.gov>, <http://karachi.usconsulate.gov>, and starting

August 24, <http://www.ustraveldocs.com/pk/>.

Statement from the United States Embassy

Islamabad, August 21, 2014

The United States Embassy has been carefully monitoring the demonstrations in Islamabad. We continue to urge all sides to refrain from violence, exercise restraint, and respect the rule of law. Peaceful protest and freedom of expression are important aspects of democracy. However, the United States is in no way involved in the process or discussions between parties. Any suggestion to the contrary is false and unhelpful to the dialogue between parties.

Violence and destruction of private property and government buildings are not acceptable means of resolving political differences, however, and we strongly oppose any efforts to impose extra-constitutional change to the political system. The United States firmly believes all parties should work together to resolve differences through peaceful dialogue in ways that strengthen Pakistan's democratic institutions and rule of law.

U.S. Ambassador Olson Encourages 157 Pakistani Fulbright Participants to Give Back to Pakistan

U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson congratulated 157 Pakistani graduate students who received awards for Master's or Doctoral studies at American universities on U.S.-funded Fulbright scholarships. The Fulbright Program is the flagship academic exchange program of the U.S. government. This year, 125 Master's and 32 Ph.D. students have been selected for these prestigious awards. Fulbright grantees represent every province of Pakistan and study a variety of academic disciplines, including engineering, energy management, business, and social sciences. After completing their studies in the United States, the students will return to Pakistan and play a vital role in Pakistan's future.

Ambassador Olson highlighted the important role of academic exchange programs in strengthening people-to-people ties between the United States and Pakistan. "I call on each one of you to continue to be outstanding representatives of Pakistan, and spend your time working to make a difference in the lives of the people you encounter, and the institutions you are a part of, both in the United States and upon your return to Pakistan," he said. "You represent all of Pakistan's provinces; you come from big cities and small villages, from the public school system and private colleges. I am confident that you will follow in that great tradition of the Fulbright program," he added.

The Fulbright program in Pakistan is the largest, and one of the most distinguished, in the world. The

United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP), now celebrating its 64th year of operation in the country, administers the program. Since 2005, 1,400 Pakistanis have received Fulbright Awards for graduate degrees, of which 41 percent have been women. The awards cover travel, living stipends, health insurance, and tuition for the entire period of study. “Opportunities for Pakistani students to study in the United States have never been greater,” said Ms. Rita Akhtar, Executive Director of USEFP. She congratulated the departing students, saying, “this was a very tough but transparent competition. We know you will represent Pakistan very well in the United States and return to make a real difference here.”

USEFP, a bi-national commission established in 1950 by the governments of Pakistan and the United States, is one of 51 Fulbright Commissions throughout the world. Its mission is to promote mutual understanding between the people of Pakistan and the United States through educational and cultural exchange programs. Since its inception, nearly 5,000 Pakistanis and more than 900 Americans have participated in USEFP-administered exchange programs. In addition to the Fulbright program, USEFP administers a number of scholarship programs for undergraduates, teachers, journalists, and other professionals.

The Fulbright Program is one element of a comprehensive U.S. education assistance program for Pakistan that includes building or rehabilitating nearly 800 schools, which benefits more than 86,000 school children; creating accredited degree programs in education at 90 teacher colleges and universities; providing college scholarships for more than 10,000 low-income students; establishing Centers for Advanced Studies at three Pakistani universities; and launching eight university partnerships that connect American and Pakistani universities. To learn more about U.S. education initiatives in Pakistan, see: <http://goo.gl/auHXF>.

United States Provides Additional \$9.3 million to Assist IDPs, U.S. Assistance Totals \$17.3 Million

Islamabad | July 22, 2014

The United States Embassy announces an additional contribution of \$9.3 million to help the government of Pakistan meet the health, water, sanitation, and livelihood needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). These funds will be provided through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The U.S. government will provide \$7 million dollars to UNICEF/Pakistan to improve health, hygiene, water, and sanitation services for IDPs with the remaining funds used to ensure the health of livestock. This new funding brings the total U.S. contribution benefiting IDPs from North Waziristan to \$17.3 million. The

United States announced \$8 million in food assistance for IDPs on June 26, 2014.

Ambassador Olson said, "The United States stands ready to help the Government of Pakistan prepare for and respond to the considerable humanitarian needs emerging in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Our additional \$9.3 million contribution reiterates the importance of the partnership between the Government of Pakistan, development organizations, and the United States."

UNICEF/Pakistan will use the funds to strengthen the existing Lady Health Workers (LHWs) Program and train new LHW staff in places hosting the IDPs to ensure timely and consistent delivery of essential medicine, oral rehydration solutions, and other essential health services. Funds will be used by UNICEF to repair and build water facilities and sanitation infrastructure in areas where the IDPs have relocated. The provision of potable water and hygiene kits, the monitoring of water quality and sanitary services, and practices among the displaced population to prevent outbreaks of epidemics will also be undertaken.

To help ensure the livelihood and economic survival of the displaced population, a portion of the \$9.3 million will also be used to help maintain the health of animals belonging to the IDPs. Support will include ensuring access to feed, water, and the provision of temporary shelter.

The United States has a long history of working together with the people of Pakistan to provide humanitarian assistance. From October 2013 to July 2014, USAID has provided over \$60 million in food assistance to Pakistan. Since 2009, the United States has provided over \$1.4 billion in humanitarian assistance to the people of Pakistan, making it the largest bilateral provider of humanitarian support to the country.

U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson's Remarks on the Occasion of Ramadan

Assalamu alaikum!

I wish Ramadan Kareem the people of Pakistan – from Gilgit to Baluchistan, from Sindh to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The teachings of Islam place the utmost importance on religious freedom, harmony, and universal human values, and Ramadan is a period for demonstrating the virtues of tolerance and respect. In addition to prayer and spiritual reflection, the Holy Month offers an opportunity to celebrate the principles that bind together people of all religious faiths – a commitment to peace, justice, equality, and compassion towards one another.

In the United States, the nearly three million Muslims who call America their home enrich our country by sharing Islam's teachings of self-discipline, tolerance, and dignity of all human beings. For American Muslims Ramadan is a time when families gather, friends host iftars, and meals are shared, as it is here in Pakistan. Ramadan is also a time for intense devotion and reflection – a time when Muslims fast during the day and perform tarawih prayers at night, reciting and listening to the entire Quran over the course of the month.

Today, we join with the 1.5 billion Muslims around the world – and your families and friends – in welcoming the beginning of Ramadan, and wishing you a blessed month.

May peace be upon you.

United States Contributes an Additional \$8 Million to Support Pakistanis Displaced by Conflict

The United States contributed an additional \$8 million to help the government of Pakistan meet the food and nutritional needs of the internally displaced people (IDPs) from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). The contribution, provided through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is part of the ongoing efforts of the U.S. government and the United Nations' World Food Program (WFP) under the Twinning Program. The Twinning Program is a partnership between the Government of Pakistan, WFP, and the international donor community through which wheat donated by the Government of Pakistan is transformed into fortified wheat flour and distributed in the most vulnerable communities. Donor funds are used to cover the costs of milling, fortification, storage, transport, and distribution of the wheat flour. This new commitment by the U.S. government will enable WFP to transform approximately 38,000 metric tons of wheat into fortified wheat flour, providing more nutritional food for the IDPs over a two-month period.

Since the Twinning Program began in 2013, the Government of Pakistan has taken a leading role in the partnership by donating 201,000 metric tons of wheat to the WFP. With this contribution of \$8 million, USAID is now the largest international donor to the program, providing a total of \$31 million in support - enough to fortify 60 percent of the wheat donated by the Government of Pakistan.

"The United States' commitment to the Twinning Program is a demonstration of our support to the internally displaced population from the FATA and the incredibly important partnership between the Government of Pakistan, WFP, and the international community," said USAID Acting Mission Director, Nancy Estes.

The United States has a long-standing history of, and commitment to, working together with Pakistan to provide humanitarian assistance and support human and social development. In 2014, USAID

provided over \$60 million in food assistance to Pakistan, in addition to the \$8 million in support of the Twinning Program. Since 2009, the United States has provided over \$1.4 billion in humanitarian assistance to Pakistan, making it the largest bilateral provider of humanitarian assistance.

For a video documentary about the Twinning Program, please visit <http://vimeo.com/94153059>.

International YES Alumni Reunion Strengthens U.S.-Pakistan Ties

U.S. Embassy Islamabad and the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN) welcomed more than 350 alumni of the Kennedy-Luger Youth Exchange & Study (YES) exchange program to an international reunion held June 26-28 in Islamabad. U.S. Ambassador Richard Olson and Farah Kamal, Executive Director of the International Education and Resource Network (iEARN), greeted the students, including attendees from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and India.

"When I look into this audience, I see a bright future for our countries," Ambassador Olson said at the reunion. "We admire you and your work, and we are grateful that you are willing to work hard to improve your communities throughout this country and the South Asian region."

During the three-day reunion, alumni will share their experiences in the United States; participate in workshops on activism, entrepreneurship, leadership, and civil society development; enjoy cultural and music performances; and brainstorm ideas for community service projects that benefit their countries' social and economic development. The reunion will culminate in a collaborative art project with local schoolchildren, helping the alumni to learn how to use art as a tool for community engagement.

Participants in the YES exchange program, which is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and implemented by iEARN, spend one academic year studying at a high school in the United States and living with an American host family. YES participants are recruited from Pakistan's historically underserved populations. For the past 11 years, more than 700 Pakistanis have participated in the YES program, and the U.S. Embassy will send 108 more students to the United States this fall. Learn more at www.iearnpk.org/yespk.htm.

The U.S. government invests nearly \$40 million annually on exchange programs for Pakistani citizens. More than 1,200 Pakistanis participate in the various high school, undergraduate, graduate, and professional U.S.-sponsored exchange programs each year. The Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN) is one of the largest U.S. alumni networks in the world. It consists of more than 13,000 students and professionals who have participated in U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs and organizes a number of events in Pakistan, including community service projects, leadership trainings, roundtable discussions, and community engagement activities. Learn more at www.pakusalumninetwork.com.

U.S. Training Improves Power Plant Engineers' Efficiency

Twenty Pakistani engineers, including five women from power generation companies nationwide, received certificates today for completing a thermal operations and maintenance training program funded by the U.S. government. Since March, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided training to 60 engineers from Jamshoro, Guddu and Muzaffargarh thermal power plants. The training enhanced the engineers' technical skills and introduced them to industry best practices to improve the operation, maintenance, and management of power plants.

Deputy Director of USAID's Energy Office Tim Moore, who spoke at the event said, "The U.S. government is committed to working with the Government of Pakistan to develop and upgrade Pakistan's energy infrastructure. Strengthening the capacity of power sector engineers through this training is a significant element of that effort." Organized by USAID's Energy Policy Program, the training program is an important component of a broader power sector capacity building project. The program is part of the U.S. government's commitment to support Pakistan's own efforts to increase power generation, improve its energy efficiency, transmission, fuel supply infrastructure, and engage in policy reform.

As part of its energy sector assistance program, USAID has funded renovations at Tarbela, Jamshoro, Mangla, Guddu, and Muzaffargarh power plants; aided the completion of Gomal Zam and Satpara dams; and helped improve power distribution throughout Pakistan. The projects have already added more than 1000 megawatts of power to Pakistan's national grid, with a cumulative target of 1400 megawatts by the end of 2014 -- enough to benefit about 16 million people throughout the country.

United States Announces Plan to Contribute \$8.9 Million for Joint Pakistan and UN Program Benefiting Afghan Refugees and Pakistani Hosting Communities

Islamabad | June 19, 2014

U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard Olson announced that the U.S. government plans to contribute \$8.9 million to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for the joint Government of Pakistan and UN Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) program at a reception at the U.S. Embassy on the eve of World Refugee Day. RAHA is a key part of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) signed by UNHCR and the governments of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan in May 2012.

Ambassador Olson highlighted the U.S. government's support for Afghan refugees and Pakistani

hosting communities and thanked the Government of Pakistan for its efforts to provide protection for refugees until they can return home in safety and dignity. Since 1979, Pakistan generously has hosted a shifting population of Afghan refugees.

"The United States recognizes the Government of Pakistan and the Pakistani people for generously hosting one of the world's largest refugee populations for over three decades. Pakistan today hosts 1.6 million Afghan refugees. Few other countries could or would bear this burden as graciously as Pakistan continues to do," said Ambassador Olson.

The United States provides a new home for tens of thousands of the world's most vulnerable refugees each year. In fiscal year (FY) 2013, the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration resettled nearly 70,000 refugees from 65 countries. The United States admits more refugees for permanent resettlement than all other nations combined. The United States has already accepted 166 refugees from Pakistan in FY 2014, surpassing the figure of 156 refugees accepted from Pakistan in FY 2013.

The United States is the single largest international donor for humanitarian assistance to victims of the Afghan conflict. In FY 2014, the United States is providing \$80 million to international organizations to assist Afghan refugees, returnees, and hosting communities in the region. The United States also funds non-governmental organizations providing these populations with education, health care, legal services, and skills training. This funding is part of the United States' long-term commitment to Afghan refugee protection, repatriation, and reintegration support. Since 2002, the U.S. Department of State has provided over \$950 million to this effort.

U.S. Hosts Gender and Entrepreneurship Event to Promote Women in the Workplace

Islamabad, June 17, 2014 - The United States held a "Women in the Workplace" seminar at the Islamabad Club today to highlight the importance of women's role in the economy and emphasize the private sector's role in supporting women-friendly policies in the workforce. The event, cosponsored by the Islamabad Club, brought together representatives from both large multinationals as well as grass-roots entrepreneurs to engage with a range of government officials, social entrepreneurs and private company representatives on the importance of creating opportunities for women to enter and excel in the Pakistani economy.

In his opening remarks, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard Olson called for more female-friendly employment practices on a global scale. "Our shared economic potential is bright, but in order to achieve it, we need to encourage, cultivate, and harness the untapped talent and productivity of

women across the globe. It must happen in every country on every continent. Achieving shared global prosperity is only possible if we reduce gender gaps in the workforce."

Ambassador Olson also announced the United States Government's support of the "WECREATE" project, a women's entrepreneurship community center that will be based in Islamabad. The Center will provide new and emerging women entrepreneurs access to the mentorship and expert assistance they need to grow their businesses which has a multiplier effect on economies. The program is funded by the U.S. Secretary of State's Office of Global Women's Issues Full Partnership Fund, which has a mandate to support gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives.

U.S. to Foster S&T Cooperation to Help Pakistan Embrace Technology-driven Economic Growth

Islamabad, June 3, 2014 - The United States today resolved to further its cooperation with Pakistan in science and technology by promoting the commercialization of scientific and engineering research in the country. Collaborative efforts in this direction will assist Pakistan in making its economy more competitive, dynamic, and driven by technology and innovation.

At a day-long "Science, Technology, and Engineering for Development: From Innovation to Implementation" conference, jointly convened by the U.S. Embassy, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), U.S. National Academies of Science, and the Higher Education Commission (HEC), officials from both countries praised ongoing U.S.-Pakistan science and technology cooperation. The conference, which focuses on how science, technology, and engineering can support development in Pakistan, was inaugurated by the Science and Technology Advisor to the U.S. Secretary of State Dr. E. William Colglazier, alongside Minister of Planning, Development, and Reforms Ahsan Iqbal, U.S. Science Envoy Dr. Bernard Amadei, and Pakistan's Higher Education Commission (HEC) Chairman Dr. Mukhtar.

Highlighting the importance of science and technology to the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue, Dr. Colglazier stressed the need to further boost U.S.-Pakistan science and technology cooperation, and informed participants that through the recently renewed Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement, institutions like the U.S. National Academies of Science and HEC continue to execute a joint research program that has awarded over \$30 million to 88 projects over the past ten years. Dr. Colglazier added that, "Of 50 young scientists and engineers at the workshop, ten have already started companies and twenty more plan to do so. It gives me great faith to talk with these young people who want to contribute to their country and the economy. We are proud of our partnership with Pakistan in science and technology that has gone on for over ten years."

Minister Iqbal challenged the participants to play a greater role in contributing to Pakistan's economic growth and development. He said that, "The link between our knowledge platform and production platform is not connected. The United States has a much better capacity to commercialize technology. It is the job of engineers to give shape to their ideas for the benefit of the people. In today's world, innovation is critical for any business, for any society."

Greg Gottlieb, Mission Director for USAID in Pakistan noted that the urgency for an economy driven by science and technology has never been greater. "This conference embodies the spirit of what USAID have been trying to achieve using technology, education and innovation to address the development issues confronting Pakistan. My expectation is that the action plan produced at the four day workshop will be an important milestone on the road to transforming Pakistan into a competitive and dynamic economy," said Gottlieb.

The conference gathered experts from around the country to showcase the results of collaborative research projects. Panelists discussed how higher education institutions can generate an entrepreneurial culture with direct connections to Pakistan's private-sector businesses. A group of successful women scientists and entrepreneurs shared their experiences and encouraged other women to study these disciplines. Ms. Nagin Cox from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California talked about her experience on the Mars Rover team.

This is the second U.S.-Pakistan science and technology conference designed to promote the commercialization of scientific and engineering research. This year, the conference focuses on how science, technology, and engineering can support development in Pakistan. The conference marks the third visit of the U.S. Science Envoy to Pakistan, Dr. Amadei, who is Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of Colorado at Boulder. He is also the Founding President of Engineers Without Borders - USA and the co-founder of the Engineers Without Borders-International network.

Dr. Colglazier is the fourth Science and Technology Advisor to the U.S. Secretary of State. His office provides advice and technical expertise in support of U.S. foreign policy. He earned his Ph.D. in theoretical physics from the California Institute of Technology, worked at the Stanford Linear Accelerator, and was a professor of physics at the University of Tennessee. Since the early 1990s, Dr. Colglazier has worked at the National Academies of Science (NAS) and the National Research Council (NRC).

Bridge-US is nonpartisan and an effort to share and publish news of diversity, harmony and mutual understanding to bridge between nations and inform people directly about how humanitarian aid is positively changing lives in Pakistan.

Dedicated to



Daniel Pearl

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