

WWF-PAKISTAN AND
WWF INTERNATIONAL

Both Bhai Amjad and Bhai Wajid were keen on 'shikar', although I doubt if my uncle or my father ever handled a gun. When my brothers came of age, they were members of a society in which 'shikar' was a prestigious pastime. From the age of six, I would accompany my brothers whenever they went on 'shikar' around Lahore and I enjoyed these opportunities.

One of the attractions of our purchase of the large tract of land in Bhopal, about which I have talked elsewhere, was that in the 10,000 acres of property, there was an abundance of wild animals from tigers down to partridges. When I went to Bhopal to oversee the farms, the big attraction was to go out on a shoot. The biggest animal I hunted was a 'sambar', a large antelope. After Partition, I got the opportunity to go frequently for duck and partridge hunting on weekends from Karachi.

In 1964, Hans Hallen, Gad Rausing, Tom Roberts, and I went on a ten-day trip to the Northern Areas, with our base at Gilgit. Our aim was to hunt 'Markhor' and Ibex, which are coveted trophies. We saw many animals but did not manage to shoot any. Some years later, Hans Hallen, Tom Roberts, and I repeated the effort with an equally unsuccessful result. Based on my experience of these two unsuccessful expeditions, what I did appreciate was that Pakistan had a few wild animals, and these were being hunted indiscriminately.

WWF-PAKISTAN

In 1968, Tom Roberts introduced me to his English friend based in Lahore, Christopher Savage, an engineer working with the consultants at Mangla Dam. Mr. Savage was a keen conservationist and he spent many hours persuading me to help in setting up a wildlife conservation organisation in Pakistan, which would be affiliated with World Wildlife Appeal in Switzerland, founded a few years earlier by Sir Peter Scott (son of Robert Scott, of Antarctic fame), and a few other concerned people. Sir Peter Scott was a naturalist and artist who set up the Waterfowl Reserve near Slimbridge, Bristol, and designed the well-known WWF logo. He dedicated his life to wetlands and waterfowls.

They had invited Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands to be the first President. He was a keen hunter; it happens that most hunters are also interested in conservation of wildlife because they want the animals to be there so that they can hunt forever. Prince Bernhard used to go to Indonesia every year because of the former Dutch connection there. We got a message to say that on his way to Indonesia, he was to stop over at Karachi airport for a few hours and would I round up some people who were interested in meeting him. I organized a group of about 7 or 8 from Karachi. They included Mumtaz Bhutto (chief of the Bhutto clan and one of the founders of the Pakistan People's Party) and Manzoor Hayat Noon. Tom Roberts was also there. I think this was in 1968 or 1969. We met in the Karachi airport lounge and Prince Bernhard said, 'I would very much like you to establish a WWF Chapter in Pakistan.' This, of course, had to be followed up by having an organization registered and getting Government approvals.

I looked around and found that there were various important people in the Government at that time, who were worth approaching. One of them was Mian Muzaffar Ahmad, Chairman of the Planning Commission during General Yahya Khan's regime and a keen *shikari*. I told him about the organization we wanted to set up and

suggested that he should become the President, to which he agreed. That helped complete the necessary formalities required to establish an NGO and our WWF branch was founded in April 1970. Mian Sahib asked me to be the secretary to provide the secretariat and other facilities, so all the legwork was done by me and my colleagues at Packages.

With the departure of Yahya Khan in 1971, Mian Muzaffar Ahmad left the country and got a position in the World Bank. We needed another person of eminence to head WWF-Pakistan because we had to have some kind of a protective umbrella. Mumtaz Bhutto was a Minister in Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's Government; he took on the WWF role and brought some of his friends onto the Board. I was also on the Board, serving as the Secretary General and Treasurer. I raised money though not from the Government and ran the whole effort out of my office with no cost to the organization. I also liaised between Pakistan and the head office in Switzerland, which had by then received international status from the Government of Switzerland.

After the change in Government of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Mumtaz Bhutto lost interest in WWF-Pakistan and General Habibullah had his eye on the position of President. He was a member of The 1001 Nature Trust (see next pages) and Dr. Parvez Hassan was after me to appoint General Habibullah. Most of the Board members were opposed to this suggestion because they wanted me to be the President. Meanwhile, General Zia-ul-Haq had taken over and General Habibullah joined his Cabinet. General Habibullah did not take very kindly to the WWF Board's preference and through official channels, he started to hound the WWF organization in Lahore - whether it was properly registered and had it been paying taxes, and so forth.

I was on the radar screen of General Zia-ul-Haq and he sent for me. At that time, both my son and daughter were studying in America. General Zia-ul-Haq said to me, 'I know both your children are studying in America. Why don't you become the Chairman of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA)?' I told him that this was not something that excited me. While I was sitting with him, I said, 'I want to make a request to you. I am running WWF in Pakistan. Your people are hounding me because of General Habibullah.' The next day General Zia issued instructions to leave our organization alone. Dr. Khalid Hamid Sheikh, who was in charge of WWF-Pakistan at that time, told me that the pressure was off!

I didn't go out and seek funds from anybody. I contributed whatever was needed to run the organization and gave all my support to the staff. I also had to keep predators away because there were a lot of people who wanted to use WWF as a platform to project themselves. One of my mandates for the organization was to have it live within its means and have people who were committed to the mission. We started with Z.B. Mirza, a naturalist and a very good artist of nature, especially birds, and then later Dr. Khalid Hamid Sheikh, a botanist. He took on this responsibility in 1980 in addition to his job at Punjab University as a Professor. Later on, we got Dawood Ghaznavi, who was working with Glaxo, but was fed up with working for a multi-national and wanted to work for a non-profit. He was followed by Ali Habib, who was working for ICI and left that position to join WWF. Both left lucrative jobs for a much lower salary. Dawood Ghaznavi was an engineer who went to Russia for Steel Mills training, and did his MBA from Yale. He spoke excellent Russian and after he had served as the Director General of WWF-Pakistan, Dawood was picked up by WWF International and went to Gland, Switzerland as Director, Asia Pacific.

What I was always looking for was someone with passion. We tried to run WWF-Pakistan on a shoe-string budget. We were keen to build a network for disseminating information and knowledge to others. I provided free accommodation to WWF-Pakistan at Packages and while I was working at the National Fertilizer Corporation, the WWF-Pakistan office remained there. Conservation in Pakistan was an alien concept and we had to educate everyone - the younger generation, the government functionaries, and people at large.

HRH Prince Philip visited Pakistan in February 1982. In addition to visiting WWF-Pakistan, he visited Karachi, where a fundraising dinner was arranged at which Rs. 500,000 was raised. He also visited Haleji Lake, had lunch at my home in Lahore and visited Islamabad where he met President General Zia-ul-Haq.

THE 1001: A NATURE TRUST

In 1972, Anton Rupert, member of the international Board of WWF, came up with a suggestion to raise a large endowment to run the administration of the organization in Switzerland. He suggested that WWF should have 1001 members from all over the world, each making a one off contribution of US\$ 10,000. He delegated one of his executives, Charles de Haes, to help WWF implement this suggestion. Anton Rupert funded the cost for Charles de Haes for the first three years. Anton Rupert's idea was to have \$10 million, which would be put into an endowment that would be able to run the Swiss office in perpetuity. The Swiss Government provided the tax benefit that all international organizations are given in that country.

I received a call from Charles de Haes, who said, 'I am Prince Bernhard's representative and, as you run WWF in Pakistan, please tell me how many people in Pakistan can be identified who can each give \$10,000 for this cause.' I said, 'You may be able to find seven people who could each give \$10,000'. At that time, the value of the US dollar was under Rs. 10. He said, 'The hit rate is 1 in 10. Can you give me 70 names by tomorrow to whom Prince Bernhard can write directly about becoming members of The 1001?' Those were the days of telexes and I worked overnight and gave him a list of 70 names of people I knew in Lahore and Karachi who I thought might be able to join 'The 1001 Nature Trust'. To cut a long story short, they got eight out of those 70 to join. I received many calls from people saying they had received a letter from Prince Bernhard and they were curious to know more about our organization. The following eight were the select group who joined:

- A member of the Habib family
- Bhai Wajid and me
- Mumtaz Bhutto, who was the Governor of Sind (the Government of Sind wrote the cheque on his behalf)
- Minoo Bhandara
- Agha Hassan Abedi
- Tom Roberts (who had meanwhile moved from Rahim Yar Khan to Khanewal); and
- Christopher Savage

WWF INTERNATIONAL

In 1976, WWF - Pakistan organized Prince Bernhard's visit to the Lal Suhanra National Park in Bahawalpur. He was impressed with this visit and liked the work we were doing. Prince Bernhard then invited me to join the International Board of WWF. At that time, WWF didn't have anyone on the Board from Asia. I was inducted onto

the International Board. Soon thereafter, in 1976, because of a problem between Prince Bernhard and the Dutch Government over a deal with Lockheed Aircraft Company, the WWF International Board asked Prince Bernhard to step down³⁴. John Loudon, who was head of Shell International, again a Dutchman, was brought as an interim replacement. He remained there for two years and at the next election, Prince Philip was elected. This was international diplomacy; they did not want one Prince to be succeeded by another.

My association with WWF International created a new opportunity for me to meet and learn from some top business and industrial leaders of the world, including outstanding scientists and personalities. Apart from Prince Philip and Prince Bernhard, I remember the following outstanding people on the Board of WWF and others connected with it:

- Sir Peter Scott
- John Loudon
- Luc Hoffman from Hoffman La Roche
- Russell Train (Administrator of the EPA in USA from 1973 - 77)
- Princess Beatrix (who later became the Queen of The Netherlands)
- Dr. Okita, an eminent Japanese who had served as a Minister in the Japanese Government
- Anton Rupert from South Africa (the founder of the Rothman's empire)
- Gavin Reilly (head of Anglo-American Mining Company in South Africa)
- John Nash
- David Ogilvy, the advertising giant
- Thor Heyerdahl of Kon Tiki fame
- His Highness Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan
- Madam Fleur Cowles, the artist
- Sir Edmund Hillary, who climbed Everest
- Sonja and Thomas Bata
- Dr. Karan Singh of India
- Prince Hendricks, Prince Consort of Denmark
- Princess Alexandra of the U.K.

I was fairly active in the deliberations of the meetings. When Prince Philip came in, in the late-seventies, he made me the Treasurer of WWF and then later a Vice-President. I also served as a Member of the Executive Committee of the WWF Board, which ran the day-to-day affairs. The Executive Committee met four times a year, depending on Prince Philip's availability.

Prince Philip re-organised the set up and reduced the size of the Board of Trustees. He established a larger forum,

³⁴ Prince Bernhard visited Pakistan again in 1986 for five days and he travelled throughout the country, during which period I was with him and we were able to organise his visit to further the cause of conservation in Pakistan. He was very pleased with his visit and he was kind enough to award me the 'Order of the Golden Ark', which he presented to me at the Soestdijk Palace in Netherlands in June 1986. For more on Prince Bernhard see pages 181 - 184

WWF - PAKISTAN & WWF INTERNATIONAL



Washington, D.C. 1985: Sitting L to R Dr. Khalid Hamid Sheikh, Honorary Administrator WWF-Pakistan, Syed Babar Ali, President WWF-Pakistan, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, President WWF International, Mr. Charles de Haes, Director General WWF International

the WWF International Council consisting of 50 conservationists and supporters from all over the world, with Sir Peter Scott as its first Chairman. Prince Philip had seen my participation in the Board of Trustees meetings over many years. When Sir Peter Scott retired in 1985, after a three-year period, Prince Philip asked me to take over as Chairman of the Council and I also served in that capacity for three years. It was later decided to play down the importance of the Council, which finally withered away.

I was then asked to chair the Conservation Committee, which was to evaluate the projects to be funded by WWF and I presided over this Committee for a full term of three years. I was then inducted as the Treasurer to replace John Nash, who stepped down from the Board. As a Treasurer, I served as a Member of the Executive Committee. The Board and Exco meetings were held wherever it was convenient for Prince Philip to be present. We met at different locations around the world but most of the meetings were held at Buckingham Palace in London; there were also two Exco meetings at Windsor Castle and one in Aberdeen, Scotland. To work as Chairman of the Council and as a Member of the Board of Trustees of WWF International was a very unique experience for me. The meetings lasted a whole day and I was honoured and thrilled to have spent six hours each time at the Palace. WWF International meetings were fixed at least six months ahead because of the heavy commitments of Prince Philip. The first meeting at Buckingham Palace happened to be on the day of the funeral of the Duchess of

Windsor who was to be buried at Windsor Castle. Prince Philip attended our meeting till lunch and flew directly from the Palace by helicopter to be in time for the funeral at 15:00 hours. Such is the tight scheduling for British royalty!

Wherever the Annual Conferences of WWF were hosted, we met the top leadership of that country. We had a meeting in Australia, for instance, where we were invited to dinner by the Governor General of Australia. When we went to Vienna, we were invited by the President of Austria to a meal at his Palace. I remember, another occasion when we were in Germany during the Chancellorship of Helmut Schmidt and he gave a dinner; Prince Bernhard was the President of WWF at that time. The first item on the menu was turtle soup and when it came, Prince Bernhard said, 'You are serving turtle soup!' Everybody put their spoons down! The Chancellor had to apologise.

Because I was one of the members of the Bureau, in my capacity either as the Treasurer or the Vice-President, I had the opportunity to accompany Prince Philip to all these places. Apart from the sound and splendour, there was also the chance to meet with people who were dedicated to conservation.

In Canada, I had the opportunity to work with Dick Ivey and of course, the Batas. I remained close to both Tom and Sonja Bata. One of the very interesting individuals I came across was Prof. Okita, head of WWF-Japan, a very well respected and bright senior Japanese bureaucrat, whose basic discipline was engineering. Witness the Japanese foresight: when Japan went into the Second World War, he was asked to head a cell to decide what Japan should do if they were defeated. He did not tell me about this himself but I was told this by my friend, Mansoor Ahmed, who served as Pakistan's Ambassador in Tokyo. When Mansoor invited me to lunch I asked him to invite Dr. Okita as well. Mansoor had done his homework and he told me about Dr. Okita's background. In America, of course, there was Russell Train and I also came across people like Roger Sant, who had served as a Minister, and Rod Wagner who was head of J.P. Morgan.

The businessmen who were a part of WWF had risen through their own merit. A common trait among these people was that they were meticulous. They had an eye for detail. Anton Rupert, for example, when he started his cigarette manufacturing company, told his people 'Not one stick will be defective! Every stick has to be perfect.' Anton was very modest. During the early years of WWF, we were at a dinner in London at the Savoy hosted by the Batas. Perwin sat next to Anton and not knowing who he was, asked him, 'What do you do?' Anton took out the pack of his Cartier cigarettes and said, 'This is what I do.' Anton at that time was switching from cigarettes to luxury goods. He bought the brands of Cartier, Mont Blanc and Dunhill and set up a new company in Switzerland. Anton died about ten years ago and all these brands now belong to his family. Anton invited me to his 80th birthday in South Africa. He was an outstanding individual, warm, and very humble. When Perwin and I were in South Africa in 1995, he asked me about our travel plans and I said we were going to Port Elizabeth along the Garden Route, a very famous drive from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth— all wild flowers for about 200 miles! He said we must take his car and when I said that we were to go to Durban from Port Elizabeth, he said, 'No, the road between Port Elizabeth and Durban is not safe. I will arrange for you to fly from Port Elizabeth to Durban and my man will escort you all the way through.' He didn't have to do that! That showed his warmth and regard for us.

WWF - PAKISTAN & WWF INTERNATIONAL



1998: Cape Town, with Gavin Reilly, CEO Anglo-America (left) and Dr. Anton Rupert (right)

The common trait among my colleagues, important people in the WWF organization, was that they didn't carry their rank on their shoulders. They went out of their way to make one comfortable. For instance, I remember a meeting of the Executive Committee in Switzerland, when we were all staying in the same hotel. The Board meetings were always held in the office, where we also had lunch. Prince Philip wanted us to eat dinner together, in the suburb of Gland, one of the villages between Lausanne and Geneva. At one dinner, he asked me to sit next to him and when they passed cigars around I took one - I used to smoke in those days. Prince Philip is a non-smoker and I still cannot forgive myself for blowing smoke right into his face. He didn't make a face and carried on the conversation. At a meeting in Windsor Castle, when the meeting ended, we went for lunch. The main item on the menu was sausage, which of course I passed. Prince Philip noticed it and said to me, 'I want to apologise. I forgot to inform them that you would be here.'

WWF had started with the idea of saving wildlife. The next move was to look after the environment because you cannot protect wildlife if you do not have the environment in which wildlife can live. Also important was to educate and motivate the young. The name of the organization was changed from World Wildlife Fund to World Wide Fund for Nature to reflect the new philosophy and the work of the organization. These steps were taken during the stewardship of Prince Philip in the 1970s and 1980s. The organization in each country reached out to the people, informing them of the cause and mission of the organization and sought funding from individuals;

many ordinary people contributed \$10 or \$20. The largest fundraising was from countries like the Netherlands and Denmark. WWF-Netherlands reached out to a million people who contributed 10 Guilders each. The mission was well propagated among the population and school children. Of course there were rich donors also, motivated by regular events where Prince Bernhard and Prince Philip were present.

A WWF CRISIS

After completing the task of enrolling 1001 members, Charles de Haes was appointed Director General of WWF in Switzerland. He was a South African with English roots. WWF-US felt that they should have a greater say in the affairs of WWF International and thought that Prince Philip was listening to Charles de Haes while ignoring good advice from WWF-US. Moreover, half of the 1001 members were from the USA. Russell Train, who could be counted as minor American 'royalty', was President of WWF-US and had been on the Board of WWF International for a number of years. Being the most prominent member, he enjoyed an important position on the Board and for a term he was also the Vice-President. In 1988, at the WWF Board meeting in Hong Kong, I was nominated by the Board as Vice-President.

The growing tension between WWF-US and the WWF headquarters over Charles de Haes came to a head at a meeting of the Board at Buckingham Palace in 1993 where presentations were being made on the re-organisation of WWF, including its name and logo. By that time, the Americans were much more vocal in their criticism of Charles de Haes. Prince Philip's nerves were getting edgy and he asked Russell Train what he wanted. Russell Train said, 'We want Charles de Haes out.' Prince Philip replied, 'If he is out, then I am out too.' Some of the members intervened to cool tempers but positions had been taken. The elections for the President were coming up in 1994 and Prince Philip announced that if Russell Train was to be the representative of the US on the Board, he would not accept the Presidentship of WWF.

Martin Laing was the head of WWF-UK. He was CEO of John Laing, the construction giant. He and I were good friends. I told the Board, not Prince Philip, that Martin and I would go to the US to mend bridges with the US organization and to see if we could persuade them to have a representative other than Russell Train, because Prince Philip had made it known that he was not going to work with him. Soon the word got around within the WWF family and Martin Laing backed out. I went to see John Loudon who had previously served as President. He was a very close friend of both Prince Bernhard and Prince Philip. I told him that I needed his help in tackling the issue and he agreed to talk to Russ.

I arrived in New York and called Russ Train in Washington. I said, 'When can I see you?' This was January, the year the new American President was to be sworn in. He said, 'You won't find any accommodation in D.C. I will come up to New York.' Meanwhile, WWF had fixed a Board meeting in Zurich that was to be held at the end of January and there was a move afoot that the US was to be thrown out of WWF at that meeting. There was general disappointment in the Board at the conduct of the U.S. members and it was considered to ostracize the U.S. membership from the Board of WWF International. Meanwhile, the term of all the trustees was coming to an end and elections of the International Board of WWF were round the corner.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

25 November 2015

Dear Babar,

Many thanks for sending me a copy of your splendid autobiography. So far, I have only had a chance to glance through it, but I did read the bit about your involvement with WWF. It brought back many memories of visits to strange places and some of the awkward problems we had to solve while we were with WWF. I was delighted to be reminded of our visit to Hunza and Gilgit.

I feel that I still owe you a debt of gratitude for all your help, particularly with the Russ Train saga.

It so happens that I was reminded of those far off days when I presented the DoF Conservation Award here earlier this week. I was delighted that it went to two people who work in marine conservation.

Please remember me to Perwin and all the family.

Yours ever
Philip

Russell Train came to New York and we met at the Harvard Club where I was staying. I said to him, 'Russ, the cause is much bigger than any individual. I think you have to solve this problem and my suggestion is that all of us resign from the Board.' My mission was to make him resign from the Board without singling him out. He said, 'That is acceptable to me.' I called up Switzerland at 11 pm, which was 5 o'clock in the afternoon there, and relayed the decision to Charles de Haes. He said, 'I will immediately call the Palace.' That evening Prince Philip declared that he would stand for election of the WWF for a last term.

When we met in Zurich, there was a sigh of relief from the Board and everybody congratulated me for saving the situation. A major crisis was averted. I was lucky that I was in the right place at the right time with the right kind of advice. I give credit to Russ Train. He could have dug in his heels. I also give credit to John Loudon who played his role behind the scene. John died a couple of years later. He was a very honourable person.

CONFERENCE IN LAHORE

The Conference of WWF International is held annually in a location decided at the Board Meeting of the Trustees. As I had been serving on the Board for almost ten years, I had from time to time been suggesting that they should consider Lahore as a possible venue. It was finally decided at the Annual Conference in Vienna in October 1993

WWF - PAKISTAN & WWF INTERNATIONAL



1994: HRH The Duke of Edinburgh after inaugurating the WWF-Pakistan Head Office Building along with WWF- Pakistan Director- General Dawood Ghaznavi



1994 : HRH The Duke of Edinburgh with Syed Babar Ali and family at their home in Lahore

that Lahore would be the venue for the WWF Annual Conference in November 1994. WWF-Pakistan therefore had to prepare for this challenging task, though the groundwork and basic logistics would be provided by WWF International Secretariat, who had organised similar Conferences during the previous ten years.

Our endeavour in Pakistan was to ensure that not only did we meet the basic requirements of the Conference but also to make a special effort to ensure that the particular needs of every individual participant of the Conference were met. We received some 130 foreign delegates and accompanying persons from some 36 countries and the entire programme and all the various activities ran according to plan and fortunately without any hitch or hiccup.

The President, His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh, was in Lahore from November 14 to 18, during which time I hosted two evening functions, including dinner at our home, 70-FCC Gulberg, Lahore. The Conference ended with a Board meeting of the International Trustees on the 18th and that same afternoon Prince Philip and his personal staff consisting of Lord Buxton, Sir Brian McGrath, Inspector Paul Fuller, Lady Assistant Alexandra Fearn, and Valet Sergeant Dave Berwick along with Dr. Luc Hoffmann, Martin Laing, Claude Martin, the Director General of WWF International, Ashiq Ahmed, the Conservation Director of WWF-Pakistan, and myself flew to Islamabad in the Queen's Flight to attend a dinner hosted by the President of Pakistan, Sardar Farooq Ahmed Khan Leghari. He had invited about ten guests to this dinner in honour of Prince Philip, which took place in the main Darbar Hall in the Presidency with all the trappings and fanfare.

The next morning on November 19, 1994 Prince Philip visited the Rawal Lake area to do some bird-watching

along with WWF-Pakistan's experts Z.B. Mirza and Ashiq Ahmed. Unfortunately, the police security was all over the place, which disturbed the birds and hardly any were seen. Z.B. Mirza later told me that as he was walking with Prince Philip, a couple of security people met them. The Prince said to them sarcastically, "Thank you for chasing the birds away!" Thinking that they were being praised for their efficiency, one of the security men replied, "You are welcome, Sir!"

WITH PRINCE PHILIP TO THE NORTHERN AREAS

When we were planning the Annual Conference many months earlier, I was informed by Prince Philip's staff that he would have three days available after the Annual Conference in Lahore and asked what kind of a programme could we suggest to keep him occupied in Pakistan. I thought the best proposal would be to take him up to the Northern Areas, which he had not seen before and which offered unique scenery to which he had perhaps never been exposed. So after the Annual Conference, I took Prince Philip into the mountains, right up to the Chinese border. At 10 am, we took off from Islamabad in the Queen's Flight for Gilgit. This was the first time that I had flown in a jet to Gilgit, where normally only turbo prop F-27 planes plied. We flew at a height of 29,000 feet, from where we had a very clear view of the mountain ranges as far as the eye could see.

As we approached the Gilgit Valley and in particular above Bungi, where we were to start descending, heavy cloud layers started appearing. We learnt later from the captain of the aircraft that they had enough fuel to circle for ten more minutes after which they would have to return to Islamabad. We were lucky enough to get an opening in the clouds through which the plane was able to dive steeply and we were able to make it to Gilgit airport. The Chief Secretary Northern Areas and his entourage were present at the airport to receive us. We drove to the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) Head Office in Gilgit, where they made a one-hour presentation on the activities of AKRSP. We then retired to the Serena Hotel for a quick lunch, changed into our warm clothes and embarked on the drive to the Hunza Valley, which we had been looking forward to for months.

An hour and a half later, we stopped by the roadside to be greeted by the elders of the Bar Valley who had, by previous arrangement, organised a brief presentation for Prince Philip on the conservation work that we were doing there. The Bar Valley is 20 kilometres off the road and, as we did not have enough time to visit it, we had suggested that they should meet us on the road and explain to Prince Philip the effort that they were making to conserve the flora and fauna of the Valley, with financial and technical support provided by WWF-Pakistan. The elders of the Valley, who were dressed in their traditional costumes, made a presentation and I was surprised to hear some of them conversing in English, which Prince Philip could understand!

An hour later, we arrived in the Hunza Valley and drove up to Karimabad to be received by the Mir of Hunza at his Palace. The Mir was in his late forties and his ancestors have been rulers of the Valley for many hundred years. His Palace was built some fifty years earlier by his grandfather but the earlier abode of his ancestors, the Baltit Fort, overlooking the valley, was being renovated as a tourist attraction for which The Aga Khan had donated considerable funds. We were told that the reason for its elevated location was that they could protect themselves better as they could see any approaching enemy well in advance.

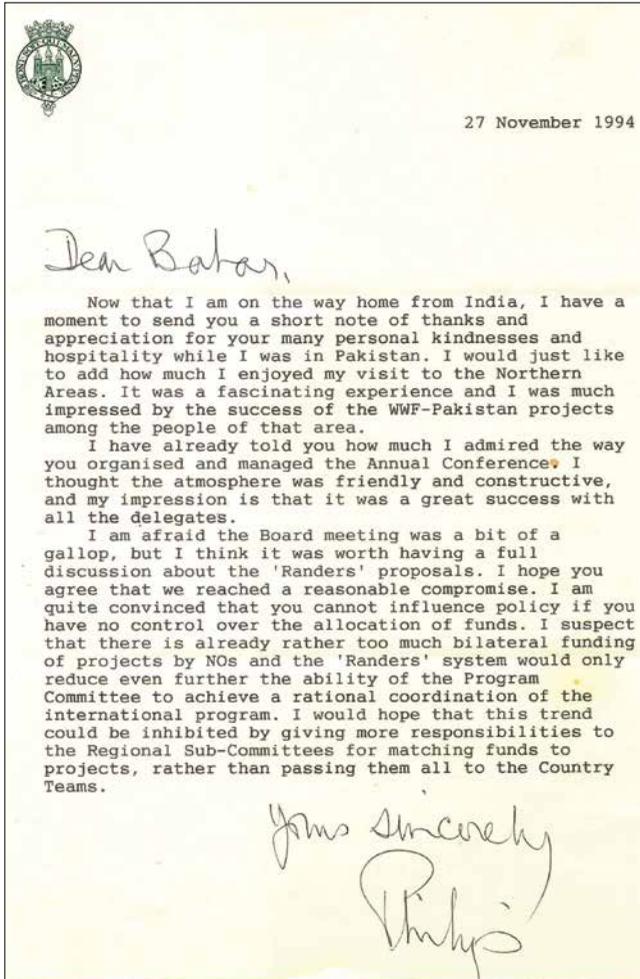


1994: HRH The Duke of Edinburgh in Hunza

The Mir organized a cultural evening for his guests, which consisted of elderly men dancing to the music of flute and drum. Surprisingly, there were no women in the performance or in the audience. I sat next to the Magistrate of Hunza from whom I tried to learn about the social character of the people. I was amazed to hear from him that there was hardly any crime in the area of his jurisdiction, which covered an area of over a thousand square kilometers. He told me that there was no more than one murder a year and that was invariably caused by a dispute over land. He told me that there were no robberies, no abductions and no rapes.

At dinner that night, I mentioned to our group what I had learnt from the Magistrate and the Mir explained that if there is a complaint against a young man for teasing a girl, he was reprimanded by the entire village. If he made any serious advances or were he to commit rape, then the people of the village would go and destroy his house and burn it down. Such a strong reaction from the people against any aberration from their moral code was a great deterrent and the young men lived in harmony with and displayed proper conduct to the women of the area. The next morning when we sat down for breakfast, Prince Philip was in a particularly good humour, and said, 'If I were to tease a girl in Hunza, I would find somebody burning down Buckingham Palace!' A few moments later, he said 'Perhaps Charles teased somebody in this Valley last year and that is why we had a fire at Windsor Castle!'

From Karimabad we drove on to Sust where there was a Custom's post for visitors going to China. At Sust, we climbed up a narrow and steep road to meet with a large gathering of people who had assembled to greet Prince Philip. This was organised by AKRSP to show Prince Philip the afforestation project that had been undertaken



1994: Letter from HRH The Duke of Edinburgh

on a self-help basis by the people of the area. It was a creditable engineering feat, in which a gorge over a hundred metres long had been cleared to bring water to land that had never before been irrigated and where they were now growing fruits, vegetables, and other crops.

We drove back from Sust to Gulmit for lunch on the bank of the Hunza River. We had arranged for a barbecue including trout, which had been brought there from Gilgit that morning. We then drove back to Gilgit to arrive just before dusk. I hosted a dinner in honour of Prince Philip at the Serena Hotel to have him meet with some twelve important officials of the Northern Areas, who had helped us in the preparation of the visit.

The next morning, at 9 am, we flew out of Gilgit. It was a cloudless sky and we were able to see clearly the peaks of Nanga Parbat and K-2 - truly an incredible view. We stopped at Islamabad to refuel and continued our flight to Karachi, where we landed an hour and a half later. Prince Philip was supposed to be greeted by a Minister of the Sind Cabinet but the Protocol arrangements by the Sind Government were rather sloppy. We had not been informed that Mr. Asif Zardari would be receiving Prince Philip and nobody took the trouble to introduce Mr. Zardari to Prince Philip, who was not aware that Mr. Zardari was the Prime Minister's husband. He was told later, during the motor ride to the State Guest House, by the UK Deputy

High Commissioner. Prince Philip informed me of this when I saw him later that evening, before the press conference, which he gave at the State Guest House.

That evening on November 21, 1994, I hosted a fund-raising dinner in honour of Prince Philip. The Director General of WWF-Pakistan, Dawood Ghaznavi, and his Conservation Director, Ashiq Ahmed, made two excellent presentations. Prince Philip lauded the work of WWF-Pakistan and also the arrangements they had made for the Annual Conference.

I was with Prince Philip for three days during which he spent one night in Gilgit and one night in Hunza. The fact that he had been to Hunza with me didn't mean anything; I always kept my distance. He very graciously gave me a signed photograph and an autographed book on conservation. He said that he was very happy to have seen the projects that WWF-Pakistan had undertaken and that he had enjoyed his visit to Pakistan. This was very evident and he later wrote to me (see page 178)

PRESIDENT OF WWF

At the end of his last term, Prince Philip said, 'I have served WWF for 17 years and I am going to be 80. I don't want to continue and you have to find a new President.' A Search Committee was constituted and I was asked to be a member. We took suggestions from WWF National Organizations and we looked at people from around the world. It was not easy to fill Prince Philip's shoes. We considered Robert Redford. He declined. The name of Maharaja Karan Singh of Kashmir was suggested but it was felt that he was too controversial because of the Kashmir problem between India and Pakistan. Prince Bernhard was keen that we should have Prince Charles as the President. His name was put up but Prince Philip said, 'No, each member of the Royal family has his own interests and I don't want to turn this into a dynasty.' He, therefore, shot down the suggestions of both Princess Anne and Prince Charles.

We were having a meeting of our Executive Board at which we had to decide on the next President of WWF International. We had hired a head-hunter in London, Heidrick & Struggles, who had put up various names. The head of Heidrick & Struggles travelled with Prince Philip from London to Geneva that day and they must have had a discussion on the way. We went through the names and the representative of Heidrick & Struggles said, 'There is also an internal candidate.' I said, 'Who is that?' and he replied, 'Mr. Babar Ali'. I said, 'I can't be. I'm a member of the Search Committee.' Prince Philip said, 'This is not your choice. This is our choice. I am going to step down and you have to take over.' I said, 'If you order me I will do it, but I will not serve the full term.' He said, 'It is up to you whether you serve the full term or not, but take it away from me.'

Two or three weeks later, we had a meeting of the WWF Board in Rome, at one of the historic villas. We went through the normal agenda, and the next item was the appointment of the new President. I got up and left the room. Prince Philip said, 'Why are you leaving the room?' I said, 'The people must have the right to oppose my name if they want.' I went into another room and five minutes later I was invited back to the meeting where everybody congratulated me and I was told that I had been selected unanimously.

The whole idea was to have a seamless transfer. I have always said that I had been given shoes that were too big for me. I fully realized my own limitations and there was no question of my trying to outshine anyone else. It was a big climb down, from Royalty to a Mr. Nobody.

I took over on the 1st of January 1997. While I was serving as the President, I concentrated on the financial side. I cleaned up the Secretariat and removed extra layers in the system, thus reducing costs and increasing efficiency. I elevated Chiew Chong as the Head of Finance and we took out the Chief Accountant and some other people in the Department who were not actually adding value. I said, 'This fellow is pretty good. You don't need a Head of Finance sitting on top of him.'

My trigger for firing people is when they fail to deliver what is expected of them. It is not personal at all, never. It just depends on whether that person is adding any value to the organization. But my policy is to part on the best of terms; I believe in generous exit terms.

The head office of WWF is a small organization and I knew everyone, from the Receptionist to the Director General. I don't stand on ceremony or rank and was very friendly with everybody. The WWF family is all over the world and we had to make sure that the head office provided what was needed to national organizations, because they were the ones who were raising the money and running the programmes. The head office had to be efficient enough to give them all the support that they required. There were Board meetings twice a year, one of which coincided with the Annual Meeting and we had to make sure that the proceedings went through in an efficient manner. Our endeavour was to ensure that there was no wastage in the system and we always had an eye on the gas tank to see how much we had so that we never lived beyond our means. We saved money and put that into our endowment. That came in very handy later when WWF International started running a deficit, when funds were not coming in at the same pace as they were being spent, and we had to draw money from our reserves.

I had to make sure that the Executive Committee and the Board meetings were held on time and that there was full participation by the members. We had more than twenty National Organisations (NOs) in addition to Programme Offices. At places where there were no NOs we had WWF offices established like a camp office, with a view to developing them into NOs. NOs were independent, each raising their own money, and some of the affluent ones even financed the head office. The head office was not just keeping a tab on the NOs, it was also providing them technical support. The head office in Gland, Switzerland was a reservoir of talent available to all NOs.

My work was also to be the spokesperson for the organization. I happened to be in Jakarta in 1997 when there were forest fires over a large area, which covered much of Sumatra and parts of Java. These were man-made fires, created to replace natural forests with palm plantations. BBC and CNN were calling me frequently during my stay. We told them that we were up against the slash and burn mafia and we were coordinating with the Indonesian government regarding the crisis. We told the Government that they had to stamp out this mafia - we could only agitate, and that we did.

WWF - PAKISTAN & WWF INTERNATIONAL



1999: Farewell at WWF International meeting in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia

I operated from Lahore and communication was by telexes and faxes. I attended the Executive Committee meetings, which were held four times a year and of course, the Annual Conference. I served on the Executive Committee for a very long time. Now WWF has made a limit of three years for anyone to serve on the Executive Committee and the Board; I served on the Executive Committee and the Board off and on for a period of almost thirty years!

I don't think there were any medals to be won for my tenure as the President of WWF. My aim was to keep the ship afloat and create no waves. It is a worldwide organization and I had the opportunity to meet and work with some of the most dedicated conservationists from all over the world. These people had succeeded in their businesses and were willing to give time and money to the cause. Among my colleagues was Dr. Anton Rupert. Apart from founding Rothmans, he was a Professor of Chemistry and a great entrepreneur, developer, and do-gooder. He helped in the conservation of Stellenbosch, a small town just outside Cape Town, to restore the original Dutch design. He also supported Stellenbosch University. Along with him, I met Gavin Reilly who was the head of Anglo-American Company, again from South Africa. This was the stature of people I got to know in South Africa, not just casually but intimately. In Europe, we had Luc Hoffman of Hoffman La Roche, the pharmaceutical company. I was responsible for bringing his son, Andre, to WWF. When I was the President I said to Luc, 'Luc, you have done much for WWF, what about your son?' He said, 'Andre does not listen to me. Why don't you talk to him?' Andre was at that time living in England, married to an English girl, and was working for an investment bank in London. I told Andre, 'Your family has contributed so much to WWF. Your father is dedicated to the cause. People look up to you because the family has resources and are interested in the cause.' I got Andre to work with WWF and he is now among the key members of the organization.



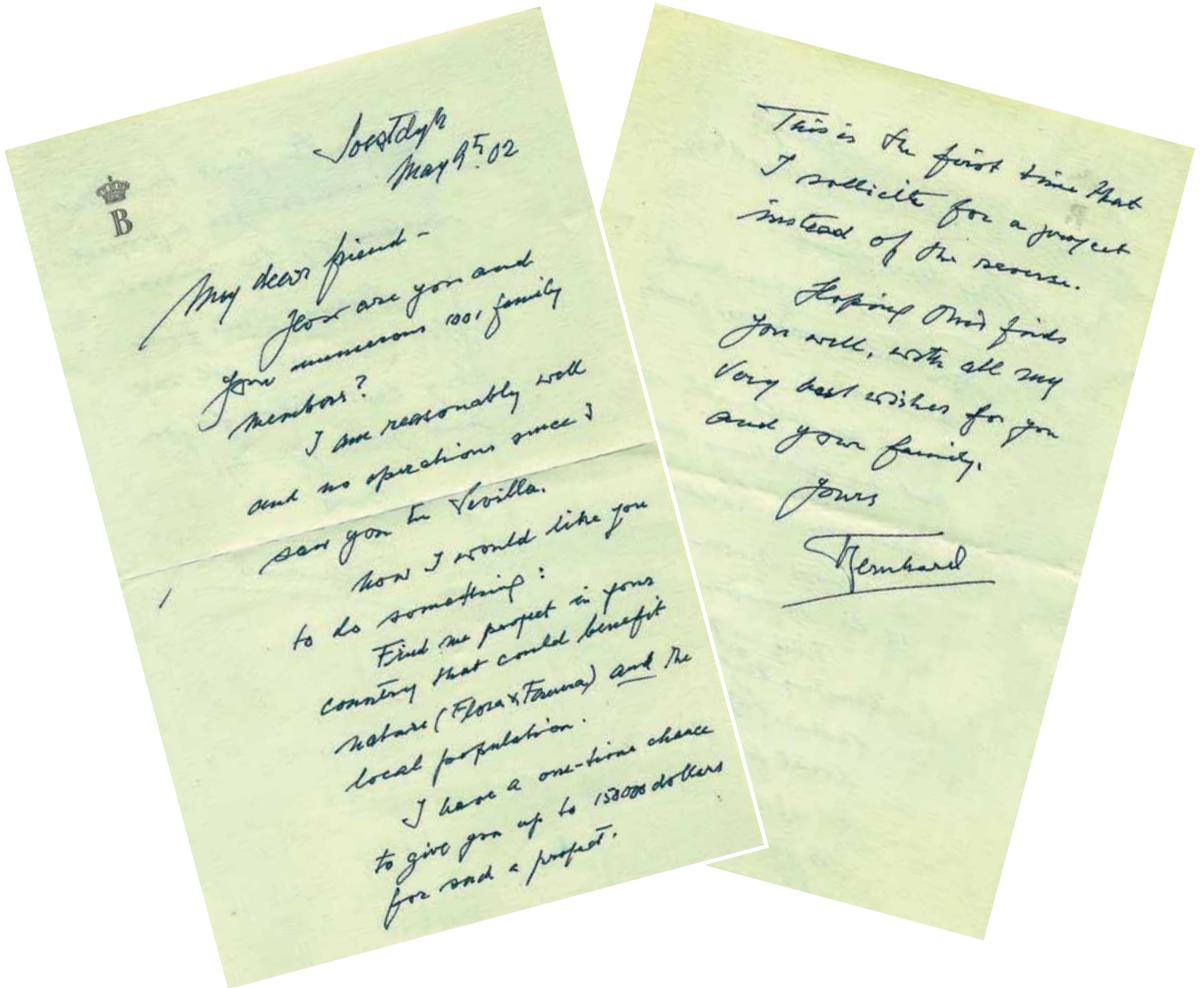
1986: Presentation of the Order of the Golden Ark by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands

PRINCE PHILIP AND PRINCE BERNHARD

I would just like to say a few words regarding Prince Philip and Prince Bernhard. It was not easy for them to get familiar with individuals because they had to maintain their distance and I made sure at all times that I did not take advantage of their kindness. It was Prince Philip's choice to make me a member of the Bureau, then the Chairman of the Council, and later his successor. I always knew where I stood and never ever asked him for anything that was not proper.

Prince Philip felt totally comfortable visiting our house twice during the WWF Annual Conference in Lahore in November 1994. You could not spring any surprises on him. Whenever he travelled, two months ahead a reconnaissance team would come on a special plane to see the people he was to meet. Prince Philip's personal secretary at WWF, Angela Giacometti, was part of the staff of WWF but assigned to him as his secretary. When Prince Philip was due to visit our house, two months ahead I asked her if I could request Prince Philip to pose for a photograph with my family. She confirmed that he had agreed to it, so when Prince Philip came to our house we assembled the family and he stood with us for the photograph.

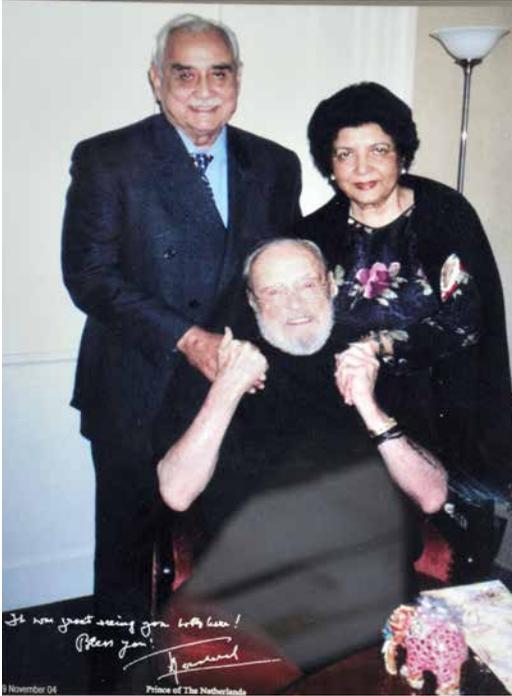
Prince Bernhard (husband of Queen Juliana of the Netherlands) was the first President of WWF. He was always very warm and close to me, and he insisted that I should see him at least once a year when I was in Europe. He



Hand-written letter from HRH Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands to Syed Babar Ali

used to write to me regularly, in his own hand. He was the one who selected me and took me to the International Board. He was very open with me. One day he said, 'I have been very indiscrete.' I did not ask him what his indiscretions were but he told me, 'I have now sold my riding boots, I have sold my guns, and I do not shoot anymore. But I still have one of the early Ferraris'. He gave a lot of money to charity. He wrote me a letter a few years before he died and said, 'I want to give a one time gift of \$150,000 to any cause in Pakistan that you think is worthwhile.' He sent me the cheque and we gave it to WWF-Pakistan for one of their projects on the beach in Karachi, for the conservation of marine turtles. He was very generous.

Prince Bernhard visited Pakistan in 1975-76 and I took him around. He visited Bahawalpur, Islamabad and Lahore. He was flying in a plane that belonged to the Dutch Queen's Flight. I was accompanying him and he loved to fly



2004: With Prince Bernhard in Soestdijk Palace, The Netherlands

it himself, especially at take off and landing. When we had landed in Islamabad, he came back into the cabin and said, 'It was very odd what the Control Tower asked me: Are your wheels down? Nobody has asked me this before!' I said, 'Do you see that plane on the ground which landed without letting the wheels down?' PIA 747 had landed a week earlier at Islamabad in such a position!

Some years later, he complained to me, 'I used to get a plane from the Queen's fleet. Now they have stopped that.' In comparison, Prince Philip was much more reserved and discreet about his family.

I remember that the last official function I had with Prince Bernhard was his 90th birthday celebration in Seville, on 11th September, 2001. There were two main tables there. One was Prince Philip's and the other was Prince Bernhard's. WWF had put Perwin and me on Prince Philip's table. When Prince Bernhard saw the lists, he said, 'No, I want Perwin and Babar on my table.' I got a message from WWF that the dinner was in honour of Prince Bernhard and he wanted us on his table. I said, 'Whatever his wishes are.' Our daughter-in-law, Rani, was with us and we had her sit on Prince Philip's table. I continued to have a warm relationship with Prince Bernhard.

At my last meeting with him, Perwin and I walked into his office in 2004 and he said, 'This is the first time I am not getting up to receive you because I am not feeling well. I will be writing out the list of the people that have to be invited to my funeral and a list of the people who are not to be invited.' We sat and talked. Then Perwin asked if we could have a picture with him. He called his ADC. Perwin had a camera, and we had a picture taken. The very next day, he wrote a note to me saying, 'It was wonderful seeing both of you together.' I cut that out and pasted it under that photograph. This was 19th of November and he died on the 1st of December, only twelve days later.

When Prince Bernhard died, I happened to be in Europe. I called up the WWF headquarters and asked them to check whether or not we were expected at his funeral because I knew he had made two lists. They called the Palace and were told the funeral date and that we were invited. I attended the funeral, which was a very solemn affair. His body was carried from The Hague to Utrecht on a horse drawn carriage for the service. When it arrived at the church, the coffin was taken by pallbearers, who stopped for a second and exactly at that moment planes flew over to dip their wings as a mark of respect. Later, they put the body into the vault in the basement.

After the service, we were invited to the Palace where the Queen met me and said, 'Thank you for coming such a long distance.' Later, when I walked up to the Queen to take leave and to thank her, she said, 'You know there was a list of people who were not to be invited to the funeral but we could not follow it.'

I had worked with Prince Philip as a member of the WWF International Board for about twenty-five years in various capacities and I had seen that the only way to work with him was to keep my distance. We used to meet at least twice a year at the Palace and every meeting ended with lunch. When we went for lunch, there used to be two or three round tables for about 20-25 people. There was no head table. I would always pick up my plate and go and sit on the third table. That, I think, was one of the things that he noticed. He saw that I was not pushing myself forward. This was so throughout my time working with him. He used to write fairly warm letters to me. I never drank and Prince Philip knew it. So no wine was ever served to me.

The whole system works with such precision. I realized that he was correct to the second, not minute. Through my business contacts, I used to get a car to take me either to Buckingham Palace or Windsor Castle, whichever was the venue for the meeting. We would go and park our car outside five minutes before I was due. Exactly two minutes before, I used to drive in, give my name, and would be called in. We then drove up to the point where the footman would open the car door. As I climbed the stairs, Prince Philip would be there to receive me.

Everything was done with meticulous detail. When the footman met you, he indicated where the rest rooms were. The rest rooms at the main entrance are as modern as they can get but at the other end you would go down in the basement where there were thunder-boxes of the Victorian period!

The food was usually English and of very good quality. If the Queen was there, the serving was done by the staff, otherwise it was a buffet setting. One day at lunch at Buckingham Palace, the plates were so hot that we needed napkins to hold them.

One lunch we had in Buckingham Palace was served in the China room, which overlooks the Victoria Memorial. Prince Philip asked me to visit him in his office half an hour before lunch. This was the occasion when Mr. Ruud Lubbers, former Prime Minister of the Netherlands, was to take over from me as President of WWF. When we were leaving his office, Prince Philip himself switched the lights off. I keep on telling people that if Prince Philip can switch the lights off when leaving a room, why cannot everyone else follow his example!

The record keeping of visits is also meticulous. On a visit to Pakistan ten years earlier, Prince Philip very graciously gave me his photograph and a book. I had forgotten about that portrait. Ten years later, I wrote to Prince Philip's Personal ADC and requested a photograph. A week later, I received a response that their record showed that Prince Philip had already given a photograph to me!

When I became the President of WWF in 1997, I asked for a meeting with him. He said, 'Come and have lunch with me at Windsor Castle on April 22.' I did not realize that 21st April was the Queen's birthday.

I had gone to talk to him about my taking on the Presidency of WWF and to ask him when I should step down. He said, 'You should serve three Annual Meetings. That would be my advice.' I had taken a tie for him, which he kindly accepted. He did not tell me about the Queen's birthday and walked me to where the rest of the group was. Two minutes later, the Queen walked in. I was presented to the Queen. She said, 'I am coming to Pakistan next October' and told her ADC, 'When I go to Lahore, I would like to see Mr. Babar Ali.' I was asked to walk with the Queen to the dining room. It was a small intimate party with about twenty-five people and I had the honour of sitting next to the Queen. She is keen on horses and talked about racing. I mentioned Kirsten Rausing, who owns a stud farm in Newmarket. She knew Kirsten. She somehow thought that I was a banker and asked me, 'How is your Bank?' I said, 'I do not have a Bank.' We talked about general subjects.

About six months prior to that, we had WWF's Annual Conference in Berlin. Prince Philip had mentioned to me that Mountbatten's grand-daughter-in-law had asked him where she should go for a holiday and he had suggested to her that she should go to Hunza. He had asked me, 'Would you be able to arrange it?' I had said, 'No problem'. At that lunch, she was also there; Prince Philip had arranged for her to sit next to me and she introduced herself, explaining the connection.

Prince Philip and the Queen came to Lahore in October 1997 and I was invited to the Governor's House – Shahid Hamid was the Governor then. One day before that, the Ambassador called and said, 'The Queen would like to present the OBE to you.' After that, Prince Philip and I flew to Chitral and on our return Prince Philip and the Queen went to Murree and I went from Islamabad to Europe that night.

Prince Philip came to my house for meals on three different occasions. He visited once in February 1982, and twice when he came for the Annual Conference of WWF in Lahore in November 1994. When he came to our house, I did not sit at his table, as my wife was the hostess. In those days, menus used to be a problem; it had to be different each time; one evening we served quail, which he enjoyed. When he visited our home, I never asked him personal questions, just general questions.

I remember once I went to Windsor Castle and there were only two or three of us there. A couple of weeks prior to that, Gorbachev and his wife Raisa had been to the U.K. I asked, 'What is Raisa like?' He said, 'She never stopped talking!'

On another occasion at Windsor Castle, our meeting finished an hour before lunch. He looked at his watch and said,

'There is an hour to go to lunch. Let me walk you around the rooms in the Castle.' We first went through the large dining room and there they were preparing for the visit of the Polish President. The table was a large one, good for about 150 guests. One room was specially prepared for the visit of Napoleon II during Queen Victoria's time and kept in the same state. We walked through many rooms and finally came to a larger room where there were glass almirahs with different mementos. I was looking at one very large showcase with all the decorations of the Queen that other governments had given to her. Then Prince Philip pointed to an almirah and said, 'This should interest you. These are the personal belongings of Tipu Sultan given to us' – he then stopped and corrected himself: 'No, we took them away from him.' They were kept in mint condition. A tiger of solid gold was among Tipu's belongings. Prince Philip also showed us the kitchen, which had been modernized but still had rotisseries, where a whole oxen could be roasted. One thing I noticed was that all the clocks, which were of old vintage, were in working order. When we were having a WWF meeting in Vienna, we had been invited by the President of Austria to the Palace for a meal. There I noticed that no clock was working!

While I was serving as the Treasurer of WWF, Prince Philip sent a message that he would like to have the meeting



1988: Dinner on H.M.S. Britannia hosted by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh in honour of the President of Costa Rica

WWF - PAKISTAN & WWF INTERNATIONAL

of the Executive Board of WWF on the Britannia at Estoril in Portugal. I, therefore, went to Switzerland and then to Lisbon. There were three of us and we went through the whole agenda. He timed it very well. He did not wear a watch; he always had one without a strap in his pocket. He said, 'It is now time for us to go for lunch.' At that lunch, Princess Alexandra, the Duchess of Kent, joined us along with her husband and one or two others.

I was at an IUCN meeting in Costa Rica in 1988 where, unexpected by me, Prince Philip was also there. He saw me in the audience and afterwards I went up to pay my respects. He invited me to dinner on the Britannia, which was anchored on the Pacific side of Costa Rica while our hotel was on the Caribbean side. The dress for the dinner was black tie. I informed his ADC that I did not have a dinner jacket with me. After checking with Prince Philip, he said a dark suit would do and that he would provide me with a black tie on arrival at the Britannia. I did not want to take a chance. I went and borrowed a black tie from a waiter but when I arrived, the butler was indeed waiting for me with the black tie. We then went into dinner, given in honour of the President of Costa Rica. There was to be a group photograph as you walked into the dining room from the reception area. Prince Philip took me by the hand and introduced me to the President of Costa Rica. He did not want me to feel awkward because I was not wearing a proper dinner jacket! As we finished dinner and were leaving the boat, each one of us was handed a signed photograph of Prince Philip. It was very well arranged.



2000: Three successive Presidents of WWF International: HRH The Duke of Edinburgh (1981-1996); Syed Babar Ali (1997-1999) and Ruud Lubbers (2000) at St James's Palace, London

All the Royal staff, both in the Netherlands and in England, do the German salute: the lowering of the head. I didn't do that either with HRH or with the Queen but I saw everybody else among their staff do it. This is because I come from a different background and it is not natural for me. You are always inadequate in the presence of the Royalty but they put you at ease.

When the Queen came to Lahore in 1997, when she gave me the OBE at the Governor's House, my family was there to be introduced to her. Hyder, at that time, was at Harvard for a Program. When the Queen met my daughter-in-law, she said, 'Where is your husband?' They are very good at these conversations. They have fifteen minutes in which they meet a hundred people without letting anybody know that they are in a hurry.

I went to attend the Duke of Edinburgh Award ceremony at Buckingham Palace in February 2010. The Award was given to a Chinese scientist. This was a drummed up function by WWF to raise funds, so they invited many British business people including the owner of Easy Jet who came without a tie, the only man without one. I don't know how much money WWF was able to raise from the event but WWF has always used HRH's name to round up new donors. I was there because of my past relationship and, of course, I was invited at HRH's behest. WWF couldn't invite people to Buckingham Palace without HRH's approval. In fact, I had long notice beforehand that an invitation was coming to me from Buckingham Palace for this event.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

18 February 2010

Dear Bahar,

Thank you very much for the splendid TUGHRA. It is a beautiful piece of work, but it is just as well that we do not have that custom here, it would bring all communication with my office to a complete halt !

It was a great pleasure to see you and your wife again at the award ceremony. It brought back many memories of some very interesting, and challenging, times at WWF-International.

Yours ever
Philip

Letter from HRH The Duke of Edinburgh

Perwin and I were standing in one corner and I said to her, 'Let the Royalty meet with new people.' HRH saw where I was standing and before we went to lunch, he finally ended up where we were. There was a photographer following him too. Prince Philip asked me, 'How are things in Pakistan?' I replied, 'Not too good.' As he was leaving, he patted me on my shoulder and said, 'Nice to see you.' I had taken a tughra for HRH and I was carrying it in my hand. I handed that along with a cover letter to HRH's ADC Brig. Miles Hunt-Davies, whom I know very well from meetings over the years. The letter explained what a tughra is. I said to Miles, 'Can you give it to HRH?' That very afternoon, HRH sent me an acknowledgement, thanking me and saying, 'It was a great pleasure to see you and your wife. It brought back memories of some very interesting and challenging times'.

WWF-PAKISTAN

My association with WWF has given me an opportunity to make a small contribution towards making the people of Pakistan aware of conservation. I have been able to assist in the establishment of offices in Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, and Gilgit. A programme for the education of the young has been initiated and sufficient funds have been collected so that income from the core fund is adequate to run the programme of education as well as to undertake projects in Pakistan. This effort has been acknowledged by international organisations, which have also generously supported us.

Before the 1970s, there was no talk of conservation at all. People today are conscious of the fact that certain animals need protection as well as their habitats and waterways. The contrast between when the organization was registered and today is like day and night - not because of me but because of the organization and its work.

In the Northern Areas, the snow leopard, markhor and ibex are protected, after a certain amount of persuasion and work with the Government. We asked the Government to give licences to hunt markhor and ibex for trophy and to give the licence money for distribution among the people in areas where the animals live. Previously they were hunted for meat but today, in every markhor and ibex, they see \$25,000! We now have far more ibex and markhor – exotic goats and sheep – than we have ever had before.

The other thing we have done is to work with the Chinese government to create a Peace Park – we have the Tashkorgan Park on the Chinese side and the Khunjerab Park on the Pakistani side. Marco Polo sheep can roam across the border while being protected by both sides. The result is that the number of snow leopards, which live off Marco Polo sheep, is also increasing. In addition, if a goat or sheep of the locals in the Northern Areas is killed by a snow leopard, we compensate the owner. Now, if a domestic animal is killed by a predator, the people do not feel that they have to go and kill it. WWF-Pakistan has set up a fund for reimbursement and the community decides about the veracity of the claim.

The Houbara Bustard is a migratory bird that requires protection. It was a bone of contention and Prince Philip said, 'Why can't you stop the Sheikhs from coming into Pakistan to hunt this bird?' We tried our best with our Government but there is a great deal of money involved. First, the Sheikhs used to bribe the local people: they took them on Haj and gave them gold watches. Then, of course, the Government realized that these people came and spent a lot of money in Pakistan; they did not want to antagonise them. For instance, the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi had a base in Rahim Yar Khan.

W W F - P A K I S T A N & W W F I N T E R N A T I O N A L

A big influence on me was my nephew, Syed Asad Ali, who advised me in all these conservation activities. He was Bhai Amjad's eldest son and lived in Karachi. He was a born naturalist. He was a hunter in the beginning, then he became a fisherman, but ultimately he became a photographer of wildlife, especially birds, and a conservationist. Every Sunday, he would go out fishing or bird watching. He had a network of people who thought similarly. I was also in touch with my friend Tom Roberts, a great naturalist and part of a group who would meet regularly. I had a whole circle of friends who were feeding me ideas and giving suggestions and I valued their advice. My policy was to identify the right people, push them into the right spots and let them get all the glory.

The effort of WWF in Pakistan has now grown even more and the organization is currently spending about Rs. 100 million a year. We have over a hundred people in our offices in Lahore, Islamabad, Karachi, Gilgit, and Quetta and WWF-Pakistan has many projects specific to the Northern Areas. It is able to raise money from foreign funds because WWF-Pakistan has done a good job and have something to show for it.

When we started spending our summer vacations in Seattle in 1997, I was serving as the President of WWF International. We met Helen Freeman in Seattle, who had set up the Snow Leopard Trust. She had been a regular visitor to Pakistan and had adopted a snow leopard cub, which prompted her to form the Trust. I introduced Ashiq Ahmad to the Snow Leopard Trust and now Ashiq Ahmad is one of their advisors.

IUCN

My association with WWF brought me into contact with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). This is a scientific body, which then worked in tandem with WWF International



Syed Asad Ali in the outskirts of Karachi

in Switzerland and around the world. I was invited by the IUCN to serve as their Regional Councillor for six years, out of which for three years I was the Vice President of the organisation with Dr. Kassas of Egypt as the President. This gave me an opportunity to learn closely from international scientists about their concerns for conservation. I was very fortunate to make the acquaintance of Dr. George Schaller and a number of other world authorities, who were working to save the world's flora and fauna from destruction.