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Zardari Honours USCENTCOM Chief for Military Cooperation

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Islamabad – President Asif Ali Zardari awarded the Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military) to General Michael E. Kurilla, Commander of the United States Central Command (USCENTCOM), during a formal ceremony at Aiwan-e-Sadr. The high-level military award recognizes General Kurilla’s role in enhancing regional security and deepening defence ties between Pakistan and the United States.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the decoration was conferred in recognition of General Kurilla’s “exemplary service and pivotal role in advancing enduring

military cooperation.” His leadership has contributed to improved mutual understanding and the expansion of joint counterterrorism efforts between the two countries.

During his visit to Pakistan, General Kurilla met with key Pakistani officials, including President Zardari and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir. The discussions reportedly focused on regional security dynamics, enhanced military engagement, and strategies to counter terrorism in South and Central Asia.

The ISPR noted that the award symbolized Pakistan’s appreciation for General Kurilla’s “unwavering support in fostering closer military-to-military ties.” His efforts were described as instrumental in deepening strategic collaboration between the Pakistan Armed Forces and USCENTCOM, particularly in intelligence sharing and capacity-building.

Upon his arrival at the presidency, General Kurilla was accorded a Tri-Services Guard of Honour, underscoring the significance of the visit and the mutual respect between the two military establishments.

In addition to bilateral engagements, General Kurilla also participated in the Central and South Asia Chiefs of Defence Conference, hosted in Pakistan. The multilateral event brought together senior military leaders from the United States, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan to discuss regional stability and defence cooperation.

The award and accompanying meetings reflect the continued importance both nations place on defense collaboration, particularly in the face of evolving security threats across the region. General Kurilla’s visit and recognition are seen as a reaffirmation of strategic alignment between Pakistan and the United States, especially in the context of counterterrorism and regional defense.