

**OPEN LETTER BY THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE 25TH JUNIOR
DIPLOMATIC COURSE**

6TH NOVEMBER TO 15TH DECEMBER 2017

Closing Ceremony

*Your Excellency Chief Guest
Director General of the Foreign Service Academy,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Fellow Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It gives me great pleasure to address you this morning on behalf of the participants of the 25th Junior Diplomatic Course for Foreign Diplomats of 2017. Since our cohort is a peculiar one, we have decided to write an open letter to Pakistan with a view to firstly, describing the unique experience of the past six weeks and also to break free from the shackles of conventional speeches.

Dear Pakistan,

Six weeks ago, we embarked on a journey as simple representatives from our respective countries, carrying with us the symbol of friendly and unparalleled bilateral relations. However, today we are leaving as more informed diplomats who have been successful in strengthening these existing ties of friendship.

The knowledge humbly imparted to us by the various resource persons and experiences shared, have equipped us with the necessary tools to face the challenges of modern diplomacy. This is of no surprise for the very foundation of the teachings at the Foreign Service Academy may be found in the wise words of Quaid-e-Azam as follows:

“Our foreign policy is one of friendliness and goodwill towards all the nations of the world.”

In this context, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Government of Pakistan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Ambassador Aziz, Director General, Mr. Shahbaz Malik, Director of the Program and through you, to the valuable staff of the Foreign Service Academy. All of you will be forever remembered for the relentless effort that has been put in to ensure the success of our course.

We were fortunate enough to broaden our expertise in various domains, ranging from national to global ones, by interacting with both academicians and practitioners. For instance, burning topics like Pakistan’s foreign policy, globalization and international trade have been thoroughly discussed.

Pakistan, as a matter of fact, words fail to describe your beauty. In parallel to the academic program at the Foreign Service Academy, we were given the opportunity to discover wonderful places like Sialkot, Lahore, Muzaffarabad, Murree and Karachi. As such, we were pleasantly surprised by your untapped economic potential, inspired by your sincere philanthropy, humbled by the wounds and sorrows of the Kashmiris, amazed by your picturesque landscapes and finally, delighted by the hospitality and warmth of your people.

As we prepare to bid you goodbye in a couple of hours, our suitcases are not only oversized from shopping but also from intangible memories. Memories of unforgettable good times with amazing and diverse people. We strongly believe that no participant from the course will ever forget the endless conversations about our respective culture and way of life back home, the joyful bus rides across the highways, the freezing but entertaining dinners in Karachi, Mr. Malik’s special concern for Amjad from Palestine, Micheal’s exasperation but patience when it comes to our craze for pictures and the collective madness and cordiality during sightseeing, to name only a few.

We will soon be back to our individual countries and it will be business as usual again, but we believe that each and every one of us is a changed person now. Indeed, we have seen from our own eyes that Pakistan is completely different from how it is being portrayed for several

years now. As such, we are going back as more responsible and aware human beings and diplomats who are more than ever ready to stand for just and good causes.

Pakistan, we believe that you and us were meant to meet and although the nearing end of our temporary companionship, let us assure you that we are taking along part of your soul and spirit. Today, we sincerely wish you nothing but love, prosperity, success, peace and harmony.

On a lighter note, in 1997, James Bond convinced the world that ‘tomorrow never dies’ and we want to believe that so does the hope to see you again.

PAKISTAN ZINDABAAD!

Khuda Hafiz