

I-am-not-too-bad in Islamabad – Week Four, 2 December 2011!



Great pot-tery from Jamshoro

Our assignment is almost over. As the Rabbi said when he slipped doing the circumcision, “It won’t be long now!” So, what is the *fundamental* problem with Pakistani engineering education? I think lyricist Oscar Hammerstein had it right in *South Pacific* with music by Richard Rodgers as follows. Though Donna and Leslie in DC will howl un-amused. Ahem, but I digress, from my high school play:

Sailors, Seabees and Marines:

We got sunlight on the sand, We got moonlight on the sea.
We got mangoes and bananas, You can pick right off the tree.
We got volleyball and ping-pong, And a lot of dandy games!
What ain't we got? We ain't got dames!

We get packages from home, We get movies, we get shows.
We get speeches from our skipper, And advice from Tokyo Rose.
We get letters doused with perfume, We get dizzy from the smell!
What don't we get? You know darn well!

We have nothin' to put on a clean white suit for, What we need is what there ain't no substitute for...

There is nothin' like a dame, Nothin' in the world,
There is nothin' you can name, That is anythin' like a dame!

We feel restless, we feel blue, We feel lonely, and in brief,
We feel ev'ry kind of feelin', But the feelin' of relief.
We feel hungry as the wolf felt, When he met Red Hiding-hood.
What don't we feel? We don't feel good!

Lots of things in life are beautiful, but brother, There is one particular thing that is nothin' whatsoever
In any way, shape or form like any other.

There is nothin' like a dame, Nothin' in the world,
There is nothin' you can name, That is anythin' like a dame!

Nothin' else was built the same, Nothin' in the world
As the soft and wavy frame, Like the silhouette of a dame!

There is absolutely nothin' like a frame of a dame.

So suppose a dame ain't bright, Or completely free from flaws,
Or as faithful as a bird dog, Or as kind as Santa Claus.
It's a waste of time to worry, Over things that they have not.
We're thankful for the things they got!

There is nothin' you can name, That is anythin' like a dame!

There are no books like a dame, And nothin' looks like a dame.
There are no drinks like a dame, And nothin' thinks like a dame,
Nothin' acts like a dame, Or attracts like a dame.

There ain't a thing that's wrong with any man here, That can't be cured by putting him near, A girly, womanly, female, feminine dame!



Left: It is very rare to find female chemical engineering faculty members in Pakistan. But I did! Right: University students' exam-cram.

Lest you think it's all fun and games here, please read this HIGH ALERT received on Saturday night from my security manager.

Dear Guests, In light of the latest incursion by International Security Assistance Force troops into Pakistan territory and the killing of Pakistan Army personnel, we would like to issue the following advisory and would request that this be taken with complete seriousness. As you are aware, we have been very flexible to date and have accommodated all requests while keeping your security our first and foremost priority.

- 1) Please do not leave the hotel at any time without your Certified Protection Officer
- 2) Please avoid telling other guests or staff in the hotel that you are US citizens
- 3) Please note we will be removing the assigned guards, and assigning only officers for your protection. Additional officers will be added to your team. The security guards will be reassigned to reconnaissance duties only.
- 4) Till the situation calms down (may take several days) , we would urge that you do not plan ANY out of town visits and please look at the possibility of sending your local partners for the same. There may be some cities that remain safe options but Peshawar, Hyderabad, etc. are currently not among them.
- 5) So far, on Monday and Tuesday, you have visits to... Please reconfirm your appointments and please make sure that as few people as possible are aware of your plans.
- 6) Please ensure your cell phones are fully charged at all times and you have the numbers of all our security team on speed dial.

We don't wish to create panic but emotions are running high and we need to keep a low profile for the next few days. Please remain vigilant and share any concerns that you may feel or any suspicious activity that you may see.

Have fun, be happy, don't worry! It doesn't help!