

## U.S. Strategy: Assisting Pakistan's Transformation

Pakistan today is clearly both part of the problem and the solution to the threat of terrorism facing the United States. Although it did not set out to do so, the landmark report issued by the 9/11 Commission ended up highlighting Pakistan's deep involvement with international terrorism. For more than two decades, beginning with the Sikh insurgency in the Indian Punjab in the early 1980s, Islamabad consciously nurtured and supported terrorist groups as a means to secure its geopolitical goals vis-à-vis Afghanistan and India. Although in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks Islamabad made the difficult decisions to stand aside as the United States destroyed the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and to assist Washington in hunting down the remnants of Al Qaeda, President Gen. Pervez Musharraf's regime has regrettably still not irrevocably eschewed supporting terrorism as a matter of state policy. Unfortunately, the 9/11 Commission's report glossed over this fact.

Although Musharraf has been rightly commended for his courageous early post-9/11 decisions in the global war against terrorism, Pakistan today deliberately remains reluctant to pursue the Taliban along its northwestern frontier and continues to support various terrorist groups operating in Kashmir. The many welcome changes in Pakistan's strategic direction under Musharraf since September 11 have therefore not extended to completely renouncing terrorism as an instrument of national policy. Islamabad continues to support terrorist groups in pursuit of geopolitical interests it perceives as critical, such as securing a friendly, even pliant regime in Afghanistan and wresting the state of Jammu and Kashmir away from India.

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Ashley J. Tellis is a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, D.C. He wishes to thank Teresita Schaffer and George Perkovich for their helpful comments.

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**Pakistan still has not completely renounced terrorism as an instrument of national policy.**

Although Pakistan's interest in these objectives is understandable, its support of terrorist groups is troublesome because even Islamabad cannot be certain that its control over the extremist forces it has unleashed will be robust in perpetuity. The terrorist groups nurtured by Islamabad today for its own strategic purposes may end up turning against the Pakistani state, as has already happened in some instances, with grave consequences for stability in a large, populous, nuclear-armed Muslim country. The violent, antediluvian Islamist ideology that animates many

of the terrorist groups supported by Pakistan also places them in natural opposition to the United States and, as a consequence, could result in attacks on U.S. as well as Afghan or Indian interests.

Assisting the transformation of Pakistan to avert its continued threat to U.S. security in particular and to Western interests more generally, therefore, represents a difficult challenge for the United States. Pakistan has

accumulated a complex set of strategic, economic, political, and societal problems throughout its 50 years of troubled statehood that are not only individually challenging but also mutually and viciously reinforcing.<sup>1</sup> Successive Pakistani leaders have shied away from promoting serious reform because the daunting nature of their country's crisis has inevitably implied that even partial amelioration would require extensive revolutionary change. They have therefore traditionally settled either for half-baked or sham efforts at reform, none of which survived their terms in office.

Thus far, Musharraf has not demonstrated that he is an exception to this rule. The structural reforms he has overseen have focused mainly on strengthening his own hold on power, and reforms related to policy improvements carry no guarantees of surviving his term in office. For all his pleas about "enlightened moderation,"<sup>2</sup> Musharraf has in fact done little to develop institutions that will promote a democratic temper or provide moderate political forces in Pakistan an opportunity to prosper. To the contrary, his political machinations have resulted in Islamist political parties rising to prominence in Pakistan's highest legislative bodies for the first time, while his strategies for preventing Islamist control of the state in the long term all hinge on continued military supremacy in Pakistani politics.

Most of the changes necessary to transform Pakistan into a success story have to be undertaken and led by Pakistanis themselves. Outsiders, including powerful allies such as the United States, can only play a supporting role. Successful transformation will require Pakistani leaders to make diffi-

cult choices, including subordinating immediate, often important institutional interests for larger national gains. Few, however, have historically appeared capable of meeting this challenge; and the current military leadership, despite being well intentioned, is unlikely to prove exceptional in this regard. Musharraf's refusal to implement an agreement previously reached with Pakistan's major political parties to retire as chief of army staff is the latest example of how short-term, sometimes personal, interests still trump larger concerns of public importance. In this case, Musharraf's actions will further retard the return to democratic rule and prevent a highly regarded reformist officer, Gen. Yousaf Khan, from ascending to the army's senior-most leadership position.

Assisting the transformation of Pakistan into a stable, nonthreatening state will also require important allies such as the United States to demonstrate a willingness to sacrifice key short-term interests to realize long-term benefits. Because such a transformation inevitably demands that Pakistan become a fully democratic regime in which the military functions as the guardian, not the master, of the state, the key question is whether Washington and other capitals have the foresight, skill, and political will actively to pursue policies that push Islamabad in this direction while still maintaining its cooperation in fighting the war on terrorism.

### **Anatomy of a Crisis**

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After the bloody partition of 1947, Pakistan found itself a deeply insecure state—territorially bifurcated, administratively handicapped, economically deprived, and soon at war with its larger neighbor India over Kashmir. For almost 10 years after its independence, Pakistan struggled to create a constitutional democracy. The universal adult suffrage associated with democratic governance, however, would have granted the more numerous Bengalis in East Pakistan the right to rule over the Mohajir- and Punjabi-dominated western wing of the state. Because this outcome was unacceptable to these groups, various constitutional drafts were rejected, and the opportunity to develop democratic institutions was irrevocably lost as the jostling ethnic and bureaucratic elites who quickly dominated Pakistan's political vacuum forged "rules of the game" that would undermine democracy for many decades to come.<sup>3</sup>

Further, the "viceregal" tradition—the habit of bureaucratic dominance that characterized governance in those British Indian states that would eventually become West Pakistan—the problematic role of Islam in the founding and legitimization of Pakistan, the competitive relationship between the provinces and the center, and the asymmetry of power between

elected officials and unelected bureaucracies all combined to create unresolved sources of tension that survive to the present day. The failure to correct these fundamental problems during the critical formative years after independence radically weakened the foundations on which a democratic political order could be constructed. Therefore, it was not surprising that in 1958, barely two years after being promulgated, Pakistan's draft constitution was abrogated by its first military coup, an event that cemented the deformation of Pakistani politics.

The military's usurpation of political authority in Pakistan was meant initially as nothing more than a remedial act to strengthen the country's defenses temporarily against internal disorder caused by fractious politics,

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ideological schisms, and interprovincial disputes, as well as external threats posed by India. Before long, however, the Pakistani military, emboldened by U.S. assistance during the early Cold War and determined to recover Kashmir from India, renounced its previously apolitical role as the guardian of the state to become just another interest group vying to preserve its control over the state itself.<sup>4</sup> Each subsequent military intervention, justified by the internal and external

security challenges of the day, further compounded this problem by exacerbating existing political divisions while creating new ones.<sup>5</sup>

The army controlled the nation's internal and external security policies, the prized share of the national budget, extensive political and economic patronage, and a vast network of commercial organizations run by retired military officers. Taken alone, this consolidation of power dealt a lethal blow to Pakistan's democracy; when combined with Pakistan's revanchist goal of wresting control of Kashmir from India (a superior and more capable power) by force, it also proved fatal to Pakistan's internal stability. Over time, as the country progressively transmuted into a garrison state with a war economy, it also became a breeding ground for radical groups, many cultivated by the military in its effort to resolve various domestic and foreign policy challenges. As Teresita Schaffer concluded succinctly, "The role of the military is a major obstacle impeding Pakistan's political viability."<sup>6</sup>

The crisis in Pakistan is extensive and systemic. Although strategic, economic, political, and societal obstacles exist and each has its specific causes, in their totality they indicate Pakistan's failure to resolve its internal and external security problems without resorting to military rule. Tackling internal instability requires revitalizing democratic politics, reorienting economic

growth toward developmental objectives, ensuring interprovincial equity, and developing a national identity rooted neither in radical Islam nor in reflexive opposition to India. Tackling external security requires an accommodation with New Delhi that both preserves Pakistan's dignity and resolves the vexing dispute over Kashmir. Thus far, military rule in Pakistan has been unable to secure any of these objectives.

Most observers today appropriately conclude, therefore, that Pakistan will not be able to remedy its multifaceted failures in governance, economic management, and foreign and strategic policy unless its leaders restore civilian democratic rule, governed by a constitutional framework with appropriate checks and balances.<sup>7</sup> Any attempt at reform that attacks Islamabad's complex problems piecemeal will produce only temporary palliatives. Rather, resolution will require significant external assistance, a permanent commitment to reconstituting a democratic order free of military interference, and time.

## What Can Be Done

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Outsiders can provide assistance in limited though important ways, but Pakistanis themselves will have to institutionalize solutions to their country's problems. The key elements of an eventual, integrated solution fall into the four primary realms in which Pakistan's most difficult challenges exist: strategic, economic, political, and societal.

### STRATEGIC

At the strategic level, Pakistan remains in a permanent state of war with India, fearful of India's natural dominance yet determined to limit New Delhi's capacity to cause harm by exploiting its weaknesses. In recent decades, Pakistan has exploited these frailties by supporting various insurgencies within India on the expectation that New Delhi will not retaliate against Pakistan through military action for fear of sparking a nuclear holocaust.<sup>8</sup> This strategy has further strengthened Pakistan's determination to acquire the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) necessary to deter and defeat India at any level of escalation, even if that acquisition has come at the cost of lax oversight of its WMD programs.

Competition with New Delhi has also pushed Islamabad to prevent India from restoring its influence in Afghanistan. In this effort to preserve its "strategic depth," Pakistan has consciously tolerated the presence of Taliban remnants along its northwestern frontier as a hedging strategy in case Afghan president Hamid Karzai's government turns out to be overly friendly to In-

dian interests. Finally, largely as a result of its tumultuous history, Pakistan views its external allies today entirely as transitory instruments of convenience, with their utility dependent mainly on their ability to assist Islamabad in its enduring conflict with India. Therefore, the core challenge in the strategic realm is to mitigate the Pakistani military's perception of permanent, inevitable conflict with India.

The strength of this perception has led the Pakistani army to pursue a variety of risky and destabilizing strategic initiatives, including terrorism and wars, during the last 50 years. It has also resulted in the military's commandeering of domestic politics and its domination of the economy. The restoration of stable civilian rule in Islamabad would greatly help attenuate this problem; historically, civilian regimes in Pakistan have been far less obsessed with the Indian threat than have their military counterparts. On the few occasions when civilian governments in Islamabad have engaged in active security competition with India, they did so for the most part to placate the military and thus minimize the potential for military interference in their rule.

Beyond restoring civilian rule, specific actions are also necessary to address Pakistan's strategic challenges, including ending Pakistani state support of all terrorist groups, including those operating in Afghanistan and Kashmir; sustaining conflict management and possibly conflict resolution through diplomatic dialogue with India; instituting a rigorous program to control the proliferation of nuclear materials and know-how as well as enhancing the security of Pakistan's nuclear assets; and developing a cooperative U.S.-Pakistani relationship.

## **ECONOMIC**

The economic challenges facing Pakistan are so complex and interrelated that no summary, let alone one spanning a few paragraphs, can provide a complete solution. What follows, therefore, is only partial and impressionistic. Pakistan's unending conflict with India has resulted in the creation and maintenance of a war economy with high military expenditures sustained at the cost of social, developmental, and human investments.<sup>9</sup> These expenditures, being a significant percentage of gross domestic product and central government expenditures, have resulted in low public and private savings, as well as depressed rates of growth; this trend was most evident during the 1990s. Low savings have necessitated high external borrowing to meet defense-heavy public expenditures, creating high debt-servicing costs that further impede savings and investment. The government's neglect of human investments such as public education and health care has resulted in low levels of social welfare, but more problematically has created opportunities

for Islamist institutions to fill the gap. The military's connections with and reliance on rural elites for military manpower and cooperative social bases has also resulted in a traditional unwillingness to tax agriculture and institute land reforms that might increase the state's revenue.

In sum, Pakistan faces two major economic challenges. The first is to correct the macroeconomic problems caused by Pakistan's inefficient war economy, and the second is to create stable, rule-bound institutional arrangements that permit productive individual behaviors to sustain desired, long-term macroeconomic outcomes without repeated state intervention. The Musharraf regime has presided over a welcome correction of Pakistan's macroeconomic performance, with rising growth rates, a reduced fiscal deficit, lower inflation, and higher tax revenues. Three factors have helped advance these improvements: the discipline imposed by international financial institutions (IFIs), U.S. economic assistance associated with Operation Enduring Freedom, and the beginnings of structural reform in Pakistan.<sup>10</sup>

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Long-term economic success will depend on the completion of structural change, including the creation of new institutional arrangements that alter microeconomic behaviors. These arrangements' ability to endure and thus produce lasting results will depend on their perceived legitimacy. Although agreements with IFIs and foreign governments that bind future Pakistani regimes may in the short term circumvent legitimacy issues, the long-term survival of any new institutional arrangements will depend on their acceptance by the body politic at large. Even as that process of securing political consent evolves, sustaining economic success will require the Pakistani government to contain defense expenditures; increase investments in agriculture, small- and medium-sized industries, and irrigation to raise the employment level, alleviate poverty, and avert rural socioeconomic collapse; increase spending on education, health, and social safety nets in order to improve human capital; and build institutions of accountability for good economic management outside of executive control.

## **POLITICAL**

At the political level, the view of India as a permanent existential threat not only justifies the Pakistani military's own claims to relevance and primacy within Pakistani politics but has also resulted in the destruction of the normative, legal, and institutional foundations necessary to sustain a demo-

cratic regime. The abrogation of successive constitutions in Pakistan has destroyed the sanctity and effectiveness of the basic law necessary for stable governance. It has also completely undermined the judiciary, which has been compelled to legitimize each successive military usurpation through a “doctrine of necessity” that, in effect, permits the new leader to annul the constitution in the name of saving the country.

Further, when in power, military regimes have not worked either to establish effective conditions for the return to civilian rule or to develop institu-

**The absence of democracy will almost certainly lead inevitably to state failure.**

tions that might make military usurpation unnecessary in the future. Rather, they have focused on immunizing themselves against criticism and deflecting any popular challenges that might arise. More dangerously, in an effort to ensure their survival and mitigate perceptions of their illegitimacy, military regimes have repeatedly undermined centrist social forces and political parties in Pakistan by encouraging radical political groups opposed to democracy. They have also deliberately privileged party-less local

governments over central and provincial institutions because the former typically cannot threaten core military interests relating to security policy, national budgets, and economic organization.

If Pakistan is to become a moderate Muslim state that exists in peace with itself, its neighbors, and the international community, its political process must be reformed. A stable, successful Pakistan will be a democratic regime governed by a constitution that incorporates effective checks and balances. A civilian government, freely and regularly elected, responsible to the constitution, and protected by the military as part of its constitutional responsibilities, will advance the marginalization of radical Islamist forces in Pakistan.

Only the establishment of democratic institutions and stable civilian rule offer some hope of overcoming the myriad challenges confronting Pakistan today, including resolving the security dilemmas with India that drive the military’s support for Islamist terrorist groups; removing the economic distortions that privilege military expenditures over social investments and that create the preconditions for the rise of disaffected Islamists; and correcting the failures of command politics associated with military ascendancy, which prevents the national interest from being defined by open competition in a vibrant civil society.

The resuscitation of democracy in Pakistan offers no guarantee that it will successfully break out from its current state of morass. The absence of democracy, however, will almost certainly ensure the perpetuation of dangerous structural trends that will lead inevitably to state breakdown. More-



over, the failure of previous attempts to institute democratic reforms should not deter future efforts. Democratic civilian rulers held office in 1973–1977 and 1988–1999, but their fear of military interference kept them focused primarily on self-preservation rather than good governance. The missteps of these democratic moments in Pakistan's history should not be used as an argument against the restoration of democracy. Rather, they underscore the importance of military abstention from rule.

In order to restore democracy, Pakistan must take several important steps, including convening a new constitutional convention to discuss how the 1973 constitution, as the only document that accommodated proposals from all Pakistani political parties and received universal acceptance, may be revitalized as the “basic law” governing Pakistan's political life; restoring centrist political parties, through a truth and reconciliation panel if necessary; curtailing the role of the federal civil services in provincial administration and strengthening provincial governments; reforming the civil service, judiciary, and police to support civilian government and the rule of law; and amending Musharraf's 2000 Devolution Plan—which seeks to empower local governments—to permit party-based local elections, parliamentary review mechanisms, and fiscal decentralization.

## **SOCIETAL**

At the societal level, repeated bouts of military rule, especially in recent decades, have effectively empowered radical Islamist elements, which have been perceived as useful instruments both to marginalize the moderate opposition domestically and to advance Islamabad's regional ambitions externally. Yet, the responsibility for this presence does not rest solely with the military. Indeed, radical Islamist elements have existed in Pakistan since partition, when founding father Mohammed Ali Jinnah's inflammatory “Islam in Danger” campaign exploited the power of Muslim militancy to assure Pakistan's creation.<sup>11</sup> Jinnah tried to disavow this approach once the new state was formed; in a speech before the Constituent Assembly in 1947, he told the Pakistani people, “You may belong to any religion or caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the business of the state.... We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and citizens of one state.”<sup>12</sup>

The evocative symbols and imagery he had exploited in the run-up to partition, however, had already done their damage.<sup>13</sup> Pietist groups in Pakistan challenged his vision immediately, arguing that, if the new state was to be secular, the new Muslim arrivals need not have migrated from India, which was secular already. Jinnah's inability to answer this critique satisfactorily created a space for Islamist groups to survive as permanent challengers

to secularism in Pakistan. Although these groups were never dominant in national politics during the early decades, they were nonetheless prominent enough to be exploited periodically by civilian as well as military regimes in support of their own ends.

Whereas blame for the presence of radical Islamism in Pakistan is shared, the military is primarily responsible for its sharp growth in recent decades. Indeed, the two key episodes that marked the consolidation of radicalized Islam occurred under military rule. Gen. Zia-ul Haq (1977–1988) began enshrining Islam throughout the state in order

**Repeated bouts of military rule have effectively empowered radical Islamist elements.**

to resolve legitimacy problems, undermine his civilian opposition, and raise committed foot soldiers for the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan. More recently, Musharraf, in an attempt to destroy the mainstream political parties that threatened to undermine his authority during elections in 2002, brought an Islamist coalition to prominence at the national level for the first time in Pakistan's tumultuous political history.

What has corrupted the social fabric in Pakistan irrevocably has been the military's deliberate use, since the early 1990s, of radical Islamic groups to fuel the jihad in Kashmir and Afghanistan.<sup>14</sup> The military's conviction that the jihad in Kashmir is both just and necessary and that Pakistan needs a friendly regime opposed to India to its west resulted in the proliferation of armed Islamist surrogates. In theory, these groups would promote Pakistan's strategic interests on the country's eastern and western borders. In practice, they often embrace a worldview that leads them to treat not only India but also Israel; the United States; and, increasingly, secular elements of the Pakistani military itself as mortal threats. The dramatic spread of poverty in Pakistan during the last 20 years caused by economic mismanagement and the demands of a wartime economy, coupled with the weakening of democratic institutions that could peacefully channel the aspirations of the underclass, have only further strengthened the influence of these groups.

Thus, the transformation of Pakistan as a state requires not only strategic, economic, and political reform but also the revitalization of Pakistani society. Pakistan needs an active civil society that is Muslim in a cultural sense rather than an exclusivist ideological one. Achieving this goal will be difficult; five decades of deformations have left these societal problems deeply entrenched and recalcitrant and viciously connected with and reinforcing of Pakistan's failures in strategy, economics, and governance. Given the complex nature of the challenges, however, several issue areas will require direct and focused activity, including correcting gender inequalities,

containing ideological mobilization, improving civil society, and selectively expanding state control. Several initiatives can be identified as the minimum actions necessary to achieve these ends: regulating, restructuring, and controlling the *madrassas* (the Islamic religious schools) as Musharraf initially intended; slowly beginning dewatering in accordance with the army's post-1990 plans; investing in targeted health care and in the education of women, especially in rural areas; working with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to invest in programs to strengthen political parties, student organizations, press and media organizations, and governmental institutions; and initiating rural and infrastructure development programs for the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, the frontier provinces that historically were loosely controlled by Islamabad and currently remain hotbeds of Al Qaeda and Taliban presence.

In sum, these strategic, economic, political, and societal solutions only touch on the actions required to assist Pakistan's transformation into a modern state. When considered in their totality, these solutions appear to share some common characteristics. For example, they are complex and expensive in terms of resources and political will, and they must be initiated and implemented primarily by Pakistanis, despite outsiders' ability to play helpful subsidiary roles. The solutions vary, however, in terms of their "intrinsic effectiveness," defined as their relative importance in assisting Pakistan's transformation into a healthy and modern Muslim state, and the time frames required for successful implementation.

## **The Role of the United States**

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The wide breadth of obstacles threatening to impede the Pakistani state's transformation to moderation, stability, and democracy demand that Washington concentrate on only a small subset of issues when deciding how most effectively to offer U.S. assistance. The 9/11 Commission's recommendations on how to wean Pakistan away from its involvement with terrorism offer one set of guidelines, but they may prove insufficient. "Sustaining the current scale of aid" and embarking on "a comprehensive effort that extends from military aid to support for better education"<sup>15</sup> are essential actions, but they cannot be substitutes for transforming the structures of rule in Islamabad. The report's conclusion "that Musharraf's government represents the best hope for stability in Pakistan"<sup>16</sup> is deeply problematic. Although true in the immediate future, any U.S. policy based on this premise would have the long-term effect of reinforcing the power of the Pakistani military and intelligence services—each has cultivated terrorism—and would come at the expense of Pakistan's already battered civilian political institutions.

Alternative measures should be selected where the United States possesses the comparative advantage to make a difference or U.S. interests are particularly salient. There will obviously be many more matters that engage American concern and where various kinds of U.S. private and governmental, as well as international, assistance may be relevant. Washington should nevertheless concentrate its energies principally on those key problems that meet the tests of comparative advantage or relative salience, namely, safeguarding Pakistan's nuclear estate and restoring democracy in Pakistan as part of a larger grand bargain with Islamabad that stabilizes the U.S.-Pakistani relationship over the long term.

### **SAFEGUARDING PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR ESTATE**

The first and most important issue on which the United States should focus is preventing the diffusion of Pakistan's nuclear technology and the loss of control over Pakistan's nuclear weapons. This problem affects U.S. security directly and is an area in which U.S. assistance can make an important difference.

In the short term, the United States should secure a full accounting of the A. Q. Khan network activities regarding nuclear proliferation from the Pakistani government, including details about what was transferred and to whom. It also should ensure that Pakistan implements the appropriate technical, organizational, and procedural safeguards to prevent a recurrence of illicit proliferation. The Bush administration began discussions with Islamabad on both of these issues, but U.S. and international concerns are far from being fully assuaged.

Over the medium term, or about the next four years, the United States should help Pakistan improve the physical protection and the oversight of its critical materials at each of its strategic sites. This effort entails providing assistance to develop simulations and exercises; transferring appropriate materials from military handbooks on nuclear weapons security; providing technology for more sophisticated vaults, access doors, portal control equipment, surveillance gear, and advanced instrumentation for materials accounting; helping Pakistan's Strategic Plans Division develop effective personnel reliability programs; and helping develop procedures to reduce the likelihood of sensitive information leaks.<sup>17</sup> Given the relatively large size of Pakistan's nuclear estate, even if the United States were to offer this aid presently, it will take time before it can be fully absorbed and implemented. The Bush administration conducted preliminary discussions with Pakistan on these matters, but Islamabad's suspicions about U.S. intentions and its fears about compromising the security of its nuclear assets imply that U.S. technical assistance may not be fully utilized for some time. In any event, Washington should continue and even accelerate these endeavors.

In addition to improving passive protection, the United States should also help Pakistan eliminate the threat of unauthorized use of its nuclear weapons. Confronting this challenge contributes both to increasing regional security and mitigating another possible danger to the United States. Despite significant public fears globally, the likelihood of unauthorized use stemming from theft or rogue launches is relatively low in peacetime because Islamabad's nuclear devices are stored in component form, rather than as complete, ready-to-use weapons, in relatively secure facilities. Under conditions of crisis, however, when these components are integrated into complete weapons and then dispersed into the field, the threat of loss, capture, or unauthorized use increases.

**The U.S. should consider providing Pakistan with early-generation PALs.**

To the maximum degree possible, U.S. security interests demand reducing the prospect of these threats materializing, consistent with Pakistan's own requirements for stable deterrence. The only solution that satisfies both these goals is incorporating technical controls, which in turn implies that the United States should consider providing Pakistan with early-generation "permissive action links" (PALs), which ensure that the weapons could never be used without authorization if they were for any reason lost or compromised. This issue will require amending current U.S. commitments to international regimes and possibly to its domestic laws, but such exceptions are necessary given that ironclad technical controls on Islamabad's nuclear weapons will advance interests on both sides as well as increase regional security.

Over the long term, and as Pakistani confidence in the United States grows with respect to the security of its nuclear stockpile, Washington should work with Islamabad to develop plans for cooperative action in case of a nuclear emergency. Such plans should cover a variety of contingencies, including attempts to steal fissile material or nuclear weapons; a successful theft of sensitive items; or the discovery of dramatic weaknesses in material accounting, control, and protection systems at particular facilities. As a matter of prudence, the United States should also plan for dealing with such contingencies unilaterally.

### **RESTORING DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN**

The potential for continued deterioration in Pakistan threatens to affect U.S. security even more deleteriously than it has previously. Today, Pakistan is populated by a variety of armed Islamist groups that possess both the desire and the capability to mount catastrophic attacks on U.S. interests. These

terrorist groups will continue to be sustained by the Pakistani military so long as they are viewed as effective tools in Islamabad's ongoing conflict with India. Although containing these terrorists constitutes the short-term solution, getting the Pakistani army out of the business of terrorism remains pivotal for the long term. This cannot be ensured unless Pakistan develops strong institutions of democratic rule coupled with a liberal political ethos. This is undoubtedly a daunting challenge. Overwhelmed by the multitude of demands surrounding Pakistan's democratization, every U.S. government

**Musharraf's own transition must be part of a larger evolution toward full civilian rule.**

has been scared into conservatism. In each instance, successive U.S. administrations have preferred to deal with the Pakistani military regime of the day to resolve the most pressing immediate problems where Islamabad's assistance may be of value, all while hoping that a meltdown in Pakistan, if it came to that, would not occur on their watch.

After the September 11 attacks, the continued radicalization of Islamic groups in Pakistan and elsewhere has brought this approach of calculated neglect to the limits of its success. Washington should focus today on convincing Musharraf to relinquish his position as chief of army staff by some specified early date if he intends to renege, as it now appears, on his previous promise to demit office in December 2004 and on encouraging him to remain active in Pakistani political life as a civilian politician who holds office as part of a normalized political process with regular elections. Musharraf's own transition to some alternative political persona must be part of a larger evolution leading to the restoration of full civilian rule. This restoration, which should be Washington's main objective concerning Pakistan's domestic reform over the next four years, should aim to persuade Pakistan's army and its principal political parties to accept and prepare for a constitutional convention that reestablishes the 1973 constitution, modified if necessary, as the fundamental law of the land.

Defining stable, new rules of the game is only the first, albeit vital, step in the process of Pakistan's transformation. Success ultimately requires the empowerment of civil society in the form of political parties, NGOs, the media, and other associations.<sup>18</sup> The United States can and, indeed, has already begun to help by expanding and realigning its official assistance to aid the development of these institutions. Washington should also pressure Pakistan to complete the registration of *madrassas* and reform their curricula, even though it should refrain from financially assisting these institutions. In general, U.S. economic assistance should focus away from debt forgiveness, so

that Pakistan bears some responsibility for its previous decisions and discovers the concept of opportunity costs, and toward investments in building social and human capital, especially in rural areas. Increased human and physical investments such as schools, roads, and primary health care in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, in collaboration with allies and with the private sector, are also desirable.

## **Constructing a Grand Bargain with Pakistan**

A stable U.S.-Pakistani relationship would serve the long-term interests of both countries as well as larger U.S. objectives in South Asia, which include minimizing the risks of another Indo-Pakistani war and transforming the U.S.-Indian relationship in order to preserve a stable, lasting balance of power in Asia. Although Pakistan is currently central to the global war on terrorism, Washington will have difficulty building a long-term relationship with Islamabad if it does not address the latter's core concerns about security, particularly its external security. Indeed, fostering democracy in Pakistan requires that Washington make democracy promotion a priority in its relationship with the Pakistani military leadership, but the Pakistani army is likely to resist all such initiatives unless they are embedded in a larger U.S. commitment to Pakistan's security.

Yet, helping Pakistan manage its problems of external security will remain a challenging and nettlesome endeavor for the United States. The chief difficulty here remains the clash between U.S. and Pakistani priorities, specifically Pakistan's policies toward Kashmir and its relations with India. The United States would obviously prefer Pakistan to use only peaceful means in its struggle over Kashmir and for India and Pakistan to work together toward a peaceful settlement. Islamabad, however, believes that, if it does not foment terrorism in Kashmir, New Delhi will ignore Pakistan and attempt to resolve the dispute by means of an internal agreement with the state's disaffected population. Furthermore, the experience of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s appears to have convinced the Pakistani military that low-intensity conflict can drive India from Kashmir or, at the very least, bring New Delhi to the table with the promise of significant concessions.

If U.S. policy acquiesces to this Pakistani strategy, it would undermine the moral foundations of the ongoing global war on terrorism; impede Washington's effort to develop a strategic partnership with India; and help precipitate another major Indo-Pakistani political crisis and, perhaps, even war. If, conversely, the United States aggressively assists India in its struggle against Pakistani-supported terrorism in Kashmir, Islamabad might be less cooperative in Operation Enduring Freedom. It would certainly view Washington as

unresponsive to its security concerns and ungrateful for all the assistance it has provided thus far in the war on terrorism.

The zero-sum quality of these opposing pressures makes managing U.S.-Indo-Pakistani relations a very difficult challenge. The best that can be hoped for is that the contradictory pressures may be mitigated, but even mitigation, which is all that can be accomplished in the short term, would require a complex and sophisticated strategy. First, the United States would have to continue to pressure Pakistan to end terrorist infiltration against India permanently, thus giving New Delhi an incentive to remain at the negotiating table. Then, as the recently initiated dialogue process unfolds, the United States should encourage both sides to expand trade, people-to-people contacts, transportation links, and cultural exchanges, hopefully to create new gains for both parties. Finally, Washington should press India to improve the political and economic conditions in Jammu and Kashmir, restrain the abuses of its security forces operating there, and conduct a serious dialogue with representatives of its disaffected population in order to assuage Pakistani sentiments and minimize the temptation for Islamabad to take provocative action.

This approach, however, which represents current U.S. policy, will provide only temporary relief. The fundamental problem arises over goals and motivations: Pakistan seeks negotiations with India principally to alter the status quo in Kashmir, whereas India accepts negotiations with Pakistan primarily to ratify it. This conundrum is irresolvable because of the differences in relative capability between the two sides. Pakistan is the state that feels most strongly about changing the status quo, yet it has no peaceful way of compelling India to surrender control over the contested territory. India, on the other hand, already possesses the prized territory and is strong enough to withstand any Pakistani efforts to wrest it away. Until one side or the other changes its grand strategic objective, therefore, the Indo-Pakistani dispute over Kashmir will continue to elude resolution.<sup>19</sup>

The United States has neither the incentives nor the capability to compel India to alter its goals in Kashmir. Because Pakistan's means of attaining its goals have come to threaten both its own security and that of the United States, however, Washington must exert influence on Islamabad. During the next four years, therefore, the U.S. administration will not necessarily have to change Pakistan's goals in Kashmir, but it will have to lean on Pakistan to change the means it has used since at least 1994, the most dangerous being the unleashing of Islamic terrorist groups. Washington can reinforce its message in multiple ways: first, by enlarging and sustaining its economic aid program as long as Pakistan meets its commitments on terrorism—both in Kashmir and Afghanistan—proliferation, and democracy; second, by increasing the quality of U.S. military cooperation



with Pakistan, primarily through expanding military education and exercises as well as providing spare parts for equipment already in Pakistan's inventory; and, third, by exhibiting a willingness to use U.S. and IFI aid, U.S. domestic laws, and other political instruments of influence as leverage to induce Pakistan to control terrorism, curb proliferation, and undertake meaningful political reform.

Washington has moved in this direction, but with two significant distinctions. Although it initiated a large economic and military assistance program for Pakistan, it did not impose any conditionality on the delivery of aid. Given the history of U.S.-Pakistani relations, formal conditionality might have been counterproductive, but relinquishing even tacit conditionality denies the United States the best instrument of influence it has to wean Pakistan away from its involvement with terrorism. Furthermore, the Bush administration's ultimatum to Islamabad shortly after September 11 to renounce terrorism has only selectively been implemented.<sup>20</sup> Washington has held Islamabad closely to its promise to eradicate Al Qaeda but has been more forgiving of Pakistan's ambivalence toward eliminating the Taliban or permanently ceasing its support for Kashmiri terrorism against India. The dangers of Taliban reconstitution and its threat to U.S. reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, as well as the consequences of resurgent Kashmiri terrorism for a renewed Indo-Pakistani conflict that threatens Operation Enduring Freedom, however, compel the United States to consider recalibrating its current policy toward Pakistan.

If the United States is to sustain a stable, long-term relationship with Pakistan despite these grave challenges without alienating India, it must encourage Islamabad to seek a permanent resolution of the Kashmir dispute on the full understanding that a plebiscite will never be held in the contested state and that substantial territorial change or radically altered frameworks of sovereignty will certainly not be part of any bargain between the two South Asian rivals. If Pakistan is willing to accept such a solution in principle, Washington should respond by demonstrating willingness to legitimize Pakistan's nuclear weapons and by offering peaceful nuclear cooperation within the limits of current policy; providing Islamabad with missile defense; becoming a "normal" supplier of conventional military hardware to Pakistan on commercial, but not concessional, terms; and pledging long-term economic assistance to Pakistan on the scale provided to Egypt after the Sadat-Begin agreement.

**U.S. reliance on Musharraf's cooperation practically limits its ability to exercise leverage.**

Such a grand bargain represents a willingness to provide a long-term U.S. commitment to Pakistani security in exchange for Islamabad's decision to end its permanent state of war with India.<sup>21</sup> The success of such an arrangement depends in large part on whether Pakistan has successfully begun its internal transformation toward democracy, economic stability, and moderate politics. If Islamabad has, the risks of a long-term U.S.-Pakistani partnership are minimized for the United States and for the dramatically transformed U.S.-India relationship because a democratic Pakistan is unlikely to concentrate on challenging India militarily and, by implication, would not force the United States to choose between supporting India or Pakistan as in the past. Even in the best of times, however, successfully concluding such a grand bargain is likely to be very difficult because it requires the United States to cajole Pakistan toward outcomes that the most powerful constituency within the Pakistani state—the military—would find fundamentally distasteful. The United States arguably has the leverage, at least in theory, to move Pakistan in this direction, but its reliance on Musharraf's cooperation to complete Operation Enduring Freedom successfully limits its ability to exercise this leverage practically.

As Dennis Kux has demonstrated in his history of U.S.-Pakistani relations, the record suggests that near-term pressures of necessity have traditionally trumped what may be vital in the long run.<sup>22</sup> Because Washington needs the Islamabad military regime's assistance to fight the war on terrorism, it will be tempting for the administration to avoid focusing its energy on restoring democracy in Pakistan and instead acquiesce to the continuation of military rule.

The United States—indeed, future Pakistani civilian leaders as well—should avoid this temptation to continue to put off the structural transformation agenda interminably and simply settle for partial, near-term, ameliorative reforms. Several previous Pakistani military and caretaker regimes did engage in important, though partial, reforms that unfortunately did not survive because the fundamental problems relating to democratic governance were not settled. Unless Washington and Islamabad learn this lesson of history, Pakistan will continue to be an expanding source of long-term security threats.

## Notes

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1. This record has been usefully synthesized in Sundeep Waslekar et al., *The Future of Pakistan* (Bombay: International Centre for Peace Initiatives, 2002).
2. Pervez Musharraf, "A Plea for Enlightened Moderation," *Washington Post*, June 1, 2004.
3. For more details, see Zulfikar Khalid Maluka, *The Myth of Constitutionalism in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 118–169.

4. The factors leading up to this process have been detailed in Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
5. Leo Rose and D. Hugh Evans, "Pakistan's Enduring Experiment," *Journal of Democracy* 8, no. 1 (January 1997): 87.
6. Teresita C. Schaffer, "U.S. Influence on Pakistan: Can Partners Have Divergent Priorities?" *The Washington Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (Winter 2002–2003): 177.
7. Aquil Shah, "Democracy on Hold in Pakistan," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 1 (January 2002): 74–75.
8. For details about this strategy, see Ashley J. Tellis, *Stability in South Asia* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1997), pp. 5–33.
9. This problem has been systematically detailed in Ahmad Faruqi, *Rethinking the National Security of Pakistan: The Price of Strategic Myopia* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2003).
10. S. Akbar Zaidi, *Pakistan's Economic and Social Development: Domestic, Regional and Global Perspectives* (New Delhi: Observer Research Foundation, 2004).
11. For more on the politics behind this mobilization, see H. V. Hodson, *The Great Divide: Britain-India-Pakistan* (New York: Atheneum, 1971); Anita Inder Singh, *The Origins of the Partition of India, 1936–1947* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).
12. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, "Presidential Address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan at Karachi," August 11, 1947, <http://pakistanspace.tripod.com/archives/47jin11.htm> (accessed October 5, 2004).
13. Ishtiaq Ahmed, "The Fundamentalist Dimension in the Pakistan Movement," *Friday Times*, November 22–28, 2002, <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/ishtiaqtext.html> (accessed October 4, 2004).
14. For an excellent review, see International Crisis Group, "Pakistan: Madrassas, Extremism, and the Military," *Asia Report*, no. 36 (July 29, 2002); International Crisis Group, "Pakistan: The Mullahs and the Military," *Asia Report*, no. 49 (March 20, 2003).
15. National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2004), p. 369.
16. *Ibid.*
17. For a good discussion of these issues, see David Albright, "Securing Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons Complex" (paper for the Stanley Foundation for the 42nd Strategy for Peace Conference, Strategies for Regional Security [South Asia Working Group], Warrenton, Va., October 25–27, 2001).
18. This point is strongly emphasized in Teresita C. Schaffer, *Pakistan's Future and U.S. Policy Options* (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, March 2004).
19. This issue is discussed further in Husain Haqqani and Ashley J. Tellis, *India and Pakistan: Is Peace Real This Time?* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004).
20. For more on this issue, see Walter Andersen, "South Asia: A Selective War on Terrorism?" in *Strategic Asia 2004-05: Confronting Terrorism in the Pursuit of Power*, eds. Ashley J. Tellis and Michael Wills (Seattle: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2004), pp. 227–259.
21. On the centrality of peace with India for the success of Pakistan's transformation, see Alyssa Ayres, "Musharraf's Pakistan: A Nation of the Edge," *Current History* 103 (April 2004): 151–157.

22. See Dennis Kux, *The United States and Pakistan, 1947–2000: Disenchanted Allies* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001). See also Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India, and Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).