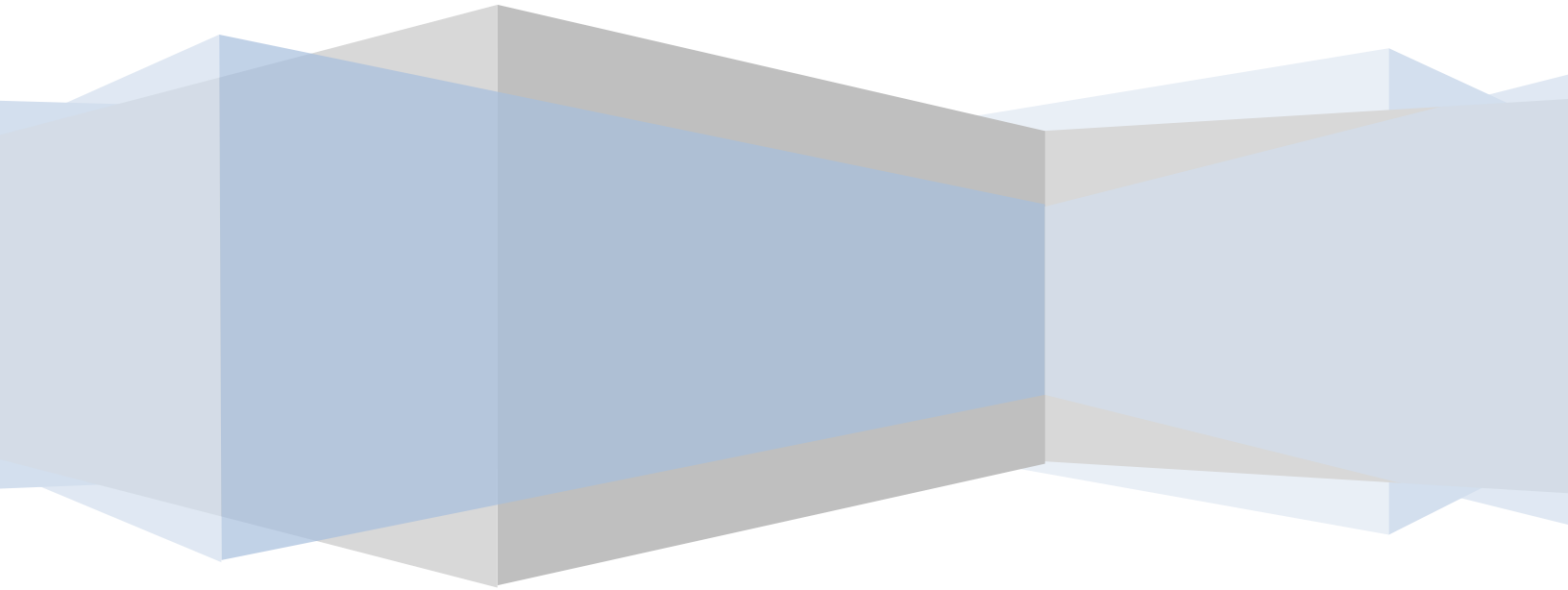


FOREIGN POLICY at Brookings

# The Future of Pakistan

Stephen P. Cohen

South Asia Initiative



# **THE FUTURE OF PAKISTAN**

**Stephen P. Cohen**

**The Brookings Institution**

**Washington, D.C.**

**January 2011**

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Stephen P. Cohen is a senior fellow in Foreign Policy at Brookings. He came to Brookings in 1998 after a long career as professor of political science and history at the University of Illinois. Dr. Cohen previously served as scholar-in-residence at the Ford Foundation in New Delhi and as a member of the Policy Planning Staff of the U.S. State Department. He has also taught at universities in India, Japan and Singapore. He is currently a member of the National Academy of Science's Committee on International Security and Arms Control. Dr. Cohen is the author or editor of more than eleven books, focusing primarily on South Asian security issues. His most recent book, *Arming without Aiming: India modernizes its Military* (co-authored with Sunil Das Gupta, 2010), focuses on India's military expansion. Dr. Cohen received Bachelor's and Master's degrees at the University of Chicago, and a PhD from the University of Wisconsin.

## **EDITOR'S NOTE**

This essay and accompanying papers are also available at  
[http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2010/09\\_bellagio\\_conference\\_papers.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2010/09_bellagio_conference_papers.aspx)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	.. 1
INTRODUCTION	.3
PAKISTAN TO 2011	.5
FOUR CLUSTERS	
I: Demography, Education, Class, and Economics	.. 16
II: Pakistan's Identity	.. 23
III: State Coherence	27
IV: External and Global Factors	..... 34
SCENARIOS AND OUTCOMES	.43
CONCLUSIONS	50
SIX WARNING SIGNS	.51
POLICY: BETWEEN HOPE AND DESPAIR	.52
APPENDIX	....56

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>CBMs</b>	Confidence-building measures
<b>CSIS</b>	Center for Strategic and International Studies
<b>FATA</b>	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>ISI</b>	Inter-Services Intelligence
<b>JeI</b>	Jamaat-e-Islami
<b>JUI-F</b>	Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazlur Rehman)
<b>KP</b>	Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa
<b>LeT</b>	Lashkar-e-Taiba
<b>MQM</b>	Muttahida Pauma Movement
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>NFC</b>	National Finance Commission
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-governmental organizations
<b>NIC</b>	National Intelligence Council
<b>NSC</b>	National Security Council
<b>NWFP</b>	North-West Frontier Province
<b>PML</b>	Pakistan Muslim League (various factions)
<b>PPP</b>	Pakistan People's Party
<b>U.N.</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme

**USIP**

United States Institute of Peace

## PREFACE

This is the capstone essay of a larger project that looks at Pakistan's medium-term future, defined as the next five to seven years (2012-2017). Other project elements include a summary of past predictions of Pakistan's future (Appendix) and fourteen essays commissioned for a workshop at the Rockefeller Conference Center in Bellagio, Italy in May 2010. The authors were asked to briefly set forth important variables or factors that might shape Pakistan's future and to speculate on the likely outcomes.<sup>1</sup> This essay follows the same pattern. After a brief summary of recent developments, it examines a number of factors — distributed among four categories — and then sets forth a number of alternative futures. It also explores the methodological problems inherent in this exercise and discusses policy options, especially for the United States, other Western countries, Japan, and India.

Brookings is grateful for project support from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) and the Norwegian Peacebuilding Foundation (NOREF). Parts of the final section of this essay appeared first as a NOREF policy brief. I am especially grateful to Azeema Cheema and Erum Haider for their assistance in this project; as young Pakistanis and budding scholars, their insights were invaluable. Constantino Xavier provided timely assistance in the final preparation of this essay and helped organize the workshop at USIP where our findings were discussed with a larger audience.

- Stephen P. Cohen

---

<sup>1</sup> These papers plus supplementary material are available on the Brookings website at [http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2010/09\\_bellagio\\_conference\\_papers.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2010/09_bellagio_conference_papers.aspx)

## INTRODUCTION

Pakistan's future is important to its neighbors and to states near and far for at least six reasons:

- It is a nuclear weapons state with a very bad record of proliferation.
- Pakistan has, as a matter of state policy, actively supported jihadist and militants in its neighbors and has either turned a blind eye or professes incapacity when it comes to opposing militants active in Europe and even in friendly China.
- The identity-based dispute with India continues, and it is likely that new crises between the two will take place sometime in next several years.
- Pakistan's economy is stagnating, complicated by the massive damage due to the recent earthquake in 2005 and floods in 2010.
- Its demographic indicators look bad and are worsened by a poor economy — long gone are the days when Pakistan was knocking on the door of middle income status.
- Pakistan could be a major disruptive force in South, Southwest and Central Asia, ruining India's peaceful rise and destabilizing the Persian Gulf and Central Asian regions.

With its declining social indicators, crumbling infrastructure, and the military's misplaced priorities, Pakistan is a deeply troubled state and, were it not for the large number of talented Pakistanis, one would be tempted to judge it to be in terminal decline. This is an important point: the Pakistani state is enfeebled, but Pakistani society is as vigorous as

ever, manifest particularly in its provincial cultures and talented elite, but here is a yawning gap between aspiration and actual performance.

Earlier projects that looked at Pakistan's future were cautiously optimistic, although a group of experts convened by the U.S. National Intelligence Council (NIC) was decidedly downbeat.<sup>2</sup> The Appendix section of this report contains a review and critique of these studies.

This essay builds upon *The Idea of Pakistan*, which devoted one chapter to the future. It took me a full week to write the very last sentence of that book, as I agonized over its exact language. I concluded:

*Before writing Pakistan off as the hopelessly failed state that its critics believe it to be, Washington may have one last opportunity to ensure that this troubled state will not become America's biggest foreign policy problem in the last half of this decade.*<sup>3</sup>

In 2006, the concerns were evident, even as President Pervez Musharraf was still riding towards his non-*rendezvous* with a Nobel Peace prize. There is ample evidence that Pakistan is turning a decisive corner, that the original idea of a moderate, reasonably secular and competitive state is out of reach, and that some other kind of Pakistan will emerge. While not entirely giving up on the reconstruction of the Jinnah's moderate version of Pakistan, it now seems unlikely.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> U.S. National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2025: a Transformed World* (Washington, DC: National Intelligence Council, November 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), p. 328.

<sup>4</sup> One of the few to make a case for Jinnah's conception of Pakistan was the conservative Indian politician Jaswant Singh, which led to his expulsion from the Bharatiya Janata Party. See Jaswant Singh, *Jinnah: India, Partition, Independence* (New Delhi: Rupa, 2009).

Some Pakistanis are now deeply pessimistic about their country. Even a former army chief and close associate of Zia-ul-Haq, has written scathingly of the entire spectrum of Pakistani political and social life:

*Pakistan is a wounded nation, hurt by both friends and foes. Her national body is riddled with injuries of insult, neglect and arrogance inflicted by dictators and democrats; judges and generals, the bureaucrats and media. None of them are blame-free.*<sup>5</sup>

*The Idea of Pakistan* examined alternative futures. These included the continuation of an "establishment"-dominated Pakistan (this was a state in which democratic forms — if not democracy — were maintained), and a state with stable if not good relations with Afghanistan and India. Other futures included overt military rule, and the emergence of a truly "Islamic" state, or even a full-fledged democracy. Also examined were the possibilities of a Pakistan in which the provinces of the Northwest Frontier Province, Sindh, Balochistan, or the Mohajir-dominated areas of urban Sindh and Karachi broke away from the Punjabi core. Finally, the possibility of Punjab itself splitting was discussed, as well as the results of a new and major war with India.

The likely percentages that could be attached to these outcomes would have come to over 100 percent because some futures could occur simultaneously or sequentially.<sup>6</sup> These projections had no specific time frame, the consensus of participants in this project being that extreme cases could be ruled out for the next few years.

---

<sup>5</sup> General K. M. Arif, *Estranged Neighbors: India-Pakistan, 1947-2010* (Islamabad: Dost Publications, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> For a survey of predictions about Pakistan see Cohen, and also Hasan Askari Rizvi, "At the Brink?" in *Bellagio Pakistan Papers*, Brookings, 2010. For a discussion of prediction methodologies in the policy world, see Philip Tetlock, "Reading Tarot on K Street," Sept.-Oct. 2009, *National Interest*.

Uncertainty about Pakistan's trajectory persists and Pakistan's state and society are even less "knowable" today, partly because first-hand research in Pakistan is now far more difficult than it was even a few years ago.<sup>7</sup>

Partnering this essay, are a group of fourteen papers written by specialists on Pakistan. These experts — European, American, Pakistani, and one Indian — were asked to name and discuss the underlying factors that would shape Pakistan's future, and then set forth the most likely of these futures. This approach was chosen over sectoral analyses (e.g., the economy, the party system, the military), to encourage the group to focus on the range and variety of likely futures. There are important variations in their response, and several participants treated the same events or factors very differently — instructive in itself. A few contributors were asked to focus on a particular issue, problem or factor. The papers are therefore not entirely comparable.<sup>8</sup>

I have refrained from attaching numbers to trends and predictions, but the language should make it clear that the continuation of the present establishment-dominated state — "muddling through" in Jonathan Paris' term — is the most likely future, or, more precisely that there is the possibility of several kinds of muddling through, albeit with a greater likelihood of more extreme and unpleasant

---

<sup>7</sup> See for example the case of David Hansen, a Norwegian scholar who was arrested and nearly sent to prison or worse; Hansen's plight is described in his fine dissertation, "Radical Ideas, Moderate Behavior," a Ph.D. thesis awarded in November 2010 by the University of Oslo. As for the rest, first-hand scholarship on Pakistan has declined as the research environment has become more difficult.

<sup>8</sup> The paper-writers and conference participants were originally termed a "Delphi" panel, after the methodology used by the Rand Corporation to predict events in the 1960s. However, as one participant wryly noted, the Oracle of Delphi was a woman, and her pronouncements were both cryptic and easily misunderstood, leading to tragic consequences for those who consulted her.

futures.<sup>9</sup> Nor am I confident that the United States has "one last chance" to get Pakistan right — but then, in 2003, even this argument was qualified by saying that it "may" have one last chance. The policy implications of this analysis are, however, clear: we know less about whether there will be one last chance than we know about the consequences of failure, thus a good-faith effort is essential. Failure is not an option, even though it may occur despite the best efforts of Pakistanis and outside powers. The usual question is "whither" Pakistan, but the real one is "whether" Pakistan: what kind of Pakistan will emerge from the present chaos, with recent events, notably the assassination of Salman Taseer, highlighting Pakistan's decline as a coherent and purposeful state.

Finally, on a personal note, I have been studying Pakistan since 1964 and visiting it regularly since 1978 but have never lived there for more than a month at a time. This essay was written in draft form in May 2010 but substantially revised after a lengthy trip to Pakistan and India in September and October 2010. So, my impressions of the society and culture are limited, but I hope reasonably accurate, certainly more so than that of the many instant experts that have written about Pakistan in the last five or six years. I have depended greatly on my Pakistani friends and acquaintances, but even they are at a loss to explain some of the new and more shocking trends now underway in their country. I hope this study does not offend and, paraphrasing Arthur Koestler, in the long run a hurtful truth is better than a pleasant lie. In Pakistan's case, there have been too many lies - whether by Americans, Pakistanis or others - and this is the time for some hurtful truths.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Jonathan Paris, *Prospects for Pakistan* (London, U.K.: Legatum Institute, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> See the analysis by Howard and Teresita Schaffer about the role that lies and dissembling plays in American relations with Pakistan, *Pakistan Negotiates with America: Riding the Roller-Coaster* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, March, 2011).

## PAKISTAN TO 2011

How did Pakistan arrive at the present juncture? Pakistan was originally intended to transform the lives of British Indian Muslims by providing them a homeland sheltered from Hindu oppression. It did so for some, although this only amounted to less than half of the Asian subcontinent's total number of Muslims, and ironically the north Indian Muslim middle class that spearheaded the Pakistan movement found itself united with many Muslims who had been less than enthusiastic about forming a new state. Some were even hostile to the idea of an explicitly Islamic state.

Within a decade Field Marshal Ayub Khan, later President, undertook Pakistan's first reformation. Discipline, guided democracy, and a market oriented economy (with little effective investment in welfare or education) would provide the framework for rapid economic growth, with a byproduct of political stability. The Ayub experiment faltered, in part because of an unsuccessful war with India in 1965. As a result, Ayub was replaced by another general, Yahya Khan, who could not manage the growing chaos. East Pakistan went into revolt, and with Indian assistance, the old Pakistan was broken up after the creation of Bangladesh in 1971.

The second attempt to transform Pakistan was short-lived. It was led by the charismatic Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who simultaneously tried to gain control over the military, diversify Pakistan's foreign and security policy, build a nuclear weapon and introduce an economic order based on both Islam and socialism. He failed even more spectacularly than Ayub and Yahya Khan. Bhutto was hanged in a rigged trial organized by General Zia-ul-Haq, who took Islam more seriously. With the American patrons looking the other way, and with China and Saudi Arabia providing active support, Zia sought a third transformation, pursuing Islamization and nuclear weaponization. He further damaged several of Pakistan's most

important civilian institutions, notably the courts (already craven under Ayub), the universities, and the civil service.<sup>11</sup> Zia was shrewder than any of his predecessors – he was also a fanatic, but one with strong foreign backing because his support for the Afghan mujahedeen helped bring down the Soviet Union.

After Zia's death, from 1989 to 1999, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif alternated in office during a decade of imperfect democracy, groping towards the re-creation of Jinnah's moderate vision of Pakistan. In fact, the 1990s are often referred to as the "lost decade" in terms of economic growth and witnessed a high rise in urban and rural poverty levels. Growth rate in the 1980s averaged 6.5 percent but in the 1990s, real GDP growth declined to 4.6 percent.

Benazir and Nawaz were unable to govern without interference from the military and the intelligence services, which under Zia had vastly expanded their domestic political role. The army believed that it was the keeper of Pakistan's soul; that it understood better than the politicians the dangers from India and how to woo outside supporters, notably the Americans, the Saudis and the Chinese. The 1990s - the decade of democracy - saw Benazir and Nawaz holding a combined four terms as prime minister. In this period, the press was freed from government censorship (Benazir's accomplishment), and there was movement to liberalize the economy (Sharif's contribution), although neither clamped down on the growing Islamist movements nor did much to repair the state apparatus badly weakened over the previous thirty years. Nor were either of them able to reclaim civilian ground from the military, which by then had developed a complicated apparatus for fixing Pakistan's elections. Benazir invested in

---

<sup>11</sup> For the best chronology of this process of state-breaking see *Ilhan Niaz, The Culture of Power and Governance of Pakistan 1947-2008* (Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press, Pakistan, 2010).

education, but the state was unable to implement her policies, and Nawaz turned to the military to exhume the "ghost schools" that she claimed had been built. There were also "ghost computers": one of the projects she liked to boast about was the wide distribution of computers to schools and villages – it never happened.

## Musharraf: Another Failed General

When he seized power in a bloodless coup on Oct. 12, 1999, General Pervez Musharraf undertook Pakistan's fourth transformation. Musharraf came to power after launching a politically and militarily catastrophic attack on India in the Kargil region of Kashmir, and then blamed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for its failure. He saw that the politicians had had their opportunity – ten years of incomplete democracy had not turned Pakistan's economy around or addressed the country's many social and political tensions. Musharraf, fresh from his coup told me that "this time he would "fix" the johnnies" [corrupt and incompetent politicians and bureaucrats], setting Pakistan on the right course under the army's tutelage. He rejected the suggestion that corrupt or guilty politicians be removed and that fresh elections be held to bring a new generation of competent politicians to power (my argument being that it takes time to build a democracy, and that the politicians should be allowed to make mistakes and learn from them). Musharraf would have none of this, as he was confident that with the backing of the military he could launch still another reformation of the Pakistani state and nation. The highlights of his domestic reform strategy included:

- Fiscal and administrative devolution to the districts. This further weakened the powers of the province, and the system was later abandoned;
- Privatization of state-owned assets. This resulted in a huge inflow of money into the treasury;

- Promotion of a poverty reduction strategy;
- Creation of the National Accountability Bureau. This was extremely controversial, and at one point was shut down;
- Breaking the monopoly of state-owned media and promoting a free press. However, toward the end of his period in office, Musharraf declared a state of emergency, constraining the press;
- Empowerment of the Higher Education Commission and establishment of new universities;
- Reserved seats in Parliament for women;
- Signing of the Women's Protection Bill in attempt to reform the Hudood Laws;
- Anti-terrorism measures. Strong public stance against sectarian violence, but in practice, the policies were ineffective;
- Registration of Madrassas and new curriculum development - also unsuccessful.

Musharraf turned to the technocrats for guidance, transforming the system of local government, selling off many state assets (thus improving the balance of payments problem, always severe for a country with little foreign investment and hardly any manufacturing capabilities). He further opened up the airwaves and in 2000, forced the judiciary into compliance, making them take a fresh oath of office, swearing allegiance to himself. One of Musharraf's cherished goals, often repeated publicly and privately, was to tackle "sectarian violence," the code for Sunni-Shiite death squads, and organized mayhem, but these actually intensified. Finally, while having signed up to the Bush administration's "Global War on Terror," his government never actually ended support for

militant and violent groups in Afghanistan, Kashmir and India itself.

In relations with India, Musharraf did introduce some important changes. These were on his mind when he first came to power, and after several years, he began to float proposals on Kashmir, and a secret back-channel dialogue was established. In my conversations in Pakistan at the time, it was clear that other generals regarded this as naive, but were willing to go along with Musharraf to see if there were any positive results.<sup>12</sup>

Although Musharraf had an idealized vision of what he wanted Pakistan to become, he was no strategist. He neither ordered his priorities nor mustered the human and material resources to systematically tackle them, one after another. He behaved as president just the way he behaved as a general: he was good at public relations but bad at details and implementation. His greatest accomplishment came when he left things alone - for example, by allowing electronic media to proliferate to the point where Pakistan now has more than eighty television channels, although many of them lacking professional standards. On the other hand, his greatest failure - and a calamity for Pakistan - may have been his permissive or lax attitude towards Benazir Bhutto's security, and a U.N. report holds him responsible in part for her murder.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> For a recent report based on conversations with a senior retired Pakistani officer active at the time of these initiatives, see Aziz Haniffa, "Musharraf was never close to solving Kashmir, says Pakistani general," *India Abroad*, Dec. 16, 2010, p. A-16.

<sup>13</sup> See the U.N. "Report of the United Nations Commission of Inquiry into the facts and circumstances of the assassination of former Pakistani Prime Minister *Mohatma Benazir Bhutto*, [http://www.un.org/News/dh/infocus/Pakistan/UN\\_Bhutto\\_Report\\_15April2010.pdf](http://www.un.org/News/dh/infocus/Pakistan/UN_Bhutto_Report_15April2010.pdf). Other reports, including some U.S. government documents leaked by WikiLeaks, indicate that the army prevailed upon the Zardari government not to follow up on the U.N. report, protecting both Musharraf and perhaps other former officers who may have been implicated one way or another in her murder.

That murder removed the most talented of all Pakistani politicians, despite her flaws, and further undercut Pakistan's prospects.

Musharraf began to lose his grip on power because of his seeming support on an unpopular war in Afghanistan and his strategic miscalculation of Pakistani public opinion, which led him to believe that a protest by the judges and lawyers would dissipate. He, like his military predecessors had to turn to civilian politicians for moral authority after about three years of rule; this failed to generate legitimacy for Musharraf just as it had failed his Ayub and Zia.

In March 2007, the Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry was summoned by Musharraf and asked to resign. When he refused to do so, he was suspended by Musharraf, a first in Pakistan's history, initiating a chain of events that eventually led to his own downfall. Chaudhry was subsequently reinstated by the Supreme Court in July, which would soon after deliberate Musharraf's eligibility as a legitimate candidate in the elections. Musharraf declared a state of emergency in November 2007, suspending both the Constitution and the Supreme Court judges. Musharraf was almost entirely isolated as his decisions were fiercely opposed by the community of lawyers, civil society organizations (both liberals and conservatives), and a very vocal population. In 2008, there was civil unrest, rioting, anti-government protests and mass support for the lawyer's movement. One hero emerged from this spectacular display of people's power: Aitzaz Ahsan, a Pakistan People's Party (PPP) member and distinguished lawyer. Ahsan, not part of the PPP's inner-circle or close to President Zardari, has kept a low profile.<sup>14</sup> Pro-Islamist sentiments were part of the lawyers'

---

<sup>14</sup> For a good overview of his reformist inclinations see Ahsan's article, "Keep the Flag Flying," in *Newsweek Pakistan*, Sept. 13, 2010, <http://www.newsweekpakistan.com>.

movement, which expanded its popular appeal, riding a wave of anti-Americanism.

Attacks on American and Western targets occurred with greater frequency, as did attempts to kill Musharraf himself. Besides the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington, there was another turning point, this one in Pakistan itself. This was the razing of the Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) located in the heart of Islamabad (close to Islamabad's leading hotel, the diplomatic enclave, and the new headquarters of the ISI). The government's attack upon the mosque came not at the behest of Washington, but of Beijing, regarded by elite Pakistanis as their most reliable supporter. China, like the West and India, was deeply concerned about the growth of Islamist militancy in Pakistan, and the training of Chinese Muslims in militant camps. The Chinese ambassador complained publicly about the kidnapping of female Chinese workers. The mosque had close ties to militant groups, some of them patronized by the ISI. The army's operation killed 102 people, according to military sources, but independent media reported that there were 286 to 300 dead, including many women and young girls. Islamabad residents recall the stench of rotting bodies.<sup>15</sup> There were other terror attacks, and Pakistani public opinion hardened against both the United States and Musharraf after repeated drone attacks within Pakistan. The army was unable to strike back at the militant leadership, which was dispersed through the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP, the former Northwest Frontier Province), Islamabad and the Punjab. The army's reputation suffered, and in 2007, officers were warned by Musharraf not to wear their uniforms outside cantonments.

---

<sup>15</sup> A close analogy to Lal Masjid was the attack by Indian military forces on the Golden Temple, the Sikh's holy shrine in Amritsar, in 1984. That also set off a sustained battle between the army, the police, and Sikh militants, with the latter receiving considerable support from ordinary Sikh citizens who were infuriated by the attack on the temple. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was eventually assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards, just as the militant Islamists tried repeatedly to kill Musharraf — they failed, but a number of army officers were assassinated.

Organized violence, including suicide attacks, shows no clear trend but has been higher in lethality this past year than in 2009. There has been a major decline in terrorist attacks in 2010 as compared to the previous year, with 687 incidents in Pakistan in 2010 (down from 1,915 in 2009) resulting in 1,051 fatalities (down from 2,670). As of December 2010, there were 52 acts of suicide terrorism, down from 80 in 2009, but they were more lethal, with 1,224 fatalities as opposed to 1,217 deaths.<sup>16</sup>

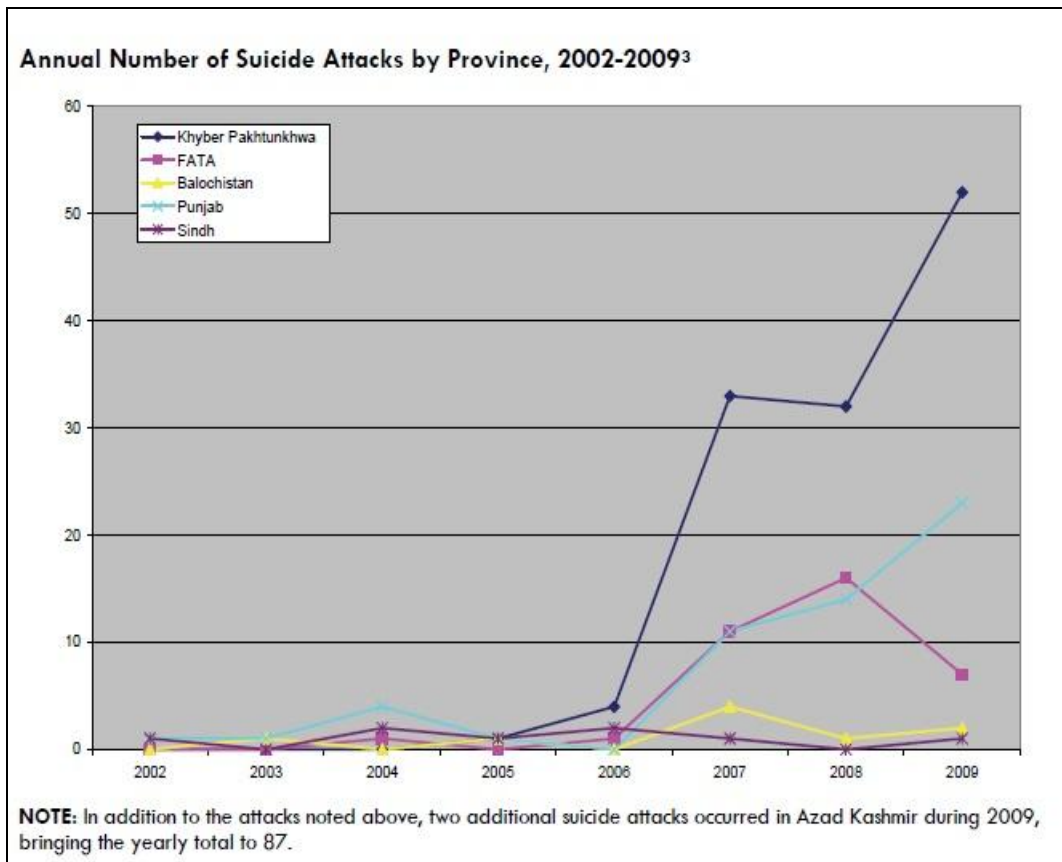
Figure 1 shows trends in suicide attacks over the last few years. Despite the declined rate, the figures again placed the country third in the world on both measures, after Afghanistan and Iraq. Suicide bombing is a relatively new scourge in Pakistan. Only two suicide bombings were recorded there in 2002. That number grew to 59 in 2008, and to 84 in 2009, before dropping to 29 in 2010 (the lowest level since 2005). Still, in the past year, Pakistan was the site of far more deaths caused by suicide bombing (556) than any other country and accounted for about one-quarter of all the world's such bombings. The largest number of deaths and attacks took place in the Pashtun belt in KP and the FATA, with Pashtuns killing Pashtuns, whereas the so-called Punjabi Taliban (consisting of Lashkar e-Jhangvi, Jaish-e-Mohammad and others) targeted Shiites, Barelvis, Ahmediyyas, as well as Christians.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Amir Mir, "2010: suicides drop by 35pc, deaths up by 1 pc", *The News*, Dec. 24, 2010, <http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrint/WriterName.aspx?ID=2&URL=By%20Amir%20Mir>.

<sup>17</sup> Two good sources for numbers are the website of the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) [http://www.sanpips.com/index.php?action=reports&id=psr\\_1](http://www.sanpips.com/index.php?action=reports&id=psr_1), and the *Brookings Pakistan Index*, a regularly updated collection of data and figures: <http://www.brookings.edu/foreign-policy/pakistan-index.aspx>.

**FIGURE 1: ANNUAL NUMBER OF SUICIDE ATTACKS**



Source: Brookings Institution Pakistan Index

<http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/Programs/FP/pakistan%20index/index.pdf>

One Indian observer notes that neither the intensified operations by the Pakistan army in the KP, nor American drone attacks, have dented the motivation of the Pashtun, both Afghan and Pakistani, nor have they diminished the Punjabi Taliban (some of which remain close to the intelligence agencies).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> See B. Raman, "Is Letting Pakistan Collapse an Option?" *Eurasia Review*, Dec. 26, 2010. <http://www.eurasiareview.com/analysis/is-letting-pakistan-collapse-an-option-26122010/>.

### Zadari Treading Water

Asif Ali Zardari, Benazir Bhutto's widower, was elected president on Sept. 6, 2008, with the support of the PPP and in coalition with other secular parties, until it collapsed in January 2011. Punjab, for example, is governed as of 2010 by a coalition of the PPP and Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N). Being forced to govern in a coalition has its problems, but it has taught Pakistani politicians the virtues of cooperation and some of the "rules of the game" appropriate to a democratic political order.

Little was expected of Zardari, but in partnership with stalwart PPP members, his government, and that of his Prime Minister Yusuf Reza Gilani, the Karachi-born, Sindhi speaking politician from Punjab's Multan district, has performed better than any prior civilian government — not a great accomplishment, but one that cannot be ignored.

The new government's agenda is largely that of Benazir Bhutto: reform and restoration, rather than transformation. She had lofty goals, but at the end of her life, she understood how badly Pakistan had been governed, even by her, and indicated to acquaintances that, just as her second term as prime minister was better than the first, a fresh start would bring more clarity and purpose. Tragically for Pakistan — and it shows that those who killed her knew what they were about — she had the charisma, the international contacts, and the experience of governance that might have given Pakistan half a chance at some kind of success, despite her flaws. Her death, especially the way she died, dramatically reduced the odds of Pakistan emerging as a normal state from its thirty-year crisis.

Zardari lacks his wife's brilliance and charisma. His reputation for corruption was one of her greatest political liabilities. There was a systematic attempt by the opposition and the intelligence services to portray him as corrupt. Zardari's defense to visitors is that he has never been convicted of any crime, but of course that is true of most Pakistani politicians whose reputation for corruption equals or surpasses his.

In the two years of his presidency, there have been significant changes in Pakistan's constitutional arrangements, and an attempt to rebuild some of the badly weakened institutions of the Pakistani state. —Civil society— is booming, the press tentatively exercises its new freedoms — in 2010 Pakistan earned the dubious honor of being the

deadliest place in the world for journalists to practice their craft<sup>19</sup> — a growing concern about social inequalities, education, and governance has given rise to all kinds of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), both modernizing and Islamist.

A wide gap remains between the government and the people of Pakistan. Except, paradoxically, for the Islamist Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), party democracy is nonexistent. Distrust still permeates Pakistan's political order, and deep fear of the security services remains. The civilian government is still dependent on the military, especially as the internal security situation worsens. Pakistan's foreign friends are as unpredictable as ever.

Zardari's major accomplishments, many of which were in cooperation with Prime Minister Gilani, include:

***Restoration of the Chief Justice and Deposed Judges:***

Chief Justice Iftikhar Ahmed Chaudhry and all judges previously deposed by Musharraf were reinstated on March 21, 2009, by Zardari, albeit under pressure from the army. There are indications that the new Supreme Court is performing far more professionally than its predecessor.<sup>20</sup>

***Agreement on 7<sup>th</sup> National Finance Commission (NFC) Award:***

The NFC award is the annual distribution of financial resources between the provinces of Pakistan by the federal government. The terms have been the cause of bitter disagreement in the past. Under the Zardari government, the 7<sup>th</sup> NFC award was unanimously approved by all four provinces

---

<sup>19</sup> In 2010 eight of the forty-four journalists murdered around the world were Pakistanis, the largest single number in any country according to the Committee to Protect Journalists.

<sup>20</sup> SC outperforms Dogar court by 2:1 — Usman Manzoor, *The News*, Sept. 19, 2010, <http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=692&Cat=13>.

in December 2009 through a consultative process, leading to improved relations between the provinces and fiscal decentralization. In a distinct departure from policies of the Musharraf regime, the NFC award increased the provincial share of the budget from 47.5 percent under Musharraf to 56 percent in the first year of the NFC (2010-2011) and 57.5 percent in the remaining years of the award. The award also includes relief measures for the provinces of NWFP, KP and Balochistan.

### ***Passage of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution:***

On April 8, 2010, the National Assembly successfully voted on and unanimously passed a constitutional amendment to curtail the powers of the president of Pakistan. A 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was passed unanimously by the Assembly in the last days of 2010, in response to some questions raised by the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

The 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment reverses the impact of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Amendments enacted in 1985 and 2003 respectively (which had turned Pakistan into a semi-presidential republic) and places limits on presidential powers, empowering Parliament and the prime minister in turn. It removes articles from the Constitution that formerly allowed the president to dissolve Parliament and suspend the Constitution and removes the two-term limit on prime ministers, thus paving the way for a possible return of Mian Nawaz Sharif. It also removed all formal executive control over judicial appointments.

Legislative authority was also decentralized by the removal of the Concurrent List (an enumeration of areas where both federal and provincial governments may legislate but federal law prevails). It also renamed the North West Frontier Province to Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa in recognition of the majority Pashtun population, although there were complaints from the province's minority Hazara community.

The passage of these amendments reversed some of the legacies of both General Zia and General Musharraf and re-erected some legal barriers to a return to army rule. The amendments were widely supported by all political parties, and the military allowed the process to move ahead, in part because its own judgment was that it was not the time for an active, public role.

### **Continuity of Economic Policy**

The Zardari government has largely continued the process of both macro-economic and socio-economic reform initiated by Musharraf. In doing so, the government has been critiqued for following an IMF-driven agenda. However, on the socio-economic side, support for the status quo has provided some stability to ongoing processes such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy as well as large social protection programs such as the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP).

### **Trends Through 2010**

To summarize trends in Pakistan through 2010:

- A number of Constitutional changes have theoretically "reset" the overarching framework of laws and governance, although Pakistan is still in the process of striking a suitable balance between the judiciary, the executive and the legislature.
- Civilians continue to grope towards a workable constitutional order. Sixty years after independence, there is still no consensus on the role of major state institutions such as the judiciary, the legislature, the presidency, and the prime minister - or on relations between all of them and the military. The relationship between the center and the provinces, and in some cases between provinces, remains unstable.

- The army's role is recessed but not reduced, and it remains an unelected center of power, with its own ties to each of the formal structures and foreign governments. Disgraced by Musharraf's activism and widespread use of the services for non-military activities, the army finds a modest role to be in its interest at the moment but retains its distrust and dislike of civilian politicians in general and of Zardari in particular. A year of seeming stability has not restored their confidence in civilian governance, which is still widely seen as corrupt and venal.
- Media plays a new and important role, resulting in greater transparency with intense press and electronic coverage of policies that were formerly made behind closed doors. However, this has not increased accountability, where institutions are held responsible for their actions and policies. The press remains vulnerable to pressure from the intelligence services, which have real ways of hurting individuals and private entities such as corporations or NGOs — by denying them government contracts, by harassment, and by rough treatment and even disappearances.
- Democracy seems to have returned to Pakistan's political culture, with parties behaving more responsibly. In earlier years, it was possible for a general to joke, without contradiction, that the first priority of Pakistani politicians was that they should be in power, while their second choice was that the army ruled. The consequence of a few free elections is that politicians are now taking their responsibilities a bit more seriously.
- The system has not produced any new leaders, politics being dominated at the top by two families, and party democracy, which might foster the emergence of new faces, remaining absent. Instead, new leadership is rising from within the militant groups, which seek either a transformation of Pakistan or a larger share of whatever spoils there are to be had in this economically stagnating state.
- Pakistan conducts an active regional and global diplomacy, and in Afghanistan, it has assets that are important to the West. It hopes to be a factor in any Afghan settlement, but this is by no means agreed upon by the United States or other supporters of the Afghan government, and relations with both India and Afghanistan are strained at best.
- The impact of foreign governments on Pakistan remains considerable, notably by the United States and China, but also by Saudi Arabia; the government cannot make any decision of importance without calculating its effect on relations with these powers.
- Anti-Americanism grew steadily in the middle class and the elite during Musharraf's reign and continues to rise particularly among youth, which is an important force given changes in Pakistan's demography.
- A few of the home-grown militant outfits have begun to expand their operations, and the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) seems to be emulating al-Qaida as it seeks a regional and even global reach, with operations in the United States, Great Britain, and South Asia.
- There have been no major terrorist attacks in Islamabad or Rawalpindi over the last year. Sectarian violence continues in Lahore and elsewhere in Pakistan; Karachi remains a violent city, brought under Ranger control in mid-2010. It is hard to tell whether the lessening of violence in the capital city is due to increased police surveillance — parts of Islamabad are heavily fortified and

secured □ or whether there has been a deal with major extremist groups, whose infrastructure remains untouched.

- 2011 began with a commemoration of Benazir's murder three years earlier, interrupted by the assassination on January 4 of her close associate, a secular PPP leader Salman Taseer, the governor of Punjab, who had been outspoken in his criticism of an obscurantist blasphemy law. His security guard shot him down in broad daylight, claiming that Taseer's outspoken comments were themselves beyond the pale. The guard was a member of an elite Punjab security force, and the murder plunged liberal Pakistanis deeper into despair or hiding - or both.

## Analytical Considerations

Three problems need to be discussed as a prelude to examining the factors that will shape Pakistan's future. The first is that of the rhetoric of hope and failure, the second is that of sequencing, and the third is the difficulty of □sizing□ the problem.

Predictions about Pakistan generally fall into two categories: the pessimists who believe that things will go from bad to worse and the optimists who believe that history is about to reverse itself.<sup>21</sup> The Pakistan-American scholar Ahmed Faruqi is cautiously optimistic, noting that both France and Britain were mired in □cognitive dissonance□ but eventually attained greatness. The consultants of the NIC report were deeply skeptical about Pakistan, and many Indian commentators, some liberal Pakistanis, and the Islamic conservatives believe that Pakistan is doomed by its very nature, its cultural DNA, and that transformation or collapse are inevitable. For

some, there is a little *Schadenfreude* in their expectations of failure.<sup>22</sup>

On the other hand, most contemporary writers hold out hope and are cautiously optimistic, although the outright optimists are fast vanishing. They see Pakistan's known and important assets as evidence of at least the potential for positive transformation. In the words of a distinguished retired Pakistani diplomat, Tariq Fatemi, □Pakistan should be confident of its own abilities and optimistic about its future given its size, location and the qualities of its people □ So should the rest of the world, given that Pakistanis have been successful wherever they have gone, and in whatever endeavors they have undertaken.<sup>23</sup>

Hope is neither a policy nor a planning factor, but it is also intimately related to success and failure.<sup>24</sup> The hope that things will or can be better is an emotion deeply embedded in the human condition □ but it is also the mirror image of worst-cased thinking, the anticipation of catastrophe. Without hope,

---

<sup>22</sup> For a critique of the honor or virtue brigade □ the *Ghairyaaat*, by a distinguished Pakistan columnist, who argues that neither the army nor revolution is the cure for Pakistan, but that its salvation lies in the slow restoration of normal democratic political processes through the ballot box, see Ayaz Amir, □The Gathering Rage of the Virtue Brigades,□ *The News*, Friday July 23, 2010. Leaders of the *Ghairyaaat* include former ISI general Hamid Gul and A.Q. Khan, the metallurgist who stole centrifuge plans from Holland and persuaded Zulfikar Ali Bhutto that a Pakistani bomb was possible; Khan is one of many who speak approvingly of China as a model for Pakistan, and scathingly of current political leaders for their cravenness regarding the U.S. and India. See □Our leaders should learn lessons from China: Dr. Qadeer,□ *The Nation*, Dec. 25, 2010, <http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/25-Dec-2010/Our-leaders-should-learn-lesson-from-China-Dr-Abdul-Qadir-Khan>.

<sup>23</sup> See Tariq Fatemi's introductory paragraph in his Bellagio paper.

<sup>24</sup> For an insightful essay on hope, in the context of the □failure□ of recent India-Pakistan talks, see Mehreen Zahra-Malik, □Hope and its discontents,□ *The Friday Times*, July 23-28, 2010, Vol. XXII, No. 23.

---

<sup>21</sup> Ahmed Faruqi, □Reversing History,□ Feb. 3, 2010, *Outlook India* <http://www.outlookindia.com/printarticle.aspx?264103>.

there would be little change and a world dominated by fatalists and pessimists.<sup>25</sup> An excess of hope or blind optimism can also be the basis for extremist and utopian movements.

Sequencing is yet another important conceptual issue, because it forces one to prioritize. As an Indian study noted, all of the factors or variables shaping Pakistan's future are important.<sup>26</sup> But are any factors more important than the rest, and can we distinguish between those that are important, but unmanageable, and those that might be amenable to change? The fundamental question is whether or not some or all of the variables that will shape Pakistan's future must operate in a certain way for something resembling success to occur, but it is also fundamentally hard to answer. It is evident that there are many factors that qualify as critical to Pakistan's future. However, none are determinative in their own right. Internal social and economic decay continue, but so does the incoherence of the Pakistani political establishment, its relations with the military, especially the army, and the role of friendly and hostile outside powers. Looking ahead, there are at least six *necessary* conditions for a stable Pakistan, but none are *sufficient*, and their sequencing and timing are critical.

Our view is that modesty with regard to what can be done is the most appropriate stance because we are discussing events that are inherently difficult to understand. To adapt the words of a former ambassador to the Soviet Union, "I don't know where Pakistan is heading, but once it gets there, I will explain to you why it was inevitable."

---

<sup>25</sup> For a modern study of disaster and unpredictable events see Lee Clarke, *Worst Cases: Terror and Catastrophe in the Popular Imagination* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

<sup>26</sup> Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses, *Whither Pakistan*, <http://www.idsa.in/book/WhitherPakistan>.

Finally, there is a "sizing" issue. Scientists talk about "sizing" a problem, stating its parameters, as the first step towards solving it. In discussing the challenges and capabilities of Pakistan, Sir Hilary Synnott examined the metaphor of the glass that is variously described as being half-full or half-empty, noting that perhaps the glass is too large. This is another way of "sizing": if Pakistan's capabilities are inadequate, it may be because its ambitions are too great. This suggests that priorities are critically important, and Pakistan has to decide which of its challenges are urgent and which are secondary and can be deferred. Thus, state capacity can be directed to the most important problems.

One aspect of the "too large a glass" concept is that Pakistan carries with it an enormous burden of the past. Its overarching narrative is that of victimhood when it comes to its relations with its most important neighbor and its most important international ally. The Pakistani self-perception as the victim of Hindu domination led to the mother of all "trust deficits," a deficit that can never be eliminated because it stems from the very identity of Indians as dominating, insincere, and untrustworthy; in this view, there is nothing that Pakistan can do to normalize the relationship because Indians/Hindus are believed to be essentially untrustworthy and have proven this time and time again. My view is that if trust is a component of the problem, it is an eternal one "there can never be enough "trust" between sovereign states, but they might think of both trusting and verifying, which in Urdu can be translated as *aitemaad aur tasdeeq*.

With regard to American actions, many Pakistanis believe that the 1980s Afghan war, the Pressler sanctions, and other harmful or duplicitous policies were recent instances of America using Pakistan and abandoning it. The war destabilized Pakistan, and the nuclear sanctions were against a program that Washington had earlier chosen to ignore. More recent examples include the U.S.

invasion of Afghanistan to attack the Taliban (which itself had not done the United States any harm), pushing radical elements into Pakistan further destabilizing their country. The American narrative of all of these events is, of course, quite different, and like the India-Pakistan relationship, there is a deep trust deficit. With regard to both sets of relationships, any policy that assumes trust is likely to fail.

## FOUR CLUSTERS

When it comes to Pakistan everything is important and everything is uncertain. To frame our discussion of the factors or variables that most powerfully shape Pakistan, we can group nineteen of them into four clusters. The first cluster includes domestic concerns regarding demography, urbanization, the economy, and education. These are all closely related, and with the exception of the economy, which is subject to changes in policy, less mutable than others. A second cluster revolves around the collective identity of Pakistan's people, as they identify with and act on the basis of their regional, ethnic and state identities. The third cluster includes the ability of Pakistanis to work for or against a common goal, or even to determine what the goals might be. Here we include the bureaucracy and structure of the government, the ability of its officials, notably the military, to work with others, and the means by which they communicate — a euphemism for the media. A final cluster includes the policies and attitudes of important foreign states, as well as the processes of globalization. This is Pakistan's environment, although globalization penetrates into Pakistan in many ways: shaping economic possibilities, influencing the ambitions and the very identities of Pakistan's citizens, and aiding or undercutting the workings of the state in different ways.

## I: Demography, Education, Class, and Economics

### Demography

Demographic trends, which are both predictable and difficult to change, are very clear for the next decade or more. They will shape Pakistan in several ways.

First, Pakistan is one of the countries undergoing a population boom. It will soon have one of world's youngest populations. In some countries, mainly in Africa, the Middle East, and a few in Latin America and South Asia, birth rates remain much higher than mortality rates so that growth rates are over 2.0 percent a year. Pakistan is one of these countries, along with Nepal, Yemen, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo — where population doubles every generation or roughly every 30 to 35 years.

As a 2009 British Council study noted, half of all Pakistanis are below the age of twenty and two-thirds have yet to reach their thirteenth birthday. Birth rates remain high even by regional standards, especially in rural areas. The population has tripled in less than fifty years and is likely to grow by another 85 million in the next twenty years. Pakistan's demographic transition from high to low mortality and fertility has stalled.<sup>27</sup> Today, with a population of some 180 million, Pakistan has a population with a median age of 18 years. The country's population curve has a classic pyramid shape. For the next 15 years, it will be bottom-heavy. The sheer increase in population will require more food, more energy, and for males, more jobs. Also, an increase in their number of voters places increasing pressure on the state regarding its ability to deliver services, even basic ones, such as education, let alone health or welfare.

---

<sup>27</sup> British Council, *Pakistan: The Next Generation*, November 2009, p. iv, <http://www.britishcouncil.org/pakistan-active-citizens-next-generation-report.htm>.

Second, Pakistan is becoming more urban. The current urban population is about 56 million, having increased from 17 percent in 1951 to 35 percent in 2005. However, the rural population is so large that some of its cities are not truly urban centers but are rural or tribal complexes gathered together in an area designated as a municipal corporation.<sup>28</sup> Instead of urbanization being calming and socializing, it offers historical rivals a new battleground, and in some cases, brings previously separated groups into close proximity, where they battle in the urban context. This is especially the case of Karachi, which has strong political parties mobilized to provide resources for urban residents. Further, it has also brought high levels of ethnic tension, with Mohajirs battling Sindhis (displaced from several Sindhi cities, where they used to be the majority population), and both battling the huge influx of Pashtuns, who are migrating from the war-torn provinces of the Frontier. In Islamabad, mosques, such as the Lal Masjid, became outposts of radical organizations located in nearby Swat and KP. Unacceptable havens of radicalism have flourished throughout Pakistan, notably in the cities, sometimes co-located with ethnic enclaves. Were police forces adequate, the problem could be managed, but they are not, and the police find themselves handicapped by the linkages between politicians and the militants, and in some cases, by the linkages between the militants and the intelligence services.

In the national economy, metropolitan areas like Karachi and Lahore and other urban centers will tip the balance against the countryside. Traditionally, Pakistan has been an agricultural economy. It will need to move up the value chain toward agriculture-based industries and then into manufacturing.

---

<sup>28</sup> Murtaza and Irteza Haider (2006). "Urban development in Pakistan" in *Urbanization and sustainability in Asia: Case Studies on Best Practice Approaches to Sustainable Urban and Regional Development* (Manila, Philippines: Asian Development Bank).

Worldwide, this has been the trend since the 1970s for developing countries, and many are moving into global services, India being the prime example. On average, agriculture accounts for only 20 percent of developing countries' GDP.<sup>29</sup> This will be a huge challenge for Pakistani agriculture. If and when a new census in Pakistan takes place, it will validate these trends and transform Pakistan's political map. If election boundaries are redrawn, it will move more seats in provincial assemblies and the central parliament to the cities. Pakistan's feudal politics will be challenged when this happens, and the rural elites can be expected to resist.

Third, there is the question of the alleged demographic dividend — whether a population bulge can be put to Pakistan's advantage. The old debate between the Malthusians, who see population booms as catastrophic, and the pro-growth school, exemplified by the writings of Julian Simon that argues that more people may be better, is resolved by the understanding that population growth alone does not cause domestic or internal conflict. Large-scale violence is almost never caused mainly by population growth; population growth is a challenge, not a threat. The critical mediating factors are state capacity and state responses.

In this respect, Pakistan fares badly. There is a strong and positive response by the state and by local civil society institutions to demographic expansion in Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh and India, states that are predominately Muslim or, in the case of India, with a huge Muslim minority population. These countries have adopted policies designed to foster tolerance and cohesion, although religious interpretative authority still resides within the conservative religious establishments. The conservative establishment is strong in Pakistan, and while Pakistan is culturally anchored in South Asia, its

---

<sup>29</sup> Shahid Yusuf et. al., *Development Economics through the Decades*, (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2009), p. 47.

religious narrative is increasingly shaped by Islamist narratives derived from the more conservative Arab states and the Iranian revolutionary model.

## Education and Youth

Education is the key to taking advantage of the demographic bulge. The theory is that this is an opportunity to educate the young, and leapfrog into a more advanced economy, one that features high-level manufacturing and services that can be marketed around the world. Here Pakistan fares worse than even India or Bangladesh, both of which greatly overestimate their capacity to educate the youth bulge.

Only half of Pakistan's children go to primary school, a quarter to secondary school, and just five percent receive any higher education.<sup>30</sup> There are no plans to create national educational corps or to mount a crash program to provide training to the growing number of uneducated youth. It has been suggested that the Army Education Corps be deployed outside of the cantonments and form the core of national educational system, but this is rejected by the military. Nor are there plans to bring to Pakistan large numbers of teachers and instructors, and the security situation is such that few would be willing to live in the country at the moment. As is well-known, the gap has long been filled by the *madaris*, religious schools of marginal practical utility in the modern world. Educating the youth bulge is a popular idea, but there is no effective state action, either at the national or provincial level. Instead, young people get whatever education they can. The results as shown in poll after poll are shocking — the youth bulge is likely to turn into a bulge of the middle-aged and discontented, ill-equipped for the modern world. An important outlet for the ambitious and the adventurous will continue

to be extremist movements, which have displaced the army as the largest recruiter of young Pakistani males.

The Pakistani government as a whole has been unable to address this fundamental failure of the state. Instead, private educational systems flourish with little quality control. The rot starts at the top, where over-ambitious and unrealistic schemes to produce a flood of PhDs, who would presumably strengthen the overall education and research capacity of Pakistan, were promulgated. These ran against the political culture of Pakistan, which is decidedly not sympathetic to research, except as in a few areas pertaining to national security, nor to mass education. Pakistan has the lowest intake of doctors in the world after Africa, and while the numbers of students in higher education, mostly funded by foreign organizations (notably America's Agency for International Development) have grown, many of these do not return. Researchers who *do* return to Pakistan do not find a congenial environment, despite some efforts to network them (for example, Pakistani researchers have very good U.S.-funded access to the global library system), and therefore often chose to leave again.<sup>31</sup> Without contact with the region's more dynamic educational institutions, Pakistani scholarship and research will stagnate. On its creation, Pakistan had one university with 600 students; it now has 143 universities with one million students. Present-day Pakistan was that part of Indian subcontinent where there was no tradition of education; it produced good soldiers and traders, not scholars. As the scholar Hamid Kizilbash observed, in Pakistan the message to scholars has always been: "your work is not important."<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> See the British Council report, *Pakistan: The Next Generation*, op. cit.

---

<sup>31</sup> Athar Osama, "HEC Scholars: Will They Return? And Stay?" Pakistan Research Support Network, Aug. 9, 2008 <http://pakistaniat.com/2008/08/09/hec-pakistan/>.

<sup>32</sup> Kizilbash's remarks were delivered at a conference on "Empowering Faculty and Transforming Education in Pakistan" at the Woodrow Wilson Center, April 7, 2010, <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/ondemand/index.cfm?fus>

Kizilbash and others believe that the Pakistani government and the elites see education as a threat to them and to their control over the state. He also notes that there is a lost generation in Pakistan, those who did not benefit from the reforms attempted after 2002. One result has been, in his words, "Those who were not privileged are finding different ways of punishing us."

## The Middle Class Myth

Vali Nasr, the American scholar and currently a U.S. State Department official, argues that the rise of a new middle class in predominately Muslim societies has the potential for a positive transformation of these states.<sup>33</sup> Noting that the vast numbers of Muslims are moderate or conservative in their social outlook, he sees the rise of a new Muslim middle class as leading to a new round of social and economic transformation in states that had been stuck in traditional ways for centuries, and that this new middle class could work easily and comfortably with the West. There will be a billion middle class consumers in the Middle East countries, including Pakistan, and these will be a force for openness, trade, and commerce with the rest of the world and within the Middle East itself. Some of this is true in Pakistan where economic growth has been very limited, but also where a new middle class seems to have emerged, energized and given a voice by the rapid expansion of electronic media, making the ordinary Pakistani far more aware of the world than before.

The logic behind the middle class as democracy's bastion is that it stands to benefit from political openness, trade, better relations with neighbors, and sympathy with other

---

[action=home.play&mediaid=E41FB00A-A2E7-7301-113CE5FEFA3FC864.](#)

<sup>33</sup> Vali Nasr, *Forces of Fortune: The Rise of the New Muslim Middle Class and what it will mean for our world* (New York: Free Press, 2009).

democracies, including the United States. Jonathan Paris notes that all of these would entail greater civilian control over foreign relations and domestic resources.<sup>34</sup> However, this assertion is rooted in the Euro-centric view of "no bourgeoisie, no democracy."<sup>35</sup> There is no inherent connection between an urban middle class and pressure for democracy. Rarely unified or motivated by collective social interests, the middle classes across Asia (e.g., Indonesia under Suharto and present-day Thailand) and Latin America, have shown themselves to be quite capable of backing illegitimate autocratic governments for their narrow economic and material interests. Pakistan, where the middle classes appear to have a historically low threshold of tolerance for "corrupt" politicians and a preference for order rather than democracy per se, has been no exception. Moreover, any prospective material benefits of trade with India will not necessarily accrue to a particular class and could easily be counteracted by the anti-India psychosis that permeates popular media and the public education system where the middle class tends to be schooled.

The growth of a middle class might be a necessary condition, but it is not sufficient for Pakistan's democratization. India had (and has) democracy even though it was one of the poorest countries in the world; China has a growing middle class as does Vietnam, but the communist parties in both states will fight democratization tooth and nail while allowing consumerism to grow. In Pakistan, the economic base for a large middle class does not yet exist, the economy and society remain very pyramidal, and socio-economic mobility is obstructed by a culture of feudalism. Above all, hopes for a new and rising middle class must be tempered by economic facts of life: rampant inflation in Pakistan over the last few years threatens a large number of citizens,

---

<sup>34</sup> Paris, *Prospects for Pakistan*, p. 25.

<sup>35</sup> Barrington Moore, Jr., *Lord and the Peasant: Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Beacon Press, 1966).

making their lives economically insecure just as the physical dangers increase because of rising terror attacks, and for many, the floods of 2010.

The army serves the same functional role as the communist parties of Vietnam or China, as it regulates the system to protect both its own interests and what it sees as Pakistan's vital interests. Finally, middle classes, when they are dislocated and threatened, have also formed the basis for revolutionary movements throughout history, and these revolutions have not always been peaceful or democratic.

Hope of reform led by the middle class is just that — a hope, not an assured process. Even a cursory example of historical parallels shows that a deprived and angry middle class can easily move into a revolutionary direction that rejects many of Pakistan's policies, embraces some form of extremism, and puts Pakistan on the path of authoritarianism or even disintegration.

## The Economy

Countries often choose inappropriate economic strategies or strategies that were once serviceable, but are made obsolete by changes in the international environment. Pakistan is no exception. Guided by the thinking of Sir Arthur Lewis, a British-educated West Indian, it opted for a policy of concentrating economic production in the state sector, then spinning these off to the private sector, so that at one point Mahboob ul Haq, one of the architects of the policy gave a contrarian speech describing the "twenty-two families" that dominated Pakistan's economy. The policy was very successful early on and created a significant upper and middle class in both East and West Pakistan. As a result, at one point, Pakistan was poised at the edge of middle-incomes status.

However, there were flaws. Pakistan's strategy ignored land and agriculture. It never tried to

carry out meaningful land reform as did many East Asian states and, to a lesser extent, India.<sup>36</sup> Second, there was a consistent policy of keeping wages low, harassing unions and not investing in basic education. Lewis said that after several generations of growth Pakistan could think of a more distributive and inclusive strategy.

The lack of education was to be a crippling problem as globalization intruded on Pakistan. It could not move up the value chain. In 2007-2008, the country's position on the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) was 92<sup>nd</sup>, falling to 101<sup>st</sup> in 2009-2010. The World Economic Forum's latest ranking for 2010-2011 places it at 123<sup>rd</sup> among 130 nations. A recent publication of the Competitive Support Fund (CSF) notes that while the Pakistan economy grew at a healthy rate of five percent per year over the last five decades, this was not the case with competitiveness of the country's goods and services or the value-added of its manufactured goods.<sup>37</sup> Instead, it came to depend on the remittances of workers that had sought employment elsewhere, notably the Gulf and other Muslim countries. As a result, very few Pakistanis pay income taxes (about three million of a population of over 170 million), and the country's tax-to-GDP ratio is just nine percent, the Pakistani argument being that this was justified since these few Pakistanis were extraordinarily productive, generating most of Pakistan's wealth and earning most of its foreign exchange.

---

<sup>36</sup> All this is in dismal contrast to India. At one time Pakistan had a much higher per capita income than the much larger (and generally poorer) India. Today, India, with its eight percent plus growth rate is one of the fastest growing economies in the world, at the top with Brazil and China. India's WIPRO software company has a bigger market cap than all of Pakistan.

<sup>37</sup> See Hussain H. Zaidi, "Only Option," *The News*, Islamabad, Sept. 19, 2010, at <http://www.jang.com.pk/thenews/sep2010-weekly/nos-19-09-2010/pol1.htm#5>.

The growth that *did* take place was misdirected. It favored the rich, with the result that Pakistan did not make the broad social and economic investments that would have prepared it for the onset of globalization, the linking of economies and peoples to the point where in some respects the world is truly flat. In Pakistan, the educated and well-off urban population lives not so differently from their counterparts in other countries of similar income range.

After peaking between 2005 and 2007, most economic indicators have witnessed dramatic deterioration. GDP growth, which in 2005 had reached a record of 7.7 percent, slowed down to an abysmal 1.6 percent during the recession in 2008, and is estimated at only 2.6 percent in 2011. After increasing steadily over the last two decades, the economy has proven unable to cope with demographic growth, leading GDP per head to stagnate at around \$2,400 since 2007. In the meantime, further increasing the burden on the population, inflation has skyrocketed, having crossed 20 percent in 2008 and not being estimated to fall below 10 percent for another few years. Never before have so many Pakistanis been looking for work; unemployment has now reached a twenty-year record of 14 percent, and is estimated to increase at least until 2013. With labor and other productivity indicators stagnated since 2006, it is not surprising that Pakistan is increasingly forced to rely on external sources. Inward foreign direct investment peaked in 2007 at \$6 billion, and is estimated to stabilize over the near future at \$2 billion annually. Pakistan continues to import more than it exports, leading to a current account deficit of 2.2 percent in 2009.<sup>38</sup> More importantly, the country depends increasingly on the generosity of foreign donors. Following the humanitarian disasters of the 2005 Kashmir earthquake and the 2010 floods, external assistance has

---

<sup>38</sup> *Economist Intelligence Unit*, Selected country data and estimates for Pakistan (1986-2013), <http://www.eiu.com>.

reached unprecedented levels: in 2009, the State Bank of Pakistan recorded a record \$4 billion in incoming development assistance, more than half of which from multilateral organizations and development banks.<sup>39</sup>

Apart from bureaucrats at the World Bank or diplomats from donor nations like the United States, Saudi Arabia, the U.K. and Japan, it is Pakistanis abroad that have expressed a resilient trust in their homeland's ailing economy: emigrant worker remittances totaled \$8.9 billion in fiscal year 2009-2010, a fourfold increase over 2001.<sup>40</sup>

The social consequences of this weak and uneven economic growth are very serious. As Anita Weiss notes, the poor and rural inhabitants of Pakistan have been left with limited resources, clamoring for jobs, decent schools for their many children, plagued by inflation, and living "quite literally" in the dark. Pakistan's ranking in the UNDP's Human Development Index slipped from 120 in 1991, to 138 in 2002, and to 141 in 2009 "worse than the Congo (136) and Myanmar (138), and only just above Swaziland (142) and Angola (143), all countries with far weaker economies."<sup>41</sup>

With greater numbers of people demanding goods and services in the country and most of them living in densely populated cities, Weiss and other students of Pakistan argue that the government must create economic space for the general population, not just the rich, and give priority to both economic and political justice. As greater percentages of citizens are

---

<sup>39</sup> See "Aid to Pakistan by the Numbers", Center for Global Development, <http://www.cgdev.org/section/initiatives/active/pakistan/numbers>.

<sup>40</sup> Data from the Board of Investment, Government of Pakistan, <http://www.pakboi.gov.pk/eco-ind.htm>.

<sup>41</sup> Data from the U.N.'s Human Development Index, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>.

cognizant of what transpires elsewhere in the world due to higher levels of education and the expansion of media coverage, they will naturally expect □ and demand □ more. On balance, weighing the few positive elements of the economy against the many negatives, it is hard to project that Pakistan will increase its growth rate or that the present maldistribution of income will change, or that the political class will support a higher tax rate. Nor will outside assistance, including the Kerry-Lugar funds, make up the difference.

Pakistan now barely survives on its own income and most social services are paid for by foreign countries. Were aid to cease, then the government would again be faced with financial failure. This happened in 2001, and it was only American intervention after 9/11 which came to the rescue of a bankrupt state. Both Pakistan's leaders and foreign donors know that given its present tax structure and weak export capability, Pakistan will remain dependent on foreign assistance indefinitely.

In many regards, Pakistan is becoming like the former East Pakistan □ Bangladesh □ although its strategic location, nuclear weapons and willingness to challenge the West in Afghanistan and India in Kashmir put it in a different strategic class.

Pakistan cannot provide basic services to its people. In the past, Pakistan could get away with this because a literate population was not required for the kind of economic developmental strategy that it had chosen, but today an educated population can be a greater asset than oil or mineral resources (of which Pakistan has little, in any case). It does not export many high value products; it provides only very low level services (mainly through the export of unskilled workers and professionals to other countries), and years ago it missed the opportunity to modernize its agricultural sector. In fairness, its friends and supporters, notably the United States and China, have not been helpful in either assisting the development of modern industries in Pakistan or allowing it to export

goods and services, notably textiles, free from tariff restrictions.

One major feature of the Pakistan economy is the large share of the budget spent on defense. Pakistan increased its defense budget by nearly 17 percent to a total \$5.17 billion for 2010-2011 to keep pace with inflation and new demands for troops and combat in the Khyber-Pakhtunwa province. Retired General Talat Masood, one of the most respected commentators on security policy, has said that spending on the Eastern (Indian) front remains constant, but the increase is directly related to new counterinsurgency requirements. Since 2001, Pakistan also received some \$15 billion in direct payments from the United States, two-thirds of it security related.<sup>42</sup>

From the mid-1990s, beginning with General Jehangir Karamat, successive army chiefs have been aware that Pakistan's weak economy made it difficult to keep troop levels high, maintain a ready force vis-à-vis India, and purchase sufficient modern equipment. Although shrouded by the rhetoric that Pakistan will meet every military contingency, and that Pakistani courage and skill will compensate for inadequate arms vis-à-vis India, every recent chief has had to confront the budget problem and some have supported negotiations with India. Budget problems are further complicated by the advent of nuclear weapons and the new combat requirements in the Frontier region, and the absence of transparency which rules out informed debate over defense spending □ the largest portion of the budget.

Of the factors in this cluster, it would seem that Pakistan's economy would be the easiest for policymakers to shape, as the country has shown high growth rates in the past. That may

---

<sup>42</sup> Zeeshan Haider, □ Militancy-Hit Pakistan Ups Defense Spending by 17 Percent, □ June 5, 2010, *Reuters*, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE6541UF20100605>.

no longer be possible, as Pakistan may have missed whatever opportunities were present when the world economy started to globalize rapidly. It was unprepared in terms of skill and educational levels, its domestic political order was too unstable, and it had little in terms of extractive resources. Pakistan has already slipped behind Bangladesh and India in terms of per capita income, and the gap is likely to grow.

## II: Pakistan's Identity

At their core, nations are ideas and the idea of Pakistan's has been in flux since it was first promulgated in the 1930s. We look at three elements of Pakistan's identity: the continuing debate over the meaning of Pakistan and what it means to be a Pakistani, the special difficulty of reconciling this identity with Islam, and regional and sub-national challenges to the idea of Pakistan.<sup>43</sup>

### The Still-Contested Idea of Pakistan

There are different ideas of Pakistan, held by the establishment, the army, ethnic and linguistic groups, different Islamic groups (especially in reference to intra-Islamic sectarian disputes), and by Pakistan's precariously situated minorities (who favor a secular state). A new challenge comes from an old quarter: the growth of class awareness and differences among Pakistanis, a development that both Islamists and secularists seek to exploit. In many ways, the Islamist movement resembles a class revolutionary movement. The avowedly secular Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) claims to be moving out of its urban Sindh and Karachi base into the Punjab and elsewhere gathering support among Pakistan's middle classes, challenging the PPP. We see first, a continuation of the seventy-year-old debate over what it means to

be a "Pakistani," and whether new meanings will drive out what remains of national identity and cohesion, and then turn to identity issues that stem from ethnolinguistic and sectarian challenges to Jinnah's idea of Pakistan.

It is hard to measure, but at least among Pakistan's elites there is an intensified debate over the purpose and meaning of Pakistan, triggered by a widespread sense that things have gone very wrong. This is notable among Pakistan's young, who do not share the optimism of their cohorts in other Asian states. The pages of English-language press are filled with laments about intolerance, bigotry and even racism, and the rise in violence directed against religious minorities, foreigners and linguistic outsiders. Pakistan is becoming tribalized, and the media is accelerating the process. Long-time visitors to Pakistan, whether Western or Asian, comment that this is not the Pakistan of the 1970s, let alone of the tranquil 1960s.

Can Pakistan continue on with this degree of discontent? It probably can, but it provides still another reason for explosion in the distant future. The new normal is abnormal, and even greater divisions about the purpose meaning of Pakistan can be expected.

### Ethnolinguistic Ambitions

The reports of a new breakup of Pakistan because of ethnic dissent are not to be taken seriously for the next five years.<sup>44</sup> Pakistan is a very diverse state, it contains many groups (as does India), some of which have attributes of "nations" — their own language, culture and even identity. Some polls seem to show that Pakistanis regard themselves as Pakistanis first, and Punjabis, Baloch, Sindhis or Mohajirs second, although the Pew Global

---

<sup>43</sup> See Cohen's *Idea of Pakistan* and Farzana Shaikh, *Making Sense of Pakistan* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2009).

---

<sup>44</sup> For an excellent overview of ethnicity in Pakistan see Alyssa Ayres, *Speaking Like a State: Language and Nationalism in Pakistan* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Affairs Project shows that Sindhis have a markedly lower sense of identity as Pakistanis than as Sindhis.<sup>45</sup> Polling in Pakistan is suspect, especially on such a sensitive issue, and in any case, powerful and disciplined minorities can shape outcomes of identity disputes, no matter what the polls say.

Pakistan's ethnic groups are not quite comparable, but all except Punjabis have faced the wrath of the central government as they have generated separatist or autonomist movements.<sup>46</sup> The Baloch are a tribal society, Sindhis are predominately rural, the Mohajir community is overwhelmingly urban (and displaced Sindhis are concentrated in Karachi and several cities in Sindh). Until now the army has been used only against these groups, but with the 2009 movement of the army into South Waziristan and other parts of the province of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, the former Northwest Frontier Province, Pashtuns have also squared off against the military.

The rise of ethnic consciousness and the more conciliatory position of the current government in Islamabad could, optimistically, sustain a new balance in Pakistan. The gradual emergence of provincial centers of power, supported by a rising civil society that has found voice through new mass media outlets had already changed politics. In 2010, after 19 years of debate, the National Finance Commission Award was ratified. This law gives greater say in the use of revenue and resources to the provinces. This realignment of power had long-term consequences. The

---

<sup>45</sup> Pew Global Attitudes project, *Growing Concerns About Extremism, Continuing Discontent with the US*, Aug. 13, 2009, <http://www.pewglobal.org>: "Most Say They are Pakistanis first," Question 99 of Pakistani Public Opinion.

<sup>46</sup> See the references in Cohen *Idea of Pakistan* to ethnolinguistic movements, especially Waseem, and for a recent study see Farhan Hanif Siddiqi, *The State and Politics of Ethnicity in Post-1971 Pakistan: an Analysis of the Baloch, Sindhi and Mohajir Ethnic Movements*. PhD thesis, Department of International Relations, University of Karachi, 2009.

new rules for revenue sharing under this award promise to give the federating units greater say over state resources and revert the country to its original federal structure. This development alone may help in staving off the centrifugal forces that have been threatening the cohesion of the state. However, few of the provinces — excepting Punjab — have the administrative capacity to take advantage of these new powers and responsibilities.

If more provinces are carved out of the current four, there is the theoretical possibility of emerging countervailing forces. This may reduce the enormous power of the Punjab, which concentrates over 60 percent of the country's population and holds a majority stake in the political system — 54 percent (148) of the 272 seats in the National Assembly are reserved for the province. Punjabis, who at 44 percent represent the largest ethno-linguistic group, keep a central, if not overrepresented position across a range of indicators: they represent 51 percent of the bureaucracy and 70 percent of the retired officer cadre.<sup>47</sup> Given this disproportionate power of the Punjab, we are unlikely to see a major constitutional adjustment in the next five years, and it would certainly have to be endorsed by the army.

Bellagio participant Josh White argues that the state can contain separatist forces. With the exception of 1971, when West Pakistani elites miscalculated their ability to crush the Bengali uprising and did not expect India to interfere militarily to support it, Pakistan's leaders have contained nationalist and separatist movements, albeit harshly at times. Pashtun nationalism, though troubling, never represented a pressing strategic threat to the state. Baloch movements were a thorn in the side of the military, but have been diminished with a combination of bribery and brutality. The

---

<sup>47</sup> Muhammad Mushtaq, and Syed Khawaja Alqama, "Poverty Alleviation through Power-Sharing in Pakistan," *European Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol.8, No. 3, pp. 459-468 (2009).

demand for a Saraiki province has gained little momentum. And the Hazarawals demanding a province, allied as they are with the weak PML-Q, hold little political leverage.

While these examples of ethnolinguistic nationalism seem unlikely to soon endanger the state, they could nonetheless undermine the legitimacy of the government and the army. Somewhat more likely is the possibility of a Pashtun nationalism revival — not from the left, in the tradition of the secular Awami National Party, but from the right, using the rhetoric and organization of new Pakistani Taliban groups. The most potent movements combine religion and ethnicity, and Pakistanis dread the possibility that this combination of religious passion, territorial claims, and linguistic and cultural commonality will appear in the form of the Pashtun-New Taliban movement sweeping KP with violent echoes in the larger Pashtun population, especially those living in Karachi.

The Pakistani Taliban have emerged as a new vehicle for the expression of Pashtun grievance but have been careful to portray themselves solely in religious rather than ethnic terms. This is perhaps because they consider religious mobilization to be more effective than ethnic mobilization; or perhaps because their ranks are increasingly supplemented by Punjabis from Kashmir- and sectarian-oriented organizations.

If the Pakistani or American militaries expand their operations in KP over the coming years, Taliban groups could leverage local discontent to promote a hybrid religious-ethnic narrative of resistance against the Pakistani government. This would not necessarily splinter the Pakistani state, but could result in deep antagonism toward the government, and the loss of peripheral areas in KP, FATA and Balochistan, to Taliban control.

The Punjab is the only province that has not yet had forces deployed in significant numbers for internal security reasons, partly because the state is heavily garrisoned by military units

facing India. The security problem is particularly sensitive in Punjab: it is the army's heartland, the country's population center, and the site of the most intense sectarian violence. It has also experienced savage attacks against seemingly innocuous targets, such as the Sri Lankan cricket team (in 2009), and against several key state icons, a navy school, the police training academy, and branches of the ISI and other intelligence services. Absent the improvement in the police force, the army is reluctant to intervene, and turns a blind eye, along with the politicians, to the mayhem that has overtaken most of the large cities, notably Lahore. When stories were published in the international press, the government's reaction and that of the military was to blame The New York Times and other newspapers for their anti-Pakistani tilt (suggesting that India or other foreign hands might be involved). In fact, some of the stories were leaked to foreign media by the policemen of Punjab, who did not receive support from provincial or national governments, let alone the army.

## Radical Islamists and Sectarianism

Islam and "Islamic" grievances, such as the Israel-Palestinian dispute, have always been at the heart of a country that was founded as the very first explicitly Muslim state. However, three events have accelerated the rise of militant Islam. The first was the Iranian revolution, which provided a potent model for Sunnis as well as Shiites. The second was the expansion of direct support for radical Islamists by the army, both within Pakistan and abroad. The third was the trauma of the American reaction (and that of much of the West) to 9/11 and the related invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan.

These developments have left behind a complex and dangerous relationship between the state and Islam that is not easily resolved. Pakistan, conceived as a refuge for Indian Muslims escaping Hindu oppression, has yet to properly define the role of Islam within the

state; what is not at question is that there is and will be a role for Islam (very few demand a secular Pakistan). Pakistan couches its "natural power projection" throughout Central and Southwest Asia in terms of its *Muslim-ness*, and claims, on civilizational grounds, a legitimate interest in protecting India's Muslims. As many observers have noted, Pakistan has come to rely upon Islamist proxies to prosecute its interests in the region, beginning in 1947 in Kashmir and in the 1960s in Afghanistan.<sup>48</sup>

The problem is not that most Pakistanis are Muslims and adhere to deeply-felt religious beliefs; it is that these beliefs have been exploited by state bureaucracies — notably the army — who support groups that are thought to be ideologically harmonious and primarily view militants, in instrumental terms, as tools to advance Pakistan's national interests.

This strategy was noticeable in the attempts to suppress the revolt in East Pakistan, but Hussein Haqqani claims that the use of Islamist mutants for state purposes took place much earlier. For those who support such strategies, this is not seen as a legitimate expression of the Islamist nature of Pakistan, analogous to the way in which the West, notably the United States, supports democratic groups around the world. Thus, support for Islamists in domestic politics as well as abroad, is a civilizational responsibility, not an act of terrorism.

---

<sup>48</sup> Praveen Swami, *India, Pakistan and the Secret Jihad* (London: Routledge, 2007); Rizwan Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy in Afghanistan* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005); Barnett Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); Mariam Abou Zahab, "The Regional Dimension of Sectarian Conflicts in Pakistan," in Christophe Jaffrelot Ed. *Pakistan: Nationalism Without a Nation?* (London: Zed, 2002), pp.115-128; International Crisis Group, *Pakistan: The Mullahs and the Military*, Asia Report No.49 (Islamabad: Crisis Group, March 2003); S. V. R. Nasr, "The Rise of Sunni Militancy in Pakistan: The Changing Role of Islamism and the Ulama in Society and Politics," *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1, pp. 139-180 (2000).

It is not Islam or religion that is the problem; it is how religion has been exploited by the state. The genie has escaped, and much of Pakistan's future will be determined by the effort to contain these groups. The most pessimistic of Pakistanis feel that the battle has been lost, and some seek refuge elsewhere. Pakistan is far from a theocracy — the Islamists are too much at each other's throats for that — but they are driving Pakistan towards a different kind of civil war, one in which religion and confessional avenues determine which side you are on.<sup>49</sup>

Is the process of creeping Islamization irreversible? Pakistanis are saturated with Islamist slogans. The country was always quite religious, and what is happening in Pakistan is similar to the growing religiosity seen elsewhere, not only in the Muslim world but also in Israel (the second state formed on the basis of religious identification and as a homeland for a persecuted minority) and the United States, but not in Europe, Latin America or Southeast Asia.

The admixture of religion and politics is potent, but even some of Pakistan's liberals, who despair at the creeping Islamization of their country, retain the hope that the trend is reversible, given good leadership. Pervez Hoodbhoy, the country's most distinguished scientist-commentator, concludes a widely distributed paper by writing that:

*I shall end this rather grim essay on an optimistic note: the forces of irrationality will surely cancel themselves out because they act in random directions, whereas reason pulls in only one. History leads us to believe that reason will triumph over unreason, and humans will continue their evolution towards a higher and better species. Ultimately, it will not matter whether we are Pakistanis, Indians, Kashmiris, or whatever. Using ways that we cannot currently*

---

<sup>49</sup> See Pervez Hoodbhoy for a worst case scenario, "Whither Pakistan," <http://pakistaniat.com/2009/06/16/pervez-hoodbhoy-pakistan-future/>.

*anticipate, people will somehow overcome their primal impulses of territoriality, tribalism, religion and nationalism. But for now this must be just a hypothesis.*<sup>50</sup>

The idea of a secular, moderate and democratic Pakistan is under attack from ethnic groups and religious extremists, and Jinnah's vision is not widely accepted. The idea of a more or less secular state, characterized by ethnic tolerance, may be irretrievable. Unless there is a radical transformation by the government in the form of a state that supports the idea of Pakistan by word and deed, we will see a continued erosion of the moral authority of the state and an increasingly fractious debate over the purpose of Pakistan.

### III: State Coherence

If nations are ideas, states are bureaucracies. In Pakistan, one specific bureaucratic organization (the army), which neither runs Pakistan effectively nor allows any other organization to do so, has dominated. In the meantime, the capacity of the Pakistani state has eroded over the last sixty years. This is evident when comparing the integrity and competence of the Pakistani state and its supporting institutions, such as the political parties, the bureaucracy and even the judiciary, with their counterparts in similar states. More than the distorting role of the military and the willingness — even eagerness — of politicians and the elite to be subordinated to the soldiers (which makes it a parody of the militarized state), it is Pakistan's geography and the negative consequences of globalization that work most strongly against it.

### Leadership and Political Parties

Pakistan's parties lack both democratic processes and the ability to aggregate interests — most are vehicles for individuals or narrow

social classes. Even in the largest and most open of the parties, elections within the organization are pro-forma. When asked before her death, Benazir told me that the PPP was not ready for internal democracy, and that it needed a strong leader (herself) to keep its factions together and to develop strategies to protect the party's integrity from assaults by state intelligence agencies. This is not changing. Some of the urban parties, like the MQM, appeal more to middle-class interest than to clan or family loyalty. But even the MQM has a strong ethnic base in the Mohajirs and their descendants, who are migrants from North and Central India.

Pakistan's political pattern has been an alternation between weak, unstable democratic governments and a benign authoritarianism, usually led by the army. These are likely to continue to define Pakistan over the next five years. The present democratic government is not popular but there is no groundswell for its replacement by either another military leader or a civilian dictator. Periodically, political figures have emerged who have been able to inspire and arouse the public in pursuit of a progressive scenario for Pakistan, but all have eventually forfeited the public's confidence. For a time in the early 1970s, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto transformed the country's political discourse and reconfigured politics; after 1998, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif serially acquired popular electoral mandates that might have broken the familiar mold of democratic politics; General Musharraf was initially widely welcomed in the expectation that he would use his presidency to create a fresh political ethos and attract a new breed of politicians.

As some of the Bellagio participants noted, a transformation of Pakistan's political system cannot be entirely ruled out. The mass support received in 2007 and 2008 by a lawyer's movement that championed an independent judiciary and democratic government suggests that a politically passive population can be mobilized for political action. The judiciary's recent assertiveness,

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

together with newly enacted constitutional changes restoring a parliamentary system, will conceivably lead to a stronger system of institutional checks and balances. Some observers see in these developments as an important step toward the realization of a progressive democratic scenario. Others worry that an arrogant, arbitrary judiciary in league with the military or an autocratic party leader can become a powerful instrument of repression.

Class disparities and inequities in the absence of a social safety net leave Pakistan with the basic ingredients for political and social upheaval. Pakistanis have reason to doubt that either the current civilian regime or a military-led government is interested in addressing their discontent. Yet the kind of transformations depicted by Pakistan's alternative scenarios face long odds. As Marvin Weinbaum noted, the best explanation lies in the continued absence of leadership and political outlets provided by programmatic parties, and an energized civil society that could produce popular mobilization.

An effective leader, with access to the liberalized print and electronic media, could tap into the frustrations growing out of severe energy and water shortages, sectarian violence, high food prices and generalized anger with the United States and the West, let alone India. High unemployment among the country's youth creates an especially volatile body of followers. For the time being, ethnic differences, persistent patron-client relations and powerful security forces limit the growth of such national or even regional movements. While this could change quickly as a result of rising extremist forces, a compromised military, or if the middle class were to lose its confidence in the system, most Bellagio participants agreed that, at least for the next five years, extreme changes are unlikely.

## The Military

For years, the military's role in Pakistan has been central, although there is also disagreement as to how pernicious it is.<sup>51</sup> It is not only an army of Pakistan, but one province, the Punjab, which is grossly overrepresented in both the officer corps and among the *javans*. So the army's political intervention is not merely that of a state bureaucracy, but also affects Punjab's relations with all of the other provinces.

Until recently, the most vehement critics of the military were Pakistani liberals and Indians. Now the Western press also finds fault, in part because of evidence of the army's link to terror groups that operate abroad and its support for the Afghan Taliban through the ISI.<sup>52</sup>

Three aspects of the army's centrality are important for Pakistan's future.<sup>53</sup> They are closely related but can be treated separately. They are the army's understanding of strategic threats to the country, notably its preoccupation with India; the army's relationship to civilian authority; and most recently — although it had roots in 1947 and 1971 — the army's relations with militant and extremist groups and radical Islamists.

***The Army and India.*** An obsession with India accompanied the birth of the Pakistan army: it came out of the Indian army, it fought the Indian army in 1947, and it sees India behind every threat to Pakistan. That some of these threats are real does not excuse

---

<sup>51</sup> Notably Aqil Shah, Hasan Askari Rizvi, and Shaukat Qadir, but almost every paper commented on the military in one way or another.

<sup>52</sup> See the needlessly insulting blog post published by Banyan, "Land of the Impure," *The Economist*, June 19, 2010, <http://www.economist.com/node/16377259>

<sup>53</sup> It is Pakistan's Army that is central, not the professional but politically marginal Air Force and Navy.

the army's collective obsession, which distorts its professional military judgment and shapes its views towards those who do not see India as the central problem facing Pakistan, or who believe that a negotiated settlement with India would be Pakistan's best option. This is a view that has never taken deep root in Pakistan, in part because India itself has generally pursued a tough line towards Pakistan. Below we will deal with India separately.

***The Army and Civilian Authority.*** As Aqil Shah writes, given history's sticky footprints Pakistan is unlikely to extricate itself from the "path dependent" pattern of a military-dominated state with an essentially revisionist foreign policy formed in the foundational first decade after independence. The historical sources of this "garrison state," including the perceived threat from India and the powerful (praetorian) military spawned by that threat, will continue to make exits to alternative futures less likely.

Shah and others see several futures ahead; the first one being the "freezing" of the political system in the intermediate, gray zone between full-fledged democracy and military autocracy. While exerting sustained civilian control over the military poses a formidable challenge for any transitional democracy, in this scenario, where the civilian government is responsible for and under pressure to squarely tackle broad governance issues (especially the potentially destabilizing economic and energy crises), the military will continue to operate in the shadows and rattle its sabers at will to prevent undesirable outcomes in domestic politics and foreign policy. New centers of power, such as the judiciary, might exert a countervailing democratic effect and help ensure the rule of law. But the scenario of more military mediation of civilian crises will reproduce the depressingly familiar (and democratically corrosive) pattern of civil-military relations under formal elected rule.

A second possible future involving the civil-military relationship would be the slow and

steady stabilization of democracy, but this would require some agreement between the two dominant parties and an increase in their coherence and ability to govern. Their recent bipartisan effort to consolidate parliamentary democracy by reversing authoritarian prerogatives in the constitution (such as the infamous Article 58 (2) B which empowered the president to arbitrarily dismiss an elected government) and conceding substantive provincial autonomy augur well for democratization. The two parties have so far resisted openly "knocking on the garrisons' doors" as they did in the 1990s. Recent reports of an escalating war of words between the two sides that concerns, among other issues, militancy and terrorism in the PML-controlled Punjab province, may yet erode the uneasy peace. But, on the whole, they appear to have learned from experience that it is better to play by the rules of the game and continue to tolerate each other rather than risk destabilizing the system, and losing power to the military for another decade.

On the basis of the experience of the Zardari government, some form of democratic stability is likely if civilians continue to work within a competitive electoral process while slowly reforming the legal and constitutional framework that had disfigured the 1973 constitution. While they continue to defer to the armed forces on critical strategic issues, politicians are acquiring a bit more political space and the now-common practice of working together in coalition governments, both at the center and in most of the provinces, will strengthen their understanding of how democracies operate.

But the margin for error is thin. It is true that the armed forces do not want to soon come back to power and civilian governments are strengthened by a new interest in democratic forms by the United States. However, other important backers, such as China and a few of the Gulf states, are not interested in democratic reform and are not bothered by authoritarian or military rule, as long as order is maintained. It may also be that the "one

man, one vote, once sequence is temporarily ended, and that Islamist parties are being tamed by their participation in local, provincial, and national elections. Twice, once in 1970, and again in 1997, moderate mainstream parties have electorally stalled the Islamists. And while the JeI boycotted the most recent ballot in 2008, even the relatively more successful Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) won only six of the 108 national assembly seats it contested. However, this has to be balanced by the poor economic performance of the Zardari government, the structural problems that it faces in sheer governance and in the growth of extra-parliamentary forces to the right as evidenced by increased social violence, assassination and terrorism.

However, as Aqil Shah observes in his paper, democratic institutionalization requires more than balancing just the civilian side of the equation. It also needs a military committed both behaviorally and attitudinally to a subordinate role in a democratic framework. The military's behavior appears to have changed since it withdrew from government, but it is important to recall it did not withdraw to the barracks because of a shift in its core praetorian ethos. Neither Kayani's professionalism nor Musharraf's lack of professional restraint can explain the military's recent political behavior. In fact, the Pakistani army's problem has never been professionalism per se. Shah is correct when he describes the army as having a particular brand of tutelary professionalism which gives it a sense of entitlement over the polity, and structures its responses to changes in the surrounding political environment.

Shah's third and most drastic scenario is a military coup d'état followed by military-led authoritarian rule. There are both domestic and international factors which may counteract, if not eliminate, this option. If the past is any guide, the military usually waits at least half a decade or so for its next intervention. Pakistan's revived civil society (lawyers' associations, human rights groups, NGOs and sections of the media) and more demo-

cratically-oriented parties will, under an optimistic scenario, probably ensure that the military has no real occasion to openly undermine or overthrow an elected government.

In managing the civil-military relationship I part company with the view held by many in Pakistan, that it is wrong to bring the army in to keep it out through such arrangements as the National Security Council (NSC). The logic is that civil-military integration would induce a partnership on all important national issues and prevent the military from going it alone. Besides being patently anti-democratic, conceding the military an institutionalized role in politics has not been a source of stability anywhere, not even in the archetype Turkey. As I wrote in 1985,<sup>54</sup> the army cannot be pushed out of power and expected to stay there - its withdrawal from politics must be staged, in both sense of the word, and demonstrable civilian competence must replace it gradually as it withdraws from each sector of society. This cannot happen in some spheres, such as natural disaster relief where the army is the only institution with capacities to manage such crises. This was the case in the Oct. 8, 2005 earthquake that devastated parts of the NWFP and Pakistani-administered Kashmir; the pattern was repeated in the 2010 earthquake.

Civilian capacity cannot be built up overnight, and a NSC arrangement that has education and strengthening civilian institutions as part of its core mission would not only solve the serious problem of policy coordination but would also socialize civilians in decisions that had previously been the exclusive responsibility of the armed forces. Senior retired generals and officials have spoken and written about taking this step to improve the linkage between civilian leaders and the army, but nothing has been done to implement these ideas.

---

<sup>54</sup> Cohen, *The Pakistan Army* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

### ***The Military and Internal Militancy.***

Pakistan could theoretically be on the path blazed by several countries around the world, most recently in South America. There, the ouster of the military from power and, crucially, a lasting reduction of military autonomy, were linked to the cessation of the internal threats that had originally induced the military to turn inward and take over the control of politics. But Pakistan's dilemma is that not only are there new and serious domestic threats — the external threat remains as well. The army's first reaction was to see an Indian hand behind domestic terrorist and separatist groups. This was not an implausible response, given Indian involvement in the East Pakistan movement. But the irony is that the Pakistan military fostered many of these groups itself and it now faces a classic case of blowback.<sup>55</sup>

The army is gearing up for a systematic expansion of its counterinsurgency operations.<sup>56</sup> This comes after such operations were dismissed in favor of the army's traditional — low intensity conflict — strategy, which consisted of quick in-and-out operations. Now the military realizes that it must have a strong civilian component to counter insurgents, who are deeply embedded in the Frontier, a pre-occupation that is widely reflected in recent

---

<sup>55</sup> The Pakistan army officer corps is not a hotbed of radical Islamic thinking, although it does engage with Islamic theories of war and searches for ways in which Islamic principles can guide it. See Stephen P. Cohen, *The Pakistan Army* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). Ambitious officers follow a Western professional model, and many are concerned with blowback from the army's support for radical Islamists. Their own theology is pragmatic, but they have not yet found a strategy to counter true extremism, in and outside of the army, as they distrust — liberal — political and social thought.

<sup>56</sup> See Stephen P. Cohen, *Mastering Counterinsurgency: A Workshop Report*, based on a conference with the National Defense University of Pakistan, March, 2009, [http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2009/0707\\_counter\\_insurgency\\_cohen.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2009/0707_counter_insurgency_cohen.aspx)

army and military writing on the subject.<sup>57</sup> Even more consequential, and as of yet not addressed by the military, is the task of containing and eliminating groups that have targeted the state (like the Tehrik-i-Taliban in the Frontier), but which are Punjab-based. The evidence so far is that the army has both conceptually and organizationally avoided this, pleading that it is badly overstretched in the Frontier as it is. The army has suffered huge casualties there, and it finds itself hard-pressed to fight against a Pashtun enemy with a Punjabi arm. As one close observer of the process reported, officers returning from combat in Waziristan use the term — invaders — to describe their presence there. They are not proud of the role, but given the open challenge to the state in general and to the army in particular, this domestic insurgency is a more immediate threat than India.

### **Basic Governance**

One of the most devastating developments in Pakistan over the last forty years has been the systematic destruction of the state *qua* state. This is well-documented, and the trend has not and perhaps cannot be reversed.<sup>58</sup> This is

---

<sup>57</sup> For recent Pakistan Army discussions on regional issues, see, for example, recent editions of *The Citadel*, the journal of the Command and Staff College, Quetta, notably Muhammed Anneq Ur Rehman Malik, — Military Lessons of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) —, Vol. 26, No. 1, (2008); Raza Muhammad, — Indian Cold Start Doctrine — A Brief Review —, Vol. 27, No. 1 (2009); Saad Mahmood, — Indo-US Nuclear Deal: Implications for Pakistan —, Vol. 28, No. 1 (2010); Qaiser Ajmal Khattak, — FATA Problem — A Perspective —, Vol. 28, No. 2 (2010).

<sup>58</sup> For a contemporary European study that emphasized the importance of state governance, see Marco Mezzera, — Challenges of Pakistan's Governance System, NOREF Policy Brief No. 2, Oct. 2009 (<http://www.peacebuilding.no/eng/Publications/Noref-Policy-Briefs/Challenges-of-Pakistan-s-Governance-System>). Numerous academic studies have told of the systematic destruction of state capacity in Pakistan. For a recent comprehensive account, which brings the process up-to-date see the fine history by Ilhan Niaz, *The Culture of Power and Governance of Pakistan: 1947-2008*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010).

one of Pakistan's critical weaknesses, worsened by the attempts of the army to carry out functions ordinarily executed by civilians. This goes beyond "civil-military relations," it pertains to the state's capacity to tax, to educate (discussed elsewhere), to maintain law and order (the police function), and the ability to make strategic policy, integrating military, political, economic and administrative compulsions in a central decision making process. The state's weakness is measurable in terms of Pakistan's low ranking on almost every governance indicator (crime, corruption, attitude towards the state), and its high ranking on the Failed State Index, where it slipped from twelfth place in 2007 to the current Top 10 and "critical" status.<sup>59</sup> The latter is deceptive because, while the state has lost much of its organizational integrity, it is still a formidable entity, compared with the hollowed out Afghanistan.

Nevertheless, demands on the state are growing as its capacity shrinks, and the population continues to expand at a stunning rate. This could be a race that is already lost. Especially alarming is the incoherence at the very top. In crisis after crisis, especially in security affairs, the state's decision-making system has failed. Whether Kargil, the Mumbai attack, the response to 9/11, or the failed attempt to get negotiations started again with India (which reflects the incapacity of the Pakistan government to demonstrate to India and others that it has militants under control), there is ineffectiveness. It stems in part from the civil-military divide but also from the loss of a great inheritance from the Raj: a civil service that functioned, and a working relationship between civil servants and politicians. The root cause of course is the military's supersedence of both politicians and bureaucrats, so again basic reform has to track back to the military's disproportionate role in governance, and that in turn may be very hard to reverse. It will take years, if not decades,

---

<sup>59</sup> Failed State Index, by *Foreign Policy* and The Fund For Peace, at <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/failedstates>

and a long period of peace, even if civilian competence is allowed to grow.

## The Judiciary and the Lawyers

The judiciary and the legal profession barely qualify as major factors in shaping Pakistan's future. It is true that the actions of the judges, especially the Chief Justice, predicated a crisis in Musharraf's government, and that the Lawyer's March contributed to his downfall, but there is no evidence that as institutions the courts or the lawyers will not support the establishment mainstream and will not be strongly influenced by army views. In the words of one veteran American journalist who spent considerable time in Pakistan, Justice Chaudhry is very popular and wants justice, and, while not being a politician, he is a true revolutionary in the current Pakistani context. He wants to move Pakistan to a normal democracy in one jump, but there is no support for this strategy from either the military or the politicians.

Pakistan inherited a great Western legal tradition, and its lawyers are among the best in the world, but they are constrained. They do not have enduring street power, and the idea of the law as supreme is not generally respected in a country where force and coercion play major roles. Judges and lawyers have also been at the forefront in rationalizing the army's regime in the name of stability. On occasions they have stood up to individual military leaders but never to the army as an institution.

## The New Media

In U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's felicitous phrase, the new media has created a new global nervous system. For years, Pakistani governments used state-controlled media to bombard and indoctrinate the public. There was an obsession with Palestine and closer to home, with Kashmir. For Pakistanis, taking an assertive stand on these

issues was part of their national identity. Before Benazir's reforms, the Pakistani press was tightly controlled and several media outlets — notably television and radio — were state owned and operated.

Now, both the medium and the messages are ambiguous. Pakistan is being flooded with confusing and contradictory images and Pakistanis, as well as "Islam", have become global media targets. This has affected educated Pakistanis deeply; they feel that Western media has unfairly singled out their country and that they are victims of a media conspiracy. Pakistan's own media — especially cable television — has not produced quality analysis of important events, and the liberalization of the Pakistani press, which is often hailed as a sign of the strength of civil society, has an underside. As Christine Fair notes, Pakistan's private media appear vibrant and diverse, with networks as Geo TV being world-class, but on issues of national security and contentious domestic affairs, they are heavily self-censored and influenced by commentators with ties to the military and intelligence agencies.

It is evident that new social media and communication methods such as SMS services are disseminating information quickly and help mobilize civil society beyond the grasp of the state, something that senior generals view with frustration and concern. Yet this mobilization strengthens not only liberal forces — radical and Islamist groups have also used the neutral technology very successfully. The net impact of media liberalization is therefore still an unknown and remains an important question that deserves objective and empirical study.

The press and the new media are thus wild cards when it comes to mobilizing and potentially transforming Pakistan. The new media and social networks supplant some of the traditional patterns of face-to-face influence, and even the impact of Friday sermons in the mosques. What we have in the media is a pack of wild cards, balancing

traditional Pakistani social conservatism. However, conservatism still reigns in the mosques and *madaris*, where the sermons range from the irrelevant to the hardline.<sup>60</sup>

## Transferring Power

Finally, given the fact that one of Pakistan's core problems has been political instability and its inability to manage an orderly transfer of power (its second free election was not until 1988, the first having resulted in a civil war in 1970), it is important to look at the way in which one government or regime yields to another. Both Islamist and left critics argue, not without justification, that it hardly matters who governs in Pakistan. But the prospect of an orderly transfer of power, one in which winners and losers accept the results and move on, is at the very core of the process of normal political change, and has been absent in Pakistan since its formation.

The way power is transferred in Pakistan seems to have undergone some changes. If the country proceeds along its present path, in which the idea of free elections, abiding (mostly) by the law, and a more normal civil-military relationship becomes entrenched, this would be a major change. In the past, there was only the issue of how much the army would tolerate before it stepped in, followed by rationalizations by compliant lawyers and politicians eager to accept a tiny place at the political table.

Musharraf's accession to power was in the classic pattern: an incompetent democratic government was displaced by a personally ambitious general to wide international

---

<sup>60</sup> There are very few attempts to study, let alone measure, the impact of Friday sermons and the mosques on public opinion. For a rare glimpse see the studies carried out by a group of students and observers by Mashal, the liberal publication and reprint house created by Pervez Hoodbhoy. See "Message from the Mosque," a review of mosque sermons that can be searched by category and topic. <http://imams.mashalbooks.org/>.

disinterest and much support, due to of Nawaz's transparent incompetence and drive to gain power. He was on the road to becoming a dictator; Musharraf intervened in the name of competent government, and then proceeded to imagine himself as a latter-day Ayub Khan.

The transition to Zardari was also followed a pattern. The army was discredited (as it had been under Ayub, Yahya and Zia). But this time Pakistan was far more important internationally, and influential outsiders shaped and then bungled the transition. This was not intended to restore real democracy to Pakistan but to keep Musharraf in power. Originally the United States and Great Britain worked out an arrangement by which Musharraf would allow Benazir Bhutto to return to Pakistan, run for election, and presumably become prime minister again, in a presidentially dominated arrangement. American Ambassador Ryan Crocker and British High Commissioner Mark Lyall Grant brokered the deal, but neither government thought it was necessary to include other Pakistani politicians, in effect making Benazir the target not only of those who opposed her, but of those elements in Pakistan that wanted to force Musharraf out as president.<sup>61</sup>

The end result — a weak president and a weak prime minister — was more acceptable to the corporate army than a strong leader, such as Benazir would have been. This transition was an aberration — it happened in largely because of the shock at Benazir's death and American and British requirements for support for the war in Afghanistan. When it became clear that Musharraf was unable to provide that stability, a deal was brokered between Benazir and Musharraf, and then they acquiesced in

---

<sup>61</sup> It may never be known whether it was state incompetence or malevolent intent that led to the neglect of her security arrangements. She added to the problem with her belief that the people of Pakistan would protect her from known elements that wanted her dead.

Musharraf's departure, as he had become a divisive figure in his own right. However, 2010 showed that even a weak government can initiate major reforms (more than almost any other government in Pakistan's history), but then the tasks it faces are much greater.

To summarize, the factors that affect the competence of the Pakistani state are generally negative. Despite the efforts of the Zardari administration to reform the system, the levers of power — the civil bureaucracy, the higher decision-making system, and the public-private interface are all incoherent. The state has yet to regain the integrity it had forty or fifty years ago, even though it is called on to do much more by way of economic development and higher standards of administration. Corruption is rife, but would be acceptable if the government were able to deliver the basic services expected of a modern state. The media and the NGO community cannot replace the state, and fundamental reform is not supported by the strongest institution of all, the army.

#### IV: External and Global Factors

While the current cliché seems to be that Pakistanis are ultimately responsible of their own fate, and they may have an exaggerated view of the pernicious role of outsiders, external factors do shape Pakistan to an untoward degree. We treat separately the roles of Afghanistan, the United States, China and India, as well as the impact of globalization and Pakistan's status as a nuclear weapons state.

#### Afghanistan

Several years ago, in its final published report on Pakistan, the country was assessed by the National Intelligence Council not in terms of its own qualities (about which earlier NIC studies were sharply alarmist), but entirely in

terms of its relationship with Afghanistan.<sup>62</sup> This reflected changes in American priorities, which remain the same in late 2010. With the presence of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, Pakistani stability and its future are important but secondary concerns. According to conversations in late 2010, even India's role in Afghanistan, or India-Pakistan relations that are so vital to Islamabad, are on some vague "to do" list of senior U.S. officials and receive little attention.

There has always been a two-way flow between Pakistan and Afghanistan. For years, Pakistan has played a role in Afghan politics, largely through its support of the Taliban — first overt, now covert — but there is also a reverse flow. Pakistan's future will be shaped by developments in Afghanistan, which track back to Pakistan in three ways: Indian involvement in the country, the American presence, and the connection between Afghanistan and Pakistan created by the overlapping Pashtun population. Of the states with interests in Afghanistan, only Pakistan's can be said to be vital; since the Pashtun movement challenges Pakistan's borders and its claim that Islam and national unity override ethnic parochialism.

American relations with Afghanistan also influence Pakistan because Kabul is more important to it than Islamabad, even in the short term. While Pakistanis assert that they distrust the United States and must prepare for any eventuality, they are fundamentally bothered by the fact that the Americans cannot articulate a desired end-state for Afghanistan, much less a strategy to achieve it. Pakistan's main objective — guided by the army's perceptions — will be to diminish India's influence in Afghanistan and secure a regime that is minimally hostile to Pakistan. Policy continuity will persist under civilian or

military leaders. Pakistan also wishes to retain its role in Afghanistan as a security manager, because of the vital question of the overlapping Pashtun populations in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and also because it receives substantial payments and political support from Washington, due to its role as a base for U.S. operations in Afghanistan.

As of the time of writing, the United States has indicated that it plans to start withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2011, although administration spokesmen claim that there will be a long-term U.S. presence, extending out for an indeterminate period and at an indeterminate level. That presence, in the words of one official, will not be Korea-like, a firm alliance — Afghanistan will not become a member of NATO — but neither will it be zero. Somewhere between one and one hundred are the intermediate "options" being considered. But realistically, it is very difficult to imagine what an Afghanistan will look like even in one year, that is, by mid-2012.

From Pakistan's perspective, if the Afghan Taliban were to assume power militarily or politically, or enter into a coalition with elements of the Kabul government, the odds of a stable arrangement are slim. If one factors in their radical allies — the "syndicate," as termed by a White House official in Dec. 2010 — then Pakistan will find many channels of influence in Afghanistan. These include the Haqqani network — the Taliban's former ally — al-Qaida, the Quetta Shura, and several of the Islamist parties active in Pakistan itself. Most of these groups would welcome a compromise agreement that would allow them greater freedom to operate in Afghanistan. Without that, they and their former mujahedeen allies, notably in the Haqqani network and the Hizb-e-Islami, will be ever more beholden to radical Islamic interests outside the region. Their links to al-Qaida and jihadi organizations in Pakistan remain strong. Together these groups form a network that aims at the removal of Western influences and the creation of a *Shariah* state in Afghanistan. And there is no reason not to believe that the

---

<sup>62</sup> National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2025: a Transformed World* (Washington, DC: National Intelligence Council, NIC 2008-003, November 2008, p. 72.

Taliban would help launch Islamic militants into Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, as they did a decade ago. Most importantly, a successful Afghan Taliban insurgency is almost certain to energize Taliban forces that seek to achieve a similar Sharia state in Pakistan.

Robert Blackwill anticipates the likely failure of the ISAF/American counter-insurgency strategy over the next several years.<sup>63</sup> This is almost certain to promote civil conflict in Afghanistan and set the stage for a regional proxy war. Ethnic minority Tajiks, Hazara and Uzbeks in Afghanistan can be expected to resist any outcome that restores the Taliban to power. They learned a decade ago that the Taliban will not be satisfied with control of just Pashtun majority areas and seeks to extend its authority over the entire country. With Pakistan as the Taliban's patron, Iran, Russia and the Central Asian republics will similarly seek spheres of influence in Afghanistan. And for all of Pakistan's concerns about Indian influence, a civil war in Afghanistan could increase Indian activity, perhaps with American encouragement. Furthermore, the possibility of Indian military advisors and arms transfer cannot be ruled out, and some Indians speak of using India's massive training infrastructure to train a new and anti-Pakistani Afghan army. Saudi Arabia will also exert influence through client groups, mostly in order to minimize Iranian gains.

A new civil war in Afghanistan will generate millions of refugees, some of whom will flee into Pakistan. These refugees will put a new financial burden on Pakistan. In the face of inflation and unemployment, and a weak, corrupt government, civil unrest in Pakistan provoked by extremist groups cannot be ruled out. The most likely outcome would be a full-fledged return to power for the Pakistan

military and a declaration of martial rule or its equivalent.

A negotiated settlement between the Afghan Taliban and the Karzai government would be the best way for Pakistan to ensure an India-free Afghanistan and also to avoid a civil war. Pakistan's motives closely resemble its efforts in the late 1980s to promote a post-Soviet coalition government in order to avoid a power vacuum. The case for negotiations with the Afghan Taliban is also an old one. When the Taliban was in power in Afghanistan, Pakistani officials regularly argued that the leadership under Mullah Omar was capable of acting independently and not necessarily beholden to terrorist organizations such as al-Qaida. Allowed to consolidate their power and given international recognition, the Taliban would be anxious to moderate their policies. Then, as now, Pakistan insisted that its influence with Afghan insurgents puts it in a unique position to broker an agreement. This is a view strongly contested by senior American officials from the Clinton administration who dealt with the Taliban — they remain unpersuaded that the "new" Taliban are any different.

Of the many difficulties in estimating Pakistan's future, Afghanistan is certainly near the top. It affects relations with the United States, it has a potential influence on Pakistan's Pashtun population and a victory for the Taliban would be regarded as a civilizational victory by Pakistan's Islamic extremists. Afghanistan is also the scene of a Pakistan-Indian conflict. Conversations with senior Pakistan army leaders in September 2010 indicate that their strategies for a future Afghanistan may be more nuanced. In saying that "we can't have Talibanization" if we want to remain modern and progressive, General Kiyani is also suggesting that Pakistan is better served if the Taliban does not prevail in Afghanistan.<sup>64</sup> The application of his

---

<sup>63</sup> Robert Blackwill, "Plan B in Afghanistan, Why a De Facto Partition Is the Least Bad Option" *Foreign Affairs*, Jan.-Feb. 2011. [http://www.cfr.org/publication/23655/plan\\_b\\_in\\_afghanistan.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/23655/plan_b_in_afghanistan.html).

---

<sup>64</sup> Pamela Constable, "Pakistan's army chief seeks stable Afghanistan", *Washington Post*, Feb. 2, 2010. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp->

remarks was even clearer with his words that "we cannot wish for Afghanistan what we don't wish for Pakistan." But, in practice, can the Pakistan army control the Taliban? When they ruled in Kabul relations were often difficult; there is no reason why a resurgent Taliban might not target Pakistan itself, riding the crest of a civilizational victory over the West, and for some Islamists, their Pakistani stooges.

Theoretically, the best option for Pakistan would be strategic cooperation with India on Afghanistan. This now seems unlikely given the deep roots of India-Pakistan hostility, and the disinterest of major powers in promoting such cooperation; a truly regional approach to Afghanistan is also stymied by the apparent impossibility of U.S.-Iran cooperation on Afghan policy, even though the two did collaborate in the aftermath of the 9/11 attack, when Iran assisted America in rounding up the Taliban and al-Qaida.

## United States

Pakistani perceptions are that the United States has repeatedly used and abused Pakistan. The narrative describes consistent American betrayal, beginning with the 1962 war between India and China, when it could have forced India to accept an agreement on Kashmir; during the 1965 India-Pakistan war, when the United States cut off aid to a formal ally, Pakistan, after India crossed the international boundary; and in 1972, when it again abandoned Pakistan in the face of Indian military aggression that led to the loss of half the country.<sup>65</sup> The cutoff of military

[dyn/content/article/2010/02/01/AR2010020102506.html](http://dyn/content/article/2010/02/01/AR2010020102506.html)

<sup>65</sup> For a comprehensive history of U.S.-Pakistan relations see Dennis Kux, *The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000: Disenchanted Allies* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001). For a unique study of Pakistani negotiating strategies with the United States see also Schaffer and Schaffer, *Pakistan Negotiates with America: Riding the Roller-Coaster*, forthcoming, 2011, United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington, DC.

supplies by the Pressler amendment and the invasion of Afghanistan were only the most recent examples of American "betrayals" and "untrustworthiness" — formalized in the Pakistani lament that there was a massive trust deficit between the two states, and that, as the larger partner, it was up to the United States to demonstrate that it was a reliable and trustworthy friend. This attitude continues now with regard to the Afghan policy and the U.S.-India nuclear agreement. The Pakistani military is not shy about presenting its view of the Afghan situation and of American mistakes.<sup>66</sup>

Under President Bush, the United States pursued a policy of de-hyphenation in South Asia, arguing that America should pursue policies with India and Pakistan consonant with the merits of each country, irrespective of U.S. relations with the other or the continuing security competition between the two. Ashley Tellis argued that India, as a rising power, deserves an increasingly strategic relationship with the United States. In contrast, Pakistan should be prepared for a soft landing.<sup>67</sup> After the events of 9/11 and the centrality of Pakistan, the soft landing was deferred. However, Washington transformed its relations with India under the umbrella of de-hyphenation, with the centerpiece of this being the U.S.-Indian civilian nuclear deal.

Pakistan viewed Washington's commitment to advance Indian power with alarm. For the

<sup>66</sup> Stratfor, "A Pakistani response to the U.S. Annual Review," Dec. 21, 2010, <http://www.stratfor.com/memberships/178428/analyses/20101220-pakistani-response-us-annual-review>. Also see the briefings of Gen. Kiyani, widely available on the Internet.

<sup>67</sup> See Ashley J. Tellis, "South Asia: U.S. Policy Choices," in *Taking Charge: A Bipartisan Report to the President-Elect on Foreign Policy and National Security* (Discussion Papers, ed. Frank Carlucci, Robert E. Hunter, and Zalmay Khalilzad (Santa Monica: RAND, 2001), p. 88, [https://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph\\_reports/MR1306.1/MR1306.1.sec3.pdf](https://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1306.1/MR1306.1.sec3.pdf).

army and for many civilian strategists, it was proof that the United States had chosen India over Pakistan as its regional ally. This view was barely softened by the massive infusion of military assistance and lucrative reimbursements that Pakistan has received since 9/11. The United States has sought to induce Pakistan into greater cooperation by offering it (like India) a strategic dialogue, which has gone through several iterations. However, Pakistanis still resist the idea of a close, enduring relationship, remaining convinced that the American commitment is short-term and linked to the situation in Afghanistan. The U.S. government, however, maintains that the India-U.S. relationship should have no bearing upon Pakistan's standing. This is incomprehensible in Pakistan. The United States has been unable to forge a plausible "new big idea" for Pakistan as it did for India. Until Washington can put forward meaningful and new (likely political) carrots and effective sticks, and develop the political will to do both, the United States will likely be unable to positively influence the arc of Pakistan's development. We will discuss this further in the policy section below.

The United States and Pakistan will remain at odds for the foreseeable future. From the American perspective, there is impatience with Pakistan's corruption, its imbalanced civil-military relationship, its support (or tolerance) for the Afghan Taliban, and for the permissive attitude towards terrorist groups based in Pakistan which, in some cases, are supported by the Pakistani government. America and Pakistan continue a fruitless game of pressure and counter-pressure over Afghanistan. The Pakistan army seems determined to maintain a foothold in the Afghan political theater, and whenever American pressure becomes too obnoxious, Washington finds that its supply routes into Afghanistan are mysteriously held up. While dependency on these routes has been reduced substantially from the 80 percent cited in 2005, and while vital equipment and supplies, such as weapons, are also flown in, the

ground route is essential for petrol and bulk supplies.

Additionally, the ability of the Islamists to sell their viewpoint in Muslim societies is closely linked to how Western policies are perceived. As Moeed Yusuf argues, if short-term interests continue to dictate the Western agenda and the people of Pakistan see themselves being left out of the bargain, Western policy will continue to fuel the very mindset it seeks to eliminate in the first place. Patience, however, may not withstand another terror attack originating in Pakistan and targeting Western property and individuals.

The establishment in Pakistan is skeptical of U.S. policy in Afghanistan and deeply resistant to cooperation on nuclear and intelligence matters. As several cables reported in the WikiLeaks episode point out, and as revelations about the identification of intelligence personnel show (in late Dec. 2010), Pakistan believes that close intelligence cooperation could be turned against it, especially when it comes to the security of its nuclear arsenal, or that America might share critical and embarrassing information with India regarding terror attacks — as it did by giving India access to David Headley, the confessed Pakistani-American who was central to the Mumbai attacks.<sup>68</sup>

As of late 2010, there is no reliable indication that Pakistani opinion — official or otherwise — is less skeptical of American intentions and actions.

The most damaging event would be a Pakistan-originated attack on Americans or on the U.S. homeland. A successful attack along the lines of the Times Square bombing of May 2010 (a venture that was hatched in Pakistan, although it used an American citizen

---

<sup>68</sup> Jane Perlez, "WikiLeaks Archive - U.S. And Pakistan, Ever Wary," *New York Times*, Dec. 1, 2010, [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/01p/world/asia/01/wikileaks-pakistan.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/01p/world/asia/01/wikileaks-pakistan.html?_r=1).

and which may have been known to Pakistani authorities) would lead to a powerful popular and Congressional reaction to punish Pakistan, or at least to stop rewarding it.

A crisis between the United States and Pakistan could also come about for other reasons. In late December 2010, there were reports about plans to send Afghan "militia" groups into Pakistan, on missions that would attack groups operating from Pakistani territory, including training facilities. There had been a few of these, but the largest American intrusion into Pakistan had been by drone attacks. These and the militia could be targeted against al-Qaida, the Afghan Taliban (seeking refuge in Pakistan), or other groups, such as the Haqqani network and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, based in Pakistan but really part of the Afghan political nexus.

Second, there could be missions designed to break up or attack terrorist training facilities in Pakistan, where U.S.-trained groups and individuals would target one or more objectives, including Afghans based in Pakistan.

In these cases, lesser grievances, such as the refusal to grant Pakistan favorable terms for its textile exports to the United States, will become irrelevant and direct attacks on Pakistan territory via drones would be very likely, and might signal a shift in American policy towards Pakistan itself (see the discussion below on policy alternatives).

Yet, Pakistan can ill afford to alienate the United States. There is no ready substitute for the advanced weapons and training the United States provides the Pakistani military with, as well as budgetary assistance and development aid for the economy. American assistance is also instrumental in unlocking the support from other sources. A more liberal U.S. trade policy could have an enormous effect on private direct investment and on job creation and might serve to strengthen democratic government in Islamabad. Pakistan also looks to the United States to apply pressure on

India to come to the negotiating table on Kashmir and other issues, and has relied on American and British diplomacy in times of crisis with India. Although the United States has few policy instruments with which to influence the course of Pakistan's domestic politics, their bilateral relations are regularly the subject of domestic debate that can strengthen or weaken a regime.

What is euphemistically called a trust deficit has for some time defined the U.S. relationship with the elites and public of Pakistan, and will continue to influence the partnership. Conspiracy theories about U.S. collusion with India and Israel to weaken Pakistan and seize its nuclear weapons are widely shared, even at the highest echelons of the army. Despite the recognition of the threat posed by the country's militants, most Pakistanis believe that the radicalization of the frontier comes as a direct result of U.S. counterterrorism policies and military operations in Afghanistan. Less than a tenth of the public holds a favorable view of the United States and almost twice as many Pakistanis see the United States as a greater threat to Pakistan's security than India.<sup>69</sup> Changing these views is a long term project that probably has to begin with the United States being willing to offer agreements on trade and nuclear issues, neither of which is in sight over the next several years.

## China: The New South Asian Power

China has systematically expanded its role in South Asia, but nowhere more than in Pakistan, where it is the dominant outside power. Its popularity among elites and in most of the provinces, its economic penetration, as well as its comprehensive support for the security establishment in the forms of military hardware and nuclear technology

---

<sup>69</sup> BBC, "Global Views of United States Improve While Other Countries Decline", April 18, 2010, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/160410b\\_bcwspoll.pdf](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/160410b_bcwspoll.pdf)

means that its already-huge role in Pakistan is growing. This was symbolized by the visit of Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao in December 2010. Approximately \$35 billion worth of aid and trade agreements were signed over a three day period, and there were the usual effusive statements from Chinese officials about the importance of Pakistan to China.<sup>70</sup> Almost all press reports and commentaries noted how easy it was to deal with China as compared to the Americans, who made unreasonable demands on Pakistan, including unrealistic requests that the overstretched Pakistan Army take on militants in the KP region.

The exaggerated rhetoric used by Pakistanis to describe the relationship demonstrates both China's importance and their distrust of the United States and, of course, India. Further, the Chinese have figured out how to deal with Pakistanis — by lavish public praise and *suo moto* criticism about instances where Pakistani actions endanger Chinese interests, as in the case of training of Islamist militants of Chinese origin. The rise of an assertive and competent China, powered by a growing economy, plus the persistence of the Pakistan-Indian conflict, means that the strategic unity of South Asia, established by the Mughals and maintained by the British, is gone.

Nonetheless, despite the rhetoric, China has grown wary of the management of Pakistan's internal security crises. China is presently the largest foreign direct investor in Afghanistan (including the Aynak copper mine in Logar Province), and has made significant investments in Pakistan, Iran and Central Asia. It is rightly worried about Pakistan's use of Islamist proxies. Moreover, China's own restive Uighurs have received training in Pakistan and Afghanistan. China has simply displaced India as Pakistan's natural trading partner, not on economic grounds but

---

<sup>70</sup> Salman Masood, "China Praises Pakistan's Fight against Terrorism and Vows to Bolster Partnership," *New York Times*, Dec. 20, 2010, p. A8.

because of political circumstances. Strategically, China is unlikely to abandon its military ties with Pakistan because it sees balancing Pakistan's capabilities vis-à-vis India as a way to contain India as a South Asian power. Finally, as explained and demonstrated in many Pakistani cities, Chinese officials and businessmen know how to cultivate Pakistani counterparts. Unlike with the Americans, Chinese criticism comes privately, not publicly. China has an open field, with both politicians and generals making frequent trips to Beijing to firm up relations with China. Only in one area do the Chinese suffer in comparison: few, if any Pakistanis want to visit or move to China. For most of them, the first land of opportunity remains the Gulf, followed by Europe or the United States.

## India

India remains a permanent and likely negative element in determining Pakistan's future. Pakistan was, after all, a movement by Indian Muslims, and the best historical analyses demonstrates that the creation of the state was almost accidental — which makes Indians less interested in accommodating even legitimate demands and makes Pakistanis even more paranoid.

A majority of Pakistanis still consider India as a major threat and view America as an enemy. According to a 2010 Pew survey, they are far less concerned about the Taliban and al-Qaida, and when asked which is the greatest threat to their country — India, the Taliban, or al-Qaida — slightly more than half of Pakistanis (53 percent) choose India, compared with 23 percent for the Taliban and just three percent for al-Qaida. Roughly 72 percent said it is important for relations with India to improve, and about 75 percent support increased trade and further talks with India. The United States' image in Pakistan was at its lowest ever among the 22 nations included in the poll. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents described America as an enemy,

and only eight percent trusted President Barack Obama.<sup>71</sup>

Within Pakistan, policy towards India will continue to be dictated by the army, which shows no sign of flexibility on major issues and a great deal of frustration with hard-line Indian attitudes. The army's "India problem" is complicated by the popular view (in the cantonments) that India only understands the language of force, an attitude that led to the politically catastrophic crossing of the Line of Control in 1999, in the Kargil region.

It will take the army's compliance, a strong political leadership, and resolutely independently-minded foreign ministers (hitherto conspicuously absent) to secure any significant shift of approach. A true "solution" to the Kashmir issue — or any of the other outstanding disputes between the two states — is nowhere in sight.

A reasonable aspiration would be to manage the issue at a level of *modus vivendi* no worse than the last few years, but this depends on avoiding new incidents such as the terror attacks on the Indian Parliament and on Mumbai. If Indian political sentiment were to allow it, there is scope for rapid adoption of some Kashmir-related confidence-building measures (CBMs). But a real and permanent change of Pakistani attitude will require a radical reduction of the role of the army and possibly also a generational shift of sentiment. The effects of further terrorist incidents like Mumbai are likely to be negative, and there is good reason to believe that the Mumbai attack was itself designed to break up the India-Pakistan dialogue. While a new crisis cannot be predicted, neither can normalization. The present situation of cool hostility and no real progress along a range of issues is likely to

remain the norm. Indeed, crises strengthen not only nationalist sentiments in Pakistan but also heighten the credibility of the country's jihadi and other extremists groups.

The management of Pakistan's relations with India has proven to be a source of conflict between the country's civilian and military leaderships, and a leading source of regime change — the army regarded civilians as too soft towards India on several occasions, and this was the justification for their removal. Further, Pakistan's ethnic cohesion is strained by differences among the provinces in the priority given to Kashmir and other issues with India — the Punjab being the most hawkish on Kashmir. A humiliating military defeat of the Pakistan army, as with the loss of East Pakistan in 1971, and an accompanying economic and humanitarian crisis, could test the very integrity of the Pakistani state, but the existence of nuclear weapons and mutual assured destruction makes such a defeat less likely.

As for the Indian side of the equation, C. Christine Fair, in her Bellagio paper, has it about right:

*India demurs from making any policies towards Pakistan that may be conciliatory, including striking a comprehensive settlement between Delhi and Srinagar. India clings to the notion that its varied elections demonstrate that the Kashmir issue is resolved. However, as any visitor to Kashmir can attest, elections have not ameliorated the pervasive discontent and dissatisfaction with Delhi, much less provided a path towards comprehensive reconciliation. India's strategy appears to be "wait it out" while India ascends and Pakistan weakens*

As some Indian strategists point out, India has been unable to compete with China in terms of expanding its own sphere of influence, by the hard-line policy on Kashmir, plus a whole host of other disputes. Indian leadership, centered in the Ministry of External Affairs and the army, has inadvertently brought about the destruction of South Asia's strategic unity, and ensures that

---

<sup>71</sup> Nicole Gaouette, "Most Pakistanis View U.S. as Enemy, Want War Over, Survey Finds", *Business Week*, <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2010-07-29/most-pakistanis-view-u-s-as-enemy-want-war-over-survey-finds.html>

India will forever be paired with a declining Pakistan.

William Milam speculates in his Bellagio paper about a scenario in which India and Pakistan normalize their strategic relationship, perhaps beginning in Afghanistan. For Milam and many others at the Bellagio meeting, peace and normalization with India is a necessary condition for Pakistan to build itself into a modern society and state. Realistically, however, darker scenarios of India-Pakistan relations are just as likely — these include a major crisis within the next dozen years, possibly involving nuclear weapons or, at a minimum, the continuing stalemate between the two to the detriment of each.

When it comes to India, the biggest question is whether the Pakistan army will come to have a different understanding of the Indian threat, and whether India itself will take the process of normalization seriously. This would suggest a Pakistan that over time acquiesces to the ascent of its larger neighbor, but obtains credible assurances that India will not take advantage of its dominant position. In some sense, Pakistan would be better off seeking a resolution today before it grows weaker and India stronger. But some in Pakistan still believe that the use of terrorism, carried out under the umbrella of a threat of nuclear escalation, will keep India off balance, a strategy that can be traced back many years. This, of course, does nothing to help Kashmiris solve water disputes, or open up transit links to the benefit of both countries. Attitudes towards India have changed more in Pakistan over the last five years than ever before, but there is little sign of this in the military, even as it grows aware that there is a new domestic threat in the form of the Pakistan Taliban with its linkages to many other forces that would like to transform, if not destroy, the idea of a moderate Pakistan.

## Globalization and Nuclear Weapons

Two other external trends will contribute to Pakistan's future. One is globalization — the more rapid and intense movement of ideas, people and goods, a process that accelerated rapidly in the last thirty years. The other is Pakistan's growing nuclear arsenal, which seems unconstrained by financial shortfall or strategic logic. They are intertwined; Pakistan received almost all of its nuclear technology from other countries, and took advantage of globalization to create purchasing networks that stretched around the world; later it used these networks to share its nuclear technology with several customers.

Contemporary globalization is most commonly associated with the huge burst of trade, telecommunications and rapid movements of people over long distances. Pakistan was among the least-prepared states for this most recent surge of globalization. It had seriously underinvested in education at all levels, and its economy does not produce many goods or services in high demand. Furthermore, it has become the target, transit lounge and training center for jihadis of all varieties. Pakistan and some of its allies, notably the United States and Saudi Arabia, encouraged these jihadis, many of whom put down local roots. Finally, Pakistan also became addicted to foreign assistance from major countries and international financial institutions, never really reforming its economy because it did not have to. In this area, Pakistan's friends did it no favor by supporting the addiction.

Along with the burst of movement of people, goods and ideas came the end of communism as an organizing principle for the young and angry. This helped unleash long-suppressed forces. Religious identity became the rallying cry, beginning in Yugoslavia and moving to the former Soviet Union and beyond. Secular revolutionary movements, like the Palestine Liberation Organization, were challenged by Islamist groups. Pakistan had religion built into its national identity and it moved in that

direction. Militant Islamist organizations and parties filled the space created by the absence of the left.<sup>72</sup> Both Pakistan's Sunnis and Shiites were influenced by the Iranian revolution, the first modern revolution to take a religious, not a leftist, turn. East Pakistan had been the first successful post-colonial insurgency based on ethnicity, although with substantial support from India. In Pakistan, the Bengalis were followed by another secular separatist movement, the Baloch, while Sindhis and Mohajirs still have one eye on the possibility of breakaway from Pakistan.

As for nuclear weapons, given that Pakistan is a state dominated by the armed forces and at near-war war with its major neighbor, it is not surprising that changes in the very nature of armed conflict have affected Pakistan. Wherever nuclear weapons are involved, war in the form of an organized battle between industrialized states employing the latest and most destructive weapons is hardly imaginable.

Nuclear weapons have not brought about a genuine peace between India and Pakistan, but their presence ensures that no rational leader will ever employ them. They have effectively ended classic, large-scale Industrialized war. There still remains the outside chance of an accident or a madman coming to power in a nuclear state, but the greater inside threat is theft and the greater outside threat is the conscious transfer of nuclear technology, or even complete weapons for political reasons or sheer greed — and here Pakistan has joined the club as a full-fledged member.

Nuclear weapons are as valuable to Pakistan as they are for North Korea. They (or their regimes) have some kind of survival insurance intact because of their nuclear capability. Pakistan, like North Korea, is too nuclear to

fail. Samar Mubakaramand, one of the leaders of the Pakistani weapons design team, reminded the world of this recently. He noted, probably correctly, that if it were not for Pakistan's nuclear deterrent, "Pakistan would have not survived after Kargil, Indian parliament and Mumbai incident episodes."<sup>73</sup> Of course, had Pakistan *not* possessed nuclear weapons, would it have pursued the provocative strategies that led India to contemplate a military response?

## SCENERIOS & OUTCOMES

Scenarios offer a dynamic view of possible futures and focus attention on the underlying interactions that may have particular policy significance. They can help decision-makers avoid conventional thinking — invariably a straight-line projection of the present into the future.<sup>74</sup> We used this approach in 2004. Here we present seven scenarios and then discuss the relationship among factors, noting which might take precedence over others. We also discuss the factors in terms of their criticality; all are necessary to change Pakistan for what we would call the better, but none seem to be sufficient.

### Another Five Years: More of the Same

The most likely future for Pakistan over the next five to seven years, but less likely than it would have been five years ago, is some form of what has been called "muddling through", and what, in 2004, I termed as an establishment-dominated Pakistan. The military will play a key although not always and not necessarily central role in state and political

---

<sup>72</sup> Even secular democracies also became more "religious," notably the United States with its angry religious right, and India, with a resurgent *Hindutva*-inspired Bharatiya Janata Party.

---

<sup>73</sup> Quoted in *The News* (Lahore), May 31, 2009.

<sup>74</sup> "Mapping the Global Future," Report of the National Intelligence Council's 2020 Project Based on consultations with nongovernmental experts around the world (Washington, DC: National Intelligence Council, December 2004), p. 21.

decisions. This scenario could also include direct military rule. As several of the Bellagio participants have noted, it has not made much difference whether the military or the civilians are in power, since both had progressive moments, but each has also contributed to the long decline in Pakistan's integrity as both a state and a nation.

In this scenario, the political system would be bound by certain parameters: the military might take over, but only for a temporary fix; it will neither encourage nor tolerate deep reform; and civilians will be content with a limited political role. The political system would be frozen in an intermediate, gray zone between full-fledged democracy and military autocracy. The state will always be in transition, but will never *arrive*, frustrating supporters and critics alike. In this scenario, the civilian government is under pressure to tackle broad governance issues, especially the sectarian, economic and energy crises, and the military officials continue to operate in the shadows while rattling their sabers to prevent undesirable outcomes in domestic and foreign policy. New centers of power, such as the judiciary, might exert a democratic effect and help ensure the rule of law, but the scenario includes continuing military mediation of civilian crises, which will reproduce the depressingly familiar (and democratically corrosive) pattern of civil-military relations under formal elected rule. It also includes the continuation of sectarian and ethnic violence, but neither alone would drive Pakistan over the edge.

Within these parameters, the economy might improve, democracy might stabilize, and there might be an increase in governmental coherence. But all or some of these factors could take a turn for the worse. Lurking in the background would be a steady decline in the demographic position, no serious attempt to modernize the educational system, and continued ethnic, sectarian and social violence. These trends are very hard to alter and impossible to change quickly. Given the military's current campaign, extremist violence

might be tamed in KP. But it seems that a revival of the insurgency will take place, given the absence of real economic growth and the weakness of political institutions. Absent police reform and a new attitude toward domestic jihadis it is doubtful that the law and order situation will improve in the Punjab, and it will certainly worsen in KP. Balochistan could again see a revived separatist movement, perhaps with outside assistance.

The "muddling through" scenario, similar to General Talat Masood's "nuanced case," could fade into a visible, slow decline of Pakistan's integrity as a state, and further confusion about its identity as a nation. One important factor in preserving the present arrangement is that just about every major power in the world wants to see Pakistan remain whole and stable. Even most Indian strategists do not relish a collapsed Pakistan. They might want a weak Pakistan, strong enough to maintain internal order but not so strong that it can challenge India. Yet, in the face of accelerating decay over the last few years, some Indian strategists are beginning to consider whether or not it is in their interest to accelerate the process.

Pakistan could be pushed very far off of its present path, with regional separatism, sectarianism, a botched crisis with India, or a bad agreement in Afghanistan, triggering new and unmanageable forces in Pakistan or conceivably, a counter-movement in the direction of totalitarianism, authoritarianism, radical reform, or the rise of a charismatic leader — all alternative futures for Pakistan but none likely in the near future. Beneath these political developments, demographic and social change continues, mostly leading in the direction of greater chaos. This scenario propels Pakistan towards the future predicted in the 2008 NIC study.

## Parallel Pakistans

A second future for Pakistan, probably as likely as some kind of "muddling through"

within the next five years, and already evident now in some provinces, would be the emergence of parallel Pakistans. The state would carry on with a recognizable central government, but some of the provinces and regions would go their different ways, not in the form of a breakup, but in terms of how they are governed, how their economy functions, how they educate their children, how they are tilted towards authoritarian versus democratic traditions, and how they accommodated Islamist, regional and separatist movements.

Centrifugal forces are intensifying and Pakistan is heading in this direction. Those who oppose democratization do it in part because they fear the weakening of the state and the unconstrained growth of separatism; those who favor democratization see it as the mechanism by which different and diverse regions and social classes can live together peacefully in the same state.

#### **BOX 1: RISKY DEVOLUTION**

**Current experiments in strengthening provincial autonomy could, if mishandled, have the consequence of tilting the federal balance so the center loses even more of its authority. Recent decisions to delegate some functions to the provinces might be premature: most of them lack capability already — Punjab excepted — and asking them to do more means, in practical terms, accepting that less will get done in the fields of education, infrastructure building and social reform, let alone improving the police and judicial systems.**

As the Pakistani state becomes weaker and as divisive tendencies grow stronger, those who favor a strong state will be tempted to invoke the argument that there is an existential external threat to Pakistan that requires the suppression of ethnic, sectarian and other differences. Such a strategy would do nothing to increase Pakistan's growth rate or address the demographic explosion.

For the near future — the next five or six years — Pakistan will either struggle on or undergo a more rapid decline, which will be evident by the rise of a more complex and fractious relationship among the provinces and between them and the center. This will be delayed if the present cooperative arrangement between the politicians and the generals continues, even if there is a change in personalities. General Kayani is not irreplaceable, but the spirit of cooperation with civilian politicians is; similarly, neither President Zardari nor Prime Minister Gilani is indispensable, but their willingness to give the military some political space while attempting to reform Pakistan's government is.

This scenario predicts the emergence of many Pakistans within the framework of an international entity called Pakistan. The army's grip will loosen but not fail, and problems generated by a bad economy, a bad demographic profile, and a bad sectarian situation will all deepen. This is not quite the "Lebanonization" of Pakistan, but we have already seen the rise of the equivalent of Hamas and Hezbollah, although their outside supporters are less visible, and their impact not as great as in Lebanon. The army will ensure that the state remains formally intact, but it may be powerless to prevent alliances between and among regional groups and outside powers. China already has considerable influence in Northern Pakistan and is a growing economic factor elsewhere; some minority sects already look to Iran for protection and inspiration, and Tehran has an incentive to balance out extremist Sunni groups in Pakistan as well as the Taliban in Afghanistan. Some leaders in Karachi, and the Mohajir community in particular, now look to India with very different perspectives than did their forefathers who abandoned it, and they talk about an independent Karachi with strong economic and security ties to other countries, just like Singapore. Finally, the Baloch and some Sindhis are utterly disenchanted with Pakistan and the emergence of hardcore Punjabi leaders allied to the army would further alienate them.

These first two scenarios are the likely future of Pakistan. They are, respectively, bad and worse. However, even in the short timeframe of five to seven years, other futures are possible. What follows is a list of the less likely but still plausible paths the country might take.

## Democratic Consolidation

It seems very unlikely now, but Pakistan could see the slow and steady stabilization of democracy. This would require agreement between the two dominant parties, an increase in their coherence, and the army recognizing that it cannot govern this state effectively and that it must allow (or even assist) a new generation of politicians to come to real power. In 2010, I described this (to senior army officers) as Pakistan's greatest challenge, even greater than that of India, but their response was muted. Such a future would also require continued support for democratization from Western states, as well as Indian actions that rewarded Pakistan for moving in this direction, and no Chinese or Saudi actions that rewarded a regression to authoritarianism in the name of stability.

The Zardari government, for all of its obvious problems, has put Pakistan on this path and other mainstream parties have not obstructed these changes. The process seems to have settled in to a game of one step forward, followed by one step backward, or perhaps a hop sideways. A recent clever scorecard of gains and losses comes out to about zero.<sup>75</sup> The parties have resisted turning to the military for support, as they did time and time in the past. They appear to have learned that it is better to play by the rules of the game and

---

<sup>75</sup> See for example the clever year-end summary by Mahmood Adele, "2010 The Year in Review," blog post on *New Pakistan*, <http://new-pakistan.com/2010/12/28/2010-year-in-review/>, in which he weighs gains and losses in several categories (press, politicians, the military, NGOs, and the economy), and the tally comes out about even.

continue to tolerate each other rather than risk destabilizing the system, and losing power to the military for another decade. However, democratic institutionalization also needs a military committed to a subordinate role in a democratic framework.

Were Pakistan to move in this direction, it would not necessarily mean that the economy will recover, and it certainly would not mean that social pressures caused by population growth and urbanization will moderate. These are time-bombs, buried deep within the Pakistani state, which would present grave problems for a future democratic regime, but such a regime, freer than the present government from the taint of corruption, and making a more serious effort at improving the functioning of the state, would also have a much greater claim on international resources and help from India.

## Breakaway and Breakup

For the next five years, it is misleading to talk of a breakaway of discontented provinces and a breakup of the state, or total state failure. Those who predict such a future soon are patently unaware of Pakistan's resiliency and capabilities, even if it is failing along many dimensions. Ralph Peters, a retired army officer, raises the possibility of Pakistan being reduced to a rump of Punjab and parts of Sindh, with Balochistan and the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa breaking away.<sup>76</sup> His paper has been much cited as evidence of American malice towards Pakistan, and in recent visits to military educational and training institutions, his name, and the prospect of an outside effort to break up Pakistan, came up repeatedly. Peters suggested that Balochistan might become a free state, including parts of Iran's own province of Balochistan, while the NWFP/KP would become a part of Af-

---

<sup>76</sup> Ralph Peters, "Blood Borders: How a better Middle East would look," *Armed Forces Journal*, June 2006, <http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2006/06/1833892>.

ghanistan. It seems that retired military officers like this option. In March 2009, a retired Australian officer, David Kilcullen, predicted that Pakistan would fail in a matter of months. These predictions are a function of anger over Pakistani support for the Taliban in Afghanistan and a lack of familiarity with the society as well as the state of Pakistan. In the longer term, the breakup of Pakistan is possible, as discussed in *The Idea of Pakistan*, but breakup would be preceded by the disintegration of the army, either after a war, through ethnic and sectarian differences, or the splitting of the army by some Punjabi political movement. None of this seems likely or plausible at the moment, but the breakup of the Soviet Union was also unexpected and unpredicted by most Soviet experts.

### Civil or Military Authoritarianism

Much more plausible than a breakup of Pakistan would be its slide into one or another form of authoritarianism. This could happen at the provincial level if the army permitted it, or joined with a regional authoritarian movement. Authoritarianism might have staying power in Pakistan, although an authoritarian regime would face the same problems of state competence and national identity as any other kind of regime. There are four authoritarian models; Pakistan might evolve into one or some combination of them.

First, there is liberal authoritarianism, most perfectly embodied in Singapore. Here a dominant party ensures that the state is well run, dissent is carefully channeled, and the economy thrives. Many Pakistanis would opt immediately for a liberal authoritarian system, especially since, as in Singapore, it holds out the hope of further liberal reform while maintaining economy prosperity and social calm. However, Pakistan has no political party capable of running such a state, and the army cannot imagine one because it is preoccupied with defense issues and lacks the secular and liberal bent of the Turkish army.

Classical authoritarianism, along the lines of Saddam's Iraq, is even less likely. While Pakistan may yet see the rise of a brutal and charismatic leader, it is hard to see how that would work in Pakistan, which lacks resources, such as oil, to sustain tough authoritarianism.

Moderate military authoritarianism, along the lines of Egypt, is more plausible. Something like this was tried by Ayub, and even Musharraf might have moved in this direction had he not been so intent on pleasing all of his audiences; he lacked the ruthlessness of a Nasser or a Hosni Mubarak. Such a regime would have the support of China or Saudi Arabia, and if it was effective, of many Western powers. Such a soft authoritarianism would have to be linked to outside assistance to succeed, economics being the driving factor. Here, China could be a major factor, building in Pakistan an acceptable Islamic but authoritarian state identity — just Islamic enough to claim legitimacy in terms of its historical roots, but not so Islamic that it would tolerate Islamist movements abroad, particularly in China. Such Islamic exports could be confined to India or other hostile neighbors.

Finally, there are two models of Islamist authoritarianism: Iran and Saudi Arabia. An Iranian model does not fit Pakistan, and not only because the very large Shi'ite minority would not tolerate the imposition of a Sunni state. Iran's population is quite modernized, and very sympathetic to liberal values, although power remains with the clerics and the revolutionary guards, two institutions that are absent in Pakistan. On the other hand, the Saudi model does not fit at all. Pakistan has fewer resources and vastly more people and diversity than either Saudi Arabia or Iran. More likely would be the emergence of provincial Islamist governments with the weakening of the center. Under the second scenario described above, some provinces could be nominally Islamist and free elections would not be able to remove them, like in Iran. A provincial government with an

Islamist bent (like Saudi Arabia) might attempt to export radicalism abroad, and a weak government in Islamabad could implausibly claim that the policing mechanisms of the central state are too feeble to prevent such activities.

At the moment authoritarianism would not sit well with most Pakistanis, but if it brought order and a degree of prosperity it would find a foothold. By analogy, this is what the Taliban did in Afghanistan, although the prerequisite for such a development would have to be the collapse of the army, which seems very unlikely under all present circumstances. Authoritarianism also does not match up well with Pakistan's diverse religious or social order, or with its deeply complex South Asian culture. Authoritarianism might be an experiment, but an experiment that would be likely to fail in its incapacity to deal with a society that is traditionally averse to centralization projects. This would be even more the case of any totalitarian movement that might arise in Pakistan. Among other factors, the new media would make it hard for either form of government to establish itself.

### **An Army-Led Revolution**

There is also a remote prospect of an army-led transformation of Pakistan, one in which the generals became true revolutionaries, perhaps along the lines of the Turkish army years ago, or more recently, the Indonesian army. This is unlikely, but perhaps more likely than the transformation of the civilian elite into a force for modernity. Indonesia is a promising point of comparison, but it differs from Pakistan in that once it gave up *Konfrontasi* it had no external enemy, and both its army and its political class could devote their energies to domestic security and reform. The results have been spectacular.

Pakistan's army is attuned to developments elsewhere. Its leadership knows that the country is falling behind its peers, notably India, yet there is no consensus as to what has

to be done. It is in the position of being an army that is better than the state that supports it; the strategic challenge is to improve that state without losing its own professionalism. So far it has failed to do this because it is caught up in domestic and foreign security crises; the army cannot shoot bullets and think at the same time. It is unlikely to promote a deeply conservative Islamist reformation of Pakistan, but with a few exceptions it lacks the objectivity to see how it might transform its own role in the state, and thereafter of the state itself.

### **Post-Crisis Scenarios**

Finally, as in the 2004 study, it is important to note that all calculations about the future of Pakistan can be changed instantaneously should there be another major crisis, especially one with India, but now also involving Pakistan's role in Afghanistan and the actions by terrorist groups that have strong links to Pakistan.

Military defeat frequently leads to the erosion of an army's domestic political power, as in the case of Greece, in 1974, after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, or Argentina, in 1982, after the Malvinas/Falklands War. In Pakistan, however, the military's defeat in the 1971 war did not bring the army's withdrawal from politics and civilian affairs. It only strengthened the resolve to take revenge on India, and it persuaded the army to back the nuclear weapons program. The deep involvement in Indian-administered Kashmir and with Indian Islamist groups precipitated a number of crises, and earned Pakistan the reputation of being a reckless state. The defeat also strengthened jingoistic nationalism which under Zia was encouraged by the state, and elements of which still have close relations with the "Honor" brigade of hypernationalists.

For the army to consider complete withdrawal from politics, which would be transformational, it needs at least the claim of a victory

and assurances that its security environment will be stable and normal.

## BOX 2: OTHER TRANSFORMATION SCENARIOS

Pakistan is unique, but its core political structure, the role of the military, and potential for revolutionary change can be compared to a number of other historical cases.

In some ways it resembles Czarist Russia, which had a rotting army and was tipped over the edge by involvement in a world war. It differs in that Pakistan's army is coherent, whereas the war destroyed the Czarist forces, which never had the influence of the court and the aristocracy. The Bolsheviks and others were able to fill a vacuum, in part because they were able to make peace with Germany, but Pakistan's Islamists are unlikely to have such an opportunity as long as the military retains its integrity and might intensify rather than end the conflict with India.

Another case with partial similarities is interwar Japan, where the civil-military relationship resembles that of Pakistan. An aggressive army vied with an aggressive navy to launch Japan on a series of disastrous foreign adventures, leading to its military destruction. Pakistan has nuclear weapons. It can be provocative without fear of retaliation; however, its economic position is much weaker than that of Imperial Japan, and might collapse even without a war.

Iran and Turkey are sometimes cited as relevant. The Shah's Iran also had the same kind of social dislocation that we now see in Pakistan, but its army was politically weak and its Shiite Islamist movement, led by an organized clergy, was more coherent than anything likely to develop in Pakistan.

Turkey has been held up as a model for Pakistan, and rescued from a nightmare scenario. Vali Nasr writes that Turkey is an exemplary case of capitalist and democratic development, which succeeded "largely with the European Union's help, with the European Union taking the long view in building ties with Turkey, requiring measures on the part of Ankara for it to be further integrated into Europe."<sup>77</sup> Turkish democracy is based on a solid economic foundation and it has rejected the Islamist revolutionary narrative, which has Israel and the United States at its center. Some of this is still officially part of Pakistan's world view. Pervez Musharraf briefly talked about the Turkish model (he grew up in Turkey), but he retreated from this position even if he personally did not subscribe to the Islamist narrative. However, Pakistan cannot be integrated closely with Europe, let alone the United States. Its natural economic partner is India, although the Chinese exploit Pakistan more thoroughly than any other state. Pakistan's military cannot under present circumstances bring itself to emulate India, the state closest to it in terms of social and ethnic complexity.

---

<sup>77</sup> Nasr, p. 231.

Finally, Brazil is the best example of what might-have-been. Approximately the same population size and level of economic development as Pakistan (both largely agriculture-based), Brazil also had an overweening military and at one time also contemplated a nuclear weapons program. However, it never had the kind of external threat faced by Pakistan. Even though it fancied itself as Argentina's rival, it was able to transform its domestic politics to the point where a normal civil-military relationship emerged, and it was able to focus on filling regional and even global gaps in technology and economics, notably its success in medium aircraft production and its international role as a sports power. Ten years ago; it was the recipient of the International Monetary Fund's largest-ever loan; today, it is lending money to the IMF.

## CONCLUSIONS

At the most abstract level of analysis, the interplay between the contested ideas of Pakistan and the integrity of the Pakistani state will be determinative. When a state is unable to protect its citizens and to collect the taxes required for the delivery of basic services, its citizens will cease to regard themselves as citizens but as subjects. They will try to leave the state, seek to transform the very "idea" that holds them together, or fight the state — or all three at the same time. Pakistan has never had a workable arrangement between the state and those who are ruled. In the words of Professor Hamid Kizilbash, talking about the upsurge in sectarian and political violence, "the people we ignored are taking their revenge."

There are five or six necessary things to happen before Pakistan can be safely put in the "normal" category. These include relations with India, a revived economy, a repaired state, a rebalanced civil-military relationship, a redefined role of the military in the state, fighting domestic insurgencies more effectively, allowing a reshaped police force to emerge, and finding a new role for Pakistan vis-à-vis its neighbors, notably India. The politicians would have to moderate their disputes, concentrating on issues and reform, and not patronage and corruption. However, none of these would seem to be a *sufficient* factor that trumps all others. In the end, "muddling through" will have at least four or five variations.

Historically, states and empires regularly come and go. The U.N. was founded with 51 states and now has 192. The old Chinese, British, French, Dutch and German empires have all vanished or shrunk. The British Indian Raj, of which Pakistan is one of the legatees, has vanished, breaking up the strategic unity of the Subcontinent and pitting the two successor states against each other. The Soviet empire is also gone, there being nothing certain about the future of all or any states

and imperial operations. Yugoslavia no longer exists; neither does Czechoslovakia, East Germany or Manchuria.

Pakistan's future is not immutable. It has lasted sixty years, but in the process lost more than half of its population in a breakaway movement, and barely resembles the tolerant state envisaged by Jinnah. The territory and the people of what is now Pakistan will remain, even if they are mutilated by population movement, environmental change, the redrawing of boundaries, or a war. Pakistan's nuclear weapons will also remain, even if they are not controlled by a central government.

All of the participants in this project agreed that the greatest uncertainty facing Pakistan is the interplay between the half-dozen or more critical factors that seem likely to shape the future — we have grouped them and other variables into the four large clusters discussed above. This is why few participants were willing to predict beyond a few years and everyone hedged their prediction with qualifications. The interplay between critical factors (especially since there was no unanimity as to which these were, or their order of importance), their sequencing and their salience in different circumstances are all unknown, or perhaps unknowable. As William Milam wrote in his paper, most of these factors/variables are both cause and effect; they can influence each other and are in turn influenced by other developments. Were these major factors/variables all moving in the right direction, a good-case scenario could not be ruled out, but as Milam notes, "It will be a long, difficult slog of one or two generations before one could safely wager that Pakistan was going to join the rank of modern societies."

Perhaps the hardest thing for Pakistanis to do is the simplest: to imagine their country as a modern state, meeting the needs of all of its people and escaping from the thrall of religious conflict. Modern states have

normal relations between civilian and military elites, and they ensure that state institutions keep up with the legitimate requirements of their people. They do not parody the worst aspects of a colonial empire that vanished sixty years ago. However, modernity is difficult when a state is buffeted by the forces of globalization that weaken its institutions and empower separatist and terrorist groups.

Pakistan has resources. It is important in its own right, and because of its nuclearized dispute with India, the international community has a powerful stake in its survival and return to normality. But to move Pakistan ahead will require concentrated focus on economic and political policies that foster growth and create greater ownership of governance. Pakistan's population, which is now regarded as irrelevant by most political leaders, could then become an asset in fighting militancy and ending Pakistan's several insurgencies. Pakistan needs a national debate on what kind of state its citizens imagine is needed. In other words, it is critical for Pakistan to set lofty targets for itself and to attempt to meet them with its own resources rather than be subservient to the interest of other states, near or far. Given the short-term perspective of virtually all Pakistani politicians, and the institutional obsessions of the military, it is hard to see how such a debate can begin.

## **SIX WARNING SIGNS**

We conclude, as we did in 2004, with a list of warning signs. While this project has identified a number of factors grouped into four clusters, these warning signs point to the immediate and urgent issues, although none alone are sufficient to ensure the normalization of Pakistan.

### **Reluctance to Deal with Economic Issues**

Pakistan has fantasized over its economic prospects for years, blaming others for its economic failures and claiming phantom successes, yet it is unwilling to tax the rich, let alone use state money to educate its masses. In the post-Musharraf period, a new sense of realism has emerged, but Pakistan is still spending too much on defense and security: it must cut its commitments to the military in the short term so it can grow in the long term by political arrangements that ease the defense problem, and by trimming of lavish weapons projects and manpower. Economic growth is also the only way to address dangerous demographic trends, which in the long run will make Pakistan ungovernable and for some, unlivable.

### **Unwillingness/Inability to Rebuild State Institutions**

It may be that Pakistan is beyond the point of no return in its weakened state institutions, whether education, local administration, or higher bureaucracies. But these problems are not esoteric, and Pakistan needs help from the international community in a massive organizational rebuilding process. Private organizations and NGOs are not a substitute. The army will have to allow civilian competence to develop, but this depends both on the army's willingness to adopt a recessed role and the rise of demonstrable civilian competence. Meanwhile, education and state-building should be given the same priorities as defense policy.

### **Absence of Governance at the Top**

In all of its recent crises, whether external or internal, the government has demonstrated extraordinary incoherence at the top. The Mumbai crisis saw confusion reign in Islamabad, and when one civilian (the national security advisor, himself an ex-general) tried to set the record straight, he was fired. There was and is no coherent system of presenting alternative policies before the government, no perspective planning, and no effective mechanism for coordinating the actions of different parts of the government. Usually the military

has its way, but there is no question that the Pakistan army does not have the strategic capabilities necessary to formulate a coherent strategy on any but the narrowest military issues. This includes developing a response to the domestic terrorism that rages in all parts of the country, especially the government-free zones of KP. If Pakistan does not create such a mechanism, pre-sumably including a National Security Council (unlike the sham NSC created by Musharraf), it will continue to stumble strategically.

## **Break the Begging Bowl**

Pakistan has fallen into a position of deep dependency vis-à-vis donors and the government is correctly criticized for giving in to them one after another, whether they are individual states or international lending agencies. Pakistan needs to adopt a relationship whereby its dignity and sovereignty are protected. As with IMF loans the initiative for assistance must come from Pakistan, not outsiders. Pakistan must develop the scope and criteria of assistance programs and gain the support of donors. The conditionality should come from the Pakistani side, with the acknowledgement that if Pakistan fails to meet conditions, then aid or support will be correspondingly reduced. This will require more capacity than Pakistan has now, and thus the government should both seek help from known competent governments to improve its budget and planning cycle, and from the private sector, where there is a great deal of talent. □Tough love□ is a suitable standard and Pakistanis should themselves insist on it.

## **Fresh Crises with India**

A more normal relationship with India is a necessary condition for Pakistan to avoid further deterioration. Although India does not want to see an assertive Pakistan, a failing Pakistan has the capacity to do India considerable damage. The nuclearization of their sixty-year conflict makes the stakes even higher. Further crises, deliberate or inadvertent, will distract Pakistan from the rebuilding task and endanger India itself. The mechanisms are (or at least were) in place for normalization between the two states. If they do move down this path the process should be encouraged by outside powers, or even by an endorsement by the U.N.

### **Further Appeasement of Islamists**

Pakistan is becoming polarized, with liberal elements on the defensive. The global dialogue on reforming Islam has a Pakistani dimension, but much ground has been conceded to doctrinaire Islamists who receive considerable state patronage. This has already changed Pakistan markedly, and the problem is not just the strength of intolerant and narrow Islamists but the weakness of modern Islamizers and the tiny pro-Western elite. Pakistan is becoming one of the centers of global jihad.

## **POLICY: BETWEEN DESPAIR AND HOPE**

Policy towards Pakistan, like that towards Afghanistan, is not only shrouded in uncertainty. In both cases (and they are linked in several ways) there are no good policy options. Doing nothing or doing the same thing are options that are both unattractive and problematic, but there are no easy paths into the future, and a strong likelihood of policy disaster remains.

Some members of this project were very pessimistic about Pakistan's future even over the next five years, and foresaw greater calamities ahead. One event that the group did not foresee was the massive flooding that submerged a good portion of Pakistan for several months from July 2010 onward. This was the result of both

a freakish weather event (heavy rains fell on the western but not the eastern portions of Pakistan's river system), plus forty years of neglect of the drainage and water management system by both military and civilian regimes. The consequences of these floods are still being debated, but they did not produce the kind of national rally that some hoped for and they are more likely to turn out to be a negative "Black Swan" event.<sup>78</sup>

However, two factors give hope — with the caveat that hope is not a policy. First, there is no question that Pakistan has the human capital to reverse its direction. Its tiny elite are competent and there is a middle class that still wants reform. Pakistan needs to experiment with democracy; it cannot be run as an autocracy, whether by the military or a civilian leadership, no matter how charismatic he (or she) might be.

Second, it is now in the interest of the international community that Pakistan succeeds — or at least that it not fails badly. No country, not even India, wants to see Pakistan come apart violently, as real failure could spew nuclear weapons and terror groups around the world. This is why the option to break up Pakistan is both impractical and dangerous.

The Western powers, Japan, and India need to have a concerted policy — one that would strengthen reform and democratic forces in Pakistan, encourage the military to adopt a recessed role, improve the Pakistan economy and generate more resources to address vital domestic needs. But China, Pakistan's closest ally, is no supporter of democratization and favors harsh measures to control terrorist and extremist groups. The parallels with North Korea are striking; by supporting these states, China keeps regional rivals off-balance, while it pursuing its narrow economic and strategic goals.

Right now, as far as the West and Japan are concerned, policy regarding Pakistan primarily derives from American and NATO engagement in Afghanistan. A second policy component is to support Pakistan in the battle against its own Taliban and other radical elements. Third, there is unprecedented economic aid, particularly in the form of the Kerry-Lugar bill. The assumption of the Kerry-Lugar initiative is that a failed Pakistan would be calamitous for the United States, given its size, its location and above all, its nuclear weapons. This is Pakistan as another North Korea — too nuclear to fail. Few, however, have advocated a massive nation-building program for Pakistan.

If one assumes that Pakistan might be weak and unstable (the worst variant of "muddling through"; or holds the view that Pakistan is headed towards greater autonomy by its various provinces), then it makes sense to search for alternative policies. One would be to encourage India to supplant Pakistan in Afghanistan, providing an alternative route to Afghanistan, thus demonstrating to Islamabad that threats to cut off the supply lines can be circumvented. An expansion of this policy would be Ambassador Robert Blackwill's proposal to accept the partition of Afghanistan, throwing American weight behind a Northern Alliance/India group to counter the Pakistan-supported Taliban in southern Afghanistan.

The problem with using India to balance or supplant Pakistan is that it provides negative incentives for the Pakistan army to undertake a program of domestic reform, and it certainly would heighten India-Pakistan

---

<sup>78</sup> Stephen P. Cohen, "Lessons from Pakistan's Latest Catastrophe", Brookings Blog comment, Aug. 17, 2010, [http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/0817\\_pakistan\\_floods\\_cohen.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/0817_pakistan_floods_cohen.aspx). For two balanced overviews see Jinnah Institute Conference Report, "Pakistan at Risk: Challenges and opportunities after the flood," Sept.-Oct., 2010, <http://www.jinnah-institute.org> and K. Allan Kronstadt and others, "Flooding in Pakistan: Overview and Issues for Congress," Congressional Research Service, CRS Report for Congress, R41424, Sept. 21, 2010, <http://www.crs.gov>.

tensions.<sup>79</sup> Those who cling to a reform strategy for Pakistan are unwilling to abandon it for a balancing policy on the grounds that doing so would rule out entirely the possibilities of reform.

If one assumes that Pakistan is not merely a state in trouble but that it will become a rogue state that cannot be reformed, whether based upon past Pakistani actions or not, then a balancing policy could be easily transformed into one of containment. This was rejected by the Council on Foreign Relations task force, but at least one of the members wrote a dissent that pointed out that Pakistan cannot be counted upon to pursue policies that match up with American interests in a number of sectors, notably relations with India, nuclear policy and support for terrorists.<sup>80</sup> If one believes that present policies are not working, that aid packages will not have much of an impact, and that Pakistani nationalism trumps Pakistani national interest, then Pakistan should be seen as a threat, not an asset. This would be confirmed should there be a successful terrorist attack originating in Pakistan against India or a Western country — for example, a successful Times Square bombing that kills many Americans. In this case it is likely that public opinion would demand a reassessment of the relationship with Pakistan.

In such a reassessment India's role would be to contain a dangerous Pakistan and might lead to a policy that placed India at the center of South Asia's geostrategic calculations, with the West working in partnership with New Delhi to "fix" Afghanistan and Pakistan, once and for all. This puts the United States on the side of a rising power, although Indians are deeply ambivalent about such a regional role.

Looking down the road five or six years, if Pakistani deterioration is combined with the Indian propensity for restraint (an India that does not want to play an active role in containing or balancing a failing Pakistan), then the United States and its allies might pursue "offshore balancing," an academic and diplomatic euphemism for "cut and run."<sup>81</sup> The columnist Tom Friedman says that regions such as the Middle East and South Asia eventually work out their difficulties without American intervention.<sup>82</sup> With increasingly scarce resources, and un-happy domestic opinion to contend with, the United States and its allies may well decide that the South Asian states can manage their affairs reasonably well; all we would need to do is to step in every four or five years to prevent a nuclear war. However, the India-Pakistan rivalry involves other states as well, notably China, which has emerged as a significant South Asian power in its own right, and which itself is playing a balancing game between India and Pakistan. Policymakers need to think through carefully whether or not American intervention would make a difference in the region, and the costs of not becoming involved as a facilitator in the stagnant South Asian peace process.

Two other policies need to be mentioned, although each has serious drawbacks. Steve Coll has forwarded the view that Kashmir is at the root of India-Pakistan differences, and if outside powers worked to facilitate a settlement, then the risks of war would be lowered and, inferentially, Pakistan could devote its energies to

---

<sup>79</sup> This point was made by the recent Council on Foreign Relations task force. Council on Foreign Relations Task Force, "US Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan," November 2010, [http://www.cfr.org/publication/23253/us\\_strategy\\_for\\_pakistan\\_and\\_afghanistan.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/23253/us_strategy_for_pakistan_and_afghanistan.html)

<sup>80</sup> See the dissent note of Michael Krepon to the CFR task force, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

<sup>81</sup> For a basic explanation of offshore balancing and other grand strategies, see John Mearsheimer, "Imperial by Design," *The National Interest*, Jan-Feb., 2011, <http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pub-affairs.html>

<sup>82</sup> Thomas L. Friedman, "The Great (Double) Game," *New York Times*, July 31, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/01/opinion/01friedman.html>

reconstruction and rebuilding.<sup>83</sup> This, of course, would be opposed tooth and nail by India, but might be workable if, in exchange, there was a settlement of the Kashmir dispute — which Coll believes was almost achieved. Were Pakistan to normalize its relations with India, then cooperation might be extended across the board, restoring the strategic unity of the subcontinent that was lost during the 1947 partition. However, India's reluctance to compromise with a failing Pakistan notwithstanding, China would have every reason to oppose normalization, and it could probably offer Pakistan more *not to* settle than India could offer Pakistan *to* settle. Twenty five years ago, before it went nuclear, Pakistan offered to abandon its nuclear program if the United States were to provide a security guarantee that included an attack from India. The request was spurned; Pakistan went ahead with a nuclear program, and has now become even more dependent on China. The prospects of restoring South Asia's strategic unity are now low to zero given China's new influence and India's ambivalence over normalization with Pakistan.

So it is back to the current, and perhaps the least worst, cluster of policies. Politics is an experimental, not a theoretical science; we must see how this experiment plays out over the next two years, but it is hard to be optimistic that the West and the United States will get both Afghanistan and Pakistan —right,— or that India will suddenly become generous, or that the Pakistani elite, especially the military, will undertake a program of deep reform. Hope for the best, but at least think about the worst.

---

<sup>83</sup> Steve Coll, "Kashmir: The time has come," *New York Review of Books* Sept. 30, 2010, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/sep/30/kashmir-time-has-come/>. I think it more likely that India and Pakistan might cooperate on Afghanistan, where both have common interests, but only in the context of a new American and Western policy that returned to the idea of a regional consortium of neighbors. For views on this by Indian and Pakistani writers, see Rudra Chaudhuri, "The Proxy Calculus: Kabul, not Kashmir, holds the key to the India-Pakistani relationship," *RUSI Journal*, December 2010, Vol. 155, No. 6, pp 52-59; and Khaled Ahmed, "A doable paradigm-shift," *Friday Times*, Sept 10-16, 2010, p. 3.

## APPENDIX

### Predictions of Pakistan's Future

Just before and after 9/11, the official and establishment Pakistani narrative was that the country could, with outside assistance, surmount its economic difficulties, take its rightful place as an ally of the West and become an anchor of the moderate branch of the Islamic world. Pakistan would be a bridge: the gateway to modernity for other Muslims, and a gateway to Islam for the West.<sup>84</sup> This was also the view of the George W. Bush administration, which had begun to rebuild relations with Islamabad.

This optimistic narrative has recently been challenged by gloom-and-doom scenarios that portray Pakistan as an already-failed state, a malign supporter of radical Islamic causes, and the epicenter of global terrorism. "Failed," "flawed," and "unraveling" are adjectives that are now widely used to describe the country. It is now typically described as having failed, in the process of failing, or a "monster state" of one sort or another.<sup>85</sup> Many Western states see Pakistan as so close to failure, and so important, that assistance is essential because of its weakness, not because of its strength.

Several analyses of Pakistan completed before Musharraf's departure anticipated the current crisis. Perhaps the toughest was the view of a group of experts on Pakistan convened by the National Intelligence Council in 2000 as part of its projection of global developments in the

year 2015.<sup>86</sup> The passages on Pakistan and India are worth quoting in full, because the predictions were presumably gathered before 9/11 and at the peak of President Musharraf's popularity.

Regionally, the collective judgment of experts was that by 2025 South Asian strategic relations would be defined by the growing gap between India and Pakistan and their seemingly irreducible hostility. The experts were wary of the possibility of small or large-scale conflict.

*India will be the unrivaled regional power with a large military — including naval and nuclear capabilities — and a dynamic and growing economy. The widening India-Pakistan gap — destabilizing in its own right — will be accompanied by deep political, economic, and social disparities within both states. Pakistan will be more fractious, isolated, and dependent on international financial assistance.*

*The threat of major conflict between India and Pakistan will overshadow all other regional issues during the next 15 years. Continued turmoil in Afghanistan and Pakistan will spill over into Kashmir and other areas of the subcontinent, prompting Indian leaders to take more aggressive preemptive and retaliatory actions. India's conventional military advantage over Pakistan will widen as a result of New Delhi's superior economic position. India will also continue to build up its ocean-going navy to dominate the Indian Ocean transit routes used for delivery of Persian Gulf oil to Asia. The decisive shift in conventional military*

---

<sup>84</sup> The one country that has taken the latter very seriously has been China, which from the 1960s used Pakistan as the jumping-off place for the expansion of its diplomacy and military assistance programs in the Middle East, although now Pakistan is less useful as China has developed important direct economic, diplomatic and military ties with the Gulf, the Arab world, and Africa.

<sup>85</sup> I have dealt with the "failure" syndrome in Chapter one of *The Idea of Pakistan*.

<sup>86</sup> National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2015: A Dialogue about the Future with Nongovernment Experts*, (Washington, DC: National Intelligence Council, NIC 2000-02, December 2000), pp. 64 ff.

*power in India's favor over the coming years potentially will make the region more volatile and unstable. Both India and Pakistan will see weapons of mass destruction as a strategic imperative and will continue to amass nuclear warheads and build a variety of missile delivery systems.*

This assumes that India will be able to translate its new global status into regional hegemony, at best, or at worst, that a rising India and a declining Pakistan are likely to clash. As for Pakistan itself, by 2050, the conferees concluded that:

*It will not recover easily from decades of political and economic mismanagement, divisive politics, lawlessness, corruption and ethnic friction. Nascent democratic reforms will produce little change in the face of opposition from an entrenched political elite and radical Islamic parties. Further domestic decline would benefit Islamic political activists, who may significantly increase their role in national politics and alter the makeup and cohesion of the military — once Pakistan's most capable institution. In a climate of continuing domestic turmoil, the central government's control probably will be reduced to the Punjabi heartland and the economic hub of Karachi.*

A few years later, despite these experts' concerns, the NIC barely mentioned Pakistan, and then only in the context of one of three global change scenarios.<sup>87</sup>

In 2004, a project by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) came to a cautiously optimistic conclusion about Pakistan.<sup>88</sup> Completed after Musharraf's third year in power it looked at the prospect for change and reform in Pakistan, dealing mostly with macro-political and economic factors, stressing the importance of rebuilding Pakistan's institutions. Pakistan's external relations and American interests were the framework for the analysis:

*The two and a half years since the attacks on New York and Washington in 2001 have intensified the internal pressures Pakistan faces. The U.S. decision to start its antiterrorism offensive by seeking Pakistani support was based on the presumption, widely shared in policy and academic circles in the United States, that Pakistan is central to the prospects for stability in South Asia. This study bears out that assumption. Every major aspect of Pakistan's internal stresses that we examined — the economic prospects, the role of the army and of political parties, the role of Islam and of the militants, and even the tensions between states and regions — is linked to developments outside Pakistan's borders. Positive scenarios from the point of view of key U.S. interests — regional stability, diminution of terrorism, reduced risk of conflict with India, and nuclear control — all involve a stabilized Pakistan and a strengthened Pakistani state. If one adds U.S. economic interests and hopes to the list, the importance of a Pakistani revival is even greater.<sup>89</sup>*

The CSIS study suggests that to have any kind of impact on Pakistan the United States will have to increase the level of attention and resources it devotes to South Asia in general and Pakistan in particular — noting that the U.S. has a number of objectives in that country, and all must be taken seriously. This project reflected the thinking behind the Biden-Lugar legislation, which urged massive economic assistance for Pakistan beside the growing military aid relationship. The CSIS report also urged support for India-Pakistan dialogue, and support for civil society, noting that the "social development in Pakistan so badly needs cannot be supplied entirely by the government." p. 5) Above all, the report emphasizes the weakness of Pakistani institutions, civil and governmental, and that these should be the focus of reform efforts and assistance by the United

---

<sup>87</sup> Pakistan is barely mentioned in another major NIC publication, a scenario building exercise that posits three future worlds, and only in the context of an Islamic Caliphate, in which it is one of the battlegrounds between the forces of the Caliph, and the "Crusaders."

<sup>88</sup> Teresita C. Schaffer, *Pakistan's Future and US Policy Options* (Washington, DC: CSIS Press, 2004).

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, p. 36.

States, notably the judiciary, education, and institutions that had to deliver power and water to the Pakistani people. As part of the project a simulation exercise was run, testing two scenarios, one in which Musharraf slowly rebuilt Pakistan, and a second in which political turmoil overtook his regime, but the dependent variable was India-Pakistan relations, not the future of Pakistan.

My own study, published in 2004, warily concluded that Pakistan may have reached the point of no return along several dimensions and that extreme scenarios were no longer inconceivable. I gave the establishment-dominated system a fifty-fifty chance of survival, but specified no time line, and also set forth a number of indicators, all of which were blinking bright red by 2006. The book anticipated Musharraf's demise and set out the problems that would be faced by a successor government.

There is also an Islamist narrative which sees Pakistan as the vanguard of an Islamic revolution that will spread from Pakistan to India and then to other lands where Muslims are oppressed.<sup>90</sup> The language is eerily reminiscent of the Marxists of the 1970s, who saw Pakistan as a vanguard of an Islamic-socialist revolution. As Hasan Askari Rizvi notes:

*Tariq Ali's suggestion to reshape the Pakistani society from top to bottom is advocated by Islamic orthodox and neoconservatives, albeit, in an Islamic framework. They view militancy as an instrument for transforming the society, and warding-off the enemies of Islam and their local agents. They talk of the control of the state machinery to transform the state and the society on Islamic lines as articulated by them.*<sup>91</sup>

There is a strong similarity between the totalitarian vision of orthodox Marxist-Leninists and that of the extreme Islamists. In many countries, the dislocated and angry intellectual class that would have turned to Marxism in the past now finds comfort in radical Islam.

Of the serious studies of Pakistan written over the last few years, none predict failure or success, with most opting for some intermediate "muddling through" scenario. Most also identify certain factors as determinative. One European study emphasizes the importance of state integrity.<sup>92</sup>

Jonathan Paris, an American analyst based in Great Britain, has written the most comprehensive study in the prediction genre, *Prospects for Pakistan*, in 2010.<sup>93</sup> He had not visited Pakistan before completing the study but nevertheless offers a methodology and analytical patience that sets his work apart. His time frame is 1-3 years, and his approach is to look both at challenges to Pakistan and "topics" which seem to be of particular importance; the latter are roughly equivalent to the factors or variables deployed in this project. Paris's list of challenges contains no surprises:

---

<sup>90</sup> For prime examples of this rhetoric see Simon Henderson, "Pakistan on the Brink: Implications for U.S. Policies," May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy (<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/print.php?template=C05&CID=3050>). The website of the Jamaat-e-Islami is a good source for the Islamist narrative, <http://jamaat.org/beta/site/index>, and the authoritative study of the Jamaat is by Vali Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jamā'at-i-Islami of Pakistan* (London: I.B. Taurus, 1994).

<sup>91</sup> See Rizvi's Bellagio paper. Tariq Ali has written that "the choice will be between socialist revolution" that is, people's power "complete and utter disintegration," and underlined the need for building "the revolutionary vanguard which will enable us to achieve a socialist workers' and peasants' republic in Pakistan." Tariq Ali, *Pakistan: Military Rule or People's Power* (New York: William Morrow & Co.), 1970, pp.243-244

<sup>92</sup> Marco Mezzera, Safiya Aftab, Country case study: Pakistan, State-Society Analysis, Jan. 2009, Clingendael, the Netherlands Institute of International Relations, [http://www.initiativeforpeacebuilding.com/pdf/Pakistan\\_State\\_Society\\_Analysis.pdf](http://www.initiativeforpeacebuilding.com/pdf/Pakistan_State_Society_Analysis.pdf)

<sup>93</sup> Jonathan Paris, *Prospects for Pakistan* (London, U.K.: Legatum Institute, 2010)

- State fragmentation and loss of control over various territories that undermined the integrity, solidarity, and stability of the country
- Security and terrorism throughout Pakistan
- The economy
- Governance issues, including corruption;
- Rebuilding the Pakistan brand.

The last item in the list is also used by Shaukat Aziz, the former Finance advisor and prime minister, and it is not clear whether this refers to Pakistan's image abroad or the nature of the allegiance of Pakistanis to the state, and the purpose of Pakistan, what I have termed the "idea" of Pakistan.

Paris's list of "topics" include:

- The economy;
- Civil-military issues;
- Trends in Islamism;
- The future of Pashtun nationalism;
- The Future of the Pakistani Taliban;
- Pakistan's relations with three countries: India, China, and the United States.

In the body of the paper there is also a discussion of demography, the insurgency in Balochistan, and other factors. Notable by their absence are discussions of the role of the media, the rise of civil society, the new role of the courts, and constitutional developments, although some of the latter, such as the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment, were still being formulated while the study was underway.

One of the most useful aspects of this study is Paris's exploration of a range of futures for the main topics or variables. For the economy he examines both a "glass half-full" and a less optimistic "glass half-empty" scenario; he does the same for civil-military relations, where three futures are discussed: a return to military dominance, continuation of the present status quo, and a third scenario involving movement towards a democratic consolidation. There is less scenario building regarding Islamic trends in Pakistan, but he rules out either the emergence of religious parties as a dominant factor in Pakistani politics or a Taliban takeover. These are eminently reasonable predictions in the short time frame of the study.

In his summary evaluation Paris argues that, when evaluating Pakistan's expected challenges, it will "muddle through," but the "unexpected challenges" make it so difficult to predict even the next one to three years in Pakistan. He notes that the spike in food costs, the rise of the Pakistan Taliban, the military's push back against militants in Swat and Waziristan, and the Mumbai attack, were all unpredicted and perhaps unpredictable. Thus, Pakistan is likely to "muddle through or slightly worse. Absent a major unexpected shock, it is not destined to become a "failed state."

Bearing in mind the one- to two-year time frame this is sensible, but the uncertainties are still considerable. The phrase, "muddling through," has become the standard optimists' characterization of Pakistan, although it remains undefined and the time-frame is always in the short term. One senior American official with extensive contacts in Pakistan, notably the military, remarked that Pakistan may be below the waterline as defined by "muddling through." Other studies, by observers more familiar with Pakistan's history and society have come to somewhat different conclusions.

Written just after Paris's study, a team of Indian experts organized by the government-funded Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses used a methodology similar to his, and came to approximately the same conclusions.<sup>94</sup> After a general discussion of recent events and trends, *Whither Pakistan* identifies six "key drivers" that will "decide the direction in which Pakistan is likely to evolve in times to come."<sup>95</sup> These are "political dynamics," radicalization of Pakistani society, the military, the economy, relations with India and foreign policy. All are seen as critically important, and all are seen as very uncertain; indeed, the drivers are phrased in the form of questions, and the analysis consists of about 40 questions. The drivers are not sequenced or ranked in terms of importance, and some factors, such as demography, are not considered at all.

This study develops three scenarios, "Lebanonization," a stable Pakistan, and a sharp downward slide and implosion. The authors note, unhelpfully, that there are several inter-mediate scenarios, in which "some drivers pan out and others do not," but these are not listed or discussed. The analysis concludes with the observation that Pakistan's stability and democratization is in everyone's interest, but "the big question is whether Pakistan can succeed in holding itself together against various fissiparous tendencies that afflict it today." Thus, Pakistan's relations with other countries, notably India, are not critical to its future (the study looks at a ten year time frame), but domestic trends and developments are the independent variable. We will later discuss the report's policy recommendations in a discussion of India as a factor, but only point out here that from the perspective of the authors of this report, India is blameless regarding Pakistan's plight; it is the victim of Pakistani misdeeds and mis-calculations.<sup>96</sup>

Finally, another scenario-building approach was taken by one of Pakistan's most distinguished retired generals at a 2009 Canadian conference on Pakistan's futures.<sup>97</sup> Lt. General Talat Masood (Ret.), a former secretary in the Ministry of Defense and now an active participant on the Track II and seminar circuit, posited three scenarios "best case, worst case, and nuanced" but provided no probability estimate.<sup>98</sup> The best case scenario is one in which both civilians and the military see the need for change and discard outdated policies; rule of law is re-established, especially in the frontier region; the military return to the barracks; and economic reform begins to take hold. Relations with India improve, and Pakistan regains its prior international status as a progressive state with continuing good with the United States, China, and the Muslim majority world.

In Masood's worst case, none of this happens, the Taliban problem continues to fester, Pakistan-based militants continue their activity in Kashmir and elsewhere in India, leading to another India-Pakistan crisis,

---

<sup>94</sup> IDSA, *Whither Pakistan*, <http://www.idsa.in/book/WhitherPakistan>

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p. 135.

<sup>96</sup> An earlier Indian attempt to develop scenarios for Pakistan's future was done at a leading Delhi think tank, The Observer Research Foundation. Wilson John, ed., *Pakistan: Struggle Within* (New Delhi: Longman Pearson, 2009)

<sup>97</sup> Johannes Braune, ed., *Pakistan's Security: Today and Tomorrow* (Ottawa, Canada: CSIS, April, 2004).

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

and as a result of these security problems foreign investment ceases to flow to Pakistan and, ultimately, the military again come to power in a new coup d'états.

A nuanced case has a continued domestic disorder, but the economy is kept afloat by remittances from overseas Pakistanis, the international economy continues to aid Pakistan, and dialogue with India is restored, with the ISI and army restraining themselves. Of course, other outcomes are possible and General Masood's mixed outcome could have several permutations.

## Other Studies

Several other attempts to predict, or discuss Pakistan's future are worth noting.

One of Pakistan's most thoughtful scholars, Pervez Hoodbhoy, attempts a five year projection, and warns of the consequences for the country if reform does not happen quickly.<sup>99</sup> B. Raman, India's leading Pakistan-watcher and former intelligence officer, concludes by arguing that India has a stake in the survival of a moderate Pakistan.<sup>100</sup> Two liberal Pakistani journalists, Najam Sethi and Ahmed Rashid, have also expressed their concern about a failing Pakistan.<sup>101</sup>

Farzana Sheikh, a Pakistani scholar resident in Great Britain, dismisses the rhetorical flourishes of "country on the brink" or "failed state," and argues that Pakistan's problems stem from its very origins, and that the identity of Pakistan has never been clear nor has a consensus been developed as to the purpose of Pakistan.<sup>102</sup> The failure of the economy, political incoherence, separatism, corruption, and the rise of extremists are all problems, or in Paris-term, factors. However, underlying these are the absence of a national purpose, notably the ambiguous but generous role accorded to Islam since the founding of Pakistan which has restricted its progress ever since.<sup>103</sup> She remains somewhat optimistic, buoyed by the rise of the new media, an active judiciary and legal community, and human rights activist who have tried to imagine Pakistan in a new way. As Benedict Anderson has argued, nations are "imagined" communities, they can be re-imagined and at bottom they are ideas. However, Pakistan the nation resides uneasily alongside Pakistan the state, and not only is the nation in deep trouble, and has been since independence, but the state of Pakistan is also crumbling, raising the question, to be addressed later, as to whether the state can support the idea, or the idea can sustain the state.

Bruce Riedel, a former American intelligence analyst with long contact with Pakistan, presumes but does not predict an Islamic militant victory in Pakistan. He points to Pakistan's creation of, and collusion with, militant

---

<sup>99</sup> See Pervez Hoodbhoy, "Whither Pakistan? A five-year forecast," June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists Online* (<http://www.thebulletin.org/web-edition/features/whither-pakistan-five-year-forecast>) and Pervez Hoodbhoy, "Pakistan: Road From Hell," June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009, OpenDemocracy.Org (<http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/pakistan-the-road-from-hell>)

<sup>100</sup> B. Raman, "Pakistan: Quo Vadis?" May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010, Raman's Strategic Analysis Blog (<http://ramanstrategicanalysis.blogspot.com/2010/05/pakistan-quo-vadis.html>)

<sup>101</sup> Ahmed Rashid, "The Scary Unraveling of Pakistan," Nov. 30, 2009, *The Daily Beast* (<http://www.thedailybeast.com/blogs-and-stories/2009-11-30/gunning-for-zardari/>) and Najam Sethi, "Islam and the West; Dilemmas of a Failing Pakistan," June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2010, *New Age Islam* ([http://www.newageislam.com/NewAgeIslamIslamAndWest\\_1.aspx?ArticleID=3048](http://www.newageislam.com/NewAgeIslamIslamAndWest_1.aspx?ArticleID=3048))

<sup>102</sup> Farzana Sheikh, *Making Sense of Pakistan* (London: Hirst & Co., 2009).

<sup>103</sup> See the review of Sheikh by Andrew Buncombe, "Review of *Making Sense of Pakistan*, By Farzana Shaikh," June 21, 2009, *The Independent*, <http://license.icopyright.net/user/viewFreeUse.act?fuid=NDQ1N'TI1NQ%3D%3D>

groups, which he believes has left Islamabad vulnerable to an Islamic coup.<sup>104</sup> Riedel dates the crisis back to the war against the Soviet Union, then in occupation of Afghanistan, but the collusion began much earlier, with state patronage of militant Islamic groups going back many years. Riedel sees Pakistan as ripe for change, "but it could be radical change for the worst," and that the battle for the soul of Pakistan has never been so acute. He develops a scenario in which Islamist and Taliban forces push to the East, and establish an Islamic Emirate of Pakistan, virtually dividing the country between Islam-ists and moderate Muslims, and anchoring Pakistani influence in the Pashtun parts of Afghanistan. Pakistan's nuclear arsenal would be at stake, and relations with India would also worsen, as would relations with the United States. Riedel's policy recommendation is that this is a future to be avoided at all costs, and that America must work with remaining moderate elements in Pakistan.

Riedel's "Emirate of Pakistan" is a fictional device. He does not specify the time frame in which it might come about, but there is no mistaking the urgency and depth of his concern about Pakistan's future "and he seems to assume that the U.S. at least still has an opportunity to deflect Pakistan from a dangerous and self-destructive course, one that would turn it into a major enemy of the United States, not an ally.

Even more pessimistic is the analysis by John R. Schmidt, a former American diplomat serving in Islamabad. He traces Pakistan's problems to its feudal political culture, in which the wealthy refuse to tax themselves, the parties are arrayed around powerful families, not ideas, and that it matters little who governs, so deep is the decay in Pakistani political institutions.<sup>105</sup> With the rise of the Islamists, not a unified body itself, but able enough to challenge Pakistan's crumbling establishment, the state faces a threat to its very existence. The "muddling through" preferences of the establishment were only confirmed by such events as the attack on Sri Lanka's cricket team. They are not likely to engage in serious reform, but will kick the proverbial can down the road. There are solutions to Pakistan's many problems, and Schmidt, writing in 2009, observes that it is probably "not too late" if the government undertakes the struggle against the Islamic threat and the army treats the Taliban insurgency seriously. He warns that the day of reckoning is coming and that the more time that is taken to address the rot, "the bloodier and more protracted the confrontation is likely to be." And, of course, the fall of Pakistan to radical Islamic forces would be calamitous for the rest of the world, even though there is probably "little that the rest of the world can do to prevent this." The matter rests, as it always had, with the Pakistani people and the political class that rules them.

Finally, Hasan Abbas, a former Pakistani police officer now resident in the United States, offers, along with Paris, the most comprehensive assessment of Pakistan's multiple crises, and is more optimistic than Riedel and others about a positive transformation.<sup>106</sup> After a comprehensive assessment of recent threats to the state and to the very idea of Pakistan, including a detailed study of the rise of terrorism, sectarian violence, and the rise of political and criminal extremism, he suggest that both the lawyers movement and the rise of the new media offer an opportunity for Pakistanis and outsiders to save Pakistan from what could be comprehensive failure. Noting that Pakistan ranks as ninth out of 177 of the world's weakest countries, "the

---

<sup>104</sup> Bruce Riedel, "Armageddon in Islamabad," June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009, *The National Interest Online*, <http://www.nationalinterest.org/printerfriendly.aspx?id=21644>

<sup>105</sup> John R. Schmidt, "The Unraveling of Pakistan," June-July 2009, *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* (<http://www.iiss.org/publications/survival/survival-2009/year-2009-issue-3/the-unravelling-of-pakistan>)

<sup>106</sup> Hassan Abbas, *Pakistan Can Defy the Odds: How to Rescue a Failing State*, Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (Clinton Township, MI: ISPU, May 2009)

challenges of militancy, weak governance, and economic insecurity are feeding each other in a dangerous cycle, which must be broken if Pakistan is to be saved.<sup>107</sup> There follows seven recommendations each for Pakistani and American policy makers. The former involve a new social contract between the government and the people, the removal of colonial-era laws, major investment in education and health care reform, the reconfiguration of state and governance structures, bringing in the Army Education Corps and Medical Corps to meet educational and health targets, providing support for progressive religious groups in order to help defeat the "idea of Talibanization," defeating the communication strategy of the Taliban, closing down militant *madaris*, overhauling the police, law enforcement and intelligence services, reviving the peace process with India, and enhancing the security of the nuclear weapons establishment while enhancing civilian oversight over the entire nuclear establishment. The United States is offered a similarly comprehensive agenda, including developing a more comprehensive strategy towards Pakistan, avoiding condition-heavy aid packages, addressing the Kashmir problem and India-Pakistan relations, accepting Pakistan's status as a nuclear weapons state, stressing education and health in American aid to Pakistan, helping Pakistan improve its civilian law enforcement capabilities, replacing drone attacks in KP with a "Humanitarian Aid package," and, finally, creating an effective oversight mechanism for Pakistani aid and assistance programs.

The scope of Abbas's recommendations is breathtaking, and point to a complete transformation of Pakistan to be led by Pakistanis themselves with full support by the United

States. They reflect the deep problems facing Pakistan, and the urgency of the reform agency, as seen by a thoughtful and expert former member of Pakistan's police force. Abbas is cautiously optimistic, while the indicators are increasingly negative, and while there are credible "gloom and doom" scenarios, "many things are going well," notably the slow and sure transition to democracy since the January 2008 elections.

---

<sup>107</sup> Abbas, p. 28.

As he notes, "politicians are settling down; however if they do not deliver they will be out of a job. The army's non-interference posture in relation to the political arena also deserves to be acknowledged although it will take a while for the civilian and democratic leadership to assume complete control and be in a position to decisively define the overall direction of domestic and foreign policy. Two of the "Signs of Hope" he discusses are the lawyers' movement of 2007-2009 and the rise of the new media. Left unsaid is Pakistan's future if such a reform program is *not* initiated and carried out successfully. Abbas does not consider the shape and timing of failure.