

FOREIGN SERVICE ACADEMY
ISLAMABAD

Passing out Ceremony 26th Advance Diplomatic Course

Vote of Thanks by Mr. Melville Robertson Roberts,
Participant from The Gambia

Honorable Special Secretary, Director General of the Foreign Service Academy, Director, Foreign Service Academy, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I consider the task to deliver the vote of thanks on behalf of participants of the 26th advanced diplomatic course being offered by the prestigious Foreign Service Academy in Islamabad as a privilege and more so, as a singular honor, speaking as a son of Africa by way of the smallest country in continental Africa; known as the Smiling Coast of The Gambia for the warmth of its people which I am proud to say is also the case in Pakistan.

My dear People, for everything in life there is a beginning and an end. If this were not so then life would be monotonous. After all the jeering curves and stormy hills, splendid mountains views and flowing rivers, we have now arrived at what is; our final day in Pakistan.

My colleagues and I arrived in Pakistan with much trepidation, armed with combatant defence mode laced with fear and uncertainty of the unknown. Some International media outlets and detractors of this great nation continue to mount a fierce campaign and seeking to paint the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as an enemy to modern day democracy, a stumbling block to world peace, and an obstacle to progressive civilization.

The twenty-two of us that have been here for the past six weeks; utterly reject that notion in all its entirety!!!

I stand here with the firmest of convictions to say, that they have failed, because we, a group comprising of 20 different nations, from all parts of the world, came; saw; and are convinced beyond a shadow of doubt, that indeed, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, is one of the greatest nations on earth. The vision of Iqbal, the undiluted dynamism and unparalleled leadership of its founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, remains to date, one of the greatest advancement agenda of any single nation on earth.

We as participants have been honored to explore the heart of the beautiful city of Islamabad and its aromatic and exotic cuisine, the high plains of Lahore in the Punjab region. How can we forget the auspicious hospitality of Avari Towers of Lahore. The Industries of Sialkot and the resourcefulness and resolve of its people the radiance of Karachi but Ah, at last, the magnificent mountain tops and astounding valleys of Kashmir will surely be imbibed in our hearts forever.

We have been armed with the requisite attributes to confront diplomatic issues as they come before us. I am sure our lecturers will agree with us, that our science is like no other; for when things go wrong, the ramifications can be terrible; Therefore, it is imperative that as we make our exodus from this mecca of diplomatic excellence; we take with us everything that this hard working men and women have equipped us with, to make our world a better place for humanity; and that is our pledge!

Distinguished Guests, as we jet out into the blue skies of Islamabad, en-route to our various countries, we take with us the warmth and love of a great nation and its people. On behalf of my colleagues, I want to decree out our enthusiastic thank to the entire staff and management of the Foreign Service Academy; they have been kind and gracious; we too are grateful to them and depart with memories of a lifetime.

To my fellow participants, I part with you in peace and love. I take back nothing home from this sojourn in Pakistan but the best of our collective audacity to excel in our professional calling. It is therefore, fitting that I leave with you, as a parting gift, a burning flame that will forever remain illuminated in your hearts and mind. Ladies and Gentlemen, in the words of Iqbal, The greatest philosopher, poet and leader of all times I quote.....

“Be aware of your own worth, use all of your power to achieve it. Create an ocean from a dewdrop. Do not beg for light from the moon, obtain it from the spark within you.” Unquote

Honorable chief guest, Director General of the Foreign Service Academy, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, reverting to my opening statement; I have come to that point where I will need to sign off, and I do so with emotions and humility. Therefore, as a diplomat par excellence, it will be remiss of me, if I do not at this point, say to you all, please accept the assurances of our highest consideration, fraternal esteem and best wishes.

Bhoat Sukriya ! Shukran!! Mercibougouil !

I THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION

“BOHAT SHUKIREYA”