

U.S. Influence on Pakistan: Can Partners Have Divergent Priorities?

As the dust from the crumbling World Trade Center towers fouled the New York air, Pakistan suddenly became a key U.S. partner in the war against Al Qaeda. Three months later, militants whose organization enjoyed free rein in Pakistan attacked the Indian parliament. War clouds gathered on the subcontinent, and just as suddenly, Pakistan was the object of intense U.S. pressure. Even as the United States emphasized its partnership with Pakistan in the war on terrorism, it pushed Islamabad—hard and publicly—to put a permanent stop to infiltration across the line of control that separates Indian and Pakistani forces in Kashmir. For Pakistan, the antiterror alliance with the United States was important, but not at the cost of its interests in Kashmir.

This jarring transition is a microcosm of a half-century of U.S.-Pakistani relations marked by overlapping interests but differing priorities. The same pattern was also apparent in earlier periods of bilateral partnership, in the 1950s and particularly in the 1980s. In both cases, the United States and Pakistan were allies against the Soviets. In the 1950s, despite the clear limitations in its treaties with the United States, Pakistan thought it had lined up an ally against its Indian adversary and was bitterly disillusioned when the United States cut off arms supplies during its 1965 war with India.

In the 1980s, Pakistan's nuclear program undid the two countries' cooperation. It was a critical feature of Pakistan's security policies and intended to counteract India's greater conventional military power. Both the United States and Pakistan emerged disappointed with their partnership. Complicating the policy agenda was Washington's tendency to overemphasize relations with particular Pakistani presidents—Field Marshall Ayub Khan in the

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1950s and 1960s, Gen. Zia ul-Haq in the 1980s, and more recently Gen. Pervez Musharraf—rather than make policy based on long-term interests and prospects in Pakistan. As a result, issues such as the viability of Pakistan’s political system have received inadequate attention.

Today, many Pakistani policymakers and politically active citizens are asking how long it will be before the United States once again loses interest and files for another divorce in the U.S.-Pakistani partnership. To avoid repeating history, U.S. policymakers must depersonalize U.S. policy toward Pakistan and establish two fundamental bases for engagement:

- a long-term democracy agenda designed to strengthen and legitimize Pakistan’s institutions; and
- a sustained and realistic approach to working with both Pakistan and India to deal with and ideally resolve their enduring, dangerous dispute.

The Problems of the 1980s

When Soviet tanks rolled into Kabul on Christmas Day 1979, they ushered in the most intense period of U.S.-Pakistani cooperation in history. The two countries collaborated to expel the Soviet army from Afghanistan, a development that ultimately helped dismantle the Soviet empire. Yet, the other leitmotif of U.S.-Pakistani relations during that decade—Pakistan’s nuclear program and its clash with U.S. nonproliferation policy—ultimately proved fatal to this chapter of the partnership. The story of how these two issues intersected at that time helps us to understand the dynamics of current U.S.-Pakistani relations.

In the two years preceding the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the nuclear issue was the major focus of U.S. relations with Pakistan. The United States had cut off all economic aid to Pakistan, not once but twice, when Pakistan’s early nuclear program surpassed the thresholds set in U.S. legislation. In 1981, however, in exchange for Islamabad’s agreement to help build up the anti-Soviet resistance in Afghanistan, the Reagan administration persuaded Congress to enact legislation restoring Pakistan’s eligibility for aid and establishing more liberal nonproliferation triggers for the suspension of aid. Pakistan soon became the third-largest recipient of U.S. economic aid as well as one of the largest recipients of U.S. military aid. Intelligence cooperation was even more stunning. Although specific numbers were never officially acknowledged, the United States and other sympathetic countries—working through Pakistan’s army and intelligence services—moved an enormous amount of arms and other needed supplies to the Afghan resistance fighters.

Crises over Pakistan's nuclear program punctuated the U.S.-Pakistani relationship throughout the 1980s. In 1985, four years after aid resumed, Pakistan crossed the revised proliferation threshold. In response, Congress (again at the administration's request) passed the Pressler amendment, which changed the aid cutoff criteria again. This new legislation stipulated that the United States could not provide any aid or sell or transfer any military equipment in any year in which the U.S. government could not certify that Pakistan "did not possess a nuclear explosive device" and that continued U.S. assistance would significantly reduce the chances of its doing so.

The Pressler amendment was remembered in Pakistan as a sword of Damocles, crafted specifically to hang over Pakistan's neck, forcing it to choose between receiving U.S. aid and pursuing nuclear development. At its inception, however, it had been the means for continuing one of the largest aid programs in the world—so that the United States could continue to employ Pakistan in its crusade against the Soviets.

U.S. policy during this period centered on Pakistan's president, General Zia. His government was a military regime under martial law until elections in 1985 put in place a parliament and a civilian prime minister. Even after that change, Zia dominated the government and made most decisions. The United States cultivated close relations with him and, despite periodic public statements welcoming the return of civilian rule and praising democracy, saw him as the centerpiece of its Pakistan policy. Zia's views on Afghanistan and nuclear policy—the key issues on the U.S. agenda—were the ones that counted; his assurances were sought and accepted as Pakistan was approaching the nuclear thresholds set by U.S. law. Although the U.S. government dealt with the elected civilian government, it accepted with little turmoil Zia's decision to dismiss the government and the parliament when he disagreed with one of the prime minister's decisions.

In U.S. nuclear policy, economic and military aid was intended to be the carrot and sanctions the stick. Islamabad was convinced, however, that U.S. interest in Afghanistan was so great that it would never cut off Pakistan's aid. Ultimately, this judgment was wrong. Zia was killed in a mysterious plane crash in 1988. The glamorous, Harvard-educated Benazir Bhutto was elected prime minister and became the effective head of government. The Soviet army left Afghanistan in January 1989. Bhutto's removal with the help of Pakistan's army in August 1990 sent shock waves around Washing-

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ton. The policy context changed, but more importantly, so did Washington's understanding of the status of Pakistan's nuclear program, leaving the U.S. government with no choice but to withhold the certification required by the Pressler amendment and terminate aid.

The sanctions went into effect on October 1, 1990, the start of the U.S. government's new fiscal year. When the Pakistani government was informed in August 1990 that aid would be discontinued, the reaction was, "You never warned us." Pakistan had, in fact, been warned for 10 years but always assumed

that other, higher U.S. priorities were reason enough not to take that warning to heart. With the decade's end, Pakistan again rapidly passed back from partnership to punishment.

U.S.-Pakistani relations in the 1980s are often interpreted as a case study in the ineffectiveness of employing both punitive sanctions and aid inducements, but the real lesson is more complicated. The nuclear program was one of Pakistan's highest priorities at the time, intimately tied to the nation's sense

that it was in a life-and-death struggle with India. The U.S. threat to discontinue aid probably delayed the completion of Pakistan's nuclear explosive device, perhaps by a couple of years. Nevertheless, neutralizing India's military advantage by developing nuclear capability consistently ranked higher on Pakistan's priority list than receiving economic aid and even military supplies from anyone, including the United States. Moreover, China's long-standing friendship with Pakistan and its support for Pakistan's nuclear program gave Pakistan another major external ally. The United States was not its only option.

U.S. sanctions contributed to the widespread feeling among Pakistanis that the United States had once again used their country and discarded it when it was no longer needed. The sanctions might have been more effective if the United States had not been so deeply engaged with Pakistan in Afghanistan and had avoided sending the kind of mixed messages that largely discredited its threats. Without the campaign in Afghanistan, however, U.S. economic and military aid to Pakistan would not have been as generous; threatening sanctions, therefore, would not have been as effective either.

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Here We Go Again

Almost immediately after the September 11 attacks, the United States presented what amounted to an ultimatum to Pakistan, whose location next to

Afghanistan and historic support for the Taliban made the country a key potential partner in the U.S. antiterrorism effort. The attacks on New York and Washington gave unique credibility to both the U.S. offer to resume economic aid and the threat of dire consequences for Pakistan if it refused to cooperate with the United States. The implied threat undoubtedly contributed to President Musharraf's rapid, positive response. But Musharraf also saw an opportunity to pursue his own stated goal of curbing the threat to the Pakistani state posed by increasingly lawless militants.

Musharraf explained his decision in a speech to the nation on September 19, 2001. He based it on four key Pakistani interests: the country's security, its economic revival, the need to safeguard its "strategic nuclear and missile assets," and the Kashmir cause. Secular Pakistanis hailed the prospect of a government move against the militants, but the public reaction to Pakistan's reversing its policies under U.S. pressure was largely skeptical. The popular view of U.S. fickleness toward Pakistan was alive and well, and many Pakistanis were reflexively doubtful of the notion that Muslims had carried out the September 11 attacks.

Musharraf's speech and the popular reaction to it foreshadowed the re-emergence of the miscommunication, misperception, and divergent priorities that characterized earlier U.S.-Pakistani relations. The United States was eager to support Musharraf's goals of rebuilding the nation and restoring Pakistan's external ties and expected that, in return, Pakistan would support the U.S. goal of removing the Taliban regime from Afghanistan and eventually putting the remnants of the Taliban and Al Qaeda out of business. But Washington did not share Pakistan's goals with respect to Kashmir. Preventing the outbreak of a war between India and Pakistan that might go nuclear remained a central objective of U.S. policy in South Asia. Pakistan's support for the Kashmiri insurgency raised the nuclear risk and put the United States and Pakistan at odds again.

Afghanistan: The Partnership Works

The first visible indicator of Pakistan's new, post-September 11 policy was its abandonment of a 10-year effort to turn Afghanistan under the Taliban regime into a virtual client state, a change that years of effort by U.S. officials had failed to achieve. As operations commenced in Afghanistan, Musharraf removed the head of the Inter-Services Intelligence Division (ISI), the part of the army responsible for supporting the Taliban, to ensure that his change in policy toward Afghanistan would be implemented.

The first few months of the new Afghan policy were painful for Pakistan. Musharraf had little success persuading the United States to adjust its mili-

tary and political tactics to account for Pakistan's sensitivities. He publicly urged the United States to minimize aerial bombardment of Afghanistan, with little apparent impact. Even worse, from Pakistan's point of view, was the succession to the Taliban when the regime collapsed in Kabul. The Taliban's principal internal rival was the Northern Alliance, a collection of tribal leaders strongly opposed to Pakistan and believed to be friendly to India. Musharraf's efforts to persuade the United States to keep this group from taking control in Kabul failed, and Pakistan soon saw its most entrenched Afghan opponents in charge with strong U.S. support. For army officers committed to avoiding a situation where Pakistan was sandwiched between two hostile states, this appeared a strategic debacle.

Despite this difficult beginning, U.S. and Pakistani interests in Afghanistan are now reasonably well aligned. Pakistan has placed stability at the top of its Afghan agenda and made considerable efforts to improve relations with the Afghan authorities. Hamid Karzai's new government in Afghanistan eventually reciprocated Pakistan's efforts.

Al Qaeda and the Militants: A Mixed Picture

Once regime change had been accomplished in Afghanistan, Washington turned its attention to the remnants of the Taliban and Al Qaeda, soon expanding the hunt to parts of Pakistan. The Pakistani government permitted the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other U.S. forces to participate directly in operations against important terrorist targets. Operational and intelligence cooperation was critical to their success. This campaign fit with the Pakistani government's desire to end sectarian violence in Pakistan and, more generally, to reclaim the authority of the state over militant groups.

The Pakistani government's actions against the militants, however, came at the price of a sharp increase in domestic violence in Pakistan. The nine months after September 2001 saw accelerated attacks against Shi'a targets and a new series of attacks against Christians. Attacks on foreign targets took off soon thereafter, starting with the abduction and murder of Daniel Pearl in January 2002. These attacks embarrassed the Musharraf government and revealed the extent of Al Qaeda's penetration into Pakistan. Pakistan's internal security picture was even more worrisome than U.S. officials had believed.

Moreover, despite the strong cooperation between the two countries' law enforcement agencies, some U.S. officials also wondered how far Pakistan's support of antiterrorism activities extended. It took the Pakistani authorities a full week to provide information to the United States after one of Daniel Pearl's assassins surrendered to a Pakistani government official whom the as-

sassin had first known as an ISI “handler.” In a society where the lines between intelligence, extremism, and law enforcement are hard to draw, it can be difficult to decipher where bureaucratic turf battles end and deception begins. Further complicating the picture, Pakistan’s sectarian militant groups include many of the same people who have been infiltrating Kashmir and supporting militancy there with the covert support of Pakistan’s ISI. The effort to control the militants at home essentially ran into the Kashmir issue—a far tougher task politically and one about which Musharraf has mixed feelings at best.

Kashmir: The Partners Disagree

In December 2001, the attack on the Indian parliament brought the Kashmir issue back to the front pages, putting the two partners on a collision course. Suspicion of India and the insurgency in Kashmir have wide support in Pakistan and are among the few issues that unite Pakistan’s fragmented polity. For the army—always a political player and especially so while an army general holds the presidency—these subjects are the touchstones of Pakistan’s security, on which they are not willing to follow advice from outsiders. Musharraf and the Pakistani leadership hoped that Pakistan’s support for U.S. policy in Afghanistan would lead the United States to turn a blind eye to Pakistan’s support for militancy in Kashmir and to provide some diplomatic support for a Kashmir settlement with which Pakistan would be comfortable.

The attack on its parliament drew a sharp response from India, which mounted a massive military deployment, cut off transportation links, and downgraded diplomatic ties with Pakistan. The United States, far from turning a blind eye, looked on the strike as terrorism and saw it as a major threat to U.S. interests. The resulting tensions between India and Pakistan raised the specter of nuclear war on the subcontinent.

Washington, concerned both about the prospect of war and about the danger of its own and Pakistan’s resources being diverted from antiterrorism operations in Afghanistan and western Pakistan, launched a major crisis-management initiative with intense consultations between top U.S., Indian, and Pakistani leaders and a high-profile visit by Secretary of State Colin Powell. Once again, Musharraf found himself facing fierce and highly publicized U.S. pressure to cut off Pakistan’s support for the militants in Kashmir and to prevent the infiltration of militants into Indian-controlled territory. He responded with a remarkable speech on January 12, 2002, denouncing all forms of terrorism as unacceptable and unworthy of Pakistan.

The brief lull that followed Musharraf’s January speech produced no breakthrough in either Indo-Pakistani relations, and neither did it produce

the resumption of political dialogue. By May 2002, the military deployments remained unchanged, and infiltration continued across the line of control. Indian spokesmen talked once again about taking action against Pakistan. With renewed danger of war between India and Pakistan, U.S. pressure on Pakistan resumed. This time, Musharraf promised the United States that he would end infiltration permanently and told the press that there was “nothing going on” along the line of control. In late June, the State Department spokesman publicly confirmed Musharraf’s assurances of a “permanent” stop to infiltration; by late summer, the United States had doubts about the veracity of this promise as well. Washington recognized that complete control of a porous border was nearly impossible to achieve, and Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage emphasized that the United States took Musharraf at his word. Those who followed the issue closely, however, now questioned how consistent Pakistan’s efforts, including Musharraf’s, were.

U.S.-Pakistani relations were once again marred by mixed messages reflecting the two nations’ conflicting goals. The United States continued to press Musharraf to change his policy in Kashmir, but Washington’s top policymakers still gave first priority to operations against the increasingly evident presence of Al Qaeda elements in Pakistan. Musharraf probably concluded that his cooperation with the United States on Afghanistan and on operations against Al Qaeda was so valuable to the United States that it would be willing to tolerate some level of Pakistani involvement in Kashmir and that he would be able to find that level through trial and error.

State Failure Is No Longer an Option

Besides the three hot-button issues of Afghanistan, antiterrorism operations, and Kashmir, the U.S.-Pakistani partnership was intended to help Pakistan with an urgent effort to rebuild its economy and political institutions. This was an objective both countries wholeheartedly shared. “National reconstruction,” as he called it, had been a major theme of Musharraf’s rule from the time he took over the government.

During the 1990s, the United States increasingly came to see Pakistan as a problem country, beset by economic and political troubles and incapable of effectively pursuing the kinds of domestic policies necessary to sustain a solid relationship with the United States. In promising more generous assistance after September 11, the United States hoped to help Pakistan start working its way out of this morass. Running the risk of state failure was no longer an acceptable outcome anywhere in the world, particularly in Pakistan, given its potential to breed Al Qaeda terrorists. The challenge here

was to ensure that reconstruction efforts received adequate attention despite the immediacy of these security-related issues.

Pakistan's economy was in bad shape, but it was, at least in relative terms, the area where visible improvement was easiest to achieve. Uncontrolled borrowing, coupled with underfunding the country's social sectors for decades, had ravaged the government's finances and left Pakistan's rural poor out of the race for economic development. Investment and textile orders plummeted following the September 11 attacks, in response both to fears of instability in Pakistan and to the global economic slump.

Even before the terrorist strikes on the United States, Musharraf's government had significantly reformed the management of his government's finances. The United States provided more than \$600 million in economic aid the first year, plus export credits and guarantees, and the Bush administration requested \$250 million for fiscal year 2003. Pakistan has continued to adhere to an economic reform program from the International Monetary Fund, which in turn has made debt relief from its creditors possible. Its balance of payments has dramatically improved.

Remediating Pakistan's underlying economic problems will require much more time. The social sectors—education and health in particular—are still desperately underfunded. Moreover, virtually all of the first year's U.S. aid has been paid in cash—the funds allocated directly to debt repayment. The same will be true of 80 percent in the next fiscal year, leaving only a relatively modest amount specifically allotted to development spending. Investment remains far below the levels in the 1990s, partly because of Pakistani domestic circumstances but also because of the difficult state of the world economy. These systemic problems will take at least a decade to resolve adequately.

The greater challenge in Pakistan is developing a viable political system. More than anything else, this requires rebuilding the country's badly battered political and other civilian institutions. The role of the military in Pakistan's political system is a major obstacle in this endeavor. The country has spent a total of 27 years under military governments, and even during periods of elected civilian rule, the army has played a disproportionate role in the political process and in policymaking. Most army officers have contempt for Pakistan's politicians and political parties and are skeptical about civilian institutions. They are uncomfortable with the uncertainty inherent in the way independent political institutions function, especially at the national level.

All three of Pakistan's long-term military governments have focused their political reform efforts on local government. That level of government has

The role of the military is a major obstacle impeding Pakistan's political viability.

relatively little to do with army interests, which include preserving military influence over Pakistan's security policy, maintaining a strong budget, and protecting an extensive network of economic organizations run by retired officers. The army's institutional goal, which Musharraf is determined to accomplish while in office, is to enhance and institutionalize the role of the military in policymaking by giving constitutional standing to a National Security Council that includes the chiefs of all the military services.

Musharraf has taken actions that undercut the viability of Pakistan's national institutions.

Musharraf is not only working to achieve the army's institutional goals but shares the sentiments behind them. Moreover, he has become increasingly intent on ensuring the continuation of his own power and has taken actions that undercut the viability of Pakistan's national institutions. The April 2002 referendum that endorsed a five-year extension of Musharraf's term had no constitutional standing. Worse, it preempted the responsibility of the parliament and the state legislatures to

choose the nation's president. Similarly, he passed sweeping constitutional changes by decree only two months before the October 2002 election of a new parliament, the very body empowered to change the constitution.

The election itself sent shock waves through Pakistan as well as around Washington. It produced a fragmented parliament, as many had anticipated and as Musharraf was believed to have hoped. His preferred party, the Pakistan Muslim League/Quaid-e-Azam (PML/Q), got the largest share, with somewhat more than 25 percent of the seats. Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) came in second. The surprise was the strong showing of six Islamic religious parties, united for the first time in an electoral alliance. They campaigned largely on their opposition to the United States and won close to 20 percent of the seats, becoming the third-largest party in the House. The results left Musharraf scrambling to put together a government with a parliamentary majority, with a high potential for instability, and serious concerns about how the religious parties would affect policy and politics in the elected branch of government.

The Personal Dimension

U.S. policymakers, grateful to Musharraf for signing up as an ally against terrorism and acutely aware of the importance of his leadership in a volatile environment, have understandably tried to support him. The contrast with the Clinton administration's chilly relations with this leader has been strik-

ing. Musharraf's state visit to Washington, D.C., in February 2002, where he received generous praise and ample high-level attention, was a classic exercise in personal diplomacy. This reception helped the Pakistani president demonstrate to his home audience that his decision to side with the United States had paid off.

This focus on Musharraf, however, has some problematic side effects. U.S. officials, careful not to embarrass him politically, have spoken out only rarely and cautiously about the return to democracy in Pakistan and the importance of healthy institutions. These issues have a lower priority for the United States than antiterrorism operations. Yet, beyond the immediate short term, Pakistan's recovery as a healthy state with functioning institutions is a critical prerequisite for keeping South Asia free of terrorism. Even in the short term, Pakistan's institutions affect the country's domestic campaign against religious extremists. The organizations on which the Pakistani government depends to bring the militants under control, notably the police, are weak, corrupt, and unreliable. Musharraf's preoccupation with his personal political fortunes and his manipulation of the political process are undercutting the political reforms that could help revive the fragile state and the institutions it needs to govern.

The parliamentary election results discussed above are likely to intensify Washington's preoccupation with Musharraf, who will have good reason to portray himself as the only force standing in the way of Islamic extremists. The election results, however, make it all the more important for the United States to craft a policy toward Pakistan that creates visible ties with the full range of the country's institutions and political leaders. U.S. willingness to speak out against the army's manipulation of the political process in the months before the election might have strengthened the proponents of responsible and vigorous democracy and might have affected their attitude toward other U.S. policy goals.

Influencing Pakistan

Recent U.S. policy toward Pakistan has deployed two concrete incentives to cement the policy changes sought by the United States: economic aid and rebuilding military ties. The United States removed all sanctions placed on Pakistan in the preceding decade, including the one that banned aid to countries in which a military government had removed an elected one. This served as a concrete indicator that Pakistan was no longer regarded as a problem state. More personal incentives for Musharraf included a high political profile for him and for Pakistan in the United States; regular contact with top U.S. government officials; and a state visit. The United States invested considerable resources in fol-

lowing up on its top priorities in Pakistan. One example is the substantial FBI presence during Pakistan's raids on suspected Al Qaeda elements.

Some types of assistance that the Pakistanis would very much have liked to receive from the United States have not been made available thus far. The most important, from Musharraf's and the army's viewpoint, is the supply of major military equipment. On a number of occasions, Musharraf has raised the issue of the F-16 aircraft that the United States was unable to deliver in 1990 and for which the U.S. and Pakistani governments finally reached a reimbursement agreement in 1998. Besides its economic aid request, the Bush administration has requested \$250 million for the sale of military equipment to Pakistan in fiscal year 2003. Both U.S. policy and the residual effect of 10 years of sanctions, however, limit the military supplies to items that were in the supply pipeline before 1998 and items connected with antiterrorism operations. In practice, this rules out the kind of major equipment that Pakistan's military wants to receive.

On the economic side, the Bush administration's fiscal year 2003 request represents a substantial level of assistance for Pakistan compared with other recipients, but it is well below the levels in 2002. Moreover, Pakistan's hope of getting U.S. acquiescence or support for its goals in Kashmir has remained entirely unfulfilled, as has Pakistan's perennial hope of weaning the United States away from its friendship with India.

As in the 1980s, the current U.S.-Pakistani partnership will remain strong on Afghanistan—the issue that launched the partnership—at least as long as that enterprise continues to be successful. U.S. economic aid will help the Pakistani government meet its financial challenges. Because so much of the aid takes the form of cash rather than specific programs, it will probably make only a limited contribution to improving health and reforming education in Pakistan. In addition, Pakistan's new high-level access to Washington and the increasing interaction between U.S. and Pakistani military services will permit the United States to pursue its security agenda in Pakistan as the need arises. Nevertheless, the fundamental long-term U.S. goal of building a relationship with a healthier Pakistani state, one less likely to incubate or export militant violence in a less turbulent region, will be beyond reach unless the United States adjusts its priorities.

The Missing Ingredients

U.S. policy toward Pakistan is still focused more than it should be on Musharraf rather than Pakistan as a whole. Leadership is important, especially in a country with weak institutions, a troubled recent history, and pending conflict, but the U.S. government has not given sufficient attention

to the people and institutions that will remain even if Musharraf passes from the scene.

Musharraf's popularity has fallen in the last year, as has happened to other military leaders before him. It is risky to generalize about opinion in a heavily rural country where fewer than half of adults can read. Some widely held views are a serious problem for U.S. policy, starting with the widespread skepticism about the value of relations with the United States and the strong popular resonance for Pakistan's Kashmir policy. In other respects, however, popular views may be closer to the U.S. perspective than those of Pakistan's leadership. Available evidence suggests that the Pakistani public has no love for military rule, wants to have both more effective government and a more open political system, and would strongly support a serious drive to rebuild the country's institutions and bring the militants under control. U.S. policy needs to make visible to the Pakistani people and to public figures other than Musharraf its support for these goals and for Pakistan's broad well-being, even if doing so might ruffle the Pakistani president's feathers.

U.S. focus on Musharraf has problematic side effects.

The United States, in other words, needs to supplement its current policies with a democracy agenda. This effort must go beyond the usual public critique of elections. The most important element of an effective democracy agenda in Pakistan would be for the United States to dedicate a much more significant portion of its aid to bolstering the institutions on which Pakistan's government and political life depend. Good starting points would include a commission to revamp and strengthen the judiciary; a thorough overhaul of the key civil service and revenue-collecting institutions; and pressure to insist on greater internal democracy within political parties. Technical assistance designed to increase the effectiveness of the parliament would be another important contribution, but countries with a parliamentary system may be better placed to provide it than the United States.

The United States will need to develop real working relationships with the elected government, in addition to its existing dialogue with Musharraf. The possibility that the religious parties will participate in government makes this more, not less, important. Their agenda conflicts with U.S. goals in several ways. However, Pakistan's political leaders—notably the 80 percent of parliamentarians from secular parties—are the ones who must primarily meet this challenge. They must find ways of working together, and ultimately that depends on strengthening the country's political institutions. A year into the new partnership, it is not too late to add this strand to U.S. policy toward Pakistan.

The normal U.S. carrot-and-stick approach is not sufficient.

The more fundamental problem in U.S. policy toward Pakistan is the clash between U.S. and Pakistani priorities, specifically, Pakistan's relations with India and its policy on Kashmir. Just as the United States was unable to sway Pakistan's nuclear policy in the 1980s, it will be extraordinarily difficult to persuade Pakistan to change its policy on Kashmir now. The United States wants Pakistan to confine itself to peaceful means in the freedom struggle in Kashmir and wants India and Pakistan to work toward a settle-

ment together. Unfortunately, Pakistan's experience in the 1970s and 1980s has led the country to conclude that, without violence, India will simply ignore Pakistan. Furthermore, the experience of the 1980s convinced Pakistan that the kind of low-intensity conflict that drove the Soviet Union from Afghanistan can drive India from Kashmir.

Real change in Pakistani policy, including the fulfillment of Musharraf's pledge to Bush to end infiltration, requires both leadership and the creation of a political consensus around a radically changed vision of both Pakistan and Kashmir. A policy shift also requires an Indian leader who is willing to respond and a persistent effort by both countries to root out the radicals who oppose a compromise settlement.

The normal carrot-and-stick approach used by the United States—aid, intense political consultation, and even greater military supplies—are not sufficient to leverage this change in the mind of a skeptical leader or to help him bring the army and the public along with him. The United States has been effective in crisis management and has been working behind the scenes to help India and Pakistan to lay the groundwork for talks. This now needs to become a major, sustained element in U.S. policy, backed by a comprehensive strategic vision of how to bring about the necessary changes on all sides of the conflict. The details of such a strategy go beyond the scope of this paper. It is by no means guaranteed to succeed. Without such a strategy, however, there is little chance that Pakistan and India will move toward peaceful resolution of their differences, and U.S. and Pakistani views will continue to clash on this fundamental and dangerous issue.

With the U.S. foreign policy debate today overwhelmingly preoccupied with Iraq, the prospects for this type of engagement in the immediate future appear poor. Unless this changes, we should expect that Pakistan's policy in Kashmir will not undergo fundamental change. Because day-to-day operations in Kashmir are more important to Pakistan than they are to the United States, the low-intensity war will continue and will lead to more nuclear

scars like the ones in 2002. Militant groups, now encouraged by the strong showing of the religious parties in the election, will preserve a base in Pakistan, and the economic and political development in Pakistan that the United States hopes to encourage will become even more difficult. Musharraf and the army will continue to dominate the country's weak institutions.

There is an irony here. When Musharraf took over the Pakistani government in 1999, he set national reconstruction as a central goal. As noted above, this is an area where U.S. and Pakistani hopes are well aligned and seem to respond to the widely held yearnings of the Pakistani people. Pakistan's Kashmir policy—generally popular within Pakistan—threatens the reconstruction effort, and a U.S. policy that is too tightly linked to a single leader may also inhibit the achievement of goals that both the United States and Musharraf fervently desire.

