

# Background

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## Denying Terrorists Safe Haven in Pakistan

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The recent upsurge in Taliban attacks against coalition forces in Afghanistan and continuing links of global terrorist networks to groups based in Pakistan are leading many in the United States to question Islamabad's commitment to fighting the global war on terrorism. Washington should review Pakistani efforts to deny terrorists safe haven and its overall policy toward Pakistan, which is at the center of international anti-terrorism efforts.

Pakistan has made invaluable contributions to combating al-Qaeda over the past five years by capturing scores of key leaders and helping to foil numerous deadly plots. However, Islamabad will need to adopt a more comprehensive policy against violent extremism to fully deny groups and individuals the use of Pakistani territory as a base for global jihad.

Pakistan has traditionally relied on violent extremists to accomplish its strategic objectives in both Afghanistan and India. Although President Pervez Musharraf has articulated his desire to turn Pakistan into a moderate and modern Islamic state, his government has taken little concrete action to make the country inhospitable for individuals and groups seeking to destabilize Afghanistan or India and plotting international acts of terrorism. Reports of links between those involved in the foiled London airliner bomb plot in mid-August and Pakistani terrorist groups that traditionally operate in Jammu and Kashmir demonstrate the dangers of not cracking down on violent extremism in Pakistan.

### Talking Points

- Pakistan has made invaluable contributions to combating al-Qaeda over the past five years but needs to adopt a more comprehensive policy against violent extremism in order to fully deny groups and individuals the use of Pakistani territory as a base for global jihad.
- Washington should strengthen its Pakistan policy to demonstrate U.S. long-term commitment to the partnership and at the same time press Islamabad to address the roots of violent extremism.
- The U.S. can accomplish this delicate balancing act by maintaining a robust assistance program that is visible to the Pakistani people, providing a consistent message to the government regarding the need to crack down on all violent extremism, developing a more proactive policy supporting the restoration of democracy, fortifying U.S. diplomatic efforts to facilitate peace between Pakistan and India, and encouraging economic integration among Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India so that each develops an interest in overall regional stability.

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Washington needs to strengthen its policy toward Pakistan in ways that both demonstrate long-term U.S. commitment to the relationship and press Pakistan to expand its efforts against violent extremists. The best chance for success against violent extremism in Pakistan lies in a strategy that prioritizes economic and democratic development and the pursuit of better relations with neighboring countries, namely Afghanistan and India. Washington should support these objectives and encourage greater economic interdependence among these three South Asian countries.

### Pakistan and the Taliban

Before the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, Pakistan supported and recognized Taliban rule in Afghanistan. Although Pakistani officials largely disagreed with the Taliban's harsh interpretation of Islam, they viewed the Taliban as their best chance to achieve their own strategic objectives in the region and believed that the international community would eventually accept Taliban rule in Kabul as inevitable. Pakistan continued to support the Taliban into the late 1990s, long after Osama bin Laden took refuge there in 1996 and despite the growing problems that it created in Pakistan's relations with Washington. Pakistan's high-stakes policy vis-à-vis the Taliban derived from its aims of denying India, as well as Iran and the Central Asian countries, a strong foothold in Afghanistan and ensuring a friendly regime in Kabul that would refrain from making territorial claims on Pakistan's Pashtun areas along the Pakistan–Afghanistan border.<sup>1</sup>

The 9/11 attacks and their impact on U.S. foreign policy quickly changed Pakistan's earlier calculations on the benefits of supporting the Taliban. President Musharraf broke off official ties with the Taliban, supported the U.S. invasion of Afghani-

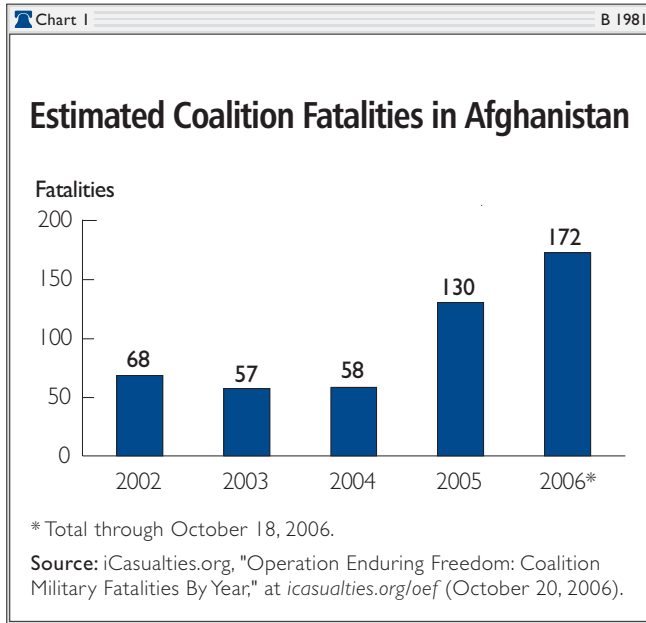
stan, and contributed substantially to breaking up the al-Qaeda network in the region. Pakistan has captured and turned over to the U.S. scores of senior al-Qaeda leaders and has helped to disrupt terrorist plots that would have resulted in hundreds, possibly thousands, of deaths.

Despite the official break with the Taliban, Islamabad has failed to crack down forcefully on Taliban leaders or actively disrupt their activities in Pakistan. Officials of the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate maintain relationships with Taliban leaders and may see benefits in keeping good ties with the Taliban in the expectation that the Taliban might again play a role in Afghanistan's politics. Taliban leaders apparently roam freely in Quetta, Baluchistan, and Taliban fighters shelter in Pakistani border areas after attacking coalition forces in Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup>

Pakistan's lax attitude toward the Taliban has contributed to renewed Taliban attacks in Afghanistan, but other factors are also facilitating instability. U.S. Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte says the Taliban is exploiting local grievances on issues such as corruption and poor governance to attract recruits and reestablish its power base. He also attributes the recent increase in Taliban attacks to more NATO operations along the Afghanistan–Pakistan border.<sup>3</sup>

Although Pakistan is not solely responsible for the increased Taliban attacks, it could help to stem them by denying Taliban forces rest and safe harbor on Pakistani soil. Washington should therefore make the issue of denying terrorists safe haven in the border areas a focal point of its partnership with Pakistan. The importance of denying terrorists safe haven as part of an overall counterterrorism strategy is well documented. In its July 2004 report, the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon

1. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 185–189.
2. Dr. Barnett Rubin, "Still Ours to Lose: Afghanistan on the Brink," testimony before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, September 21, 2006, at [www.senate.gov/~foreign/testimony/2006/RubinTestimony060921.pdf](http://www.senate.gov/~foreign/testimony/2006/RubinTestimony060921.pdf) (October 2, 2006), and Daniel Benjamin, *America and the World in the Age of Terror* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies Press, 2005), p. 117.
3. Gary Thomas, "Coalition, NATO Forces More Proactive in Southern Afghanistan," interview with Ambassador John D. Negroponte, transcript, Voice of America, October 4, 2006, at [usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=texttrans-english&y=2006&m=October&x=20061006175837xjsnommis0.5906946](http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=texttrans-english&y=2006&m=October&x=20061006175837xjsnommis0.5906946) (October 6, 2006).



the United States highlighted the need to develop a "realistic strategy to keep possible terrorists insecure and on the run."<sup>4</sup> The March 2006 National Security Strategy says that "we must prevent terrorists from exploiting ungoverned areas,"<sup>5</sup> and the 2005 State Department counterterrorism report indicates that "[d]enying terrorists safe haven plays a major role in undermining terrorists' capacity to operate effectively, and thus forms a key element of U.S. counterterrorism strategy."<sup>6</sup>

### Musharraf's Tribal Areas Deal: Curtailing or Emboldening Terrorism?

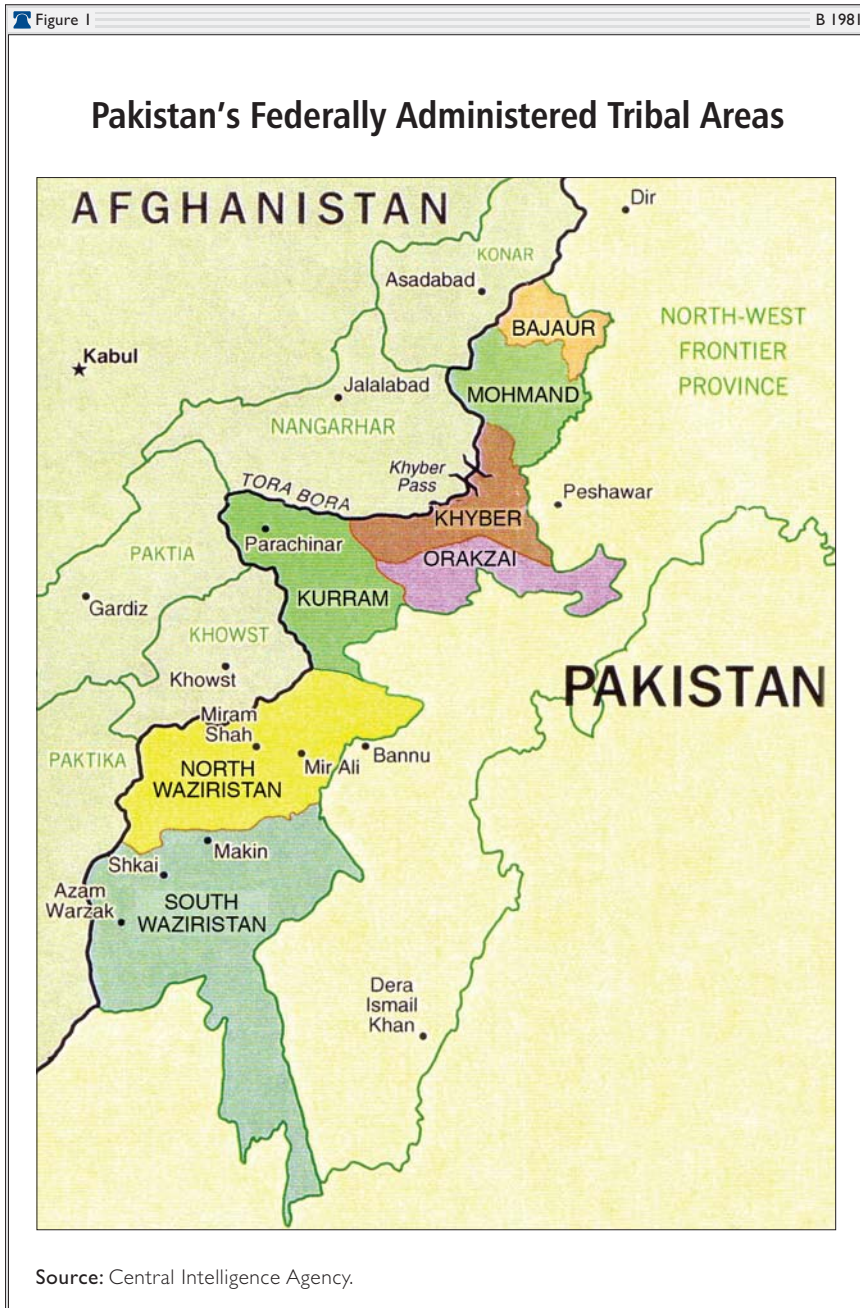
Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), which consist of seven semi-autonomous tribal agencies along the border with Afghanistan, constitute one of the most dangerous terrorist safe havens in the world today. According to the 2005 State Department counterterrorism report, the FATA has been "a safe haven for al Qaeda and Tali-

ban fighters since the fall of the Taliban in December 2001."<sup>7</sup> The lack of central government authority in this region and the fact that the local population shares a Pashtun identity with the Taliban make it a particularly attractive location for the Taliban and its al-Qaeda supporters to hide.

Since 2004, the Pakistan military has deployed some 80,000 security forces to the area to disrupt the terrorists, but these military operations have also damaged traditional tribal institutions, increased radicalism in the region, caused the deaths of several hundred Pakistani soldiers, and met with increasing opposition from the broader Pakistani population. Public opposition to the military operations in the FATA spiked in late August following the Pakistan military's unpopular assassination of an elderly Baluch politician who had spearheaded a rebellion in Baluchistan province.

Because of the growing problems with the FATA military operations, President Musharraf on September 5 announced a "peace deal" with tribal leaders of the North Waziristan Agency that includes an end to offensive Pakistani military operations in exchange for the tribal rulers' cooperation in restricting Taliban and al-Qaeda activities. The Pakistan government wants to restore the traditional form of governance in the region and co-opt the tribal elders and political representatives through an infusion of economic assistance for new roads, hospitals, and schools. The U.S. supports Pakistani efforts to bring more government services to the region and to turn it into a regularly administered province. Washington is also providing assistance to help Pakistan control the region by equipping Pakistan's paramilitary Frontier Corps, funding the construction of more than 100 border outposts, providing high-tech equipment to help Pakistani forces better locate terrorists attempting

4. National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *9/11 Commission Report*, July 22, 2004, p. 367, at [www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf](http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf) (October 2, 2006).
5. The White House, "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America," March 2006, p. 12, at [www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/nss2006.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/nss2006.pdf) (October 2, 2006).
6. U.S. Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2005*, April 2006, p. 16, at [www.state.gov/documents/organization/65462.pdf](http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/65462.pdf) (October 18, 2006).
7. *Ibid.*, p. 20.



rorists or enhance Taliban and al-Qaeda influence in the region, making it easier for terrorists to plot, organize, and train. Although President Musharraf denies that the pact was made with the Taliban, reports that scores of Taliban militants were recently released from Pakistani custody are worrisome.

To make the pact effective, Islamabad will have to enforce its terms strictly, which means coming down hard on any elements that are found protecting or sheltering Taliban or al-Qaeda. This may require Musharraf to punish lower-level individuals within his own intelligence and security services who have helped Taliban leaders evade capture by U.S. forces in the past. This is a tall order for Musharraf, given the deep institutional links between the intelligence and security services and the Taliban. He has already faced at least two assassination attempts because of his counterterrorism cooperation with the U.S. Although the U.S. sees an urgent need to deny safe haven to terrorists along the Pakistan-Afghan border, President Musharraf carefully calculates each counterterrorism step that he takes to ensure his own survival.

If, as Musharraf claims, the Waziristan pact is aimed at increasing cooperation from the local tribes against the terrorists, Pakistan should find it increasingly easier to close in on Taliban and al-Qaeda hideouts. The U.S. will need to monitor the situation closely and judge the merits of the pact based on whether it results in fewer cross-border attacks into Afghan-

to cross the border, and funding an air wing with helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft.<sup>8</sup>

The next several months will be crucial in determining whether Musharraf's Waziristan deal will advance U.S. interests by denying safe haven to ter-

8. *Ibid.* and news release, "Fact Sheet: Afghanistan and Pakistan: Strong Allies in the War on Terror," The White House, September 29, 2006, at [www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/09/20060929-2.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/09/20060929-2.html) (October 18, 2006).

istan and more information on Taliban/al-Qaeda activities and hiding places. Washington needs to focus all of the tools and resources at its disposal on dealing effectively with this troubled region. Failure to do so will further destabilize Afghanistan and make it easier for terrorists to plan and execute their next international attack.

### **Tripartite Meeting: A Step in the Right Direction**

The recent tripartite meeting of Presidents George W. Bush, Hamid Karzai, and Musharraf in Washington is a first step in defusing tensions between the Afghan and Pakistani leaders resulting from the increased Taliban attacks. It is now widely acknowledged that the fate of Afghanistan is closely linked to Pakistan and the policies that it pursues over the next several years. Therefore, the U.S. needs to continue these high-level three-way meetings to bring the countries into greater alignment and to build economic and security linkages between their governments that will make them increasingly interdependent and interested in their mutual stability and security.

The Administration is already moving in this direction with the pursuit of reconstruction opportunity zones (ROZs) in the Afghan–Pakistan border areas, which would allow products produced in these remote areas to receive trade preferences in the U.S.<sup>9</sup> The U.S. Congress would need to pass legislation to implement the ROZ program. The Bush Administration and the next U.S. Congress should work together to fast-track implementation of the ROZs so that Afghan and Pakistani leaders will immediately begin to benefit from working cooperatively on peaceful trade-related projects.

During the tripartite meeting, Presidents Karzai and Musharraf also agreed to establish tribal jirgas (gatherings) of Pashtun local leaders from both sides of the border. President Karzai has commented that he hopes the jirgas will provide assurances to both Islamabad and Kabul that each country's peace and prosperity is good for the other.<sup>10</sup>

### **Links Between Kashmiri Militancy and International Terrorism**

Links between Pakistan-based Kashmiri militant groups and international terrorist incidents further demonstrate the need for Islamabad to adopt a zero-tolerance policy toward violent extremism. Reports surfaced in mid-August that one of the prime suspects in the London airliner bomb plot had family ties to Maulana Masood Azhar, the leader of the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM), a radical Kashmiri terrorist group.<sup>11</sup> Indian security forces captured Azhar in Kashmir in the early 1990s and then released him in 1999 during a hostage swap to free 155 passengers on a hijacked Indian plane that flew to Kandahar, Afghanistan. The Indian government also released two other suspected terrorists—British-born Omar Sheikh and Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar—to end the hijacking crisis.

The JEM had apparently made an earlier unsuccessful attempt to free Azhar by kidnapping five Western tourists, including American citizen Donald Hutchings. One of the tourists was beheaded, and the others were never found and are presumed dead. Pakistan officially banned the JEM in 2002, but Azhar has never been formally charged with a crime.<sup>12</sup>

The JEM has also been linked to the kidnapping and brutal murder of *Wall Street Journal* reporter

9. News release, "President Bush and President Musharraf of Pakistan Discuss Strengthened Relationship," The White House, March 4, 2006, at [www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/03/20060304-2.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/03/20060304-2.html) (October 18, 2006).
10. Ahmed Rashid, "Karzai for Jirga to Crush Taleban," BBC News, October 11, 2006, at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/6032631.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6032631.stm) (October 11, 2006).
11. "The Radical with a Perfect Cover," *Sunday Times* (London), August 20, 2006, at [www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2087-2320777\\_1,00.html](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2087-2320777_1,00.html) (October 18, 2006), and Stewart Tendler, Sean O'Neill, and Zahid Hussain, "Suitcase Full of Bomb Equipment Found by Police," *The Times* (London), August 18, 2006, at [www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2-2318431,00.html](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2-2318431,00.html) (October 18, 2006).
12. Paul Watson and Mubashir Zaidi, "British Case Renews Focus on Pakistan," *Los Angeles Times*, August 13, 2006, p. A9, and "Profile: Maulana Masood Azhar," BBC News, December 16, 2002, at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south\\_asia/578369.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/578369.stm) (October 11, 2006).

Daniel Pearl in January 2002. Pearl's kidnappers demanded the release of Pakistani prisoners from Guantanamo Bay, an immediate end to the U.S. presence in Pakistan, U.S. delivery of F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan, and the release of Mullah Zaeef, the former Afghan ambassador of the Taliban regime to Pakistan. Omar Sheikh later confessed to Pakistani authorities that he masterminded Pearl's kidnapping. Sheikh was also involved in the kidnappings of Westerners in India in 1994 that were aimed at freeing Masood Azhar. In July 2002, Sheikh was sentenced to death by an anti-terrorism court in Pakistan.<sup>13</sup>

The JEM has roots in the Afghan war against the Soviets, and its cadres trained at Taliban camps in the late 1990s. The JEM (then called the Harakat-Ul-Mujahideen) reportedly suffered several casualties during the U.S. strikes on terrorist training camps in Afghanistan in 1998 in retaliation for al-Qaeda bombings of two U.S. embassies in Africa.

### Terrorist Attacks Jeopardize Indo-Pakistani Talks

Indian allegations of Pakistani involvement in the July 11 Mumbai train blasts, which killed nearly 200 people, are severely straining Pakistan-India relations. On September 30, the Mumbai police commissioner told a news conference that the authorities had finished their investigations into the Mumbai blasts and had concluded that the attack was planned by Pakistan's intelligence service and carried out by the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LET) and their operatives in India. He also said that the Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) had assisted in the attacks. India has said that it will test Pakistani resolve in countering terrorism through a joint mechanism agreed to by the Indian and Pakistani leaders in Havana, Cuba, in late September. Pres-

ident Musharraf has so far been reluctant to take concrete steps to rein in jihadists that fight in Kashmir, mainly because his government believes the militancy is Islamabad's only way to keep pressure on India and to force New Delhi's hand in negotiations over the contested territory.

Table 1		B 1981
<b>Major Terrorist Attacks in India, 2005–2006</b>		
<b>2005</b>		
July 5	Five militants attack the site of the destroyed Babri Mosque and the Ram Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya.	
July 28	Explosions on trains in Uttar Pradesh kill 13 people.	
October 29	Bombings in two New Delhi marketplaces days before the Hindu festival of Diwali kill 59 people and injure at least 200.	
<b>2006</b>		
March 7	Bombings in the Hindu holy city of Varanasi kill 28 people and injure more than 100.	
July 11	A series of explosions rock commuter trains in Mumbai, killing at least 200 people and injuring approximately 700.	
September 8	At least two bomb blasts at a Muslim cemetery in the western town of Malegaon kill 37 people and wound 125.	

The U.S. considered labeling Pakistan a state sponsor of terrorism for its support to militant groups fighting in Kashmir in the early 1990s. Although the Kashmir militancy erupted indigenously in Srinagar—the Muslim-dominated summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir on the Indian side of the Line of Control (LOC)—over grievances related to political representation of the Muslim community, Pakistan quickly took advantage of the situation and provided support to Kashmiri militant groups.

The U.S. again pressured Islamabad on its support to militants fighting in Kashmir during the 2001–2002 military crisis between India and Pakistan, in which a total 1 million troops were mobilized on both sides of the border. To defuse that crisis, then Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage secured a commitment from President Musharraf in early June 2002 to end the infiltration

13. Husain Haqqani, "The Ideologies of South Asian Jihadi Groups," *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, Vol. 1, May 19, 2005, at [www.futureofmuslimworld.com/research/ctID.5/ctrend.asp](http://www.futureofmuslimworld.com/research/ctID.5/ctrend.asp) (October 18, 2006).

of militants across the LOC, which divides Kashmir. Armitage conveyed the Pakistani pledge to Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihar Vajpayee, who subsequently agreed to pull back Indian forces, ending the military standoff.<sup>14</sup> Despite reduced military tensions, India did not agree to resume official dialogue until 18 months later in January 2004.

President Musharraf would find it politically challenging to pursue a broader crackdown on domestic terrorists that strike in India and abroad. The religious parties would label such a crackdown as a surrender to India over Kashmir. However, he could draw support for such a crackdown from other parts of Pakistani society, such as the secular political parties, the business community, and Pakistanis who have been involved in people-to-people exchanges with Indians over the past few years.

A more serious dialogue on Kashmir between India and Pakistan and deeper engagement by the U.S. would help to give Pakistan confidence that its viewpoint has been taken into account. The U.S. should not try to involve itself directly in resolving the dispute, but it should continue to talk about the issue separately with both sides and inject ideas into their dialogue process. President Musharraf is clearly hedging in talks with India by allowing Kashmiri militant groups to continue to operate. The U.S. needs to convince Musharraf to instead put his faith in the India–Pakistan dialogue.

A genuine peace process between New Delhi and a wide spectrum of Kashmiri leaders that addresses political grievances and human rights issues would also help to temper the Pakistani public's emotional reactions to Kashmir and widen public support for a genuine crackdown on violent groups. Encouraging travel back and forth across the LOC (started by the Muzaffarabad–Srinagar bus link) and greater interaction and cooperation between officials from both sides of the LOC will widen the constituencies for peace and help to isolate violent extremists.

## Weakening Extremism by Promoting Democracy

Promoting a more open and transparent political process in Pakistan will also help to curb the influence of extremist groups, thereby reducing support for terrorism. Before the 2002 elections, religious parties that backed the Taliban traditionally received less than 8 percent of the popular vote and had been marginalized in the 1988, 1990, 1993, and 1997 national elections.<sup>15</sup> In the 2002 elections, however, the religious parties performed well in the areas bordering Afghanistan and increased their total vote share to about 11 percent, partly because of changes in election rules that favored them over the secular parties and partly because of anti-American sentiment in the Afghanistan–Pakistan border provinces.<sup>16</sup> The secular Pakistan People's Party (PPP), which is led in exile by former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, grabbed about 25 percent of the popular vote in the 2002 elections.

The full participation of the main secular democratic parties, including the PPP and the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), in the 2007 elections would provide more political choices to Pakistani voters and instill greater confidence in Pakistan's democratic process. Charges of corruption leveled against Benazir Bhutto and her husband have tainted her personal reputation, but the PPP as a party continues to attract individuals who support secular-based policies. The PPP recently led efforts in the Pakistani parliament to repeal the controversial Hudood ordinances that discriminate against women. The Musharraf government has since put efforts to repeal the controversial ordinances on hold as a result of pressure from the religious parties.

The Pakistan military's pervasive involvement in civilian affairs has stifled the development of civil society and the establishment of democratic institutions. Pakistan has been ruled by the military for over half of its existence. Even during periods of civilian rule, the military has wielded tremendous

14. Polly Nayak and Michael Krepon, "US Crisis Management in South Asia's Twin Peaks Crisis," Henry L. Stimson Center Report No. 57, September 2006, at [www.stimson.org/southasia/pdf/USCrisisManagementFull.pdf](http://www.stimson.org/southasia/pdf/USCrisisManagementFull.pdf) (October 16, 2006).

15. Aitzaz Ahsan and Meghnad Desai, *Divided by Democracy* (New Delhi: Lotus Collection Roli Books, 2005), p. 134.

16. Stephen Philip Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2004), p. 187.

power over decision-making. Although the military is unlikely to submit fully to a civilian government in the near term, Washington should set benchmarks that begin to restrict the military's role in Pakistani politics. U.S. legislation prevents Washington from providing assistance to a government put in place by a military coup, but the Bush Administration has permitted assistance to Pakistan since 9/11 under a waiver to this law. The annual recertification of this waiver should be tied to free and fair elections in 2007 and a return to civilian rule.

### The Role of U.S. Assistance in Countering Extremism

Carefully targeted U.S. aid programs can also help to counter anti-American sentiment and limit the influence of radicals who use hatred of the U.S. to mobilize political support. A visible U.S. aid presence in the country will reassure the Pakistani population that Washington is committed to average Pakistanis, not just to the military leadership. U.S. assistance programs that focus on building institutions and promoting human rights and democracy would also show that the U.S. is committed to Pakistan's success as a stable and prosperous country and deflate extremists' arguments that Washington is interested only in exploiting Pakistan for its own purposes. Washington must work to overcome the suspicions of Pakistanis who remember when the U.S. abruptly cut off its large-scale aid program because of Pakistan's nuclear program in the early 1990s.

Polling in Pakistan and other parts of the Muslim world has demonstrated the significant impact that U.S. humanitarian aid has on peoples' perceptions of America. A poll by Terror Free Tomorrow, a U.S. nonprofit organization, indicated that favorable attitudes toward America doubled following the U.S. response to the October 2005 earthquake in Pakistan.<sup>17</sup> The U.S. should search for ways to emulate the kind of humanitarian programs that

were employed following the earthquake on a more permanent basis and to publicize more effectively the assistance that Washington has already provided. Regrettably, security concerns have forced the U.S. to limit the size and scope of its assistance projects in the country. Most U.S. assistance to Pakistan over the past five years has been in the form of budgetary support and debt relief, which has helped Pakistan's macroeconomic indicators but has limited the direct impact of U.S. aid on the broader Pakistani population's attitudes toward America.<sup>18</sup>

### What the U.S. Should Do

To strengthen U.S. policy toward Pakistan and to press Islamabad to address the roots of violent extremism, the United States should:

- **Maintain a robust U.S. assistance program but make it more visible to the Pakistani people.** The U.S. should target more of its assistance to development, health, and education projects that affect the grassroots of society. Since 9/11, most U.S. economic assistance has gone either to debt relief or to direct budget support of the Pakistan government. While this aid has improved Pakistan's macroeconomic indicators, it has had little impact on the average Pakistani's perception of America. The U.S. embassy and aid mission in Islamabad should work together to develop programs that demonstrate Washington's interest in promoting economic development and democracy. The embassy's public diplomacy office should submit regular stories to the local press detailing U.S. assistance programs and their impact on the lives of average Pakistanis. Implementing more U.S. assistance programs that focus on economic development and promoting human rights and democracy will demonstrate that the U.S. is committed to the success of Pakistan as a stable and prosperous country and help to deflate the extremists' arguments that Washing-

17. Terror Free Tomorrow, "Dramatic Change of Public Opinion in the Muslim World: Results from a New Poll in Pakistan," November 2005, p. 1, at [www.terrorfreetomorrow.org/upimages/tft/Pakistan%20Poll%20Report--updated.pdf](http://www.terrorfreetomorrow.org/upimages/tft/Pakistan%20Poll%20Report--updated.pdf) (October 18, 2006).

18. U.S. Agency for International Development, "Pakistan," in *Congressional Budget Justification, Fiscal Year 2007*, at [www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2007/ane/pk.html](http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2007/ane/pk.html) (October 18, 2006).



ton is interested only in exploiting Pakistan for its own purposes.

- **Provide a consistent message regarding denying safe haven to all terrorists**, regardless of whether they attack coalition forces in Afghanistan or innocent civilians in India or elsewhere. Washington should privately acknowledge the links between the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and Pakistan-based groups that target India and should convey U.S. expectations that Islamabad develop an equally uncompromising policy toward all three groups. This means that Pakistan must shut down training facilities associated with international terrorist incidents, including institutions run by the Lashkar-e-Tayyiba in Muridke and the Jaish-e-Mohammed in Bahawalpur. Washington should emphasize the dangers of Islamabad's maintaining a permissive attitude toward groups that commit terrorism and remind Pakistani officials that U.S. laws require sanctions against states that support terrorist groups.
- **Develop a more proactive U.S. policy to support the restoration of democracy.** Washington should convey a consistent public message that calls for free, fair, and transparent elections in 2007 and emphasizes the importance of democracy as a way to lessen the influence of extremist forces. The U.S. should also discourage further changes in the election rules or other government manipulations of the electoral process. The full participation of the Pakistan People's Party and the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), the two main secular democratic parties, in the 2007 elections would provide more political choices to the Pakistani voter and instill greater confidence in the democratic process. Despite legislation that generally prohibits providing U.S. assistance to any government put in place by a military coup, U.S. assistance to Pakistan is permitted under a waiver to this law. The annual recertification of this waiver should be tied to free and fair elections in 2007 and a return to civilian rule.
- **Highlight the F-16 sale and how it demonstrates American support for Pakistan's long-term security in the region.** The recent announcement of the resumption of U.S. F-16 sales to Pakistan passed without much fanfare, even though Pakistani officials had repeatedly told U.S. officials over the past several years that releasing the F-16s was crucial to building confidence in Pakistan about the U.S. commitment to the relationship. A senior U.S. official should deliver a major speech on the U.S. interest in Pakistan's long-term security and describe how the F-16 sale fits into this context. Pakistan's reluctance to crack down on the Taliban and Kashmiri militant groups is driven largely by Islamabad's perception that it needs an insurance policy vis-à-vis Afghanistan and India. The U.S. should search for ways to demonstrate that Washington wants a long-lasting and broad-based relationship with Islamabad and will remain committed to a secure and stable Pakistan, thereby enhancing Islamabad's perceptions of its own security in the region.
- **Maintain and fortify U.S. diplomatic efforts to facilitate the building of peace between India and Pakistan.** New Delhi's allegations that a Pakistan-based terrorist group and Pakistan's intelligence agency were involved in the Mumbai bomb blasts could derail Indo-Pakistani bilateral talks unless Pakistan takes concrete steps to crack down on domestic terrorist groups. While Washington should encourage such a crackdown, it will also need to acknowledge Pakistan's interest in seeing substantive movement on India-Pakistan talks on Kashmir. In this context, Washington should encourage New Delhi to take additional confidence-building measures on Kashmir and to involve the Kashmiris in a peace process that addresses human rights concerns and political grievances.
- **Institute regular trilateral meetings with senior U.S., Pakistani, and Afghan officials**, such as the Bush-Musharraf-Karzai meeting held in late September. The U.S. needs to take the lead in mediating differences between Kabul and Islamabad and injecting ideas into the discussions to help to overcome their mutual mistrust. The U.S. should support the idea of establishing tribal jirgas on both sides of the border as a way to build confidence

between the two governments. Washington should also strongly discourage further mudslinging between Kabul and Islamabad of the sort that occurred in mid-September. Clearly, Pakistan has a role to play in achieving a stable and prosperous Afghanistan. Washington needs to convey to Islamabad both the priority that it places on ensuring stability in Afghanistan and that the U.S. will remain committed to this goal over the long term.

- **Encourage economic integration among Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India** so that each has a vested interest in overall stability in the region. Washington should vigorously pursue trade, development, and investment initiatives that mutually benefit all three countries. The Bush Administration and the next U.S. Congress should fast-track legislation implementing ROZs along the Afghan–Pakistan border. The U.S. should also actively encourage trade between Pakistan and India and consider initiatives that would bring Indians and Pakistanis together in cooperative efforts to reconstruct and rehabilitate Afghanistan. Greater economic interdependence and integration among the three countries will contribute to stability in the region as each country begins to view good relations with its neighbors as benefiting its own economy. Implementing the South Asia Free Trade Area (SAFTA) would further this process.
- **Establish an interagency working group on Pakistan** that meets regularly to assess the current status of aid programs, counterterrorism operations, democratic development, and Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan and India. The

working group should be led by the State Department and be tasked with developing a more integrated U.S. policy toward Pakistan. It is becoming increasingly clear that Pakistan is at the center of the international fight against terrorism, and the U.S. needs a stronger interagency process to develop its Pakistan policy. In the past, the different U.S. agencies that deal with Pakistan have often argued over issues related to the extent of Pakistani counterterrorism cooperation. The arguments have developed between those who have a vested interest in continuing to receive the Pakistani cooperation that is forthcoming and those who see an urgent need for greater cooperation. The bureaucratic infighting has often polarized the two camps of opinion and stifled the development of a carefully crafted approach toward achieving U.S. counterterrorism goals in the region.

## Conclusion

Stability in Afghanistan and in South Asia more generally is closely linked to the policies that Islamabad pursues over the next few years, including actions that limit the Taliban's ability to operate on Pakistani soil, peace efforts with neighboring India, exploration of trade and investment opportunities in the region, and a return to democratic politics. The U.S. needs to pursue these objectives with equal vigor to help Pakistan address the roots of violent extremism and begin to contribute to greater stability and peace in the region and beyond.

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