



PRESS RELEASE

PAKISTAN AFGHANISTAN JOINT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

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PAJCCI urges COAS to include economic committee in proposed Pak-Afghan Army working group: Zubair Motiwala

(Karachi) President PAJCCI acknowledged the recent recommendation of General Qamar Javed Bajwa to form a Pak-Afghan Army working group to jointly work and formulate security proposals for government level discussion of mutual concern. He believed it is a dire need but established that keeping current confidence level and business stagnance in view it would be significantly vital to also include an economic committee in the same working group to help re-establish confidence building measures.

Motiwala elaborated that Pakistan Afghanistan Joint Chamber (PAJCCI), since its inception, has been making all relevant endeavors to improve and stabilize confidence building measures between the two countries and ensuring that business communities across the border attain mutual benefits in terms of trade, transit, security, peace and prosperity. However, recent political turmoil has resulted in permanent, long-term damage to the bilateral and transit trade whereby recent figures are showing a rise in Afghanistan's trade with Iran and a corresponding decline in business with Pakistan. Pakistan-Afghanistan trade has dropped significantly in the last 2-3 years because of bilateral tension that caused other countries to penetrate in Afghanistan easily, as India has recently acquired a very strong hold both socially and economically in the Afghanistan, causing double damage to the Pakistani economy and neighborly relationship.

Keeping the economic imbalance and deteriorating business situation between the countries, formation of such economic committee, comprising members from each country's private sector and think tanks, to deal with the respective Governments on pertinent matters would be of significant importance. This committee would act as economic and confidence building catalyst to ensure achievement of previous business levels and further enhancement of bilateral trade, rejuvenate regional linkages and promote joint investments. In this context, PAJCCI offers its services as a bilateral entity, having its members in both the countries, to act as a joint platform and support overarching objective of peace, prosperity and economic connectivity.

Additionally Zubair Motiwala strongly urged both the governments to segregate business and trade ties from political and military tensions, though, establish strong security measures that are vital for

stabilization and sustainability of both the countries without compromising upon the sentiments of the business community across the border. He emphasized that both the governments should take immediate steps to enhance confidence building measures to revive the peace and economic prosperity between the both countries in order to save the business communities across the border from losing long-term association established since ages. Historically it has been proven that peace follows economic initiatives and not otherwise hence Governments should allow economics to function freely and help politics rather than obstructing the free flow of economic activities.