Mr. President,

I would like to felicitate you on the skillful manner in which you are guiding the work of the Security Council this month. May I also congratulate Ambassador Bolton and the U.S. delegation for the successful and eventful U.S. Presidency last month! I would also like to wish Ambassador Wang Guangya of China a successful presidency next month.

2. The Pakistan delegation expresses its gratitude to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Tom Koenigs for his briefing to the Council today and to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the situation in Afghanistan. May I also take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Mr. Koenigs’ predecessor, Mr. Jean Arnault for his work. We fully support the continuation of the important role of the United Nations in Afghanistan. We also support the international security assistance for Afghanistan.

3. This report outlines the considerable progress made in Afghanistan in fulfilling the benchmarks of the Bonn process. We wish to congratulate President Karzai and the fraternal people of Afghanistan on these achievements. There are also, unfortunately, many outstanding challenges that remain to be overcome – especially security, narcotics, crime, warlordism and development. The Afghanistan Compact, adopted at the London Conference, has endorsed a comprehensive plan to address these challenges to restore peace and security and build prosperity in Afghanistan. The commitments undertaken by the Afghan government and its international partners under the Compact will, we hope, be fulfilled.

4. Pakistan and Afghanistan enjoy a close and symbiotic relationship rooted in geography, history, shared ethnicity and a common faith. Our destinies are inextricably linked. Peace in Afghanistan reinforces peace and tranquility in Pakistan. Peace in Afghanistan will enable both nations to serve as the bridge for trade and commerce between Central Asia, South Asia and beyond. The success of the endeavours for peace and prosperity in Afghanistan is therefore vital for Pakistan.

5. Over 25 years ago, the Pakistani people welcomed nearly 4 million of their Afghan brothers with open arms. We hosted them mostly without the generosity of external assistance. Three million Afghans still remain in Pakistan. In accordance with our traditions, and the principles of humanitarian law, Pakistan has not obliged them to return involuntarily to their country. Yet, return they should; and we trust that conditions will soon be created to enable them to do so in dignity and honour.

6. As history will recount, Pakistan’s hospitality during Afghanistan’s most difficult years, has created enduring problems for Pakistan – including the rise of
extremism and the presence of terrorism. We are addressing these phenomena resolutely and, we believe, successfully. Pakistan has adopted short and long-term strategies to address the problems of terrorism and extremism.

7. We have captured over 600 Al-Qaeda terrorists most of whom infiltrated into Pakistan after 9/11. We have acted resolutely against Taliban terrorism, in accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolution 1267. We have deployed over 80,000 troops on our Western border with Afghanistan to prevent the infiltration or exfiltration by Al-Qaeda and other terrorists. Concurrently, we are investing in infrastructure and socio-economic developments of these so far unsettled frontier regions. Pakistan has also launched major military operations in some of our tribal areas to eliminate the presence of foreign terrorists and their supporters. Over 600 Pakistani soldiers have lost their lives in the 75 operations conducted by Pakistani security forces. And may I remind that these casualties are larger than all of those suffered by the coalition and other forces in Afghanistan. No one can, therefore, question our commitment and determination to succeed in defeating terrorism.

8. A comprehensive approach is required to address the challenges of terrorism and criminal violence and insurgency in Afghanistan. The terrorist and violent incidents in Afghanistan are taking place in not only the South or South-East but in various other parts of the country. They can be prevented by effective action within Afghanistan by the Afghan national and international coalition forces. To ensure success, the root causes of such violence – extremism, warlord-ism, the narcotics trade, local rivalries – will all need to be addressed patiently and sincerely. The failure to do so cannot be externalized.

9. Certainly, border security and control is essential to prevent infiltration into Pakistan or Afghanistan of terrorists or violent criminals. Pakistan has, as I said, deployed 80,000 troops to do so on our side. A matching effort is required on the other side if the hammer and anvil strategy is to work. Moreover, this endeavour cannot succeed without close cooperation in intelligence sharing – and in real time. We can achieve this in the Tripartite Commission as well as through close and constant bilateral contacts.

10. Pakistan has also decided to take additional actions. We will fence parts of the border to reinforce interdiction by our forces. We will also seek to eliminate terrorist elements who may be located in Afghan refugee camps and elsewhere among the refugee population.

11. Together with intelligence sharing, Pakistan expects its partners to enhance Pakistan’s capabilities for interdiction and counter-terrorism through provision of electronic and other equipment, especially additional helicopters, to enhance mobility and reaction time. Our requirements have been conveyed to our partners.

12. Finally, the joint counter-terrorism operations must be conducted with full adherence to the principles of international law, including those incorporated in the Kabul Declaration, regarding respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference. Pakistan will not countenance any violation of these principles.

Mr. President,
13. Pakistan believes that Afghanistan, with the support of the international community, and through cooperation with its neighbours can succeed in meeting the challenges of security, governance and development. Pakistan wishes to make the maximum contribution to the success of the Afghanistan Compact. An essential component of this Compact is to ensure sustainable and rapid development in Afghanistan.

14. At London, Pakistan supplemented its earlier commitment of 200 million dollars with an additional pledge of 50 million dollars for Afghanistan’s development. We have made special arrangements to facilitate transit trade to and from Afghanistan. Bilateral trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan was 1.2 billion dollars last year, which, we hope, will grow to 2 billion this year. We have reached an agreement with the U.S. for the creation of industrial zones on the border with Afghanistan whose goods will be allowed duty free access to the U.S. market.

15. Pakistan is convinced that given mutual goodwill and enhanced trust, Afghanistan and Pakistan can cooperate closely to build peace and security in the region and assure prosperity for our peoples whose historical and fraternal bonds are strong enough to withstand the vicissitudes of politics and posturing by those who wish to sow the seeds of division and discord between us.

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