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THE PRIME MINISTER

14 December 2007

Dear Mr Cheema

Thank you and your co-signatories for your joint letter of 10 November about the situation in Pakistan.

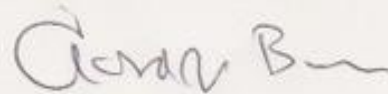
We have raised our concerns with the Government of Pakistan at the highest level, both bilaterally and with international partners, and will continue to do so. I spoke to Pakistan's interim Prime Minister Soomro on 20 November and to President Musharraf on 21 and 23 November. I urged them both to: restore constitutional order as soon as possible; lift the state of emergency before elections are held; release all political prisoners, including members of the judiciary; lift all media restrictions; and step down as Chief of Army Staff as soon as possible (the last of which has now taken place).

I therefore welcome President Musharraf's decision on 28 November to fulfil his pledge to retire from the military and to be sworn-in as a civilian for his next term as President of Pakistan. I am also glad that he has announced that the state of emergency will be lifted on 16 December, and Pakistan's constitution restored ahead of parliamentary elections on 8 January. We welcome the release of most of those held under the state of emergency. However, we continue to call on President Musharraf to release all human rights defenders, lawyers, judges and journalists who remain in custody, while ensuring their safety and protection, and to lift remaining restrictions on the media. In this respect, I was glad to hear of the release of both Ms Jehangir and Mr Imran Khan. We strongly support a level playing field for free and fair elections in Pakistan that allows for the full participation of all political parties and their leaders.

As you know, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting that I attended in Kampala last month suspended Pakistan from the

Councils of the Commonwealth. The way is open for Pakistan to return to full membership if the constitution is restored and free and fair elections take place. We very much hope that Pakistan will act swiftly to allow this to happen.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Gordon B", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr Nadir Cheema