MANIPULATING RELIGION FOR POLITICAL GAIN IN PAKISTAN

CONSEQUENCES FOR THE U.S. AND THE REGION

Ambassador Shirin Tahir-Kheli
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INTRODUCTION

When Pakistan came into being in August 1947 as a homeland for the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent, it promised to become a forward-looking secular nation for all who lived or moved there. The early death of its founding father, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, made that goal more distant. Over the decades that followed, the cynical manipulation of religion within the political fabric of the country created uncontrollable extremist factions and ungovernable areas, with crippling repercussions for Pakistan’s development and progress.

This policy brief traces the role of Islam in Pakistani politics to show how it came to be so influential and radicalized, despite the intentions of the country’s founders. While the report takes as a starting point the establishment of Pakistan as a Muslim state, it examines the manipulation of religion by succeeding political leaders away from the initial goal of a moderate and inclusive state. The deliberate nature of Pakistan’s transformation merits understanding, as such perspective is critical to answering such pressing questions. What is required to change the game in Pakistan? Is the state with its weak civilian government and its new army chief likely to make the requisite adjustments? What are the implications for the region and for U.S.-Pakistani relations moving forward?

The analysis stems from the insight that there is a fundamental gap in understanding the relationship between religion and governance. Separation of church and state is fundamental to the American experience. The relationship between the Pakistani state and religion is a symbiotic one. Islam, unlike Christianity, does not prescribe the separation of religion from politics. Indeed, Muslims argue that Islam is a complete social, political, legal, and cultural system. Therefore, commingling of religion and state is not barred. Indeed, some argue, it is desired. This view of how Muslims view their lives is at the heart of the current controversy in the United States regarding the implications of sharia law as the foundation of the practice of Islam. For four decades, nobody had any issue with Pakistanis practicing their religion in Pakistan; after all, the state had been created in the
From a Muslim Identity to Religion in Politics (1947–1965)

A HISTORY OF ISLAM IN PAKISTANI POLITICS

INTRODUCTION

MANIPULATING RELIGION FOR POLITICAL GAIN IN PAKISTAN

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name of a moderate religion. Problems arose only when those bent on violence, in the
furtherance of their particular political agendas, used Islam as the motivator of their evil
deeds: extremism and militancy aimed at the United States both within and without.

Both post-9/11 U.S. Presidents, George W. Bush and Barack Obama, have well under-
stood this point. Yet, there will be hard feelings when some of what Pakistan is likely to
be asked to do will not happen. This will be so for two reasons: First, the nature of the
relationship between religion and its practitioners, no matter how misguided, in Pakistan
will reduce the government’s ability to maneuver. The focus on religion will continue
to spark sectarian fighting as well as inter-religious violence between Sunni and Shia.
Therefore, the Islamabad government will likely be reluctant to add American requests
to this volatile mix. Second, politics within Pakistan will likely continue to have two faces:
one truly anti-U.S. and the other, while privately being acquiescent, only publicly so. If
the negative fall-out from the overt and deliberate use of religion for negative purposes
is to be stemmed, a more positive reason for religion as the basis for the existence of an
Islamic Pakistan needs to be articulated and then implemented.

What follows is a brief history of Pakistan through the lens of religion in politics, and
policy recommendations for improving the security and prosperity of South Asia. It
draws heavily on my unique personal experience as a member of the National Security
Council staff focused on South Asia. It begins with a discussion of the first two decades
of Pakistan’s political development, in which Muhammad Ali Jinnah forged an indepen-
dent and moderate country only for his successors to set it on a collision course with
India. This section is followed by a discussion of why and how Pakistan began to build
an international identity with other Muslim countries. The subsequent sections examine
the interplay of domestic politics with exploitation of religion as the basis for legitimacy.
The study concludes with recommendations for how the U.S.-Pakistan relationship might
be improved and strengthened to enhance the security and prosperity of the region.

From a Muslim Identity to Religion in Politics (1947–1965)

Even before independence in August 1947, Muslim leaders in colonial India made the case
for Muslim self-rule. Absence of consensus on this demand and the long and tortured
history of that undertaking provided a rationale for separation of the subcontinent into
two distinctly different countries.

While millions of Muslims chose happily to remain in India at partition, residents and
new migrants to Muslim-majority areas that became Pakistan were filled with relief
and hope for a bright future. There was much to be done and no one felt the need
to prove, in any specific way, their Islamic credentials within the larger civil society of
the nascent Pakistani state. Although the carnage of partition was a result of thuggery
and the mockery of religiously motivated political movements on both sides, once
Pakistan had been established, a moderate Islamic state seemed to be in the making.
Muhammad Ali Jinnah had such a vision and there was every expectation that an
inclusive state, where non-Muslims would find a home, would be the outcome of the
independence struggle. This included a role for women in the public life of Pakistani
society. In the early 1950s, women played a key role in the social and economic
empowerment of the less fortunate. For example, they ran schools, education centers,
and small businesses where uneducated women could learn a vocation, offering them
a possible livelihood. There was even a contingent of women in the national defense
force and it marched alongside other troops on ceremonial occasions.

There were known scholars of Islam whose work was already noted outside Pakistan
such as Maulana Maudoodi’s Jamait-i-Islami. Maudoodi was an important thinker whose
political philosophy has been credited with having a wide impact on Muslim thinking
beyond the borders of Pakistan. However, his backing of a more religiously inclined
state was a minority view within Pakistan at the time. Pakistan was a Muslim state and
the vast majority of its citizens were Muslims, period. Most who practiced religion did
so in a private way. Unlike in Saudi Arabia, there was no coercion to practice, and it was not an issue whether practitioners observed “the right faith.”

However, a few years after the partition, this began to change. Religious tolerance waned, as became evident when martial law had to be declared to cope with the 1953 anti-Ahmadi riots, which attacked a small group which differed from mainstream Islam in its belief that the Prophet Mohammad was the last prophet of Islam. The subsequent declaration of the Ahmadi community as “non-Muslim” was the first of the poison-tipped arrows to be shot out of the slingshot. Yet, for the most part, for a generation thereafter Islam as the preponderant religion was assumed and its practice was generally moderate.

These early decades — the 1950s and the first half of 1960s — were the formative years for Pakistan. The country’s focus then was on internal political and economic development. Yet, it took nearly a decade after partition for the finalization of the first constitution. When political leaders floundered in governance, resulting in a misguided attempt to establish a viable state, the country turned to the military. In October 1958, Prime Minister Feroz Khan Noon was dismissed. President Iskander Ali Mirza dissolved the government, abrogated the constitution, and ordered martial law into effect.

While governance initially improved and Pakistan’s economic indicators went up, transparency and accountability were not the hallmarks of a military government. General Ayub Khan ran an efficient yet politically exclusionary non-inclusive administration. His military rank and experience gave him an easy access to Western governments. He was well received in Washington on his maiden visit as head of state, when President Kennedy received him as a special guest at Mount Vernon for a lavish state dinner. Jackie Kennedy had visited Lahore for the annual National Horse Show in 1961 along with her sister, and Ayub Khan had been the host.

Ayub did not focus on Islam as the raison d’etre of Pakistan’s existence, as his job was to ensure an economically viable Pakistan. Yet, he also felt that the denial of all of Kashmir with its majority Muslim population to Pakistan was a wrong that needed righting. The opportunity came with General Ayub Khan’s use of Pakistani army commandos to infiltrate Kashmir in September 1965, a disastrous exercise that would have long-term political consequences. India reacted with a major assault against the heartland of West Pakistan, at the international border a few kilometers from Lahore. The smaller Pakistan army fought hard and a great deal of nationalist fervor was unleashed within Pakistan.

However, it soon became clear that the war could at best be a stalemate, especially when the U.S.-dependent Pakistan military was denied critical spare parts by an arms embargo hastily imposed by Washington as an immediate sign of its displeasure with Pakistan’s adventurist policy against India.

Washington found itself in the middle of a subcontinental war it felt had been launched due to the Pakistani army commando raids that sought to wrest control of Kashmir from India. Kennedy had a close relationship with India’s Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. The U.S. ambassador to India, John Kenneth Galbraith, was a Kennedy mentor. Pakistan was a signatory to two U.S.-led alliances. But those (SEATO and CENTO) were aimed at the communist Soviet Union and China. India was never an intended target. Thus, the only immediate sign of displeasure of consequence that Washington could display toward Pakistan was to declare an immediate arms embargo which meant exhausted military materiel would not be replaced. Given that, unlike India, Pakistan received essentially all of its military supplies from the United States at the time, the embargo had an electric effect on Pakistan and the war was shortened without achieving the Ayub goal in Kashmir.

After this fiasco, Pakistani foreign policy became focused solely on dealing with the hostile relationship with India by launching an aggressive search for alliances in new directions, toward nations such as the former Soviet Union and China and away from the United States. This search was largely to help develop military capacity, but it also looked for diplomatic support. Further, the aftermath of the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War shaped a new psyche in the country and precipitated the shooting of more “poisoned arrows.” It would be the fiery foreign minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, with very little personal dedication to religion, who would cunningly articulate Pakistan’s Muslim identity as a way of attracting outside help from neighboring Islamic countries, making cynical use of Islam.

Washington watched from a distance while its former “most allied ally” began to search elsewhere for friends. President Lyndon Johnson expressed his displeasure with the growing Pakistani friendship with China at a time of escalating warfare in Indochina. These protestations had little effect, especially given that the U.S. arms embargo continued to hurt and the Pakistan military actively sought alternative sources of supply.

Visible Pakistani public disenchantment with American policy began to set in after the 1965 war. Here was the start of the oft-repeated lament of how America sidelined its alliance with its “true” friend Pakistan, inimically giving preference to the ‘cunning and
shiftily rival state. For the first time, in a coordinated critique from mosques, the mullahs in Pakistan in turn began to have a field day with anti-American rhetoric.

Building an International Muslim Identity (1965–1980)

In the early years of Pakistan’s existence, Pakistanis took their link with the Muslim world as a given, but there was as yet no articulation of the larger alignment with the Islamic Ummah beyond the belief in a shared religion as common cause. Identification with the broader Islamic world after 1965 would give a new legitimacy to Pakistan’s involvement in causes related to all Muslims. More importantly, it also allowed for external help or interference (wANTED or not) from other Muslim countries. What underlay this new direction for Pakistan?

After the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War where the Indian Army spliced off Pakistan’s eastern wing, leading to the birth of Bangladesh, Pakistan reached further afield to reinvent its Muslim identity. Conveniently, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the Gulf Emirates were coming into greater resources as the price of oil soared. The resulting bonanza helped a new crop of Pakistan’s mullahs fill their coffers. Because their stance suited Pakistani leaders such as Z.A. Bhutto, and later General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, there was never any desire by political leaders to interfere with their hateful anti-American Friday sermons.

When 1971 ended, the country’s future looked bleak. Pakistan had been beaten out of its eastern province, where political grievances escalated into total alienation and brutal suppression by the Pakistan army. India intervened and Bangladesh was born. As Pakistan surrendered its former eastern province to India, some 93,000 Pakistani prisoners-of-war had been captured by India. Because the United States once again had ended all assistance (only briefly revived earlier) during the 1971 war, the handover from external assistance. As prime minister, Z.A. Bhutto extolled the virtues of a broader search for friends, calling the alliance with the United States entirely one-sided, only to its own benefit and to the benefit of India. He reached back to his earlier sermons as foreign minister about the unreliability of the West and the need for shared interests with China and the binding ties with Muslim countries.

In any case, with East Pakistan becoming Bangladesh, it was apparent that Pakistan had failed as an experiment in creating a separate nation-state for the majority of the subcontinent’s Muslims. Bhutto, now the sole leader of the truncated Pakistan, vowed to find new paths and expand Pakistan’s dealings with countries of the Gulf region and with other Muslim states. Even though Bhutto had pledged “bilateralism” as the core concept for Pakistan’s foreign policy in his 1972 meeting with the Indian prime minister in Simla, where he got the return of Pakistani POWs, he set about to do just the opposite. And, world events had just provided a perfect opportunity.

The frequent travel to Pakistan in the 1970s by Arab leaders and the Iranian Shah also made for a highly visible link between Pakistan and other Muslim-majority states. Daily news items about the dialogue between leaders and top officials, hunting trips, and travel to the Bhutto ancestral village by visiting delegations all made for colorful copy. During these many gatherings, Bhutto touted a new sense of purpose to Pakistani policy. He began to link the newfound special “friends” with the word “Islamic.” Bhutto played to both secular audiences and those with more Islamic leanings with his increased use of the words “friends” and “Islamic,” often putting them together as “Islamic friends.” Bhutto proudly touted his success at the rehabilitation of Pakistan.

Nowhere was this more evident than in the 1974 Islamic Summit. Bhutto hosted the second meeting of 39 heads of state of Islamic countries in a three day meeting held in Lahore beginning on February 22, 1974. While the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) had been established in 1970, the Lahore Summit was the most visible gathering of Islamic heads of state from across Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Anwar Sadat of Egypt, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, Colonel Qaddafi of Libya, Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and others attended. It was a remarkably potent gathering of leaders, and as host, both Bhutto and Pakistan felt their credentials burnished. Cleverly, during the meeting, Bhutto chose to recognize Bangladesh and its leader Sheikh Mujib ur Rehman, whom he had vilified mercilessly only three years earlier. Considering that many believed Bhutto had personally been responsible for some of the bloodshed during the birth of Bangladesh with his goading of the Pakistan army to move against Mujib and others in East Pakistan, the recognition of the new nation in front of this gathering was a shrewd move demonstrating reconciliation. The act was well received by leaders present and the painful 1971 period was finally left behind.

At the conference, the leaders from the Islamic world affirmed the charter of the OIC to: showcase solidarity amongst member states; consolidate cooperation across a wide spectrum of issues; eliminate segregation and oppose colonialism; support Palestinian people in “their struggle to regain national rights and to return to their homeland”; and...
to support all Muslim people in their struggle to safeguard their dignity, independence, and national rights (read: Kashmir).

The above was the first time that Pakistan actively signed on to Palestinian issues, although at numerous conferences over the years, Pakistani foreign ministers paid lip service to all causes related to the Muslim world. This was the new Pakistan in step with newly powerful oil-rich countries that shared a common religious faith. Bhutto and his senior advisors said with great emphasis that Pakistan’s rout in 1971 had been more than sufficiently compensated by the new dynamism of Pakistan’s foreign policy after 1973. This also referred to defense and security policy.

All the rhetoric accompanying Pakistani foreign policy in the Bhutto years, along with the renewed focus on religion and its links to the external environment, had a darker side internally. If Islam was to be the motivating force for Pakistani actions and existence, then just how Islamic should the state become? Bhutto had provided the opening for the religious elements in Pakistan, until then mostly sidelined, to assert themselves. Thereafter, it became difficult for the prime minister to convincingly argue that the picture of 39 Islamic heads of state praying together at the Badshahi Mosque during the February 1974 summit in Lahore was noteworthy, but the celebration of the Friday prayers with a potent sermon by the resident mullah was not. The fulmination of belligerent Islam became an acceptable weekly happening.

Further, this occurred at a time when Pakistanis working in Arab countries were increasingly sending money back to Pakistan, giving rise to an entire system of “hundi” to exchange earnings in riyals into rupees in various parts of rural Pakistan where the remittances were sent. The informal hundi facilitated an alternative economy whereby money was paid by workers in Arab lands to individuals who used their own network to transfer cash to remote parts of Pakistan where the workers’ families resided. These same money handlers began to offer their services to those wishing to help build mosques as part of the duty of Muslims. Thus, along with the remittances came the accelerated building of Saudi supported Sunni mosques. Iranians then stepped in to fund construction of Shia Imambaras. Trans-border Islam had begun its march. Within Pakistan, the exploitation of Islam as part of the election cycle also accelerated with the election set for January 1977.

As the 1977 election cycle began, most had expected a win for Z.A. Bhutto. To offer a serious challenge against Bhutto, the opposition had coalesced into the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) with powerful middle class interests. The Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) claimed it represented the rural poor as well as the urban marginalized — meaning a large majority of the voting public. The election was fought for forty-five days with divisive campaigns titled: “whiskey, war, and Islam.” The polarization of Pakistani politics had begun full force and increasingly there was no middle ground.

In a fair and unrigged election, the PPP may well have won a clear, but certainly not overwhelming, majority. Yet, the election commission declared that the PPP’s win was nearly four-fifths of the votes cast for the National Assembly and it even had supporters who had won as independents from the tribal belt. Accordingly, the PPP was declared as having won three of the four provinces and also having conclusively held on to seats in the Punjab, the largest province. This over-reach clearly smelled rotten. The ANP immediately screamed “foul.”

As opposition demonstrations and calls for fresh elections accelerated, many felt a huge disservice had been done by the PPP leaders to democracy in Pakistan. For democracy to survive in Pakistan, the country needed free and fair elections. As matters got worse and opposition leaders refused to compromise, Bhutto started to make concessions, which added to the overarching belief that the election had indeed been rigged under his direction. Under siege, Bhutto offered to lift the state of emergency that restricted freedom of press and assembly that had existed since the 1971 war. He also offered to release political prisoners. But he continued to use his paramilitary Federal Security Force to quell public demonstrations, as the army wanted little to do with potential use of deadly force against citizens.

Bhutto tried to fashion a national political party with the poor and lower income groups at its core. In his declared effort to take Pakistan toward what his slogan called “Islamic Socialism,” he cynically manipulated both the poor and the slogan. Given that Pakistan was a multi-party system at that time, the 1977 election demonstrated that Bhutto’s hold was weaker than he asserted — and desired. Challenges to election results by political opposition parties, who banded together, unleashed a storm of public protest across urban areas. After offering many concessions, and following several weeks of violence, Bhutto imposed “martial law” on April 21, 1977, a sad admission by the much touted...
A HISTORY OF ISLAM IN PAKISTANI POLITICS

Unlike his predecessors, Zia openly touted his life as that of a devout Muslim. Long again to ensure public safety.

To quell the rising dissent, Bhutto also attempted to burnish his credentials as an Islamist. (He had renamed the nation the “Islamic Republic of Pakistan” in 1973 to much the same purpose, even though his Pakistan was half its original size following the loss of East Pakistan to newly formed Bangladesh.) Amongst the new gestures that Bhutto offered was the declaration of Friday, rather than Sunday, as the weekly holiday and the banning of alcohol sales to all Muslims. Liquor, although very expensive, had until then been available in restaurants and clubs open to all who could afford it. However, even known Bhutto supporters thought this was a wasted attempt to cultivate religious sentiment and would merely strengthen the growing influence of the mullahs.

The change that Bhutto had brought to the politics of Pakistan demanded that challenges in the political process be put up with, but he was not willing to accept any diminution of his power. During the summer, as the prospect for street battles escalated, the military finally did what it always does in the name of national unity — it intervened. On July 5, 1977, General Zia-ul-Haq, who was chief of army staff, overthrew Bhutto and with the ousted prime minister went Pakistan’s attempt at sustained, though flawed, democratic development. Zia asserted that given the inability of the civilian political leaders to fashion any compromise, the army had intervened to prevent the country from descending into chaos.11

Unlike his predecessors, Zia openly touted his life as that of a devout Muslim. Long before he became a more polished interlocutor with sophisticated international analysis to buttress his arguments, Zia’s first foray into public speaking provided much insight into his “real beliefs.” On July 11, 1977, Zia held a press conference to explain the coup d’état. He spoke in monotones about religion, ethics and morality, all of which he found wanting in Bhutto.12

Zia was also the first leader of Pakistan who had not been a member of its social elite. His lower-middle-class background had been enhanced at the age of 52 by his new stature as the chief of army staff after a promotion by Bhutto, who had mistaken his humble low-key stance for an absence of ambition. Unlike Bhutto, Zia was not charismatic; he was the first head of state not to acquire the sophistication of the West by attending English-speaking private schools, and he had not been educated abroad. He liked to say that when upon independence he had been assigned as an officer to the newly constituted Armored Corps Center in Nowshera near Peshawar, Zia introduced the practice of recitation from the Quran prior to the first parade each morning.

Zia made no secret of the fact that he came with a sense of mission to carefully cultivate Pakistan’s role as an important part of the Islamic Ummah. While references to Islam had served to bring Pakistan into being and, while various other leaders — especially Bhutto — had used Islam as a rallying cry to better their own fortunes or bring Pakistan into international focus, it was Zia who quietly and consistently worked to fashion an Islamic state within Pakistan. Zia, always uncomfortable in the ways of the West espoused by the Pakistani elite, felt that Western liberalism had corroded the moral fiber of society. It would only be through the fashioning of a true Islamic identity that Pakistan’s decline could be stemmed. It was in the Zia years that the state began to make changes to allow for a more aggressive public display of religious teachings and practice. Government offices stopped work for prayers. As in Mecca, workers of all ranks, officers and regular soldiers, were encouraged to stand side by side in a Jamaat together to offer noon time prayers.

Mullahs were entertained at the president’s house and their views solicited by the president. They were allowed great latitude in saying essentially whatever they felt like during the Friday after-prayers sermons. Loudspeakers were installed in mosques so that the call to prayer, as well as the sermon that followed, were heard loud and clear in neighborhoods. Despite all the authority that mullahs and teachers in madrassas were granted, their own education was not a priority of the president. Thus ill-educated preachers and teachers spouted hateful prejudice to completely uneducated masses and yet-to-be-educated children. In 1980, the president established an Islamic University in Islamabad to which students from the Muslim world were welcomed. The idea was to provide an institution for greater Islamic theology and jurisprudence for the learned. Despite Zia’s patronage, few, if any, practicing mullahs in Pakistan actually went to this free institution for greater Islamic theology and jurisprudence for the learned. Despite Zia’s patronage, few, if any, practicing mullahs in Pakistan actually went to this free institution of higher learning. And even among those who did, most came out just as bigoted as they were before entering the Islamic University because the curriculum was narrow and debate nonexistent.

Zia firmly held to the view that with the Soviet invasion of December 1979, Pakistan had become the front-line state to help defeat “godless communists.”13 Thus, in Zia’s view, supporting the United States in that enterprise was a religious duty — of course, that
15 Beyond the promotion of Urdu as the working language of the government, Zia sought to transform the entire educational system to place greater emphasis on Islam. The elite English-medium schools had long been nationalized under Bhutto and most of the foreign teachers had left the country, but these schools still aimed at providing a curriculum that would have been recognized as “normal” in the West. Noting that the elite was opposed to the transformation he envisioned, Zia sought and garnered support from the lower and lower-middle class that endorsed the Zia vision for an Islamic state. While Bhutto had created a sense of social and economic entitlement amongst his followers, Zia cemented a sense of religiosity which made the poor and disenfranchised expect that in the creation of an Islamic Pakistan (rather than merely a Muslim state), religion should be the defining force. Mosques were already preaching fire and brimstone against those who in their view did not subscribe (rather than merely a Muslim state), religion should be the defining force. Mosques were already preaching fire and brimstone against those who in their view did not subscribe to their narrow definition of Islam. The president carefully nurtured that definition as he sought to re-make Pakistan.

"Islamic" banking was introduced as a way of bypassing interest payments, originally forbidden in order to prevent usury. The banks merely called it something else and carried on. Zakat tax was imposed in order to meet with the religious requirement of helping the poor by an annual payment of 2.5 percent tax on designated assets. The state collected this money and used it for provision of relief to the poor. Zia was proud of the money collected via the fund and used it openly to buttress causes and efforts of his choice that allocated the funds to the poor. The result often was a strengthening of the influence of mullahs, who inevitably were brought in as distributors.

The president sought other changes as well. Islamic jurisprudence was cited as the needed model for supplanting the British-bequeathed judicial system. In Zia’s view, the Anglo-Saxon judicial system was based on un-Islamic traditions, which took too long to deliver justice. In Pakistan, pending cases often took more than 20 years before a decision was rendered. The poor, in particular, cited expenses incurred in lawyers’ fees and the long time taken to resolve cases as equivalent to an absence of justice. In fact, these were the central complaints against the system in place. Zia pushed for Islamic jurisprudence in the belief that it offered swifter and classless justice. He asked his legal experts to look into models of Islamic courts along with an introduction of the sharia jurisprudence in the belief that it offered swifter and classless justice. 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What emerged was a strange mix. There was the existing Anglo-Saxon tradition with an entire court structure to support it, all the way to the Supreme Court. There were also military courts, which had grown strong under long periods of martial law in Pakistan. Indeed, Zia did not brook any interference in military courts on many an occasion, as noted by his powerful long time deputy army chief who wrote on the period.15 Civilian courts were told to steer completely clear of any ruling on his military takeover of Pakistan. At the same time, however, Zia stated that another judicial layer was needed in order to implement sharia law.


Most of the decade of the 1980s found Pakistan once again in alliance with the United States. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan brought the two countries into close collaboration in fashioning and executing the response. The Reagan administration pledged strong support for Pakistan's economic well-being and upgrades to its military — always a key goal of Pakistan's military leadership. Finally there seemed to be a shared goal uniting U.S. and Pakistani foreign policy. By upping the Carter offer of $400 million to a $3.2 billion five-year program, Reagan found immediate resonance with Zia. Yet even at that time, there were voices in Pakistan who, recalling events of the mid-1950s, cautioned Zia that responding to events in neighboring Afghanistan with the vehemence required by American policy would not serve Pakistan in the long run.16 However, Zia was the ultimate decision-maker and touted the fact that two "God-fearing" countries had come together to expel the "godless communists."17

Pakistan willingly became the “front-line” state to accomplish the American goal of expelling the Soviets.18 As American funds began to flow into Pakistan, Afghan resistance leaders headquartered there and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Pakistan's intelligence agency, played favorites in dispensing the funds. American largesse created a more muscled Pakistani intelligence apparatus, and intelligence coordination remained close between the United States and Pakistan. Zia held to the goals set by the United States in UN-sponsored talks: the preservation of Afghan sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence, and nonaligned character; the right of the Afghan people to select their own form of government, political and social system; the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops; and the return of Afghan refugees, over 2 million of whom were in Pakistan.

In private and official conversations, Zia would talk of the duty of every Muslim to support the jihad in Afghanistan. He welcomed numerous leaders from the Muslim world and proudly spoke of Pakistan's responsibility to be a part of the Ummah in support of Muslims. He felt that Pakistan would weather the dislocation caused by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and, even as he took assistance from the West, in the process it would cleanse itself of Western culture. The Arab Mujahedeen were welcomed as brothers-in-arms. No thought was given to the future impact of their integration into the culture of the northern areas of Pakistan, which sowed seeds of the havoc that followed decades later in the Pakistani body politic.

Because of goals shared by the two countries, U.S. motives were not really under fire in Pakistan at the time. Friday sermons in mosques dimmed their anti-American rhetoric — after all, the Mujahedeen were Muslims and America was their benefactor. Given that U.S. aid started as a covert affair and the ISI Directorate was the funnel for the assistance, Zia kept the ISI profile low and focused on the Afghan effort. His director general of ISI, General Akhtar Abdur Rahman, was a favored colleague who fully towed the president's line. Zia directed Rahman to remain in close contact with William Casey, who was then the CIA director.19

Coordination between the United States and Pakistan on Afghan policy continued throughout the 1980s. High-level talks were a frequent occurrence and collaboration extended to a range of issues beyond the war in Afghanistan, bringing a new dynamism to the relationship.

The war against the Soviets intensified. More resources poured into Pakistan. As a result, the ISI became more powerful. Zia kept tight control over the ISI and its funding, weapons distribution to the "freedom fighters," and their training in Pakistani military camps. Billions of dollars were poured into Pakistan by the United States and by friends in the Arab world. Transparency and accountability seemed out of the question.

One of the direct consequences of this period of U.S.-Pakistan relations was the development of a “Kalashnikov culture” in Pakistan. Weapons and drugs moved freely into the country from Afghanistan via porous tribal areas. A percentage of items destined for Afghanistan's war ended up in local arms bazaars. Even more lethal was the continued slow conversion of Pakistan's northern areas to a Wahabi version of Islam. The Arab fighters, extolled by Reagan as brave "freedom fighters" when he met with some of them in Washington, were beginning to seize control of the mosques and those who prayed there. Pashtuns, who had always been a socially conservative ethnic group, faced even
more control under the new emerging culture of jihad. In the vast refugee camps where Afghans lived in Pakistan, the women often spoke of suffocating restrictions under the newly acquired Wahabi cultural norms. Before the onset of this culture, in Afghanistan where they lived in their own villages, they had felt less constrained.

The Pakistan army, and perhaps the ISI to an even greater degree, created a fighting machine using illiterate fighters and trained them to use modern weapons such as Stinger missiles. Pakistan coordinated with the United States in talks, with the UN as an intermediary, for total withdrawal of Soviet troops. These talks accelerated in 1986 as the offensive against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan began to pay off. Shortly thereafter, President Reagan reached out to the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to begin talks which led to the Geneva Accord being signed in 1988 and the withdrawal of Soviet troops.21

Zia’s death in an air crash in 1988, which also took the life of a popular American ambassador, created a sense of camaraderie in the loss on both sides.22 At the time, then-Secretary of State George Shultz noted that “United States relations with Pakistan are based on long-standing shared purposes and common goals.” At Pakistan’s request, a team of experts was dispatched from the United States and worked alongside the Pakistani team investigating the crash of the usually very reliable C-130. The inquiry did not point to any sabotage, but it also did not completely rule it out. As a result, conspiracy theories became rampant in Pakistan.

The end of Zia’s rule meant a chance for an American focus on a new democratic Pakistan. Following elections on November 8, 1988, George H.W. Bush became the 41st president. Shortly after, on November 10, Bush noted: “I would like to reaffirm my commitment to a stable Pakistan.” He said the United States and Pakistan shared “a historic relationship” and he pledged to further strengthen those ties. There was no overt mention of democracy, but Bush had begun to evaluate a new course whereby “stability” in Pakistan meant a return to democracy.

A Return to Civilian Government — Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif

General elections in Pakistan on November 16, 1988 offered an opportunity to put that hope into practice. Bush became personally focused on them, even as he waited to assume the presidency. Benazir Bhutto, leader of the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) founded by her father, led an energetic campaign. Her party won 92 out of the 217 seats in the National Assembly. Her closest opponent was Nawaz Sharif with his Islamic Democratic Alliance (IJI), which ran in support of the Islamization efforts launched by Zia and won 55 seats. As the White House focused on these results, it appeared that then-former finance minister and president of Pakistan, Ishaq Khan, was less than eager to allow the majority winner to put together a government. Ishaq Khan was nervous about Bhutto’s lineage and the policies enacted by her father under the first PPP control.

As a bureaucrat par excellence, Ishaq Khan felt that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had systematically destroyed Pakistan’s institutions in the name of socialism and his cynical use of religion. The daughter’s popularity with the same base that had supported the father was of concern both to the military and the civilian president.

In order to put pressure on President Ghulam Ishaq to accept the results of the election and to pave the way for a democratic transition, President-elect Bush sent two letters with an American delegation to President Ishaq and Benazir Bhutto to express his desire to work with the leader who had garnered the most seats in the National Assembly. A few days after the departure of the American delegation from Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto was invited by Ishaq Khan to form the government. She put together a coalition with smaller parties and independents and was sworn in as the first female prime minister of a Muslim country on December 4, 1988. It was a heady moment, which both Pakistan and the United States celebrated.

From the outset, Benazir Bhutto felt a sense of siege over key matters, especially the nuclear issue.23 Over the years, even as she granted patronage to ever-increasing numbers of both leaders and the rank and file of the party, she always claimed that she was not in charge of many things, including security and military matters. In 1988, she was undoubtedly aware of the presence of Arab fighters in Pakistan’s midst, and of the rising role of the mullahs in the establishment of madrassas both inside the country and especially along the northwestern borders. The ISI was now without the close scrutiny that had been possible under Zia. Ishaq Khan had become president at Zia’s death and he was under no illusion that, in reality, the army chief and the head of ISI were the key figures in Pakistan. These institutions were less than complimentary about Bhutto and her lack of experience when, as her first-ever job, she assumed the office of prime minister at age 35. Additionally, her marriage in 1987 to Asif Zardari, who was believed to have perfected the art of official corruption, added to their open disdain.
It was often said in Pakistan at the time that Bhutto was less interested in the welfare of Pakistan than she was in avenging her father’s death. Of course, she was the modern face of Pakistan, especially to the West. But the West was losing out in Pakistan as the mullahs and the intelligence services pulled the country away from the West. Pakistan was rapidly becoming conservative, as the former Mujahedeen remained in situ in Pakistan after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. The initially hoped-for promise of a democratic, educated, female prime minister was not fulfilled, as controversy swirled around her and others in her orbit were hounded by open talk at all levels of Pakistani society of corruption enriching their personal coffers.

Bhutto denied that either she or her husband were making illegal money and charged her opponents with maligning her name in order to destroy democracy. Yet, it often seemed as if an evil bargain had been struck, whereby Bhutto was left to make money, as was alleged, while the conservative elements worked for a different Pakistan. Bhutto lacked support from the army and bureaucratic leadership, which remained disdainful of the prime minister, citing instances of political patronage that was causing the collapse of Pakistani institutions.

Bhutto wanted close relations with Washington; she consulted openly and frequently with the American ambassador Robert B. Oakley, winning him the nickname “Viceroy.” However, American hopes for stability included expectations of accountability and transparency, including with respect to the nuclear program. The growing belief in Washington that the known nuclear red line (i.e., no uranium enrichment beyond 5 percent) was being violated, Bhutto claimed that she was out of the loop on the nuclear program because it remained in the exclusive hands of the military. Pressure from the U.S. Congress for sanctions accelerated in the face of mounting evidence that Pakistan had crossed the nuclear weapons threshold. This was another time of escalating tensions with the United States.

It finally fell to the United States to brief Prime Minister Bhutto on Pakistan’s nuclear program. As required under the Pressler Amendment, a briefing by senior administration officials preceded the October 1990 cutoff of U.S. assistance to Pakistan. Delivery of Pakistani-purchased F-16 aircraft was halted, and it appeared clear to American senior officials that Bhutto was indeed not in the loop on nuclear preparedness in her country and that the more hawkish President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and the Army Chief, Aslam Beg, were calling the shots in the escalating tensions with India over Kashmir. Of course, in Pakistan, neither the president nor the army chief faulted Pakistani nuclear policy. Rather, they blamed the U.S.-Pakistan relationship’s demise on Pakistan no longer being needed to fight Soviet policy in Afghanistan. Also, General Beg and President Khan were both more comfortable with an anti-Indian bent discouraged by Washington. In particular, Beg cultivated Pakistan’s Islamic credentials in and out of office. He also established a special relationship with Pakistan’s theocratic Islamic neighbor, Iran.

Despite decades of contact, Pakistan and the United States never managed to cultivate an enduring relationship. Any observers who assumed that assistance and support, irregularly given, would result in American influence in Pakistan were mistaken. Even with a democratically elected Benazir Bhutto in office, and despite the $5.7 billion in economic and military assistance doled out by the United States during the Zia years, the focus of Pakistani policy remained India. The Reagan White House worked hard to promote confidence building between India and Pakistan, resulting in some success, including the agreement to refrain from attacking each other’s nuclear facilities and bringing Zia and Rajiv Gandhi into meaningful talks in December 1985. After 1988, with Gandhi and Bhutto as prime ministers, many in Washington, including the president, hoped that the new generation of political leaders would usher in a new era of good relations. While notable movement did take place—for example, Bhutto ended support for Sikh extremists who plotted against India from Pakistani soil, and the two countries brought military delegations into talks on a settlement of the contested 20,000-foot-high Siachin Glacier—long-term benefit proved elusive. However, changed conditions in Afghanistan and the seeming uprising in Indian Kashmir proved too tempting for the Pakistan military and the ISI not to exploit. Thus, doors to genuine normalization in the subcontinent remained closed.

Hard-liners in the military, intelligence and politics including the president, were unhappy with Bhutto’s outreach to Gandhi. The most contentious issues have always been related to defense, and final progress was not possible without the support of the hard-liners of each side. Both intelligence agencies, India’s RAW (Research and Analysis Wing) and the ISI, were loathe to go along with rapprochement. Conservative religious elements (there were more than a few Pakistani extremists at the time and the resident Arabs who had fought in Afghanistan were still celebrating the expulsion of Soviet forces) had always disapproved of westernized Bhutto. The prime minister was mindful of these negative sentiments and, in order to establish some Islamic credentials, her first foreign trip was to Saudi Arabia. There she traveled to Mecca and performed Umra and met King Fahd.
After demonstrating due reverence to the Wahhabi Saudi state, where a Muslim female prime minister was an aberration, Bhutto thought it safe to visit the far more welcoming United States. Addressing a joint session of Congress, Bhutto stated that Pakistan had not and would not develop nuclear weapons. In order to make the military happy, she asked for an additional 70 F-16 fighters and arranged to put down half the requisite amount, $658 million, in cash towards the purchase. Feted as a star in the United States, she went home with a sense of having secured a long-term relationship with Washington.

In August 1990, Bhutto was dismissed from office by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan. Her dismissal, within a period of twenty months, was said to be a result of incontrovertible, mounting evidence of corruption and incompetence. In addition, her foreign policy, with its very obvious American tilt, was not popular with the president and the military, which controlled the nuclear program and knew that thresholds were being crossed. As Kashmir burst into rebellion in reaction to perceived high-handed tactics of the Indian security services, Benazir Bhutto’s attempts at normalizing relations with India were taken by the Pakistani defense establishment as being out of touch. In addition, there was great public disillusionment with her government’s performance on the socioeconomic front. These issues were considered sufficient grounds for her ouster.

On October 1, 1990, the United States again cut off all assistance to Pakistan in reaction to Bhutto’s dismissal. Bhutto had been ushered into office as prime minister with the explicit support of the United States. Her dismissal and then the severance of assistance reflected a sad chapter, primarily for her failure to deliver good governance and stability to Pakistan’s democratic experiment. Secondly, as in other cases, her removal resulted from an inability to safely ride the tiger that is the Pakistan military.

In Pakistan however, the dismissal was a domestic matter and the break with the United States, after the 1990 aid cutoff, was seen by most, especially the army chief, as another natural outcome of the Soviet collapse rendering Pakistan “useless” to Washington. Beg and other critics of American policy were unconvinced that the break was really the result of deliberate double dealing by Pakistan on the nuclear weapons issue. Rather, they preferred to believe that the program was where it was but the need to overlook the transgression had disappeared with Soviet defeat in Afghanistan.

When in power, Bhutto had expressed interest in ending the Afghan war; however, she was the first to admit that she was out of the loop, and that the military and the ISI controlled all strategic and Afghanistan issues. Given the hidden nature of that enterprise, the ISI used religious extremists and their activists to help carry out its policy in Afghanistan. More moderate Afghan leaders were appealing to Washington to stop ISI interference. In their journeys to Washington and meetings elsewhere, they pleaded for ISI exclusion from supporting conservative elements from the previous jihad. In conversations with reporters, they kept voicing their frustration that no one was listening. In the post-Bhutto period, checks against ISI actions were further reduced. By 1990, Pakistani institutions had weakened to the point that political oversight and accountability over strategic issues was not even a facade. The army’s direct involvement after the 1958 martial law had left a long lasting legacy of opaqueness in all policies deemed by the military and intelligence elite and their operatives to constitute the national interest. Citing fear of Indian control in Kabul, the Taliban were nurtured to bend to Pakistani preferences in their battle for control of Afghanistan.

By the mid-1990s, Pakistan’s political culture had changed. Ever-increasing numbers of Afghan refugees, meddling by the ISI inside Afghanistan, the destruction of Afghanistan in the continuing civil war, and Pakistan’s decision to join Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in recognizing an insurgent Taliban as the government in power in Kabul had all begun to isolate Pakistan and sideline its image as a Muslim country with a serious educated elite and a rising middle class. Democracy had returned, but the leaders were mired in bickering and the nation’s business was left to drift. Economic crisis brought bankruptcy even as corruption siphoned off what there was left of the treasury. Internal politics were once again consuming a good deal of attention inside Pakistan. In Washington, Pakistan was often referred to as a “failed state.” Except for the pressure on the security and safety of nuclear weapons, American preoccupations with Pakistan were muted and limited to the half-unspoken desire to bring back better governance and stability. Also, half-hearted mention of need for normalization with India continued.

Despite the obvious discomfort of Pakistani leaders whenever the United States asked that the ISI be reined in, most Pakistanis openly talked of the training and materiel given to the Taliban as “hundreds of Afghan mullahs began to descend on Kandahar in the cool spring weather of 1996.” It was clear that Kabul was their goal, and other warlords who had come together to form the government would not surrender without a fight. The Taliban invoked Islam freely and noted that their rule comprised serious implementation of sharia as interpreted by basically illiterate Afghans. Pakistan’s President Farooq Leghari, the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Jehangir Karamat, and the ISI chief Lieutenant
General Naseem Rana met with other former Mujahedeen leaders in Islamabad in order to coax cooperation with the Taliban.

Pakistan’s security establishment continued its stewardship of Afghan policy. Thus in her second stint as prime minister from 1993 to 1996, Benazir Bhutto continued to complain about being excluded from key issues facing Pakistan, including its nuclear capability and the ISI’s dealings with the Taliban. It was a strange complaint given that Bhutto’s minister of interior, General Naseerullah Babar — to whom she was close — was said to be, through the intelligence network, intimately involved with Afghanistan. “Bhutto saw the rapid growth of madrassas in the northern parts of Pakistan as a legacy of the Arab money and the individual Arabs who stayed back in Pakistan after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.”

Yet, Bhutto was involved and General Babar was an important interlocutor on her behalf. She subsequently took credit for her efforts to create an important opening for Pakistan through an Afghan policy which she coordinated with the military and intelligence via an interagency process, a seldom-used model in Pakistan at that time. Pursuing a dream of opening trade routes to Central Asia as a way of providing revenue and prestige, Bhutto, in 1994, wanted to shore up then-Afghan Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar with a plan to build up the infrastructure “right through the Pashtun country, all the way to Central Asia, bypassing Kabul and the entire ethnic gridlock to its north.” Despite Bhutto’s demurral, Babar spearheaded a publicized caravan of trucks carrying Pakistani textiles from Pakistan to Central Asia via Quetta in Baluchistan. Textiles were allowed to pass only because the passage was greased through previous payments of tax to the local warlords — a practice that was long prevalent in Afghanistan. Moreover, whenever interference was encountered, armed Taliban fought to free the road for Babar’s convoy of trucks to proceed.

The ISI informed Bhutto of the need for Arab Afghan fighters in challenging India in Kashmir. In retrospect, Bhutto seemed to acknowledge that she had been cornered into supporting the Taliban and that she had essentially given her security agency a “carte blanche.” By early 1995, Bhutto indeed went back to her constant fear of losing track of various parts of the Afghan policy to the ISI. The loss of U.S. aid had created economic shortfalls, even for the legitimate business of the state. Outside support was sought for the growing Afghan potential. Saudi Arabia, with its tradition of individual patronage in Pakistan, stepped in. Saudi intelligence and interior heads, members of the House of Saud, became the patrons of a new Jihad.

Bhutto seemingly did not share information regarding the sponsorship of the Taliban with U.S. leaders whom she met in the course of a visit to Washington in spring of 1995. Given decreased U.S.-Pakistan interaction after the flight of the Soviets and the U.S. abandonment of Afghanistan, the American embassy in Islamabad did not appear to reflect much on the growing links between Pakistan and Afghanistan, perhaps in the hope that the traditional power brokers of Afghanistan, the Pashtuns, would bring some order there, create a more stable environment and, following the Islamic edict, end heroin trafficking.

By July 1996, the United States was asking neighboring countries to come together to pledge non-interference in Afghan affairs. After a gap of some six years, a UN Security Council debate was held to that effect. Pakistanis noted that the Clinton administration appeared sympathetic to the Taliban, while Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Robin Raphel noted for the record that: “We do not favor one faction over another nor do we give any group or individual support.” Bhutto’s emissaries traveled to Washington to make the case for support, but Pakistan and Saudi Arabia remained the only two countries with formal links to the Taliban. ISI handlers and conservative Pakistanis, including the local and Arab extremists, continued to perceive India as an enemy, especially with the Kashmiri uprising of 1989 having provoked a strong military response inside Kashmir by Delhi.

Bhutto’s apparent support for ISI policies was noted often within the Pakistani elite, despite public demurrals. The general sentiment was that Bhutto had purposely made a deal with the security establishment in order to allow them to concentrate on Afghan policy while she was given leeway to focus on economic and political issues. She allegedly allowed for lucrative contracts and commissions for her family, friends, and political patronage to strengthen the PPP hold on Pakistan. Many were disappointed that the prime minister had learned nothing from her first failed stint, which had ended on charges of corruption. The second term similarly appeared to be heading that way, and it finally did with her dismissal by President Farooq Leghari in November 1996, again on charges of corruption and poor governance. There were no street agitations to challenge the dismissal, reflecting how far the Bhutto legacy had fallen. She had even played the Islamic card with her Afghan policy and it got her nowhere.
Benazir Bhutto was the last Pakistani leader who was a product of formal Western education and orientation. Her sacking brought into play a different breed of Pakistani political leader: more conservative, less worldly and more tuned toward the Pakistani culture and mores, and more openly religious. Amongst the public at large, the havoc of the anti-Afghan Jihad with its residual "Kalashnikov culture" and disintegrating security in the northwest province, the writ of the federal government — which had never been very strong in that area — was further weakened. Peshawar became a morbid muddle as a result of the large Afghan refugee presence, its control over the private transport sector, and the shared ethnicity of Pashtuns who intermarried and made it their permanent home. The Taliban culture of brutality, which they acquired as they fought to defeat other ethnic groups and establish national control in Afghanistan, now found its way to Peshawar. The process was undoubtedly helped by the presence of thousands of illiterate, Pakistani madrassa graduates who first began to taste their power through involvement with Taliban control.

As the state turned more conservative, political leaders again invoked Islam and attempted to cultivate closer relations with Saudi Arabia and other conservative regimes. The politics of Pakistan turned sectarian as the Shia-Sunni divide played out in inter-ethnic violence openly espoused by homegrown movements such as the Lashkare-Tayyaba or the Jaish-e-Mohammed. These movements promoted violence as a convenient means of enforcing their inhumane and un-godly dicta. They covered their criminality by declaring their victims "anti-Islamic."

In terms of Pakistan's political stability, the madrassas of southern Punjab became particularly aggressive in pushing their narrow vision of Islam. Punjab is the breadbasket of Pakistan and an area where feudal landowners have tight control over the welfare of the population, but where there is great poverty. Into this mix came Arab-financed madrassas with narrow views of what constitutes the best model of an Islamic state. It is here that domestic extremism bred an anti-Western bent. Students are taught that America is complicit in their misery and that the current Pakistani rulers — whoever they may be — are unworthy of the stewardship of a country established in the name of Islam. To sacrifice all, including their lives through suicide bombings, for achieving a perfect state is not only permissible, but required by (their version of) Islam.

The 1997 parliamentary election revived the fortunes of Nawaz Sharif, who headed up Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), became prime minister for the second time in February.
between the Indian and Pakistani prime ministers in Lahore. Strong Indian political and military reaction to what was termed Pakistan's usual double dealing made the military adventure unsustainable. Kargil was another instance of U.S. involvement, as Sharif asked Clinton for assistance and flew to Washington for a July 4, 1999, meeting once it had become clear that Pakistan was taking a pounding from India in the war Pakistan had initiated in the high mountains of Kashmir. Given the high hopes attached to the opening of normalization evident in Lahore only months before, the United States was more than puzzled at this behavior in Pakistan. The prime minister said he had not been fully informed before the engagement by the army, then led by General Pervez Musharraf, though few found that assertion to be credible. More likely, the always-distracted Sharif did not fathom the consequences of what he was being briefed on. Soon thereafter, Sharif retaliated when he tried to dismiss Musharraf mid-flight, as the latter was returning from an official visit to Sri Lanka in October 1999. After a tense standoff, however, it was General Musharraf who did the dismissing. Sharif was ousted from power and eventually out of the country to Saudi Arabia, where the conservative leader was housed and fed in regal style by the Saudi king who negotiated the terms of his exile from Pakistan.

Pakistan in the Post-9/11 World

In Pakistan, 2000 was still a time when the state writ held sway over a majority of religious elements, including mosques and the growing numbers of "jihadists" deployed in Kashmir. With a military government in power, the intelligence agencies were put in charge of jihadists working inside Afghanistan and Kashmir. In the early 1990s, many shopkeepers in Pakistani bazaars openly said in conversations that they would offer money for jihad when asked by groups known to be active in Kashmir. They indicated that the asking was done by a security person on behalf of the fighters. The bazaars noted that they felt it was their duty to contribute because of, in the words of one shop owner, "the stressful and difficult lives of the Kashmiri populace who were handcuffed under the tyrannical Indian rule." Indeed, they found the giving not a charity but an obligation under Zakat.

Thus it was clear by the time the twenty-first century came around that the Pakistani state was under attack on all fronts from education to governance to jihad, heading into a perfect storm. Moderate Pakistanis consoled themselves with the belief that the religious elements had little political sway and if elections were ever held, they would be a small minority in parliament. However, the holding of elections, as always, proved elusive; military rule continued, and the street power of the extremists kept growing.

Then came a seismic event that changed the world, and Pakistan became central to its aftermath. On September 11, 2001, an act of terrorism planned in remote Afghanistan showed up on American soil: nineteen Saudi- and Egyptian-born terrorists hijacked airliners and crashed them in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania. Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda took "credit" for planning and executing this horror, which had resulted in the death of some three thousand innocent people, did billions of dollars in damage, and changed the democratic world forever.

It soon became clear that the Taliban in Afghanistan, whose vision hearkened back to the fourteenth century, had been party to the heinous act, and Pakistan, which had maintained links with them, faced a clear choice: ignoring the shared responsibility in their creation, American leaders convinced themselves that it was only the Pakistanis who had parented the Taliban. Of course, Pakistan's geographical contiguity had been essential to providing them succor, but the American reasoning went as follows: "Without Pakistani support, the Taliban would not have been in power in Kabul. After all, the Taliban had extensive links with the Pushtun areas of Pakistan, sharing ethnicity and history of the jihad against the Soviets."

Indeed, the Taliban were born in Pakistani refugee camps, were mis-educated in Pakistani madrassas, and learned their fighting skills from the Mujahedeen fighters based in Pakistan. Their families carried Pakistani identity cards. Without Taliban destruction of the Afghan state and its near-total isolation (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Pakistan were the only countries that had recognized the Taliban government), Osama bin Laden would not have taken hold of the country that gave him the space to plan and execute attacks against the American homeland.

Thus, within minutes, Pakistan went from its well-honed posture as a reluctant ally to a friend of the perpetrators of terror, meaning it became a potential enemy. President George W. Bush presented Pakistan with a clear choice: "You are either with us or against us." In a bizarre coincidence of fate, the morning of September 11, 2001, found the well-known U.S. antagonist, Lieutenant General Mehmood Ahmed, director general of the ISI, visiting Washington as a guest of CIA director George Tenet. Summoned for meetings with the White House and State Department officials, Mehmood was the first to face the direct ire of American leaders who were beginning to deal with the 9/11 aftermath.
Secretary of State Powell was the designated pitcher to Musharraf, officer-to-officer, regarding what specifically was required of Pakistan after 9/11. Several items on the list were deemed "non-negotiable" and conveyed as such to the Pakistani president by Powell and to the ISI chief by the deputy secretary of state, Richard Armitage. These were: termination of all logistical support for bin Laden (i.e., stopping al-Qaeda operatives at the Pakistan border and intercepting arms transported via Pakistan); blanket overflight and landing rights; access to Pakistani naval bases and borders; immediate access to intelligence and immigration information; condemnation of the 9/11 attacks and an end to all domestic expressions of support for terrorism against the United States and its friends and allies; cessation of fuel supply to the Taliban and an end to Pakistani volunteers going into Afghanistan to join the Taliban; in the event of confirmation of the al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden role in Afghanistan and their continued welcome in Afghanistan, termination of Pakistan's recognition of the Taliban government, an end to support for the Taliban, and assistance to the United States as it seeks destruction of bin Laden and his al-Qaeda network.42

President Musharraf agreed to the American demands but sought to assert one of his own: namely, that India must not have a role in the Afghan war, or in the follow-on government in Kabul. In a lengthy conversation with the U.S. ambassador, Wendy Chamberlin, the Pakistani president said that while he would help in the capture and extradition of al-Qaeda, Pakistani citizens, be they from the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) or other Panjabi groups, would be excluded from extradition, presumably as these were operating directly under the Pakistani intelligence writ.43

Despite Musharraf’s request, the quick rout of the Taliban by the United States led to the rapid opening up of Afghanistan to India. Pakistani protests and fears of a two-front war were dismissed in Washington. The zero-sum game operated as Pakistan’s loss became India’s gain. With Vice President Cheney’s acquiescence, and possibly his encouragement, Zalmay Khalilzad, then the U.S. advisor to Afghanistan, directed the opening of Indian consulates (read: bases) in Jalalabad and Kandahar, cities bordering Pakistan. Pakistani leadership feared Indian intelligence using these bases for spying and other trouble-making. The perceived linkage of the American goals in Afghanistan to India, and the expanding Indian role there, fed further paranoia and suspicion in Pakistan. Thus, the ISI was less than enthralled with the U.S. demands.

The 9/11 attacks on the United States briefly created pro-American sympathy, even as the most extreme challenged the origin of the attacks. Subsequent U.S. military action against the Taliban and al-Qaeda followed the U.S. president’s pledge to the nation that, henceforth, terrorism would be dealt with at its source. In order to help eradicate the Taliban, both in Afghanistan and less ostensibly in Pakistan, Bush was now committed to using all means at his disposal, military and diplomatic. While a major military action was required in Afghanistan, weaning Pakistan away from its addiction to extremism turned out to be even harder. After all, in his first speech after the 1999 coup, Musharraf had noted: “Fifty two years ago we started with a beacon of hope and today that beacon is no more and we stand in darkness . . . the slide down has been gradual but has rapidly accelerated in the last many years.” Musharraf pledged to arrest that slide.

On January 12, 2002, Musharraf noted in a well-received speech that Islamic militants had been allowed to flout the state for far too long, but he would confront them. "The day of reckoning" had arrived and he asked: “do we want Pakistan to become a theocratic state? Do we believe that religious education alone is enough for governance or do we want Pakistan to emerge as a progressive and dynamic Islamic welfare state?”44 Most Pakistanis cheered this resolve and wondered if this president, who had crashed in through the back door, would break the pattern of weak leaders and undertake bold actions to rein in the growing fundamentalist militancy infecting Pakistan.

In May 2004, Musharraf again appealed to Pakistanis to shun the forces of radicalism, citing the existential danger to Pakistan of an unchecked drift to extremism. Noting that rhetoric and actions coming out of some mosques and madrassas made Pakistan a target for charges of aiding terrorism, the president noted that these charges opened up Pakistan to “serious consequences that Pakistan will be incapable of bearing.” He demanded that Pakistanis “must condemn and counter any religious personality who is dividing you and fueling hatred and sectarianism and promoting militancy in any form.”44 Again, for a moment, it seemed that under Musharraf’s firm leadership, with full support of the army, militancy would be challenged. There was even talk of Musharraf’s admiration for the Turkish model and how he just might become the modern-day Ataturk for a nation that, in order to successfully meet the modern menaces of extremism and terrorism, was clamoring for state coherence.

Yet this did not happen. There are reasons for the lack of resolve to carry out the lofty mission Musharraf had pledged to undertake. First, and likely most compellingly, his...
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The intelligence and military leadership — thought it would be an impossible task with unknown consequences: i.e., the domestic situation in Pakistan already being sufficiently tense and tenuous made it difficult to predict the outcome. The anti-American ISI chief, General Mehmood Ahmed, was replaced on October 8, 2001, but undoubtedly there were others of his ilk within the intelligence community. Despite the promise of the January 12 speech, and even though the jihadists were in disarray after 9/11, there was no will either to challenge them and permanently lock away their leaders, some of whom had already been picked up, or to enforce the registration of deadline rules for the madrassas in order to exert some control over their message.

Second, the army remained focused on India, and as the man behind the Kargil debacle, Musharraf understood the need to protect Pakistan in terms of the perennial concern of a two-front problem for Pakistan along its northern and eastern borders. Although the American ultimatum forced a refocus away from the Taliban at the official level, it did not offer any increased hope of a more friendly relationship with India, unlike what had been the case when the United States partnered with Pakistan in the expulsion of the Soviets from Afghanistan in the 1980s.

Third, after the open pressing of Pakistan to fall in line with American objectives in Afghanistan and the shuttle to Pakistan by CIA Director Tenet to press upon Musharraf the absolute seriousness of the situation, the traditional anti-American sentiment quickly followed earlier sympathy elicited by the 9/11 attacks.

Thus it took months of prodding before the Pakistan army was deployed to the South Waziristan region. But intelligence cooperation accelerated and both the United States and Pakistan openly lauded the results of the form of increased arrests of major al-Qaeda leaders in Pakistan — including Abu Zubaydah, the head of al-Qaeda’s overseas operations — and their extradition to the United States. However, by 2003, it seemed that the writ of the state no longer extended into an increasing number of areas within Pakistan. Pakistani jihadi groups were functioning in the northern areas, including Swat, as well as within the southern part of Punjab, Pakistan’s most populous state.

At the same time that emergency funding, debt forgiveness, and the U.S. support for the Pakistan army was adding millions of dollars to the country’s coffers, the Pakistani public’s views of American policy was moving in strongly negative directions. Those who fancied themselves as high-minded proponents of democracy were offended when, during Musharraf’s visit to Washington in February 2002, Bush praised him: “President Musharraf is a leader with great vision and courage . . . I am proud to call him my friend.”

In contrast, Pakistani government officials noted that Pakistan remained “America’s most sanctioned ally,” and shopkeepers and the man in the street expressed the view: “America is against Muslims everywhere.”

Those who thought Bush’s emphasis on “democracy promotion” would yield favorable results for Pakistan were disappointed. What especially became anathema to the Pakistani liberals, as noted by a well-known Pakistani author, was the fact that “No one (in Washington) raised the issue of democracy with Musharraf,” and instead the U.S. president expressed, “Musharraf was indispensable.” This attitude was well noted to great (negative) effect in Pakistan. It was clear from the outset that the war in Afghanistan and the war against extremism made Pakistan an important player for the United States. The Pakistani military adapted itself to the requirements of American policy and, over the years, benefited handsomely from the alliance — except in periods of strict sanctions when, to satisfy Congress, all military and economic assistance was banned.

Sadly, in Pakistan, U.S. assistance was considered more as military aid primarily focused on benefiting the (secret and undeclared) needs of the United States, rather than economic support that assisted people. Many faulted the disproportionate, though intermittent, flow of military assistance for giving the military a sense of power vis-à-vis the political system. Further, the military continued the adversarial posture toward India in order to strengthen its own position as the guarantor of the nation’s security and turned Pakistan into a “rentier” state, available for hire to do America’s bidding simply based on its strategic location.

Even in the early years, ranging to 1979, little evidence existed that linked the amount of assistance provided with an appropriate positive opinion of the United States. In other words, there is little to indicate a correlation between assistance and influence.

Indeed, after the end of the successful Jihad in Afghanistan, a great deal of opposition chatter grew while the erstwhile Mujahedeen and subsequent extremists began to offer an alternative, highly negative view of American policy toward Muslims in general and Pakistan in particular. After 9/11, terrorism was the main filter as the United States worked to bring Pakistan into line. Thus, after 2005, dealing with most other issues relating to Pakistan was downgraded to the assistant-secretary level.
Of course, this was upended when tragedy struck on October 8, 2005: Pakistan was hit by a destructive earthquake in its northern regions measuring a massive 7.6 on the Richter scale. The damage was extensive, with over 100,000 dead, 138,000 injured, and 3.5 million rendered homeless. Entire towns were demolished, taking with them schools, hospitals, and means of livelihood. The region, remote under the best of circumstances, was rendered impassable. The United States reacted swiftly to the tragedy by responding to Pakistan’s request for assistance. Disaster assistance teams were sent, and a 23 member Contingency Support Group from McGuire Air Force Base arrived to provide planning and logistical support.51

Within a twenty-four hour period, the United States dispatched a C-17 military aircraft carrying blankets, winterized tents and other urgently needed supplies. A flow of assistance began with C-17s delivering goods including shelter, water, medicines, and help provided through the Red Cross. Initially, eight U.S. military helicopters (five CH-47 Chinooks and three UH-60 Blackhawks) helped in the grim task of reaching stranded people with supplies and airlift to hospitals, including a U.S. Army field hospital. Despite the war next door in Afghanistan, from which the helicopters had been borrowed, the dedication of these aircraft to relief provided a dramatic example of American help to the average Pakistani. The U.S. Senate also expressed its sympathy for the plight of the people affected by the earthquake and pledged immediate assistance.52

Pakistani leaders and residents in affected areas acknowledged the great assistance offered by the United States, calling the Chinook helicopters “angels of mercy.” They decried the cyclical nature of the U.S.-Pakistan relationship where periods of intense engagement were followed by phases of distinct estrangement. Citing the fact that both countries had learned from mistakes of the past, Pakistan felt it was now a relationship of mutual benefit and shared interests. Reform, moderation, and self-reliance made the future more secure in fighting extremism and terrorism. The U.S. designation of Pakistan as a “major Non-NATO Ally” was celebrated in Islamabad as indicative of the positive trends for the future of the relationship.53 All this provided breathing room to the leadership and respite from the encroaching forces of extremism that would turn Pakistani cities into killing fields.

When Secretary Rice visited Pakistan for a brief stop en route from India in 2005, she noted that the United States had committed to a broad relationship with Pakistan, supporting economic and educational reform. To this end, assistance totaling approximately $3 billion over a five-year period had been pledged, and Rice echoed President Bush in praising Musharraf “for his courage and vision in promoting peace and stability in the region and for his concept of enlightened moderation.”54 Rice enlivened the audience for audibly expressing at the same press conference in Islamabad that the United States would “continue to work with Pakistan and we look forward to the evolution of a democratic path toward elections in 2007 for Pakistan.” She noted that Pakistan had come a long way since September 11, 2001. She credited that improvement to Musharraf and his advisors along with the people of Pakistan for moving toward democracy and pluralism while shunning extremism. To some, U.S. policy, as evident in Rice’s visit, still reflected the U.S. terrorism agenda and the need to move aggressively against al-Qaeda. The close link with Musharraf was not popular with some in Pakistan and many complained that beyond the occasional rhetoric, the Bush administration did little to push Musharraf to allow democratic politics to play a role in the country. When American assistance was cited, Pakistanis felt that much of it was transmitted via beltway-bandit contractors who siphoned off the majority of the allocated sum. Thus there was never much to show for it and there was little in the way of transparency or accountability.

The better part of the cooperation was in intelligence and for the fighting in border areas. As military and intelligence agencies drove that agenda, an opportunity was missed to work with the political leaders and the younger generation. The man in the street’s perception focused on what he believed was a free hand given to Musharraf and his generals by American financial support for the military. Washington did not dwell on the decade’s long association of the Pakistani military with the mullahs in fighting proxy wars in Afghanistan and in Kashmir. By the end of Bush’s first term in 2004, there was still a possibility for Musharraf to break with the mullahs and cooperate with Benazir Bhutto and her PPP party, which at the time was a staunchly anti-mullah party with a solid popular base of support. Instead, Musharraf made it look as though he was not one for power-sharing, and the steady inroads by the military into civilian governance along with additional benefits for the military continued apace. The existence of press freedom, which had emerged much to Musharraf’s credit, gave a new voice to the varied opinion prevalent in Pakistan. Yet, there was no outlet for the political give-and-take that a robust political system would offer and demand.

A “king’s party” was launched, and Musharraf went about touting his belief in “enlightened moderation” and in “isolating the extremists,” tasks he claimed that only a military ruler could undertake. Pakistan’s domestic opposition shunned the Musharraf exercise...
and offered no support. The brutal murder of journalist Daniel Pearl earlier in 2002 again reminded one of the darker side of the rapidly changing Pakistan. It was there for all to see, but much of the country, including the political elite, ignored it. Even as thousands of extremists were jailed following the January 12 Musharraf speech, none were tried at a time when there was adequate support for a moderate Pakistan. Some said that the army wanted to keep the focus on winning the parliamentary elections set for October 2002. Others in Pakistan were of the view that the military had begun to distinguish between jihadists who were useful in any enterprise aimed at Afghanistan and India and those who were not because they targeted the homeland. The political map of the country was re-drawn with constitutional amendments enhancing the power of the presidency — that is, Musharraf’s — and banning previous prime ministers from holding future office. The military again imposed the literacy requirement for elected office holders with the assertion that it would raise the caliber of the political leadership: an exclusionary clause in a country with barely 54 percent literacy. Disingenuously, however, madrassa education was given parity with the formal educational structures. Given existing press freedom, it is ironic that the storm of criticism seemed to catch the military by surprise. Washington saw these steps as indicative of Musharraf’s desire to move toward democracy. His push for increased participation by women was lauded by an American administration that had begun to talk of women’s empowerment in a first-ever concerted effort by a U.S. administration, as the president and the secretary of state felt that Muslim women were harbingers of better trends in their respective countries.

These were the years when there was not much U.S. administration interaction with Benazir Bhutto. She was “officially ignored” when she came for her annual visit to Washington. She complained it was ironic that even as Bush spoke of democracy building in the Muslim world, in Pakistan he seemed focused exclusively on the military dictator.

In contrast, the head of the democratic opposition in Pakistan was not able to meet the president or his senior aides, except at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington. She noted that Cheney was particularly in favor of pushing American policy to stay firmly in the Musharraf camp. To Bhutto, Secretary Rice appeared to express full support for a moderate Pakistan. Some said that the army wanted to keep the focus on winning the parliamentary elections set for October 2002. Others in Pakistan were of the view that the military had begun to distinguish between jihadists who were useful in any enterprise aimed at Afghanistan and India and those who were not because they targeted the homeland. The political map of the country was re-drawn with constitutional amendments enhancing the power of the presidency — that is, Musharraf’s — and banning previous prime ministers from holding future office. The military again imposed the literacy requirement for elected office holders with the assertion that it would raise the caliber of the political leadership: an exclusionary clause in a country with barely 54 percent literacy. Disingenuously, however, madrassa education was given parity with the formal educational structures. Given existing press freedom, it is ironic that the storm of criticism seemed to catch the military by surprise.

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By 2005, senior administration officials were touting the strategic opening to India as the key policy change of the Bush years. Engagement with Pakistan was represented as involving the fight against al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups that would destabilize Afghanistan. Further, the prevention of nuclear proliferation — evidenced in the excesses of the A.Q. Khan network — and the containment of the spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) remained a key issue. The multi-year assistance package was to be a down payment on U.S. interest in Pakistan’s security and stability. But, the “major shift in American attention is nowhere more evident than in our newfound strategic engagement with India. This new relationship rests on the solid foundation of shared values, shared interests and our increasingly shared view of how best to promote stability, security and peace worldwide in the 21st century.”

In Pakistan, the U.S. recitation of the “shared mutual interest” with India was taken to mean the final end of Islamabad’s special relationship and the placement of Pakistan into client-state status. American popularity plummeted further as Pakistanis going through daily bombings and deaths in major cities were confronted by a new enemy that worked against a moderate future. The blame for the deterioration in security and economic conditions was often laid at the feet of the American war on terror, which was seen to be destabilizing to Pakistan — especially in the face of escalating U.S. demands that more be done.

Washington did not seem to have any interest in combining the rapidly improving relationship with India with any attempt to move Delhi toward normalization with Pakistan. “We should be under no illusion,” said the undersecretary of state charged with dealing with India, “that Indo-Pakistani normalization would find the U.S. merely on the sidelines.”

Given that all past sustained success in confidence building between India and Pakistan had always involved behind-the-scenes active work by the United States, the new attitude whereby Washington appeared publicly to be saying the equivalent of “we are happy not to be involved” and “good luck to you and your future” came across as unrealistic. In the event of Pakistan’s collapse at the hands of the extremists, no country would be more directly affected than India and, vicariously, also the United States.

On the domestic Pakistani front, Musharraf’s handpicked prime minister acted more a buffoon than a leader, interested only in showing off his self-importance. And all the while, civil society was making a push for transparency and accountability. The military was in power and Musharraf talked of “enlightened moderation,” which some political
leaders noted had failed to promote a culture of tolerance. The government’s publicly undeclared worsening record on human rights abuses, including disappearances and arrest without judicial follow-up, simply meant a strategy by Musharraf to “use donor-friendly language to disguise its real anti-democratic tactics on the ground.”

Afghanistan forced continued U.S. interest in Pakistan, wanted or not. By the end of 2006, there seemed to be more discussion internally on the need for a democratic Pakistan as a requirement for security in Afghanistan. While Musharraf was being honored as a moderate, military control of civil institutions did not allow for recognition of the political need for ending interference. On the other hand, the Afghans had, with U.S. (i.e., Cheney’s) encouragement, begun to play a newer version of the “great game.” They approved the building of Indian consulates in Jalalabad and Kandahar, which fed the paranoia in Pakistan’s intelligence services that interference by Indian intelligence in Pakistani affairs on the north was now legitimized. No amount of American assurance that the consulates should deal only with the legitimate work of Indian businessmen in the region was either believed by, or mollified, the Pakistani security forces or even the average Pakistani.

When President Bush made a brief stop in Pakistan in March 2006 on his return from a two-day visit to India, he acknowledged again Pakistan’s role against terror, noting that there had been some slippage in performance. He endorsed Musharraf, who had twice come under physical attack by terrorists. While the issue of democracy was raised by the American president, it was done so in quiet tones, giving the impression that Musharraf was increasingly vulnerable. In any case, the mention of democracy was tied to Musharraf’s promise of elections. Never did it imply any expected decline in the powerful role played by the military in all civilian institutions. While Washington said it recognized there was more to Pakistan than Musharraf, reality militated against that assertion.

Domestic events inside Pakistan began to unravel the control that the Musharraf coup had rendered. As pressure began to mount on the Pakistani president to move toward civilian rule and fulfill his promise to hold elections in 2007, a number of events began to change the political landscape of Pakistan. First, there was the revival of political interest and activity by the two major parties, the PPP and the PML (N). Both Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif were in exile and both wanted to return home to run for office. Given that each had been dismissed in turn because of corruption and poor governance, Musharraf tried to prevent their return and barred them from running.

Musharraf’s dispatch of army generals as his successive ambassadors to the U.S. between 2004 and 2008 made further mockery of democratic intentions. Barely serving for two years each, these military men did nothing to cement ties across Washington or in the realm of public opinion. Instead, much of their time was taken up in making sure that the military continued to receive assistance promised by the U.S. after 9/11.

On December 27, 2007, Benazir Bhutto was assassinated as she addressed a rally in Rawalpindi following her noisy welcome to Pakistan in October after eight years of exile in Dubai and in London. She returned with active U.S. encouragement and was assumed to be the next prime minister following elections scheduled for January 2008. Even her death accounts were controversial, with differing views regarding the manner of her killing. A shocked nation and international community responded with swirling charges of intrigue and blame following the tragedy. Musharraf argued defensively that he had asked her not to address such public gatherings and that he had provided for sufficient security at the rally. Bhutto’s decision to address the crowd from her car after exposing her head through the sunroof was also questioned. Why did she do that? Had she received encouragement via a cell phone conversation from her family? Why had the site been swept and washed clean so quickly before evidence could be gathered? Why had her husband’s security man, Rehman Malik, gone on to the husband rather than stay with the dying Bhutto?

Pakistan is a land where conspiracies are commonplace. And the death of Pakistan’s first female Prime Minister was a major trauma ripe for exploitation. Her loss at a time of return to civilian rule did not derail the election. But it raised the fortunes of her husband, making him no longer a behind-the-scenes operator, but the president of Pakistan.
MAKING A BETTER U.S.-PAKISTAN RELATIONSHIP
— TOWARD PARTNERSHIP

Through troubled times, the United States recognized that Pakistan’s location, its nuclear capability, its tensions with its neighbors, its long history of engagement with the United States, and its role as an important member of the Muslim world combined to necessitate Washington’s continued interest. The U.S. presence in Afghanistan made Pakistan relevant. It was in recognition of these factors that, in October 2009, the U.S. Congress passed the Kerry-Lugar-Berman legislation authorizing $1.5 billion in economic assistance over each of the ensuing five years. Hoping to put to rest a number of key Pakistani complaints, the authorizing legislation incorporated a new title with long-term resonance: the “Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act.” The bill did not do away with all problem issues. For example, is the U.S.-Pakistan relationship a “transactional” one: namely, the “you use us and then lose us” type? Should future rounds of assistance be like the 9/11 military-to-military transfers which have already poured some $10 billion in support funds for the war on terror, or should they focus instead on the needs of the people and the democratic institutions?

U.S. Preferences and Pakistani Policies

As both countries grapple with combating extremism as a joint fight with shared interests and needs, a better partnership is badly needed. The American assumption is that a sensible democratic government in Pakistan should be able and willing to go to its people and articulate the need to combat the extremist threat as an existential one for Pakistan’s survival. Yet what is observed is the exact opposite. Washington watches in frustration as it feels that somehow these sensible ideas get characterized, both by the government and the very rowdy press, as an unacceptable demand from the (now very unpopular) United States.

To some degree, there will always be radicals and their chosen clerics in Pakistan. American policy that focuses on removing all influences of this group or the total containment of
local Taliban is unrealistic. The question, then, is: Can the U.S. continue living with this reality and yet want to build a strategic relationship with Pakistan? Another question: Will the U.S. find resonance with Pakistan for its sentiment, echoed at the start of the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue, that America comes to the dialogue with “great respect for the nation and the people of Pakistan”? 63

Added to all this must be a better understanding of the fact that underlying U.S.-Pakistan engagement is the reality of a continuing deep-seated suspicion. It leads to clashing perceptions of intentions on both sides: Washington frets that Pakistan will not deliver on promises to fight against extremism, including eliminating sanctuaries for terrorists inside Pakistani territory, or, will pick and choose which extremist groups they will target, allowing others to remain in place for use (against India) sometime in the future. Pakistanis disagree with the expansive nature of American priorities and policies and are mindful of the fact that the U.S. has never been as unpopular in Pakistan as it is today. Pew Research shows that, in 2014, only 14% Pakistanis had a favorable view of the U.S. Further, the organization found that only 10% Americans believe that Pakistan can be trusted.

In Pakistan, sentiment rides high against U.S. drone strikes. Further, the popularly held view that the augmented American staff at the embassy has been mostly CIA and military personnel who flaunt local laws only adds to the poor perceptions of Americans. This view assumes that fully armed American contractors regularly rampage around Pakistan, as in the Raymond Davis affair in January 2011 involving the killing of two Pakistanis by an American. Pakistanis were incensed that a CIA agent would operate freely and be willing to kill, even as he claimed it was a defensive action. 62 Davis did not have diplomatic immunity and was briefly imprisoned, but he was later released and rushed out of the country. Compensation was paid to his family. The incident cast a chill over the relationship, wiping out the claim by then-U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton that “habits of cooperation between our governments at every level” characterize U.S.-Pakistan ties. 63

Davis flew home, creating the impression that “America can get away with murder” in Pakistan. The serving foreign minister, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, resigned over the affair, became a critic of the Zardari government, and became a deputy to opposition leader Imran Khan.

Then came the U.S. Navy SEAL raid on May 12, 2011, which killed Osama bin Laden in Abbotabad, less than one hundred miles from Islamabad and two miles from the Pakistan Military Academy. Few in the United States believed that senior Pakistani military and intelligence officials did not know his whereabouts. In fact, an article by an American journalist, Seymour Hersh, pointedly claims that Pakistan’s military leadership knew about the U.S. plan to get bin Laden in advance of the raid that killed him. 64 The article led to a spirited debate within Pakistan about relations between Pakistan’s main actors, the military, the political elite, and the United States. The capture of bin Laden further demonstrated the tenuous hold of modernizers in today’s Pakistan working to limit the damage to their own state from extremists. 65

For many inside Pakistan, the key question remains: Did key Pakistani leaders really have no knowledge that bin Laden was hiding in full view behind the walls of his compound in Abbotabad? Officials pointed to the fact that Osama bin Laden had ceased use of cell phones in 1998, which meant no tracking of his whereabouts. Nonetheless, he was settled enough to father babies and receive aides who were coming and going with news and supplies. On balance, it is hard to believe that the military did not know.

The manner of the U.S. killing of bin Laden became controversial because it embarrassed the political leadership. One unfortunate side disaster was that by using vaccination as an excuse to gain access into the bin Laden household, all vaccination attempts in the conservative northwest frontier provinces suffered. Polio, almost eradicated from Pakistan a decade ago, resurfaced and polio vaccinators have been killed as suspicious persons thought to have CIA connections.

The Obama Years

The incoming Obama administration inherited a Pakistan relationship which outgoing senior Bush administration officials termed “the most difficult like a bad marriage where divorce is not an option.” Yet in February 2009, the new president tasked a review of the Pakistan relationship as part of the hoped-for stabilization of Afghanistan. This was one of the Obama administration’s first reviews and a remarkable White House commitment to focus on improvement. The review and congressional pledges of increased multi-year security and economic assistance for Pakistan’s critical needs such as energy, education, and development of the unwieldy tribal belt of Pakistan that borders Afghanistan — from which cross-border problems originated — offered hope.

Yet, even as the U.S. was looking to build new bridges, Pakistan’s government felt under siege by domestic extremists who were escalating their targeting of Pakistani sites and citizens. Coupled with the rising anti-Americanism, the Zardari government felt obliged
Pakistan is the world’s sixth most populous state at 185 million people. It has limited resources and some 60% of its population is under the age of 30. Lack of access to education and to employment opportunity makes governance even more critical. In addition to graft and corruption as its modus operandi, the state is also bankrupt and the $7.6 billion International Monetary Fund loan negotiated in November 2008 requires stringent measures which have proved unpopular domestically. Inflation is high, manufacturing is declining, rural poverty is on the increase, and due to a lack of education, information technology has not offered the vehicle for progress that it has in neighboring India. Annual remittances from overseas Pakistanis topped $12 billion, helping shore up the system. Using the often unreliable estimate provided by the government, unemployment currently stands at 15%. According to Pew Research data, 56% see no hope for the future and 67% see economic issues as paramount. Also, nearly three-fifths of the population now fear for personal security.66

Asking the government to give its full attention to these issues as well to extremism in the border areas is to make side deals to stem the threat to the state. The boldest of these was the 2009 agreement with religious conservatives in the Swat region of Pakistan, only 100 miles from Islamabad, to allow extremists breathing space and control. Shocked, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made a comment that could well be repeated elsewhere: “I think that the Pakistan government is basically abdicating [power] to the Taliban and to the extremists.” Neither current Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif nor his predecessor, President Asif Zardari, would eschew future deals if Islamabad ever felt another such deal would offer it respite, however short-lived, from the constant stress of governing in an area of turmoil.
ADDITIONAL ISSUES IN THE RELATIONSHIP AND REGIONAL RESPONSES

a result of the U.S. decision to decouple the India-Pakistan relationship. Pakistan has a separate identity and history. Its existential fear of India will not vanish as Religion’s role as a glue that cements Afghanistan and Pakistan cannot be denied. But Pakistan has a separate identity and history. Its existential fear of India will not vanish as a result of the U.S. decision to decouple the India-Pakistan relationship.

Another development worth noting is the rapid growth of a new middle class which is influencing relationships with the world. Rising out of poverty because of the $125 billion sent by Pakistani workers employed in the Middle East since 1975, this group favors close ties with the Arab states. Their view clashes with an upper-middle class that is more secular and Western-oriented. Both visions fight for space in the political system, are disillusioned with the current state of affairs, and are represented by charismatic opposition leaders, namely Tahirul Qadri for the former group and Imran Khan for the latter.

**U.S. Withdrawal from Afghanistan and Role of Pakistan in the Region**

The war in Afghanistan that followed the 9/11 attacks on the United States has cost more than $800 billion. U.S. and allied military action coupled with diplomacy has yet to assure a smooth transition after the withdrawal of U.S. troops and the likely diminution of funds for Afghanistan. Yet, much has been invested and Afghanistan has changed in these past decades. However, its immediate neighborhood remains difficult. Relations with Pakistan will likely carry great weight in securing security and stability for both nations.

Religion’s role as a glue that cements Afghanistan and Pakistan cannot be denied. But Pakistan has a separate identity and history. Its existential fear of India will not vanish as a result of the U.S. decision to decouple the India-Pakistan relationship.

This may be the time for some bold diplomatic action regarding the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Afghanistan has never recognized the Durand Line, the border the British drew dividing the Pushtun areas of what is now Pakistan and Afghanistan. Given the American stake in future stability there, and the relationships Washington still have in Kabul and Islamabad, now may be the moment to push for recognition of the Durand Line. After all, if President Ashraf Ghani wants to normalize the border and restrict its illegal penetration, a formal border agreement that legally defines it should be an incentive. The trilateral commission that oversees joint operations along the neighboring area cleverly ignores the precise description of the border and its definition as the Durand Line. Yet, a legally proper settlement of this issue will overcome an age-old problem and would have positive ripples in relations between the two neighbors.

**Kashmir / India**

Persistent emphasis on Islam within Pakistan and in its foreign policy cannot logically continue forever without further affecting Kashmir, since that issue involves the lives and future of Muslims. If Kashmir is made an Islamic issue, as in the past, Pakistan cannot really hope to have a sustained improved relationship with India. U.S. interests in Afghanistan cannot be served in the presence of Indo-Pak tensions, as the military will not look west when its focus is to the east toward India. Hence, strong U.S. encouragement of India-Pakistan normalization is worth considering. Absent real normalization with India, there will not be any Pakistani focus to confront militancy on the Afghan border. The perceived Pakistani need for the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani network will continue because it is deemed to be a hedge against what the Pakistani government believes is an Indian ill intent toward Pakistan.

However, India means business when it stresses that there cannot be any state-sponsored or sanctioned terrorism aimed at India coming from Pakistan. No breach will be allowed. Pakistani governments have always demurred that they are rendering any support of any kind. That end of support will now have to cover intelligence services that have traditionally cultivated the use of proxies against India. In turn, India will also need to reciprocate with an end to consideration of any play against Pakistan, either in Balochistan or the frontier regions of northern Pakistan or in the Afghan border regions near Pakistan.

Efforts toward security and political moderation in India and Pakistan remain interconnected, despite Washington’s preferences. Unrest in Pakistan will have dramatic
consequences for India and its quest to be the major regional power. Thus, these subcontinental neighbors have a great deal to gain from a mutual reduction of tensions, the opening of borders and trade, and the development of joint efforts at energy production and enhanced infrastructure benefitting both sides of the tense border. After nearly seven decades of enmity, perhaps the next decade will offer a different template of better relations based on some shared interests, even as problems in other areas remain. Religion brought separation in the subcontinent in 1947. Perhaps religion and its misuse by extremist terrorists can bring reconciliation for a more productive peace between India and Pakistan.

**Iran**

The July 14, 2015, agreement between Iran, the U.S., Russia, China, France, the UK, Germany, and the EU is a game changer for the region, if implemented as envisaged. Iran’s re-engagement with the West could offer more than the economic windfall that comes from the removal of sanctions under the agreement. Given that steps in engagement are tied to Iran’s verifiable compliance with the dismantling of its nuclear weapons capability, a step back from nuclear capability will offer space for regional engagement. Tehran’s outreach to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf right after the historic agreement could result in a discourse which lowers sectarian tensions in the world of Islam.

An open Iran in economic engagement with the United States and others can only help in ending the unidimensional control of the ayatollahs and the hard-line Iranian Revolutionary Guard over key elements of policy.

From Pakistan’s perspective, an Iran more integrated into regional affairs (rather than contesting them) brings a better chance to deal productively on bilateral issues such as Afghanistan. Facing a porous border to its north, Pakistan will welcome better cooperation with a country with which it shares a hard border and a coastline. Iran’s new posture can help in the future of a free Afghanistan. Managing the border with Iran can also help Pakistan to stem contagion from the Middle East in the form of Daesh/ISIS threats. The geopolitical stakes are high.

Removal of sanctions will enable energy-short South Asia to access the long reviewed Iran-Pakistan-India natural gas pipeline. The initial phase, which could bring Iranian gas to Pakistan, offers a hydrocarbon incentive to structural development and engagement, demonstrating a tangible benefit of cooperation.

Pakistan wants to use its China connection to build its trade capacity on the Indian Ocean. Iran’s proximity to (if not control of) the Strait of Hormuz offers a chance for cooperation in the functioning of Pakistan’s proposed Gwadar naval port as a major hub for trade.

**Saudi Arabia**

If partnerships are not forthcoming, for the sake of its own future, Pakistan must cut out the cancer of religious intolerance and acceptance of the power of the mullahs. That requires very strict action against public and private donations, especially from Wahabi Saudi Arabia. The Pakistani leadership needs to be firm on this, despite the place Saudi Arabia holds as the “keeper of the Holy Places, Mecca and Medina.”

Pakistan has sent its troops to help the Saudis in the 1970s and more recently. In the Pakistani mind, defense of Saudi Arabia is a duty and especially because the Saudi royal family will underwrite the costs of all secondment. Pakistan’s army is a tested fighting machine. The Saudis have no comparable force with which to fight off internal problems or external threats. The current Pakistani Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, is close to the Saudis. He spent his 2000–2007 exile years at his villa in Jeddah, where he was accorded royal protection and hospitality and business opportunities. It is worth noting that the recent unanimous rejection by the Pakistani parliament of a Saudi request for Pakistani ground troops to fight in Yemen against Houthi rebels is a welcome respite from involvement in inter-Gulf disputes. Pakistan’s current army chief smartly avoided entanglement in matters not tied to his country’s national interest.

In any case, future Pakistani support for Saudi security ought to warrant a reciprocal Saudi commitment to end support for the militant mullahs of Pakistan who have emerged as a result of Saudi funding. These uneducated but messianic keepers of millions of mosques cite Saudi government and private funding for their mosques and madrassas as a matter of consequence for their role in the political system. Riyadh ought to become aware that further funding of these elements defeats the purpose of getting the Pakistan army’s help against militant extremists from the ranks of Daesh (ISIS). These are the two sides of the same coin. Pakistan is not yet at the point of easy capture by Daesh, but continued empowerment of Wahabi-model mullahs by Saudis could result in greater conflict within Pakistan, and hence in its neighborhood.
An Iran that is willing to build productive relationships in its region will need to help damp down the severe sectarian tensions inside Pakistan that tear apart Pakistan’s major cities on a daily basis today.

**Nuclear Security**

Pakistan considers its nuclear weapons arsenal the jewel in the crown of security. While the United States worries about a Pakistani nuclear weapon falling into terrorist hands, Pakistan’s establishment insists its cache of arms is secure. The best that is allowed from outside powers is discussions about security of nuclear weapons between U.S. and Pakistani experts in third countries. As leaked diplomatic cables showed, Pakistani officials used the public nature of the nuclear arsenal discussions to make it virtually impossible for any U.S. expert to assist in securing the weapons or ensuring the reliability of the personnel who oversee them.72

The stockpile of enriched uranium, originally supplied by the United States under the Atoms for Peace program, sits in an aging reactor in Pakistan and cannot be moved to the United States because of public sentiment and the near unanimous support that exists for the nuclear program in Pakistan. The deep suspicion of American policy, especially in the “de-hyphenated era” of U.S. closeness to India, makes collaboration impossible. That situation is unlikely to change anytime soon. Within Pakistan, the nuclear arsenal is perceived as the absolute guarantor of Pakistan’s security. The official position of the government will remain unapologetic about the nuclear program and the safety of the arsenal.

Given that perceptions of nuclear capability are the sole remaining guarantor of security in an uneven match with adversaries, especially India, a change in the existing Pakistani reliance on its nuclear capability is unlikely. A thaw in relations with India under the new regime of Narendra Modi could help to build better fire walls and greater transparency aimed at preventing inadvertent escalation. Minimally, both countries must continue to abide by their previous agreements for notification of tests and for identification of nuclear facilities. A decline of communal issues in India would help to prevent spillover in Kashmir and elsewhere with religious rhetoric that always exacerbates relations.

The intersection of religion and politics inside Pakistan cannot be controlled from Washington. Only domestic pressure on recalcitrant or ineffective governments can stem the rising tide of sectarianism and intolerance. Stronger civilian institutional governance is needed to balance the military’s involvement in law and order.

A change of administration in the United States will not change the dynamic of Pakistan’s foreign policy. An exhausted Washington, eschewing formal involvement in regional problems, can only manage limited engagement from afar. Current emphasis on strategic partnerships with India, Saudi Arabia, and Israel may help to set parameters for U.S. engagement. But internal stresses in Pakistan — with economic problems, sectarian violence, and provincial strains — cannot be managed from outside.

**Conclusion**

The lack of rapport between U.S. and Pakistani foreign policy is not unwelcome in either country. While Pakistan now lies much lower among U.S. priorities, it cannot be a totally disinterested party as Pakistan’s strategic location, its nuclear weapons status, its role in the Muslim world, and the size of its population ensure its place as a player in the region and even beyond. Further, the downsized U.S. presence in Afghanistan requires cooperation from Pakistan, where the Taliban got their initial support and will continue to factor into Pakistan’s calculations. Peace talks aimed at launching an era of peace and stability in Afghanistan require cooperation from the Taliban. And the Taliban require cooperation from Pakistan’s intelligence services. While Pakistanis accept diminished American interest in their future, they know that geography and history will ensure an American role — despite other regional actors with whom the United States is now more comfortable.

Finally, it is amazing that nearly sixty years into the U.S.-Pakistan relationship, it is far from clear what positive threads bind the two countries. The prisms through which each views the other are different. The image of the United States in Pakistan is the lowest ever among the 22 nations included in the 2010 Pew poll, and it is only marginally better today. As the author of a 1982 study looking at influence in the U.S.-Pakistan relationship, I am struck that the conclusion I came to then is still valid today: that is, thirty-three additional years have passed since 1982, but the United States convincingly still cannot claim much influence in Pakistan. With a great deal less investment, China remains, for most Pakistanis, the true friend.
In April 2015, China offered Pakistan an economic corridor with investments and trade in the region of $46 billion. Despite security concerns given that its workers and engineers had been killed in Pakistan in 2004, the Chinese pledged a “mega-network of pipelines, highways and railway lines requiring twenty-four-hour patrolling and surveillance.”73 Pakistan will need to upgrade its business-investment climate and public-sector capacity, as well as make reforms in the energy sector. That hard work lies ahead, but the prospect of an economic corridor built with China’s help has energized the relationship between Pakistan and China.74

The 2016 U.S. election will bring in a new president. Having previously had the opportunity to advise U.S. presidents, how would I structure such an opportunity should it arise again?

Given the plethora of problems that will face a new president, I would highlight a few issues for urgent review. First, the United States has to get an updated understanding of Pakistan. We have dealt comfortably with its military for decades, but do we understand its nature today? Its biases? Strengths and weaknesses? Would it be a partner or an adversary in the region when U.S. focus has shifted? More energy needs to be spent on this effort. Greater enhanced interaction could offer better opportunities for shared policies. IMET (International Military Education Training) is still an excellent tool. A new administration ought to strengthen funding and expand connections.

Given the abysmal standing of the United States in today’s Pakistan, it is important that we understand if and where we might have support. The younger generation is one vast sector on which attention is needed. It is also important to understand differing perceptions in the provinces of Pakistan. U.S. policy is often a “one-size-fits-all” model. Can we better understand the nuances and differences that help identify mutual goals?

Second, the security of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons arsenal is critically important to Pakistan-U.S. relations and to peace in the region. Decades of suspicion plus Pakistani resentment at India’s special status in the American scheme makes it nearly impossible to have joint programs for protection and personnel reliability of any depth. Yet, an incoming administration must continue to engage with the strategic command institutions in the Pakistan military. However, dual tracking of nuclear security and safety issues with civilian top leaders is important in giving them knowledge and a role. Minimally, transfer of nuclear weapons knowledge and expertise with devastating effect on the region must be prevented at all levels.

Third, Pakistan’s development requires targeted and sustained assistance in key sectors. I would make trade and energy a first priority. Trade offers development through employment and access. Removing the trade quotas for textiles is long overdue. Special interests have stymied past efforts, but a review of existing policies and changes thereto could prove immensely beneficial without jeopardizing the U.S. national interest.

Energy cooperation offers a critical avenue for demonstrable benefits of collaboration between the United States and Pakistan. That can occur at two levels: one, where U.S. companies help along a range of energy projects from gas exploration to solar; two, where the U.S. removal of Iran sanctions allows Washington to end pressure to stop projects such as a natural gas pipeline from Iran to Pakistan, and potentially to India.

Fourth, an incoming U.S. president has a window of opportunity to build on the relationships with India and Afghanistan with suggestions that help reduce tensions with Pakistan. Promotion of collaborative projects such as the natural gas pipeline from Iran through Pakistan to India, and improved infrastructure for border trade would rein in negativity and promote better relations.

Finally, Pakistan’s women — from a female prime minister to civil society leaders and ordinary women who support education of girls and work from home to supplement incomes — offer the brightest avenue for development assistance. U.S. assistance programs should make a strong splash with real resources, transparency, and accountability as a major commitment to lift this key group into economic self-sufficiency. This approach could be a unique experiment in U.S. relations with the world’s only Muslim nuclear weapons power.
NOTES


3 This group takes its name from Mirza Ghulam Ahmed (1935-1908) a Panjabi who in 1882 declared himself a 'renewer' or mujahid of Islam. Ahmadis do not subscribe to the concept of Jihad against non-believers and hold that the prophet Mohammad was not necessarily the last prophet of Islam, thereby disagreeing with one of the basic beliefs held by Muslims.


5 In July 1972, Bhutto went to Simla, India, for negotiations with the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Consequently, Pakistani prisoners of war were released and all of the territory seized in the course of the 1971 war, returned by India. In return, Bhutto pledged to honor 'bilateralism' in Indo-Pak relations, eschewing help by foreign countries in resolving its difficulties with India.

6 See Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, The Myth of Independence (Karchi: Oxford University Press, 1969). Previously, the man who had been an ardent courtier of the American alliance with Pakistan in the early 1950s and gone on to head the army and the country had voiced similar views [Mohammed Ayub Khan, Friends Not Masters (London & Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1967)].
7 I often sat in the visitor’s gallery in the National Assembly during visits from the U.S. to Pakistan and heard him do so.

8 This led to a parallel structure for money transfers to Pakistan eventually helping ‘bad guys’ transferring unaccounted large sums into the country for use by extremists.

9 "Pakistan: Of Whiskey, War and Islam," The Economist, March 5, 1977, 68. Note — on the attack, the PNA charged Bhutto with drunkenness and "Bacchanalian orgies" to which Bhutto, responded disdainfully, "we drink wine, not the people’s blood!"

10 I recall, from a visit I made to Pakistan at that time, open talk of at least two dozen seats that were won through noticeable election ‘irregularities’.


12 Zia as leader of Pakistan acted very differently upon his takeover than did the mercurial Bhutto. I was in Pakistan that summer and recall the efficient rounding up of Bhutto’s senior colleagues late one night, many of whom were my parent’s neighbors in Islamabad. The first words in everyone’s comment on the shocking news of a yet another military coup was to exclaim how simple minded and humble Zia was, how deferential to Bhutto he had always appeared to be, and how nobody could have imagined him throwing Bhutto out.

13 During my years as an academic and as a member of the Reagan administration at the policy planning staff of the Department of State or as director for South Asia at the National Security Council of the White House, I met Zia several times. He talked of my book on U.S. - Pakistan relations and the havoc that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had played with Pakistan’s future. This was a view he shared with me.

14 Meaning, "God willing."

15 In the 1980s I began to note to my family and colleagues that beards were fast becoming the norm for men in Pakistan. Each time I traveled there on official and personal business, there were more men with beards in the public and in official ranks such as the police and the army.


17 Ibid., 314.

18 I was serving in the White House during this period.


20 During the 1984-88 years when I accompanied White House and senior U.S. government visitors on visits to Pakistan, including the then Vice President George H. W. Bush in May 1984, General Rahman was always present in Zia’s meetings with American interlocutors.

21 General Khalid Mahmud Arif, *Working with Zia: Pakistan’s Power Politics 1977 - 1988* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 325 - 327. After complicated negotiations lasting six years, the Geneva Accord was signed on April 14, 1988. Soviet troops left Afghanistan shortly thereafter and no interim government was ready to take charge in Kabul. Various estimates put the cost of the Afghan invasion and occupation at over $70 billion and Soviet military leaders noted that the war had cost nearly 14,000 soldiers dead and some 35,500 wounded. The war cost nearly 200,000 Afghan and Arab supporters their lives; another 80,000 were wounded. Afghanistan suffered enormous physical damage as well with its elementary infra structure in tatters. Arable land was destroyed, lives were uprooted, and nearly a third of the Afghan population at the time ended up as refugees mostly in Pakistan and Iran.

22 From my South Asia director portfolio at the NSC, I worked on arrangements for Secretary of State George Shultz to attend Zia’s funeral and for the return, on his aircraft, of the body of the American ambassador to Pakistan.

23 I had known her for a time before she became prime minister, and she would invite me over for a meeting or a lunch when I was in Pakistan where she would talk freely of the existing situation.
24 Dubbed “Mr. Ten Percent” in Pakistan based on stories of lucrative contracts through which a 10% commission was said to be given to Zardari.


26 The disconnect between U.S. access to Pakistan and its leaders and Washington’s ability to influence Pakistani policy is detailed in Shirin Tahir-Kheli, The United States and Pakistan: The Evolution of an Influence Relationship, (New York: Praeger, 1982).

27 For example, comments by Hamid Karzai to Ahmed Rashid, Descent into Chaos: The U.S. and the Disaster in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia (New York: Penguin, 2009), 12.

28 Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy and Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Armitage, both crucial actors on Pakistan, subsequently noted that the U.S. had been too sanguine on the Taliban's developing threat against American interests.


30 General Babar, a Pathan, had served as governor of the now re-named Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province from 1975 -1977 under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. He served as Special Assistant to Benazir Bhutto in her first government during the 1988 - 1990 period and as minister of interior in her second term, 1993 - 1996. When I asked if reports of her complaints about exclusion were accurate during one of my visits to Pakistan, she demurred, saying that often a lot of things got done in her name about which she would only subsequently find out.

31 Also during her meeting with me, Bhutto noted that she often pointed out the perils of this legacy in her meetings with Americans but few paid it serious attention.


33 Ibid., 293.

34 Ibid., 294 - 296.


37 In my conversations with him, I found it difficult to focus him on any of the issues strongly affecting Pakistan’s international standing or his vision for the country’s future. He preferred instead to talk of the various highway projects that he had launched which would not only connect up the entire country but make Pakistan a player in Asia.

38 In my conversations with him, I always found the prime minister uninterested in foreign policy talk and much more interested in cricket and cuisine.


40 Mehmood was, in my experience, the single most openly hostile Pakistani official at the time in terms of U.S. policy. It was clear that he did not see much benefit to the Pak-U.S. relationship and was candid in his discussion of lack of benefit that Pakistan derives from the American relationship. Later, some noted that he was proud of saying that he was a "born-again Muslim" which some felt was more a case of a "born-again Islamic fundamentalist."

41 Ibid., 59; Hassan Abbas, Pakistan’s Drift Into Extremism: Allah, then Army and America’s War on Terror, (New York: East Gate, 2004), 217.


45 "Bush Promises to Facilitate Pakistan India Talks," The Nation, February 14, 2002.

46 Openly anti-American sentiment was voiced in the bazaars of Pakistan. Further, when I would ask why they did not print sales receipts, the shop owners remarked that sending the regular sales taxes on to the government would be stupid. "The government is full of thieves. Therefore, no sensible person pays tax to the government."

47 My conversations with the State Department, National Security Council, and the Pentagon reflected little desire in the United States for Pakistan to return to civilian government.


51 The White House Press Office statement noted that "the U.S. is robustly responding to the request of President Musharraf and the Government of Pakistan…," The White House, October 9, 2005; "Statement on U.S. Assistance for Earthquake in Pakistan," The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Washington D.C., October 9, 2005.


53 Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, Speech to the Council of Foreign Relations, New York City, November 18, 2006.


56 Shivraj Prasad, Interview by NDTV, New Delhi, India, March 16, 2005.

57 Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, remarks en route to India, U.S. Department of State, March 15, 2005. Rice noted that in her conversations with Musharraf in Islamabad, she would expect a commitment to a democratic path for Pakistan. She lauded the Pakistani president for his effort to rid Pakistan of extremism and make Pakistan a model for other Muslim countries.


59 Ibid.

60 Sherry Rehman, President, Central Planning, Pakistan People’s Party, letter to the author, November 25, 2005.


63 Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Remarks at the Asia Society Series of Richard Holbrooke Memorial Addresses, New York, February 18, 2011.

For a detailed account of the lead up to the death of Bin Laden, see Chief of Station, Islamabad, Robert L. Grenier, *88 Days to Kandahar: A CIA Diary*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015).


Based on discussions with Shahid Javed Burki, August, 2015.


Ibid.


Sherry Rehman, “Can Islamabad Leverage the China-Iran Opportunity?”, Jinnah Institute, Islamabad, July 26, 2015, 2-3.

Ibid.
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