



## Free and Fair Election Network

### FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 11 Session No.99 of the Senate

#### **Senate: Debate on Foreign Policy Concluded**

ISLAMABAD, December 18, 2013: Starting 40 minutes behind the schedule, the four hours and 40 minutes long 11<sup>th</sup> sitting of the ongoing Senate session was adjourned soon after the debate on foreign policy concluded, says Free and Fair Election Network in its Daily Factsheet based on direct observation.

Five members belonging to different political parties, including JUI-F, ANP, PPPP and Independent debated the motion about foreign policy for 48 minutes with particular reference to the visit of the Prime Minister to US, the repercussions of the expected reduction of forces in Afghanistan by the US/ISAF in 2014, offer of talks to Taliban, drone attacks and NATO supply.

Following the debate, advisor to prime minister on foreign affairs winded up the debate by giving policy statement. Moreover, the federal minister for finance, revenue, economic affairs and statistics gave policy statement on the loans taken by the IMF.

Leader of the Opposition objected to the live coverage of finance minister's speech by national television hookup, saying it was discriminatory to air speeches of some people and not of others. The members belonging to ANP staged a token walkout of two minutes over the issue.

Leader of the House and Leader of the Opposition attended the sitting. The parliamentary leaders of PPPP, ANP, PML and MQM were also present.

Ten out of 18 Starred Questions on the Orders of the Day were taken up; however the relevant ministers did not attend the session. The senators also asked 36 supplementary questions during Question Hour.

Following are some key observations of the House proceedings:

#### **Members' Participation in House Proceedings**

- The Senate met for four hours and 40 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1610 hours against the scheduled time of 1530 hours, witnessing a delay of 40 minutes.
- The House took a break of 43 minutes.
- The Chairman presided over the sitting for first two hours and 23 minutes. The Deputy Chairman chaired the rest of the proceedings.
- The Leader of the House and Leader of the Opposition were present during the entire sitting.
- Fourteen senators were present at the outset and 28 at the end, while maximum 34 were counted to be present at a point during the sitting.
- The parliamentary leaders of PPPP, ANP, PML and MQM attended the sitting.
- Two minority senators attended the proceedings.



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- Five members applied for leave.

### Representation and Responsiveness

- Five members belonging to different political parties, including JUI-F, ANP, PPPP and Independent debated the motion about foreign policy for 48 minutes. Following the motion, advisor to prime minister winded up the debate by giving policy statement.
- Ten out of 18 Starred Questions on the agenda – requiring both oral and written answers – were taken up. Additionally, lawmakers asked 36 supplementary questions. The questions were addressed to the Cabinet, Establishment and Climate Change Divisions.

### Order and Institutionalization

- Senators spoke on 11 points of order consuming 22 minutes of the proceedings.
- Senators belonging to ANP staged a token walkout of two minutes on discriminatory coverage of members' speeches on state owned television channel PTV.

### Transparency

- 'Orders of the Day' was available to the legislators, observers and others.
- Information on senators' attendance was not available to the observers and the public.

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