

Gilani for immediate end to violation of its territory

ISLAMABAD, Sep 16 (APP): Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani Tuesday called for an immediate end to violation of Pakistan's territory by the US, NATO and ISAF forces and stressed the need for greater cooperation and understanding among all the stakeholders. Talking to British Secretary of State for Law and Justice Jack Straw here at the Prime Minister House, Gilani said Pakistani armed forces were fully capable of handling any situation, within their territory.

"The sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country would be safeguarded at all costs," Gilani said. Jack Straw said terrorism was a matter of concern for the entire world, as it was also for Pakistan. Acknowledging that Pakistan had faced a lot of difficulties due to its frontline status in the war against terror, Straw agreed with the Prime Minister that foreign incursions into Pakistan's territory would be counter productive. He also hoped that Pakistan would continue providing passage to NATO supplies through its territory on their way to Afghanistan.

The Prime Minister said Pakistan wants friendly relations with all its neighbours and particularly desires a stable and prosperous Afghanistan as it was in Pakistan's national interest. He said meeting of a jirga would be held soon which would hopefully make some headway for lasting peace in the area. The Prime Minister said that due to difficult terrain and porous border, it was difficult to stop cross border movement but still the Pakistan security forces were playing a very effective role. The Prime Minister asked UK to support Pakistan in its efforts for greater market access to the EU, preferably through Free Trade Agreement. He also appreciated economic cooperation and assistance of the United Kingdom (UK) as Pakistan's major trading and development partner in the European Union (EU) and one of the largest investors in Pakistan.

On the issue of terrorism, the Prime Minister said that fight against terrorism was top priority of his government. He said Pakistan's armed forces and civilians had rendered most sacrifices in the world in the war on terrorism. He called upon the world community to realize the root causes which stem from socio-economic disparity and unresolved political disputes so as to curb this menace effectively. The Prime Minister said his government would adopt a multi-pronged strategy as the past strategy has failed to produce the desired results. He said that the new strategy would incorporate both long and short term measures including political dialogue, socio-economic development and security options in the areas bordering Afghanistan to address the issue effectively.

The Prime Minister was also appreciative of Britain's role and assistance in restoration of democracy in Pakistan. The Prime Minister briefed Jack Straw on the issue of restoration of deposed judges. He underlined government's resolve for having an independent judiciary in the country and vowed to work towards that end. Jack Straw termed Pakistan as a strong partner of Britain and said that Britain would continue to support Pakistan in every sphere of bilateral relations particularly in the field of trade and security. The meeting was attended by the Minister for law Farooq H. Naik, Deputy High Commissioner of the Embassy of the UK Ray Kyles, Head of European & International Division Patrick Bourke and senior officials.