

JOINT STATEMENT

United States – Pakistan Defense Consultative Group Meeting

The 25th meeting of the United States - Pakistan Defense Consultative Group (DCG) was held at Ministry of Defence, Rawalpindi, Pakistan on September 21, 2016. Pakistan's delegation was led by Defense Secretary Lieutenant General (Retired) Zamir Ul Hassan Shah and the U.S. delegation was led by Ambassador David B. Shear performing the duties of Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. The DCG is the primary forum for the United States and Pakistan to exchange views and coordinate on defense and security matters with the goal of strengthening cooperation in areas of mutual interests. The DCG last met in December, 2015 in Washington, D.C. and both sides noted the important milestone of the 25th meeting of the DCG.

Both delegations recognized the centrality of the U.S. – Pakistan bilateral security partnership to their overall bilateral relationship and acknowledged that continued cooperation remains vital to promoting peace, security and stability in the region and beyond. They expressed satisfaction that the bilateral security partnership had played a critical role in degrading Al Qaida and other violent extremists in the region. They also expressed appreciation for ongoing cooperation to counter terrorism and extremists outfits including Daesh in the region.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitments to a strong defense relationship in years ahead, geared to achieve common strategic objectives particularly related to counterterrorism (CT), regional stability, and other areas of security cooperation.

During the plenary session, DCG participants discussed each country's strategic priorities. The United States reiterated its support for the Armed Forces of Pakistan in their ongoing operations in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), including North Waziristan, and recognized the progress made in disruption of certain militant networks that has helped enhance security on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. The United States also recognized the sacrifices of Pakistan's security forces in securing areas along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

Pakistan re-affirmed its commitment to take action against all terrorists and violent extremists without discrimination. The United States, while acknowledging the progress made, urged full implementation of Pakistan's commitments. The two sides also discussed CT efforts and stability operations in the FATA, which Pakistan plans to continue in the future. Pakistan side also expressed its support and desire for stability in Afghanistan, which remains a high priority objective for Pakistan as well. Pakistan side also reaffirmed its commitments to not let anyone use Pakistani soil against any other country. Both countries underscored that no country's territory should be used to destabilize other countries.

The United States also recognized significant contributions made by Armed Forces of Pakistan in promoting maritime security in the North Arabian Sea and Horn of Africa through its consistent participation in the U.S. – led Combined Maritime Forces, and recognized the Pakistan Navy for assuming command of Combined Task Force -150 operations.

Both sides discussed the political and security situation in Afghanistan, CT priorities, where the U.S. side reaffirmed President Obama's decision to maintain approximately 8,400 troops in Afghanistan. Both sides expressed satisfaction on the efforts made by their respective militaries to improve operational coordination. They expressed deep appreciation for the sacrifices of the United States' and Pakistan's military personnel and civilians in the common fight against violent extremism.

Both sides reviewed the numerous challenges facing regional security, and shared their views regarding the importance of regional peace and stability and expressed support for efforts for reconciliation in Afghanistan. The Pakistan delegation provided an update on their cooperative activities with Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces, and both sides agreed that continued cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan, particularly on border management, is critical for meeting the enduring security requirements on both sides of their shared border. Pakistan side stressed the importance of security assistance both in terms of equipment and operational re-imbursment which Pakistan views as essential for ongoing stability operations. The United States and Pakistan also discussed continuing support for bilateral and regional exercises, security assistance, operational re-imbursments and stability activities. The U.S. delegation noted Pakistan's positive efforts to counter threats from Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). To bolster this cooperation, both sides agreed to continue working together to build counter – IED capacity. Pakistan also discussed and shared its view point on expanding security cooperation beyond CT domain.

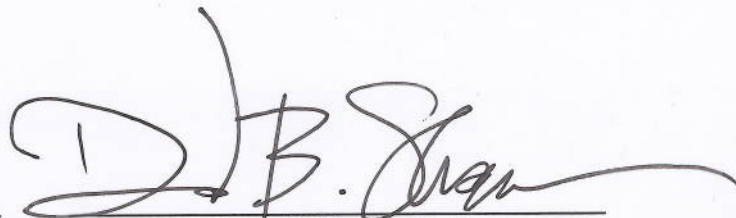
Recognizing the criticality of Pakistan's lines of communication for success of stability efforts in Afghanistan, both sides agreed to work closely to finalize the MoUs of ALOCs and GLOCs arrangements.

Both sides look forward to the upcoming Defense Resourcing Conference in spring 2017 to continue planning security cooperation.

The delegation reaffirmed that the DCG remains an invaluable forum to discuss strategic defense policy issues and exchange views on shared security concerns. They committed to work towards deepening their strong and long standing defense partnership.



Lt Gen. (Retired) Zamir Ul Hassan Shah
Defense Secretary of Pakistan



David B. Shear
PDO Principal Deputy Under Secretary
Of Defense for Policy