General Pervez Musharraf while he was also Chief Executive took over the office of the President of Pakistan on June 20, 2001, under the Provincial Constitutional Order (PCO) by removing Rafiq Tarar before he was allowed to complete his five-years tenure. With immediate effect he dissolved the suspended Senate, National and Provincial Assemblies and dismissed the Chairman of the Senate and the Speaker of the National Assembly. After assuming the new office as President, General Pervez Musharraf announced, “The change will augur well for the future of Pakistan”; and said, “I think I have a role to play; I have a job to do here; I cannot and will not let this nation down”. He gave three reasons for taking over as the President of Pakistan: constitutional, political, and economic.

The critical moment in General Musharraf’s presidency was 9/11, when Washington suddenly and direly needed his support the international antiterrorism campaign and to crush the Taliban in Afghanistan. Thus he became a pivotal player on the world stage and a close ally welcomed in Washington and London alike as a statesman of international standing. General Musharraf did his best to highlight the core issue of Kashmir at every international forum. In July 2001, he held his first summit meeting with Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee at Agra but couldn’t make much headway in solving the Kashmir problem. Due to his consecutive efforts, however, a lot of tension between the two neighboring countries with nuclear-armed rivalry has been eased as they have restored diplomatic relations and started to build up warming ties mutually by means of confidence building measures. General Musharraf has given a new formula for solving the protracted dispute of Kashmir. After the Taliban were ousted, he offered all possible help to the new government.

President General Musharraf kept his word to restore democracy and hold elections in October 2002 as mandated by the Supreme Court. He gratified the nation when after general elections, Pakistan’s National Assembly and Senate in November 2002 met for the first time since the coup three years earlier. He also relinquished the post of Chief Executive when Zafaullah Khan Jamali became Prime Minister of Pakistan in November 2002. President Musharraf, however, continues to hold the offices of Chief of Army Staff, and Chief of the Staff Committee. The opposition parties refused to accept Framework Order (LFO) 2002 as it empowered the President to sack the prime minister, dissolve parliament and also recognize him as both head of the army and head of the state. According to the opposition the provisions of the LFO were unconstitutional and illegal, and against the sovereignty of the Parliament. As a result, the business of parliament remained in deadlock for a year. In December, 2003 as part of a deal with MMA (Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal) to end the stand-off, General Musharraf agreed that he would step down as military head of the country on December 31, 2004 and also give up some of the powers he assumed after the coup while on January 1,2004. After getting vote of confidence from parliament and the four provincial assemblies, President Pervez Musharraf would now serve full five-year term as President till 2007 under the constitutional provisions after the seventeenth amendment was passed by a two-third majority of the Parliament. He secured 658 votes (56.23 per cent) with simple majority from a total of 1,170 members of parliament and the four assemblies amid MMA abstention and opposition boycott.

President Musharraf presents to the world vision of a modern, tolerant, democratic, Islamic Pakistan and favors economic reforms and free trade with the West. He has also played a vital role in negotiating an economic package to assist Pakistan out of its problems.