

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

January 7, 2012

Dear Madame Secretary:

We are writing today to express our deep concern over the safety and well-being of former Pakistani Ambassador to the U.S. Husain Haqqani. It has come to our attention that Ambassador Haqqani is under intense pressure in Pakistan, including possibly threats to his life, over the so-called “Memogate” affair.

Questions have been raised about the manner in which this case is proceeding against Ambassador Haqqani and whether due process of law is being followed. Internationally recognized human rights defender Ms. Asma Jehangir recently quit as Haqqani’s lawyer, citing her lack of confidence in the judicial commission established by the Pakistani Supreme Court to investigate the case. Because of her doubts about the commission’s impartiality, Ms. Jehangir refused to appear before it.

Ms. Jehangir described the Supreme Court decision to admit the memo petitions as a “black chapter” in the judiciary’s history and further noted her concern that Ambassador Haqqani could be picked up by Pakistan’s intelligence services and intimidated, and even possibly tortured, into providing a statement that suits their interests. In this context, the fact that Haqqani was forced to surrender his passport, despite returning to Pakistan voluntarily to face the charges, is particularly troubling.

The case against Haqqani follows an ominous trend in Pakistan. The assassinations of Punjab Governor Salmaan Taseer, Minister for Minority Affairs Shahbaz Bhatti, and journalist Syed Saleem Shahzad this past year have created a culture of intimidation and fear that is stifling efforts to promote a more tolerant and democratic society. Significant segments of the Pakistani media have already judged Haqqani to be guilty of treason, which could inspire religious extremists to take the law into their own hands as they did with Taseer and Bhatti.

While we, as individuals, may not have always agreed with Ambassador Haqqani’s views, we regarded him as an effective presenter of Pakistani positions in the Washington context. In keeping with its traditional support for human rights and its deep interest in a firmly democratic Pakistan, the U.S. government should do all it can to ensure Haqqani receives due process without any threat of physical harm.

We commend the State Department for its statement on Friday calling for fair and transparent treatment of Ambassador Haqqani in accordance with Pakistani law and international legal standards. We would urge the U.S. government to continue to weigh in with key Pakistani leaders and to make appropriate public statements to ensure that Husain Haqqani is not physically harmed and that due process of law is followed.

With High Regards,

Dr. Stephen P. Cohen, Brookings Institution

Ms. Lisa Curtis, Heritage Foundation

Mr. Sadanand Dhume, American Enterprise Institute

Mr. Toby Dalton, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Dr. C. Christine Fair, Georgetown University

Dr. Robert M. Hathaway, Woodrow Wilson International Center

Mr. Michael Krepon, Stimson Center

Ambassador Dennis Kux, Woodrow Wilson International Center

Ambassador William B. Milam, Woodrow Wilson International Center

Dr. Aparna Pande, Hudson Institute

Dr. George Perkovich, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Mr. Bruce Riedel, Brookings Institution

Ambassador Howard B. Schaffer, Georgetown University

Ambassador Teresita C. Schaffer, Brookings Institution

Dr. Ashley J. Tellis, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Dr. Marvin G. Weinbaum, Middle East Institute

cc.

The Honorable U.S. Vice President Joseph R. Biden

The Honorable U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta

The Honorable U.S. National Security Advisor Thomas E. Donilon

The Honorable Director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency David H. Petraeus