



## **Vision F.O.**

**Multidimensional Diplomacy for Durable Peace,  
Inclusive Growth and Shared Development**

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**Multidimensional Diplomacy for Durable Peace, Inclusive  
Growth and Shared Development**

**Keynote Address**

**By**

**H.E. Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi**  
**Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan**

**NUST Institute of Policy Studies, Islamabad**

**NUST | Islamabad**

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## About the Speaker\*

Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, is one of the most seasoned statesmen of contemporary Pakistan. He has engaged at every echelon of politics and governance since he started his political career in 1983 from the District Council. He



has held multiple ministerial portfolios, serving previously as Minister of Planning and Development and Minister of Finance of Punjab. He has been elected 5 times as Member National Assembly, and he has twice served as the Minister for Foreign Affairs; from 2008-2011, and currently since 2018.

As Foreign Minister, he envisions a foreign policy that is articulate and principled, ensuring a peaceful and prosperous neighborhood for development. He believes in the reinforcement of long-standing relationships and in making new alliances, with Pakistan pursuing a policy of partnerships for peace, security and prosperity.

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\* This brief profile of the Foreign Minister is excerpted and derived from his profile at the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan. For the detailed profile of the Foreign Minister, see, <https://mofa.gov.pk/foreign-minister-of-pakistan/>.

# **Vision F.O. -Multidimensional Diplomacy for Durable Peace, Inclusive Growth and Shared Development**

## **1. Introduction**

NUST Institute of Policy Studies (NIPS) organized the keynote address of the Foreign Minister, Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, at NUST, Islamabad on Thursday, February 10. The address focused on highlighting the major contributions of Pakistan's multidimensional diplomacy to durable peace, inclusive growth, and shared development.

In his address, the Foreign Minister shared that the collective and consultative pursuit of geoeconomics had grown to become the predominant objective of Pakistan's foreign policy under the leadership of PM Imran Khan. He stated that this major foreign policy goal was currently being realized through the proactive global operationalization of various types of diplomacy, such as economic diplomacy, public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, science diplomacy, and digital diplomacy.

The address was followed by an extensive interactive session moderated by Director NIPS, Brigadier (Retired) Amir Yaqub, in which the Foreign Minister responded in detail to various questions and comments from the audience.

The Foreign Minister assured the audience - that consisted largely of the NUST community of students, scholars, and faculty - that

Pakistan's diplomacy was ceaselessly promoting and safeguarding the vital national interests of Pakistan, be it the untiring efforts for a just and satisfactory resolution of Kashmir dispute in line with the UNSC resolutions, the uninterrupted promotion of the comprehensive development of CPEC, the deepening and diversification of diplomatic relations, driving forward both bilateral and multilateral coordination and cooperation with major powers, or Intra-OIC cooperation.

During his remarks, Rector NUST, Lieutenant General (Retired) Javed Mahmood Bukhari HI (M), paid tribute to the Foreign Minister as one of the finest and most experienced statesmen of contemporary Pakistan, under whose stewardship, Pakistan's diplomacy had been massively revitalized for fostering regional peace, stability, progress, and global harmony.

Dr. Ashfaque Hasan Khan, Principal NUST School of Social Sciences and Humanities and DG NIPS, presented the vote of thanks, and highlighted the urgent need for the formation of new institutions for conducting new types of regional cooperation and integration.

## 2. Welcome Remarks

**Lieutenant General Javed Mahmood Bukhari HI (M) (Retired)**

**Rector NUST**

Excellency Shah Mahmood Qureshi, the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, is undoubtedly one of the finest and most experienced statesmen of contemporary Pakistan.

With a noble political pedigree and impeccable educational credentials, he has been exposed to high politics since early years. He possesses penetrating insight into the drivers of current domestic, regional, and global events. In his long and illustrious public career, he has served the people of Pakistan with unflinching dedication.



He has been representing Pakistan internationally with unmatched professional competence and praiseworthy patriotism, always guarding Pakistan's vital interests abroad. He is a master diplomat



who has handled difficult and complex international situations with remarkable finesse and proficiency.

Due to his vision and leadership, Pakistan's diplomacy has undergone massive rejuvenation and diversification in the last three years, with the promotion of peace, stability, mutual understanding, multilateral cooperation, shared development, and common prosperity as its key principles.

I would also take this opportunity to share that NUST has the distinction of being the premier higher education institution of Pakistan. It commands the most comprehensive and rigorous knowledge ecosystem in the country. Internationally acclaimed QS World University Rankings have placed NUST as the top university of Pakistan. This is the second consecutive year that NUST has won this distinction.

NUST community looks forward to listening to the seasoned remarks of the Foreign Minister.

### **3. Keynote Address on Multidimensional Diplomacy for Durable Peace, Inclusive Growth and Shared Development**

**H.E Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi**

**Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan**

I thank you for inviting me to the NUST Institute of Policy Studies to share my thoughts on Vision F.O. and the need for multidimensional diplomacy for durable peace and inclusive development.



The currency gained by terms like “multidimensional diplomacy” is reflective of new trends and realities. The world is very different from what it was some decades ago. Diplomacy is no longer merely inters-

state. There are multiple players, factors and forces, influencing the conduct of diplomacy.

Traditional means of conducting international relations and foreign policy have been overtaken by the fast-paced global perception industry. Multidimensional diplomacy now uses tools ranging from economy, cyber space, digital technology, science and innovation to culture and even people-to-people linkages.

Soft power has already replaced conventional warfare. The world has entered the era of battles of narratives and information/disinformation warfare. We see a huge shift in the role of media, their impact on all sphere of life and modern technology being used to influence opinions and push agendas.

Another external factor that we have just recently witnessed that has overturned the global economy is Covid-19. This global pandemic has upended the global economic systems. We see Covid-19 is not just a global health crisis but a catalyst for long-term geopolitical shifts.

Covid-19 vaccines too have aided diplomacy with countries competing for influence through their vaccines and related technology.

A new world is upon us, and we have to navigate with caution and foresight. The unipolar world has now become a rear-view vista. Multilateral mechanisms that were setup in the first place for mediation and conflict resolution are losing their efficacy. The political economy of energy is in a flux due to geopolitics as well as technological advances. Weakening of multilateral bodies, closed

borders policy and fraying international alliances are giving way to regional partnerships.

In the backdrop of these shifting trends, geopolitics is reorienting to accommodate new actors and emerging factors and considerations. Pakistan's foreign policy must respond adequately.

Under Prime Minister Imran Khan's leadership, we have proactively and consistently advanced our diplomatic objectives both bilaterally and multilaterally. We have consolidated friendships and strengthened bilateral relations with major powers and key partners across all regions.

We have put to use various tools of diplomacy be it economic diplomacy, science diplomacy, public diplomacy or digital diplomacy, to lead the advocacy for durable peace, inclusive growth and shared development.

Guided by the Prime Minister, Pakistan is a leading voice at multilateral forums with strong advocacy on issues of sustainable and equitable development, climate change, debt relief, corruption and illicit financial flows as well as Islamophobia.

And we are pressing ahead on the clear pathway provided by the policy shift with increased focus on geo-economics, leveraging our geo-political significance. 2021 has also been an exciting year of reform at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where the strategic planning reform under Vision F.O. in 2020, became a reality in 2021. Vision F.O. envisages an environment of thought leadership at MOFA to promote

a macro vision, digital landscape and an evolved transparent way of communications.

To this end, we launched robust Economic Diplomacy agenda as well as Public Diplomacy Initiatives besides engaging in large scale digital reform and leveraging Science Diplomacy. Let me elaborate upon some of the successes of our multidimensional foreign policy for durable peace in our region, as well as shared development and growth.

### **3.1. Afghanistan**

Post-15 August 2021, Pakistan geared its diplomacy for garnering regional and international consensus for constructive and sustained engagement with the new interim authorities in Afghanistan. Our overriding concern is to avert a humanitarian catastrophe and an economic meltdown.

Pakistan played a pivotal role in the safe evacuation of over 90 thousand individuals across 42 nationalities, consisting of diplomats, International NGO workers, media persons and many others.

This included the establishment of the six-country format of immediate neighbors of Afghanistan on Pakistan's initiative, our participation in the Moscow format and other meetings, and the Troika Plus Meeting held in Islamabad, including the interaction with the Afghan interim authorities.

The high point of these activities was the Extraordinary Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers hosted by Pakistan in Islamabad in

December 2021 to focus on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. Attended by over 70 delegations, including 30 at the Ministerial/Deputy Ministerial level, and representation from various regional and international organizations, and international partners, it provided a wider platform to address the humanitarian and economic challenges confronting the people of Afghanistan. The Session yielded substantive, action-oriented outcomes.

### **3.2. Economic Diplomacy**

Due to Imran Khan Government's shift of focus from geo-politics to geo-economics, economic diplomacy has assumed higher priority in the conduct of Pakistan's foreign policy. Throughout the year, under my Vision F.O., I have personally remained engaged with our missions abroad to review their activities regarding export and investment promotion, increasing investor confidence, enhancing remittance inflows, tourism promotion, and broadening of trade ties with host countries.

This effort to promote and expand our trade and investment portfolio across the world together with steps taken at various levels at home has led to concrete achievements including: an improvement by 39 points in Pakistans ranking in Ease of Doing Business; 7% increase in trade with Africa; and, an increase of over USD 2 billion in the export of information technology and IT-based sectors

### **3.3. Digital Diplomacy**

Digital Diplomacy is a pivotal aspect of Vision F.O., and is in line with Prime Minister's vision of a Digital Pakistan. Under the digital reform

agenda, we have launched the Foreign Minister's Portal that provides the diaspora direct access to all 114 Pakistan Missions abroad based in 87 countries with a view to efficient handling and addressing of their issues.

All 114 Missions have been brought online on social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram enabling greater transparency and access. Our Missions have also proactively promoted the Roshan Digital Accounts providing digital banking solutions to millions of Non-Resident Pakistanis.

Prime Minister Imran Khan launched 'Automation of Power of Attorney', to resolve a perennial problem of overseas Pakistanis. Initially launched as a pilot project in ten Missions in the United States and the United Kingdom, this facility will be extended to all our Missions abroad.

### **3.4. Public Diplomacy**

In 2021, Pakistan's Diplomatic outreach achieved momentous growth as a result of our various public diplomacy initiatives.

Last year we celebrated 70 years of diplomatic relations with Argentina, China, Germany, Spain and Thailand, hosting high impact Public Diplomacy events to add a new and renewed people to people dimension to our ties. In 2022, we will be celebrating key milestones in our friendships with many others including UAE, US, UK and the EU.

A key component of Public Diplomacy is Cultural Diplomacy. Our collaboration with Pakistan's most compelling cultural export "Coke

Studio” in 2021 made waves and was a real first for the Government having crafted and executed a public-private partnership at such a scale.

Pakistan celebrated key global days throughout the year including World Environment Day where we hosted a bike rally led by myself. We were also happy to find ourselves in a relatively better COVID19 environment that enabled us to host the annual Pakistan Foreign Office Women’s Association (PFOWA) charity bazaar.

In 2021, I was also happy to have the second iteration of the FM Honors’ List, through which we recognized 25 bright Leaders under 40 from the overseas Pakistani community, for their exceptional achievements in the fields of innovation, sustainability, science, technology, academia, politics and social work.

We at the Foreign Office are working with all our Missions abroad through both traditional and new tools of diplomacy to create a voice that would resonate with the global community and to dent the deep rooted negative perceptions about Pakistan through fresh and positive narratives. Keeping our interests supreme, we must navigate through this tumultuous external environment to ensure that Pakistan’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence are secured and Pakistan’s development agenda is advanced.

I would like to close by saying that Pakistan is pursuing a proactive foreign policy with a focus on the global agenda. The future is unpredictable but we have the resilience and experience to deal with the challenges ahead.



## 4. Q&A Session

The Keynote Address by the Foreign Minister of Pakistan was followed by an interactive session with the NUST community of faculty, scholars, and students, in which many questions on a range of issues from the audience were addressed comprehensively by Excellency Shah Mahmood Qureshi.



In response to a question about what role Pakistan could play in the recognition of the interim Afghan government by the international community, the Foreign Minister stressed the need to view the question of recognition in a comprehensive manner. He stated that Pakistan's key concern, following the victory of the Afghan Taliban, was averting a humanitarian crisis and economic collapse inside Afghanistan, which would have made things extremely dire for the almost 38 Afghans, and which would have also ultimately affected

Pakistan adversely, as the latter was already hosting almost 4 million Afghan refugees. The Foreign Minister stated that Pakistan had, therefore, played a key role in creating the enabling environment that would help drive forward the engagement of international community with the interim setup in Kabul. He mentioned that Pakistan had successfully hosted the Extraordinary Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan in December 2021. He stated that in addition to the Foreign Ministers of the OIC Member States and Observers, the session was attended by the representatives of the United Nations, international financial institutions, and other non-member states like China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union, which was a significant headway from the situation of near-total isolation, which had surrounded the interim regime in Kabul in the immediate wake of August 15, 2021. He said, owing in large part to Pakistan's proactive engagement with the international community on the issue of its engagement with the interim Afghan government, the situation was gradually improving. From isolation of the interim Afghan government, the mood was shifting gradually to engagement. Foreign ministers of a few countries had already visited Kabul. The interim Afghan Foreign Minister had recently been invited to Oslo to engage with the representatives of key European countries. The Foreign Minister further mentioned that Pakistan had unequivocally conveyed to the interim Afghan government that the recognition of the regime by the international community was contingent upon the formation of a representative and inclusive

government and respect for human rights, including the rights of women. Such a government was important for normalization and the restoration of Afghanistan's diplomatic relations with the world.

Responding to a question, which country Pakistan would invite first if it were to set up a global organization for development and poverty alleviation, the Foreign Minister began by complimenting the People's Republic of China on its spectacular, precise, well-coordinated, sophisticated and highly successful domestic development and poverty alleviation drive of the last 40-plus years, having pulled nearly 800 million people out of poverty during this period among its multiple achievements. He further expressed his special appreciation for China's massive multi-type convening capabilities, a recent demonstration of which was the world-class organization by China of the Winter Olympic Games 2022. The Foreign Minister stated that challenges like Climate Change and Covid-19 global pandemic could not be tackled on the national basis alone, and that they required a concerted global response. He declared himself to be in full agreement with President Xi's vision of the shared future for all humanity. He said in the event that Pakistan were to propose the establishment of a new world development organization, the first country Islamabad would approach and invite would certainly be the People's Republic of China.

Replying to a question about the role of Pakistan's multidimensional diplomacy in highlighting the plight of Kashmiri Muslims in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), the Foreign Minister categorically stated that Pakistan had raised – and will continue to raise – at all relevant international and regional forums the cause of

Kashmiri Muslims suffering from brutalities, human rights violations, and terrorism by the Hindutva-dominated Indian state, government, and other extremist non-state elements patronized by the Indian government. He stated that the position of the government of Pakistan, led by the Prime Minister, Imran Khan, on the issue was very clear that Pakistan would not engage in any dialogue with India, unless the unwarranted steps taken by India on August 5, 2019, were reversed, and unless the special status of IIOJK as well as the human rights of Kashmiris in IIOJK were fully restored.

He noted with concern the increasing marginalization and ghettoization of Muslims and other minorities in India under the Modi regime. He further stressed that the issue could only be resolved by peaceful means via dialogue in line with the UNSC resolutions. He said the emphasis placed in Pakistan's National Security Policy (2022-2026) on economic security in addition to traditional security, and the ongoing shift in Pakistan's foreign policy from geopolitics to geoeconomics, would not only reinforce Pakistan's position on the Kashmir issue, but also improve its standing in the international community.

In response to a question about the efforts undertaken by the government in taking up, with the interim Afghan regime, the issue of ensuring that Afghanistan's soil would not be used for terrorism against Pakistan, the Foreign Minister stated that Kabul had assured Islamabad that no terrorism against Pakistan will be allowed from

Afghanistan's territory. He said the government was confident that Kabul would honor the commitment it had given to Islamabad.

The Foreign Minister paid a special tribute to Pakistan's armed forces and law enforcement agencies for comprehensively checking terrorism in the country. He further highlighted the notorious role played by hostile elements, including India, in fomenting terrorism and disorder in Pakistan. The Foreign Minister said that Pakistan had duly apprized the UN of the role played by India in sponsoring acts of terrorism across different regions of Pakistan, especially Balochistan.

He considered that the national consensus built around the challenge of fighting terrorism in the shape of the National Action Plan would further help coordinate national efforts, and assist in the formulation and execution of a comprehensive antiterrorism and counterterrorism strategy. The Foreign Minister said that terrorism cost the nation more than 80,000 casualties and an economic loss of over 150 billion US dollars, but ultimately Pakistan's antiterrorism and counterterrorism response had succeeded in defeating the menace of terrorism by dint of indigenous resolve and resources. He said continued national resolve would eventually lead to the total neutralization of terrorism in Pakistan.

Responding to a question about the state of the comprehensive security cover provided to CPEC, the Foreign Minister said that the security of CPEC remained the top priority of the government, as evidenced by the establishment of Special Security Division (SSD) and Task Force-88, focused on overland and maritime security of CPEC, respectively.

Mr. Qureshi further elaborated that solid national consensus existed with regard to CPEC, which was a major domestic development initiative for Pakistan as well as the epitome of shared bilateral progress between China and Pakistan, and possessed massive potential for inclusive regional connectivity and shared development. He considered the steady progress of CPEC to be a demonstration of the focus of national leadership that had allowed the construction of CPEC in an uninterrupted manner.

The Foreign Minister said that his government was paying special attention to the ongoing development stage of CPEC, as it had entered the crucial Phase II, which differed substantially from the priorities of Phase I, wherein infrastructure development and energy projects were the key focus, but CPEC Phase II had prioritized industrial cooperation, development, and relocation, agricultural modernization, digital technology and connectivity, SEZ construction, and S&T development. He expressed his conviction that the development of CPEC would lead to considerable career and advancement opportunities for the talented youth of Pakistan. He pointed out that the interaction between Pakistani and Chinese leadership in the beginning of February 2022 showed that there was mutual understanding on the orientation of CPEC development, overall bilateral relations, and the regional situation, including Afghanistan.

When asked about any possibility of breakthrough in India-Pakistan relations, the Foreign Minister assured the audience that the policy of his government was that any forward movement in this regard

required positive, substantive, and verifiable actions by India, including the reversal of the measures taken by India on August 5, 2019.

When asked about how Pakistan could become financially sovereign, the Foreign Minister said the nation needed to prefer and elect honest and competent leaders repeatedly and stand united behind such leaders to realize the immense development potential of the people of Pakistan.

Responding to a question about the possibility of the establishment of a knowledge diplomacy working group in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in view of the increasing salience of knowledge diplomacy – defined as the role played by higher education institutions and other knowledge-based institutions to promote peaceful cooperation among nations – by virtue of the ongoing transformation of contemporary interstate relations due to the global impact of the peaceful development of China and emerging nations, the Foreign Minister said that he was open to policy suggestions in this regard, and informed the audience that, under his leadership, the Foreign Office, had taken steps on a sustained basis to engage formally with at least two think tanks, namely, the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) and the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS).

Responding to the concern voiced during the interactive session about the potential for the overextension of capabilities in the course of geopolitical or geoeconomic interstate partnerships, the Foreign Minister stressed that it was the prime responsibility of a prudent

national leadership to ensure that the country did not become entangled in commitments that were not conducive to its long-term development. Mr. Qureshi stated that the careful management of foreign relations was one of the key priorities of his government. This was why the current government was keenly interested in forging mutually beneficial partnerships with other countries that could collectively advance shared development, said the Foreign Minister.

He further elaborated that, under the instructions of Prime Minister Imran Khan, he had visited the Central Asian Republics (CARs) to discuss projects such as the transnational railway network connecting Uzbekistan and Pakistan via Afghanistan, the Trans-Afghanistan Pipeline, also known as TAPI Pipeline, that will provide gas from Turkmenistan via Afghanistan, and Central Asia-South Asia-1000 or CASA-1000 Power Project, that will transmit clean hydroelectric power from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to Pakistan through Afghanistan.

When asked about the efforts of Pakistan's missions abroad regarding the welfare of overseas Pakistanis, for instance, in countries like Saudi Arabia, the Foreign Minister pointed out that Pakistani community in Saudi Arabia was a major source of foreign remittances and Pakistan's diplomatic mission in Saudi Arabia was fully engaged with the Pakistani diaspora there. However, the Foreign Minister cautioned that the overall behavior and conduct of overseas Pakistanis in different countries was the biggest determinant in so far as the prevailing perceptions about Pakistanis in different countries were concerned. These perceptions, he further mentioned, would become crystallized



over a long period of time, but, once they settled into a certain way of looking at Pakistanis, would lead to quick wholesale characterization, regardless of the virtues or qualities of individual Pakistanis living abroad. The Foreign Minister advised that it was, therefore, essential for overseas Pakistanis to conduct themselves properly day in day out, individually and collectively.

He highlighted the need for the diplomatic staff of Pakistani missions abroad to revisit their traditional approach, and become more proactive in engaging with the issues of the overseas Pakistanis who were an asset for Pakistan, as had been suggested by the Prime Minister Imran Khan in his interaction with Pakistan's missions abroad. He further informed the audience that the quality of consular services of Pakistan's missions abroad had been improved by means of leveraging ICTs and digital technologies. He further pointed out that once given the right to vote, overseas Pakistanis would see their overall influence increase significantly.

Responding to the question about the prospect of the diversification of Pakistan's foreign policy, considering that it had been largely West-oriented for the greater part, the Foreign Minister recognized that the West had been the focus of Pakistan's foreign policy for a long time, and would continue to be important, but he indicated that Pakistan in the 21st century was committed to pursuing a balanced foreign policy, maintaining normal and good relations with different countries.

He shared that Pakistan was now engaging more proactively with African countries, one of the signs of which was that the trade with

Africa had gone up 7 percent in the last two years. He mentioned that Pakistan was keenly exploring new markets in Central Asia, and the new orientation overall was to look more toward the East. He announced that Islamabad was all set to host the 48th Session of the OIC Council of Ministers in March, 2022. The Foreign Minister highlighted that domestic development was linked to the levels of regional integration within a region. He remarked that thriving regions like the EU and ASEAN led countries located therein to prosper as well. The Foreign Minister assured the audience that Pakistan's diplomacy would continue to be proactive, innovative, multidirectional, and multidimensional to promote shared development, durable peace, and inclusive growth in the days to come.



## **5. Concluding Remarks**

**Dr. Ashfaque Hasan Khan**

**Principal, NUST School of Social Sciences and Humanities &  
Director General, NIPS**

Dr. Ashfaque Hasan Khan stated that the Foreign Minister's finesse as a seasoned diplomat had contributed to the country's ability to deal with challenging regional and global situations. Dr. Khan appreciated the steps taken by the Foreign Office under the Foreign Minister's leadership, that had increased its capacity to pursue the foreign policy goals of Pakistan in an integrated and improved manner. He praised the high quality of the interactive session of the NUST community with the Foreign Minister, which, according to Dr Khan, showed the high level of understanding and passion of NUST students as well as the spirit of meaningful engagement for which the Foreign Minister was renowned at home and abroad. DG NIPS said that the shift from geopolitics to geoeconomics necessitated new forms of regional integration and regional cooperation. He said this was also made necessary by the failure of SAARC to fulfil its promise due to the hegemonic designs of Pakistan's eastern neighbor. He considered that the time was ripe for the South Asian nations like Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Afghanistan, together with China, to explore the possibility of a new organizational form for regional cooperation.



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H.E. Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi  
Foreign Minister of Pakistan

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Defining Research

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