

## Pakistani Ambassador hopeful Obama will improve relations

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With Barack Obama recently elected as America's next president, the relationship with Pakistan will improve, said Husain Haqqani, the Pakistani ambassador.

Haqqani said that after the election of General Pervez Musharraf in 2000, Pakistan struggled to keep the president in power and the people rejected his military dictatorship. Pakistan is facing problems establishing a democracy right now, he said.

"The election of a new president will have an impact. There is already indication of the softening of the anti-American sentiment," Haqqani said. "The U.S. has the opportunity to reach out to the world and say, 'We may be the largest power in the world...but we also have the ability to empathize and work with others.'"

To an audience at the Hinckley Institute of Politics Nov. 21, Haqqani discussed how the future relationship between the United States and Pakistan looks bright.

The United States and Pakistan have made an agreement on the pursuit of terrorists, allowing the United States to engage terrorists in Pakistan with cooperation from the Pakistani army.

"In (the) last few weeks, Pakistan and (the) United States have enhanced their relationship on the war on terror," Haqqani said. "There have been several attacks on terrorist safe havens...with cooperation of Pakistan, Afghanistan and NATO."

Haqqani also said it is too early to tell what impact this will have on the war. Nonetheless, Pakistan's image of America has changed from that of an invading force to a cooperative one, he said.

Besides changes to the United States, Pakistan impeached Musharraf in February and selected a new president in April. Haqqani said the new Pakistani president could help change the focus from military to what the people want and need.

"Only 58 percent (of) school-aged children go to school...(and) 33 percent live below the poverty line," Haqqani said.

He said the solution to the poverty problems is capitalism.

He advised Pakistani people to think about entrepreneurship and bringing business ties to their country.

Haqqani said the people have spoken by calling for Musharraf's impeachment, whom Haqqani refers to as a military dictator. Musharraf threw out 48 judges in Dec. 2007 and enraged people, he said.

The time for change has come, Haqqani said.



Lucas Isley

Hussain Haqqani, the Pakistani Ambassador to the United States, spoke at the Hinckley Institute on Friday. Haqqani explained how Barack Obama will help relations with Pakistan.

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Claire Gordon, an international studies and French major, agrees with Haqqani that the relationship between the United States and Pakistan is volatile.

"It's balancing on the edge of a knife," Gordon said, "We can move forward or we can do a lot of damage. It's all about how we perceive how we use our forces and the Pakistani borders."

Though some have a negative view of the relationship with the newly elected government of Pakistan, other viewpoints differ.

"(Haqqani) is looking for greater foreign policy and greater cooperation between the two," said Robert Bourne, a political science major. "(They're) trying to dispel the image of Pakistan as a dangerous military-run country, but rather a democratic country."

Bourne believes Haqqani responded to questions about the new administration in a positive manner, which indicates that the relationship between the United States and Pakistan is on the right track.

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