

**Joint Statement after Meeting between
Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan**

The Foreign Secretaries of Pakistan and India met in Islamabad on 27-28 December 2004, to review overall progress, commence the next round of the Composite Dialogue and discuss the issues of Peace and Security including CBMs, and Jammu and Kashmir. Foreign Secretary of Pakistan Mr. Riaz H. Khokhar, led the Pakistan delegation while the Indian delegation was led by Foreign Secretary Mr. Shyam Saran. The talks were held in a frank, cordial and constructive atmosphere.

2. Recalling the solemn and categorical reassurance contained in the Joint Press Statement of 6th January, they expressed their determination to carry the process forward.

3. On the issue of Peace and Security including CBMs, the two Foreign Secretaries, inter-alia reviewed the progress made during the meetings of Experts on Nuclear and Conventional CBMs. Building upon the existing contacts between DG MOs, they agreed to promote regular contacts at local level at designated places and explore further CBMs along the international boundary and the LoC. They discussed and narrowed further their differences on the draft agreement on pre-notification of flight testing of ballistic missiles, and agreed to work towards its early finalization.

4. Both sides discussed the issue of Jammu and Kashmir and agreed to carry forward the process in the light of the Joint Statement issued after the meeting between President of Pakistan General Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh in New York on September 24, 2004.

5. The meetings on the other six subjects under the Composite Dialogue, i.e. Siachen, Wullar Barrage/Tulbul Navigation Project, Sir Creek, Terrorism & Drug Trafficking, Economic & Commercial Cooperation and Promotion of Friendly Exchanges in Various Fields would be held on mutually agreed dates between April and June 2005.

6. The two sides also agreed that technical meetings including the Joint Study Group on Trade matters headed by the Commerce Secretaries, Indian Coast Guards and Pakistan Maritime Agency, Pakistan Rangers and Border Security Force of India, Expert level dialogue on Nuclear and Conventional CBMs, technical level meeting on bus service between/through Amritsar and Lahore, meeting between the Narcotics Control Authorities would be held between January and June 2005.

7. They also discussed issues related to apprehended fishermen, civilian prisoners and missing defence personnel. It was inter-alia agreed that:

(i) Immediate notification would be provided to the respective High Commissions through the Foreign Ministries of arrested Pakistani/Indian nationals;

(ii) Consular access would be provided within three months of apprehension;

(iii) Repatriation would be done immediately after completion of sentence and nationality verification;

(iv) A mechanism would be introduced for early repatriation, without sentencing of inadvertent crossers;

(v) A similar mechanism would be established for early release, without sentencing of those under 16 apprehended by either side.

8. The Foreign Secretaries of the two countries would meet in New Delhi to review the overall progress in the Composite Dialogue in July-August 2005.

9. The Foreign Ministers and the Prime Ministers of the two countries would meet during the SAARC Summit in Dhaka in January 2005. The External Affairs Minister of India Mr. K. Natwar Singh would visit Islamabad in February 2005 for bilateral discussions.

10. The Foreign Secretary of India called on Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and Foreign Minister Khurshid M. Kasuri of Pakistan during the course of his visit to Islamabad.

Islamabad

28 December 2004

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