Text of President Zardari’s address to UN General Assembly

UNITED NATIONS, Sep 25 (APP): Following is the text of the address of President Asif Ali Zardari to the UN General Assembly:-

Text Begins

“Mr. President, Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalaam Alaykum

May peace be with you.

Excellencies,

I come before you today in the name of my late wife, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, as a victim of terrorism representing a nation that is a victim of terrorism.

I am a husband, who has seen the mother of my children give her life fighting the menaces of terrorism and fanaticism that haunt the entire civilized world.

In her place and in her honor, I come before you as the elected President of a democratic Pakistan who received a two-third mandate of our Parliament and assemblies. That extraordinary mandate of our Parliament and assemblies. That extraordinary mandate of support was a vote of confidence in her, in her doctrine and in her message. That vote was an act of love and a demand for a democratic, moderate, modern, tolerant and economically just Pakistan, the essence of the Bhutto Doctrine.

It has been eleven months since the first attack on my wife on October 18, 2007 was followed by a United Nations resolution calling for an inquiry into that crime against humanity. That UN resolution has so far been ineffective. After her assassination on December 27, the international community demanded an

independent inquiry - a demand supported by resolutions in Pakistan’s parliament and four provincial legislatures.

Today we still do not know what forces and institutions were involved, who plotted and planned and coordinated and trained and paid for the murder of my wife and my nation’s beloved leader. A UN investigation into the murder of their leader would reassure the people of Pakistan that the international community cares about them, that the UN’s charter of justice is more than rhetoric. We owe it to her. We owe it to history.

If the President of a country and his children cannot get justice through the United Nations, how would the poor and the dispossessed around the world find reassurance that the UN is capable of protecting the weak and the suffering?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the name of humanity and in the name of justice, move forward quickly on the investigation of the assassination of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, let the people of Pakistan and the world know once and for all, whose bloody hands took away one of the greatest women of history.

My wife courageously returned to Pakistan last year, openly confronting the forces of terror. Three million people turned out to welcome Benazir, and to welcome the return of democracy to Pakistan. She was a brave woman who understood the dynamics of our region and the world, who understood the interrelationship between politics and economics, between social injustice and political dictatorship.

For years she told world leaders that dictatorship fuels extremism and poverty fuels fanaticism. She outlined the Bhutto Doctrine of Reconciliation so brilliantly presented in her last book, a dual mission to combat dictatorship and terrorism, while promoting social and economic reform and justice for the people of Pakistan. Benazir Bhutto understood that democracy was not an end, but a beginning:

that a starving child has no human rights; that a father who can not support his family is someone ripe for extremism.

The Bhutto Doctrine of Reconciliation is a roadmap not only to a new Pakistan, but to a new era of peace and cooperation between East and West, between people of all faiths. It is a roadmap that if followed will avoid the clash of civilizations and clash of religions that is the terrorists’ ultimate goal.

The Bhutto doctrine is the new century’s equivalent of the Marshall Plan that saved Europe after World War II. And just as the Marshall Plan was centered on the principle that an economically sound Europe could and would resist communism, the Bhutto Doctrine’s pillar is that an economically viable Pakistan will be the

centerpiece of the victory of pluralism over terrorism. Ladies and gentlemen, the Bhutto doctrine will ultimately prove to be as critical to the victory of freedom in this century as the Marshall Plan was critical to the triumph of liberty in the last.

Ours is the Doctrine of Reconciliation. Theirs is the Doctrine of Death.

Her killers thought her elimination would end her dream of a democratic Pakistan and the balkanization of our region would enable the forces of darkness to prevail.

But our nation rallied in the aftermath of her brutal and tragic assassination.

If Al Qaeda and the Taliban believed that by silencing Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, they were silencing her message, they were very wrong.

We have picked up the torch and will fight against terrorists who attack us, and fight against terrorists who use our territory to plan attacks against our neighbours or anywhere in the world.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Ours is a bloody fight, and the personal pain that my children and I feel cannot be fully expressed, nor the pain of a Nation that has been robbed of its greatest asset, its greatest leader. But the terrorists’ lust for blood and hate has not been satisfied.

Only last week, the forces of evil struck against with a bloody and cowardly attack against my people.

A suicide truck bomb destroyed a great building in our capital barely a stone’s throw away from my office and the house of Parliament.

Once again, Pakistan is the great victim in the war on terror. And once again our people wonder whether we stand alone. Thousands of our soldiers and civilians have died fighting against the common enemies of humanity. We have lost more soldiers than all 37 countries that have forces in Afghanistan put together.

The roots of today’s terrorism can be traced to a war involving the world’s superpowers in Afghanistan during the 1980s. Afghanistan and Pakistan, and increasingly the world, are reaping the bitter harvest sowed towards the end of the cold war.

The world

turned its back on Afghanistan after the Soviet defeat. In Pakistan, we were left with three million refugees within our borders. Their camps that soon became the breeding grounds for intolerance and violence. The West left South and Central Asia. We were left to live with the consequences. And one of its greatest consequences was the birth of Al Qaeda and the talibanization of Afghanistan and parts of our tribal areas.

Yet we do not look back on history. We are victims but we will never be vanquished. On the contrary, the more of our children’s blood they spill, the stronger is our determination to defeat them. We in Pakistan stand united and in defiance. We are resolved that our future will not be dictated by these who defy the spirit and laws of Islam for their sordid political goals.

We may be the targets of international terrorism, but we will never succumb to it. Toward that end, we reach out to you and to the entire civilized world.

Terrorism cannot be fought by military means alone. Fighting it requires political will, popular mobilization, and a socio-economic strategy that wins the hearts and minds of nations afflicted by it. Unilateral actions of great powers should not inflame the passions of allies. Violating our nation’s sovereignty is not helpful in eliminating the terrorist menace. Indeed, this could have the opposite effect.

Many of you in this great hall read about terror, while we live with it. We do not learn about terror from reading newspapers or watching the evening news. We see our children and our wives being blown up before us. My cities, neighborhoods, streets, hotels and offices bear the brunt of the terrorist fanatic rage every single day. A democratic Pakistan is in the process of reaching the national consensus necessary to confront and defeat the terrorists. Only a democratic government can win this war.

We are fighting the menace and we will continue to fight. But this is the fight for the peace of the world. This is the fight for the future of generations to come.

Yes, we fight for ourselves, for our children, for our very soul. Yes, this is our war, but we need international support - moral, political and economical.

In our stability lies the world’s security. Globalization is not just economic; it is also political. The terrorist vision strikes out at all continents and all nations. We must draw the line on their rampage. And we must draw that line in Pakistan.

The question I ask the world’s leaders in this august chamber is whether you will stand with us, just as we stand for the entire civilized world on the front-lines of this epic struggle of the new millennium?

Ladies and gentlemen,

I stand
before you as the President of a great nation that has just suffered under a decade of brutal military dictatorship, human rights abuses, and the systematic destruction of the foundations of democracy and civil society.

Sadly,
all too often the world stood silent as dictators ruled our people with a bloody fist. Nations that were founded on democracy were silent for reasons of expediency. My wife would say that they “danced with dictators”

Today, as we
meet here in New York, the democratically elected leader of Myanmar, Aung San Suu Kyi, continues to be imprisoned in Yangon. She has suffered year after year under house arrest. The world should demand that this great woman finally be freed.

We
appreciate the efforts of Ms. Laura Bush in this regard.

Today,
the horror of terrorism that plagues our region and threatens the world is a by-product of this lack of commitment to the values of democracy. When the world betrays democracy, it sets the table for disaster. We all continue to pay the price.

In the
early years of the new millennium, there are two great battles before mankind. First there is the battle for democracy and liberty against dictators - the fight for universal human rights that is the hallmark of this body.

At the same
time, we are fighting in the trenches of the battle that will determine the course of this century - the battle against extremism and terrorism - between the forces of ignorance and the forces of education, between bigotry and tolerance, between justice and discrimination, between confrontation and reconciliation.

Democracy
is not like a switch that can be turned on and off when it’s convenient. It is a universal value guaranteed to all men and women.

It is the
outcome of these struggles that will determine whether the noble experiment embodied in these hallowed walls of the United Nations will succeed or fail. The struggle between the Bhutto Doctrine of Reconciliation and the Terrorists’ Doctrine of Death will determine the future of mankind.

Let not the
extremists who would manipulate Islam for their political ends define us to you. They are rabid but they are few.

Ladies and

gentlemen,

It is time
for the world to take notice. We are not the cause of the problem of terrorism, we are its victims.

We are
an aggrieved nation NOT one that has caused grief.

We have
fought this battle largely alone.

We have
shared our air bases, our air space, our intelligence, and our armed forces in a coordinated effort to contain terrorism.

Ladies and
gentlemen,

It is time
for the developed world to step up to the plate to help us, and in turn help itself.

The fight
against terrorism and extremism is a fight for the hearts and minds of people. It can’t be won only by guns and bombs. The fight must be multifaceted.

The
battleground must be economic and social as well as military. We will win when people are mobilized against the fanatics. To mobilize them we have to give them hope and opportunity for their future. They need jobs. Their children need education. They must be fed.

They must
have energy.

We must
give people a stake in their own government, and we must demonstrate to them that democracy does perform, that democratic governance can improve their everyday life.

Ladies and
Gentlemen,

An
economically viable Pakistan will be a stable Pakistan. And a stable Pakistan will suck the oxygen from the terrorists’ agenda. Economic justice and political democracy are the worst nightmares of the terrorists.

We must all
fight this epic battle together as allies and partners. But just as we will not let Pakistan’s territory to be used by terrorists for attacks against our people and our neighbors, we cannot allow our territory and our sovereignty to be violated by our friends.

Attacks
within Pakistan that violate our sovereignty actually serve to empower the forces against which we fight together.

I am a
democratic President of a democratic country that intends to be a model to our region and to our religion, for a vibrant, modern, tolerant, peaceful, moderate democracy committed to economic and social justice. People, including my wife, died for this movement. We will not waste their sacrifices.

We will
work patiently to convince leaders in FATA and our Pakhtunkhwa Province to accept the writ of government and turn their back on terrorists. The terrorists can blow up our girls’ schools but we will rebuild them, brick by brick, inch by inch. We are in this battle to win. And we know how we have to do it.

We will
work together with our neighbor Afghanistan, and the NATO forces stationed there, to ensure security of our common border. We will continue the composite dialogue with India so that our outstanding disputes are resolved, as I discussed with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Whether it is the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir, or cooperation on water resources, India and Pakistan must accommodate each other’s concerns and interests; we must respect and work with each other to peacefully resolve our problems and build South Asia into a common market of trade and technology.

Better
relations between Pakistan, Afghanistan and India would help create the regional environment that is more conducive to reducing militancy in our region.

But let be
clear, to those in this hall, and to the terrorists lurking in their caves plotting their next assault on humanity. If necessary we will confront evil with force - our police, our army and our air force. We will turn the power of the state against the stateless terrorists. We will turn the power of justice against the chaos of anarchists. We will turn the power of right against the darkness of evil.

Ladies and
Gentlemen,

I did not

come to the office of President, to this moment, by design. As my wife once said about herself, I did not choose this life, it chose me. An extraordinary combination of circumstances brought me to this moment.

It has not been as easy road. I spent nine years in prison, in solitary confinement, as a hostage to my wife’s struggle for democracy and to our party’s future.

I was unjustly imprisoned under a judicial system manipulated and controlled by the forces of dictatorship. I refused to break under pressure.

My years in prison made me a stronger person and hardened my resolve to fight for democracy and justice. Those years prepared me for this moment.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Terror took my wife’s life. But the terrorists cannot kill my wife’s dream. Her vision, her passion, her force is now our common task. The Benazir Bhutto Doctrine of Reconciliation lives on; it guides us in our endeavors. Her Reconciliation is the mantra of the new era, and I am dedicated to implementing what she has proposed. I wish I could do it at my wife’s side. But now I will do it in my wife’s place.

Pakistan will prove wrong all the negative predictions about its future. We will show the way in overcoming suspicions towards and from our neighbours, and building a future for our people.

Throughout her life, my wife struggled to make the world a better place for our children, the children of Pakistan and the children of the world.

I owe it to her memory, and to all of the martyrs of democracy to continue to do the same, until the Bhutto Doctrine of Reconciliation is not just her dream but the world’s reality.

Thank you.”

Text End.