



PAKISTAN ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

Incorporated in New South Wales

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File Reference No. 16/PAA-317/dfat review/1

Australia is currently reviewing its foreign policy through a White Paper for which DFAT has its overseas Australian High Commissioners to contribute and be a part of this review. Australia needs to make favourable changes towards Pakistan for advancing towards a better future and prosperity of the two countries. As an elected representative of the Pakistani community and a businessman, on behalf of our strong Australian – Pakistani community, I would like to highlight the following important factors to look at, when reviewing the existing policy:

1. Are we ready to accept the fast-changing environment around the globe? How well we are prepared for these changes? These are the two key questions to look at. Fight against terrorism while unfinished yet but is heading towards a decisive stage. Pakistan has suffered immense losses on civil, military, economic and human fronts of this war. At this stage in this war on terror, the need of strong civil and military coordination between the two countries is more than any other time in the past. Leaving Pakistan behind is not in the interests of any of the two countries as Pakistan is slowly but surely shifting its focus away from conflicts towards trade. I have seen Pakistan growing rapidly in the last four years or so. As Australian Pakistani, I want Australia to be engaged with this fast-growing country in the next ten years
2. Pakistani Australians form a strong segment of the local Australian community with a size of over 100,000. The contributions are a plenty, Usman Khawaja, Fawad Ahmad and Nadeem Sarwar to name a few. Their contributions in building Australia are growing every day and it should be taken into consideration in this review. Not to forget 15-20K Pakistani students who are directly and indirectly contributing towards Australian economy and society. I personally know that Australia is trending to be the number one country for studies among Pakistani students who want to study abroad. In the last five years, the number of students from Pakistan has seen an exponential growth. What about the next ten years? Logically, this number is only going to increase. Australia must consider this as an important factor in its foreign policy review.
3. CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) is correctly known as a game changer not only for the region but the world as well. China is building a Steel Mill as a part of the CPEC, for which Australia will be providing bulk of raw material. Australian involvement thus has already begun. But it is only a small and indirect contribution in this project. An early Australian entry will be of immense advantage to our larger Australian community and our economy. CPEC must be

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considered as a gateway to Pakistan and Australia should do whatever needed to be a leading frontline partner on the multi-billion-dollar project with potential of hundreds of billions of dollars and thousands of jobs. Ten years down looking ahead, Australia in its foreign policy cannot and must not ignore CPEC and Australia should be leading rather than following and be direct rather than indirect on projects like this.

Summarizing my points: war on terror not over but end closing in, improved law and order, business-friendly environment, local Australian – Pakistani community and increasing student numbers from Pakistan and CPEC. Clearly Australian involvement needs to be on the up and proactive in reviewing its foreign policy. Pakistan has made the right shifts in its policies and Australia must reciprocate in this bilateral relationship. Most important (to me) is the fact that Pakistan is the most under-invested country (due to law and order situation), but the changing and improving conditions make this 200,000,000 plus country, a potential market of unprecedented proportions. The chance is for everyone to grab its share in this market. Are we ready though; is the question that must be addressed in this review. Our community is ready to work with DFAT to come up with a win for both of the countries.

Abbas Rana
President

16 March 2017

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