

PRIME MINISTER ANWAAR-UL-HAQ KAKAR'S SPEECH AT THE 78TH UNGA SESSION – KEY TAKEAWAYS

By

Mahrukh Khan

Research Fellow

Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP), ISSI

Edited by

Dr Neelum Nigar

September 28, 2023

(Views expressed in the brief are those of the author, and do not represent those of ISSI)



“Development depends on peace...”

Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addressed the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on September 22, 2023, and put forth Pakistan's stance on a range of regional and global matters including the long-standing unresolved Jammu and Kashmir dispute, actions aimed at strengthening economic recovery and initiatives undertaken to attract both domestic and foreign investments; Pakistan's commitment to global development, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and poverty reduction; and concerns about the volatile global political landscape.

As the world stands at this critical juncture in contemporary history, global conflicts are proliferating, escalating tensions among major powers are evident, and geopolitical considerations are overshadowing economic priorities. This situation is reminiscent of the Cold War era, and ‘the world cannot afford Cold War 2.0.’¹ At the UNGA session, Pakistan expressed apprehension about the global economic outlook, including slow growth and the potential for a recession due to high

¹ Statement by Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Prime Minister of Pakistan, United Nations General Assembly, 22 September 2023, https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/%5Bvariable%3Acurrent_session%5D/pk_en.pdf

interest rates and stressed on the importance of addressing global conflicts through cooperation and collective action.²

Following are the key takeaways from the speech by Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar at the 78th UNGA session:

1. *Global Economic Challenges:* The resurgence of geopolitics is overshadowing the importance of geo-economics;³ the current global economic prospects appear bleak, marked by slow growth and the potential for a recession while developing countries battle with the effects of COVID-19, global conflicts, and climate change, further leading to economic setbacks, poverty, and hunger.
2. *Sustainable Development Goals:* Prime Minister Kakar called for the implementation of the SDGs Stimulus, and the expansion of concessional lending by multilateral development banks, and the resolution of the debt problems for the developing countries.⁴ SDG commitments are a global goal that must be upheld, including the utilization of Special Drawing Rights for development, increased concessional lending by Multilateral Development Banks, and resolving the debt problems of heavily indebted nations.
3. *Climate Change Commitments:* It is increasingly important that the developed nations fulfill their climate change commitments such as the operationalization of Loss and Damage funds and the acceleration of carbon emission mitigation targets. The Prime Minister underscored the need for developed nations to fulfill their climate change commitments without selectively providing these funds on the basis of geopolitical considerations.⁵
4. *Pakistan's Challenges:* Pakistan faces a triple challenge of food, fuel, and finance,⁶ exacerbated by COVID-19, conflicts, and climate change. Developing countries, including Pakistan, seek international support for their comprehensive recovery plans, such as the 4RF Plan, which costs \$13 billion.

² Statement Summary, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Prime Minister of Pakistan, United Nations General Assembly, 22 September 2023, <https://gadebate.un.org/en/78/pakistan>

³ Statement by Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Prime Minister of Pakistan, United Nations General Assembly, 22 September 2023, https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/%5Bvariable%3Acurrent_session%5D/pk_en.pdf

⁴ Statement Summary, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Prime Minister of Pakistan, United Nations General Assembly, 22 September 2023, <https://gadebate.un.org/en/78/pakistan>

⁵ Statement by Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Prime Minister of Pakistan, United Nations General Assembly, 22 September 2023, https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/%5Bvariable%3Acurrent_session%5D/pk_en.pdf

⁶ Statement by Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Prime Minister of Pakistan, United Nations General Assembly, 22 September 2023, https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/%5Bvariable%3Acurrent_session%5D/pk_en.pdf

5. *Geo-economics and Regional Projects*: Pakistan is shifting its focus towards geo-economics, with initiatives such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and connectivity projects with Central Asia.⁷ The country is committed to working towards a stable and sustainable economic revitalization, a strategy that entails the stabilization of foreign exchange reserves and the national currency, augmentation of domestic revenues, and, the mobilization of substantial domestic and international investments. To achieve these objectives, a Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) has been instituted to expedite investment deliberations in key sectors—namely agriculture, mining, energy, and information technology in partnership with collaborating entities in Pakistan.
6. *Peace and Regional Relations*: Situated in the least economically integrated region globally, Pakistan has always emphasized on peaceful and productive relations with all neighbours for the larger collective development of the region. Nonetheless, peace in the region is dependent upon the resolution of the Kashmir dispute.
7. *Jammu and Kashmir Dispute*: The issue of Jammu and Kashmir remains longest unresolved dispute at the UN with India's non-implementation of UN Security Council resolutions. There is a growing need of international intervention and mutual restraint on strategic weapons to address the issue. Highlighting the longest-standing issues in the UN, Prime Minister Kakar alluded to India's deployment of troops in Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir to pursue what Pakistan characterizes as the "Final Solution" for the Kashmir issue, India implementation of prolonged lockdowns and curfews, incarceration key Kashmiri leaders, forceful suppression of peaceful demonstrations, extrajudicial killings of innocent Kashmiri individuals in alleged "encounters" and "cordon and search operations," and imposed collective punishments.⁸ Furthermore, India has denied access to this region, a request made by the UN High Commission for Human Rights and supported by numerous Special Rapporteurs.
8. *Peace in Afghanistan*: Peace in Afghanistan is a strategic imperative for Pakistan.⁹ Pakistan at the 78th UNGA session highlighted the importance of peace in Afghanistan, with a focus on

⁷ Statement by Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Prime Minister of Pakistan, United Nations General Assembly, 22 September 2023, https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/%5Bvariable%3Acurrent_session%5D/pk_en.pdf

⁸ Statement by Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Prime Minister of Pakistan, United Nations General Assembly, 22 September 2023, https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/%5Bvariable%3Acurrent_session%5D/pk_en.pdf

⁹ Statement by Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Prime Minister of Pakistan, United Nations General Assembly, 22 September 2023, https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/%5Bvariable%3Acurrent_session%5D/pk_en.pdf

humanitarian assistance, economic revival, and counterterrorism efforts. Ensuring peace in Afghanistan is of paramount importance. While the international community's concerns, particularly regarding the rights of Afghan women and girls are important, equally important is the continuous provision of humanitarian aid to the vulnerable Afghan population. While Pakistan supports the revival of the Afghan economy and the execution of connectivity projects with Central Asia its foremost priority has remained the prevention of terrorism and the elimination of cross-border terrorist attacks by groups such as the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Daesh that operate from Afghan territory.¹⁰ Pakistan has actively and repeatedly sought cooperation and support from the Afghan government to curtail these attacks and is taking necessary measures to combat externally instigated terrorism effectively

9. *Global Conflicts:* Pakistan supports efforts to end conflicts in Syria and Yemen and commends the normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict requires a two-state solution for lasting peace. Moreover, Pakistan's believes in peaceful relations with its neighbours, including India, and the centrality of the Kashmir issue to regional peace underscores its commitment to conflict resolution.
10. *UN Peacekeeping:* Pakistan has a history of contributing to UN peacekeeping missions and emphasizes the importance of ensuring the safety and security of peacekeepers. For more than six decades, Pakistan has made significant contributions by deploying 230,000 peacekeepers across 47 missions worldwide. In the present day, UN peacekeepers encounter intricate and unprecedented challenges, particularly from criminal and terrorist organizations, notably in the Sahel region. The paramount objective remains the assurance of the safety and security of these peacekeepers. Pakistan reaffirmed its commitment to collaborate with the United Nations in enhancing the capabilities and strengthening the mandates necessary for the effective execution of enforcement actions by UN and international forces, whenever the need arises.¹¹

¹⁰ Statement Summary, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Prime Minister of Pakistan, United Nations General Assembly, 22 September 2023, <https://gadebate.un.org/en/78/pakistan>

¹¹ Statement by Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Prime Minister of Pakistan, United Nations General Assembly, 22 September 2023, https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/%5Bvariable%3Acurrent_session%5D/pk_en.pdf

11. *Combating Islamophobia*: Pakistan highlighted the need to combat Islamophobia as well as ideas that breed extremism, hatred and religious intolerance.¹² To fight back the increase in Islamophobia Pakistan has proposed measures including the International Day to Combat Islamophobia and legal initiatives against the burning of the Holy Quran, demonstrating its commitment to protecting religious minorities and promoting interfaith harmony.
12. *Counterterrorism and Extremism*: Pakistan called for the effort to address all forms of terrorism, including far-right extremist groups as well as root causes of terrorism, such as poverty and foreign occupation.¹³
13. *Hindutva-inspired Extremism*: The Prime Minister highlighted the plight of minorities in India and stressed that Hindutva-inspired extremists pose a threat to India's Muslim and Christian populations, with the potential for genocide, underlining the need to firmly oppose "state terrorism" and address the underlying factors contributing to terrorism.¹⁴ In order to do so, it is crucial to distinguish authentic freedom struggles from acts of terrorism. Pakistan advocated for the establishment of a General Assembly Committee responsible for overseeing the equitable implementation of four pillars of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy; i) addressing conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism; ii) preventing and combating terrorism; iii) building States' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and strengthen the UN system's role in this regard; and iv) ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law as the fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism.¹⁵ This sent a clear message that terrorism in any form is unacceptable, ensuring the importance of combating all terrorists without discrimination, encompassing the emergent peril presented by far-right extremist and fascist entities.
14. *Global Strategic Rivalries*: Multilateralism is facing challenges as a consequence of unilateral policies, strategic rivalries, and heightened tensions among global powers.¹⁶ Pakistan's

¹² Statement by Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Prime Minister of Pakistan, United Nations General Assembly, 22 September 2023, https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/%5Bvariable%3Acurrent_session%5D/pk_en.pdf

¹³ Statement by Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Prime Minister of Pakistan, United Nations General Assembly, 22 September 2023, https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/%5Bvariable%3Acurrent_session%5D/pk_en.pdf

¹⁴ Statement by Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Prime Minister of Pakistan, United Nations General Assembly, 22 September 2023, https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/%5Bvariable%3Acurrent_session%5D/pk_en.pdf

¹⁵ United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, United Nations Office for Counter Terrorism, <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/un-global-counter-terrorism-strategy>

¹⁶ Statement by Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Prime Minister of Pakistan, United Nations General Assembly, 22 September 2023, https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/%5Bvariable%3Acurrent_session%5D/pk_en.pdf

commitment to multilateralism is evident in its support for the United Nations and other international organizations. Pakistan is also a member of the G77 and China, a group of developing countries that advocates for common interests at the international level. The intricate global and regional predicaments confronting the world today find their most effective resolutions through the practice of robust multilateralism within the United Nations framework. The Summit of the Future and the Pact for the Future are in line with Pakistan's commitment to multilateralism as these initiatives can help to build a more just and equitable world order in which all countries have a voice.

15. *Multilateralism and Global Cooperation*: Pakistan underscored the importance of effective multilateralism within the United Nations framework and criticized the idea of elitism within the comity of nations.¹⁷ Efforts to strengthen multilateral institutions and enhance global cooperation are essential and Pakistan's strong endorsement of effective multilateralism within the United Nations highlights its belief in global cooperation to address contemporary challenges.
16. *UN Security Council Reform*: During the session, Pakistan advocated for preserving the key UN Charter principle of sovereignty and equality and opposed the addition of permanent members to the Security Council whilst supporting the expansion only in the non-permanent category.¹⁸ Pakistan's stance against the addition of permanent members to the UN Security Council in favour of expanding non-permanent seats aligns with its commitment to a democratic, representative, and accountable Council with equitable representation.

At the 78th UNGA session, Pakistan reiterated its commitment to working diligently with all Member States to achieve a more equitable and peaceful global order. It emphasized the need to foster peace and prosperity, decrease major power rivalries, commit to the UN Charter, implement Security Council resolutions, end conflicts, and respect principles such as self-determination and territorial integrity. The speech underscored Pakistan's unwavering commitment to peace, stability, and global prosperity and highlighted Pakistan as a responsible global actor, an advocate for regional cooperation, and an adherent to international principles and agreements.

¹⁷ Statement by Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Prime Minister of Pakistan, United Nations General Assembly, 22 September 2023,
https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/%5Bvariable%3Acurrent_session%5D/pk_en.pdf

¹⁸ Statement by Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Prime Minister of Pakistan, United Nations General Assembly, 22 September 2023,
https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/%5Bvariable%3Acurrent_session%5D/pk_en.pdf