



MARCH 2011

REPORT

ISPU

NO SHORTCUTS:

U.S. Policy and the Challenge of Stabilizing Pakistan

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Institute for Social Policy and Understanding



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Acknowledgements

This report benefitted from outside review and expertise. The author especially thanks Ayesha Jalal, Shuja Nawaz, Shahid Yusuf, Moeed Yusuf, Andrew Exum, Merium Khan, Wajiha Ahmed, and Jeff Collman for reading drafts and offering useful comments. The author also thanks Siwar Bizri, Shireen Zaman, Farid Senzai and the staff at ISPU for their publishing support. All the opinions contained in this report are the author’s. They do not reflect the judgments of any other individual, organization, government, or institution.

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Introduction

The stability of Pakistan, a nuclear-armed state in a troubled region, presents a formidable challenge for the United States. Pakistan-based militant groups undermine the country's security, help fuel the insurgency in Afghanistan, and increasingly endanger the American homeland. By one estimate, a majority of all "serious" terrorist plots against the West since 2004 have been linked to al-Qaeda or related entities inside Pakistan.¹

Despite these threats, Pakistan's fractious politics has impeded the development of a systematic counterterrorism strategy. Constant tension between the military and civilian poles of power, and among the civilians themselves, has deflected attention away from militancy. The views of the Pakistani public present additional complications: it is against extremism but ambivalent about military operations, for democracy but harshly critical of civilian rule.

Much recent discussion in Washington has focused on how to induce or compel Islamabad to expand military operations against militant havens in Pakistan's tribal areas. This emphasis is understandable, but it is important not to neglect other critical factors relevant to the country's stability. There are two intertwined dimensions of Pakistan's current struggle for survival: the military war against militancy and the political struggle for democracy. Focusing on one aspect at the expense of the other is to strive for short-term tactical advantage at the potential cost of long-term strategic failure.

This report identifies the key trends in Pakistan's stability over the last two years, and evaluates their implications for U.S. policy. In recent years, critical shifts have occurred: in 2008 a civilian government was democratically restored to power after almost a decade of dictatorship, and in 2009 the Pakistani army began significant military operations against militants. Major shifts in U.S. policy also occurred concurrently: in March 2009 the Obama administration announced a new integrated strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, one that emphasized the importance of winning the war against extremism in Pakistan.

It is now possible to assess how these changed conditions have affected Pakistan and what insights they suggest for future policy. Pakistan has made important progress against militancy since 2009, but it is still ambivalent about fully confronting all jihadist groups. Thus far, internal political developments have been primarily responsible for shifting the country toward a more robust anti-militant posture, although the United States has played a key enabling role through

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financial assistance and diplomatic engagement. At the same time, however, it has become increasingly clear that the United States is constrained in its ability to affect transformative change in the Pakistani state's behavior.

The report is divided into five parts: Part I outlines the historic roots of Pakistan's instability, Part II explores the military war against the insurgency since 2009, Part III assesses the ongoing competition between the civilian government and the military regime, and Part IV evaluates the unique policy challenges that Pakistan poses to the United States.

Part V concludes the report by arguing that the United States should have a long-term strategy to ameliorate the underlying conditions that have fostered Pakistan-based militancy. In particular, it should seek to stabilize Pakistan's democracy, encourage more effective counterinsurgency efforts, reduce Indian-Pakistani tensions, and bring in regional stakeholders. In the meantime, the United States should expect progress to be slow and incremental, rather than conclusive.

Part I: The Roots of Pakistan's Instability

Terrorism emanating from Pakistani territory stems directly from the fundamental imbalance and insecurity of its political system. Two factors stand out in particular: the army's support for jihadist groups in order to redress Pakistan's regional weakness and the army's quest for domestic political dominance vis-à-vis weak civilian institutions.

From its inception, the Pakistani state has been haunted by a chronic sense of ideological insecurity that has fueled violent conflict.² Ethnic separatist movements of varying intensity have always existed in the major provinces. In 1971, a significant portion of the country's territory was lost when Bangladesh became independent after a violent struggle with the Pakistani army. The Pashtun-dominated northwestern regions have an irredentist inclination toward Afghanistan's Pashtun population. Internal weakness is also exacerbated by a volatile regional environment. The state was born out of a bloody partition from India, with which it has fought three wars. Given the latter's conventional military superiority and territorial and economic size, India has been the subject of Pakistan's overwhelming strategic attention for the last sixty years.

The second major fact that has defined Pakistani history is the lopsided contest for power between the army and civilian institutions.³ The former has always dominated the government, ruling directly for more than half of the country's short existence; exerts a decisive influence even when not formally leading the government; and views itself as an institution of meritocratic egalitarianism that recruits from Pakistan's best and brightest. In contrast, it has only contempt for the inefficiency and corruption of civilian political parties, which are mostly based on feudal and family-based networks. The army enjoys an unchallenged monopoly over the making of national security and foreign policy.

The political ascendance of the right-wing Islamist general Muhammad Zia ul Haq in the 1980s transformed Pakistani society. In a bid to transcend ethnic and provincial divisions and bolster the state's legitimacy by appealing to the population's Islamic sympathies, he began an unprecedented program to Islamize the state and society. In this national narrative the army became the defender not just of Pakistan's boundaries but also of Islam as well, thus leaving no space for secular civilian parties in mainstream political life.

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The long-term impact of this strategy was most important in the country's northwestern regions. The Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan (FATA), which are not integrated into the country's political and legal order, are governed by draconian regulations dating back to British rule. As a result, the region's overwhelmingly Pashtun population has traditionally had an adversarial relationship with the state. Rather than trying to address discontent through better governance, the army made a strategic decision to co-opt Pashtun restlessness through radical ideology, the result of which is the contemporary Islamization of Pashtun nationalism.⁴

The breakout of the jihad against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan completed the vicious circle as Pakistan indoctrinated non-state actors with radical ideology and provided the necessary funds, military training, and logistical support. Saudi Arabia played a vital role in setting up the transnational networks of money, ideology, and people that fed the jihad.⁵ The army's support for militant groups abroad dovetailed neatly with the state's domestic drive toward right-wing Islamist ideology.

After the Soviet withdrawal, Pakistan helped the Taliban prevail against competing jihadist factions. Support for the Afghan Taliban embodied the army's strategic logic: an Afghanistan ruled by a Taliban dependent on Pakistani patronage would quell separatist Pashtun sentiment at home, be impervious to Indian influence, prevent Pakistan from being encircled by hostile forces on its western borders, and grant it "strategic depth" in the event of a military conflict with India.

After September 11 and the launch of the second international war in Afghanistan, Pakistan could not openly support the Taliban. Under American pressure, military dictator General Pervez Musharraf ordered military operations against terrorist sanctuaries in the border regions. Despite the ensuing anti-state militant backlash, however, the army often reached "peace deals" with the extremists. This appeasement strategy granted a measure of local political legitimacy to the insurgents that previously had been lacking.⁶ At the same time, Musharraf's regime continued to covertly support the Afghan Taliban while publicly denying any links, indicating that the army's fundamental strategic calculus in Afghanistan remained unchanged.⁷

In the meantime, al-Qaeda members relocated from Afghanistan to Pakistan's tribal areas. Pakistan garnered useful intelligence on the organization and helped kill or capture many of

its top leaders. Yet the army's avoidance of military engagement with the Taliban indirectly strengthened al-Qaeda by creating more freedom of operation in the tribal areas. After 2001, al-Qaeda training camps in Pakistan's border regions were linked to several successful or attempted attacks on the West, including on New York and London.

Like previous periods of authoritarian rule, Musharraf's nine-year tenure significantly undermined the capacity of civilian institutions. Political leaders were marginalized as Musharraf set political parties against each other and barred mainstream politicians from full participation in electoral politics. These policies significantly enhanced the power of right-wing Islamist parties sympathetic to the Taliban, which obtained unprecedented electoral victories in the 2002 elections. The absence of civilian control at the national and provincial levels meant that civil service bureaucracies atrophied. Weak governance empowered hard-line Islamist organizations and jihadist groups to further entrench their presence.⁸ The tribal areas and the NWFP suffered the most from jihadist encroachment.

Equally damaging, Musharraf's strategy for staying in power and strengthening the army at the expense of civilians created an enduring distrust of anti-militant efforts inside Pakistan. By strengthening hard-line Islamist organizations and undercutting civilian parties, he directly enhanced the power of pro-jihadist arguments in Pakistani society. As a result, even though Pakistanis had acknowledged by 2007 that militancy was a problem (large majorities perceived a wide range of militant groups to be a threat to Pakistan), substantial majorities were strongly opposed to military operations during Musharraf's reign.⁹

This history suggests that there are two key aspects of Pakistan's struggle against extremism. On the one hand, it is critical that the state act against all militant groups based on its territory. Without sustained counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations, extremist organizations will continue to destabilize the state, undermine coalition operations in Afghanistan, and pose a threat to the United States and its allies.

At the same time, democracy must be consolidated inside Pakistan if terrorism is to be defeated. There are two reasons for this. Despite their considerable flaws, Pakistan's political leaders are more likely to develop solutions that ameliorate the underlying reasons for militancy.

Militant networks have entered the vacuum created by the absence of strong, representative governance. To counter them, Pakistan's leaders must institutionalize the norms of democratic contestation, extend the rule of law nation-wide, distribute political power between the federal government and the provinces fairly, and address the concerns of the country's ethnically variegated population. For its part, the army continues to have a strong interest in emasculating civilian institutions in order to preserve its own role as the state's dominant actor. Even if were to recognize that militancy can be defeated only through better governance, the army is not configured to establish strong governing institutions.

Second, if the army remains the only influential actor in formulating national security policy, its regional threat perceptions will compel it to pursue an agenda that exacerbates militancy. Broadening national security decision-making to include elected representatives is more likely to yield a balanced approach with respect to the state's relationship with non-state actors and regional rivals. To be sure, a civilian-led Pakistan does not guarantee that the state will adopt a completely different approach toward militancy. In the past, civilian leaders have often made political deals with such militant groups as Sipah-e-Sahaba-e-Pakistan (SSP).¹⁰ But overall, civilians have far less to gain from permitting militancy to flourish than the military. Only political leaders working in the context of robust political institutions can bring in diverse stakeholders and develop the long-term counterterrorism consensus necessary to overcome jihadism.

Since democracy returned to Pakistan in 2008, the state has engaged in a series of major military offensives against militants. The next section examines this shift in Pakistan's behavior toward militancy and its underlying reasons and limits.

Part II: Pakistan's War against Militancy

During Musharraf's tenure, jihadist control of Pakistani territory steadily increased. But Pakistan's most significant concession occurred in February 2009, after his departure: the Swat Valley ceasefire ceded control over almost one-third of a major Pakistani province that, unlike the tribal areas, was fully integrated into the federal system. This official abdication did not satiate the militants' appetite for more territory, and by April they were in Buner, sixty miles from Islamabad.

A Shift in Pakistan's Approach to Militancy

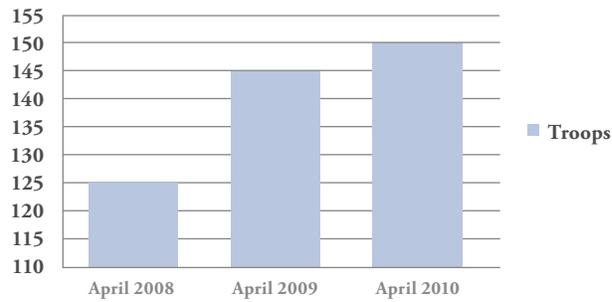
Starting in mid-2009, the army began a series of full-scale military offensives against anti-government militant groups. These operations represented a significant shift in the posture of the state and the broader society against terrorism. In particular, Operation Rah-e-Nijat, launched on 17 October 2009 against Beitullah Mehsud and his allies in the tribal agency of South Waziristan, was a defining turning point. The scope and intensity of the military onslaught on insurgent sanctuaries from that point onward was unprecedented, as it featured an aerial bombardment campaign working in concert with ground troops.

Perhaps most importantly, though, the military publicly staked its prestige on a decisive encounter with the Taliban insurgency. Previously, the army had downplayed its counterterrorism efforts to domestic audiences; this time it emphasized the operations' significance and encouraged widespread (if carefully controlled) media coverage. Commanding generals gave detailed briefings, and a larger network of retired military and intelligence personnel provided constant commentary on Pakistan's private television networks. This protracted public relations campaign played a significant role in rallying the population against the militants.

Rah-e-Nijat was formally concluded in mid-December 2009, although fighting has continued in South Waziristan. Since then, more than 140,000 troops have been fighting insurgents in the tribal agencies of Bajaur, Orakzai, Khyber, Mohmand, and the Swat Valley region in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province. According to the army, over 2,600 soldiers have been killed in those and other counterterrorism operations since 2001.¹¹ In a notable development, Pakistan moved more than 100,000 troops from its eastern border with India over the course of these operations. A Pentagon assessment concluded that this "thinning of the lines" against India suggested that Islamabad had accepted the importance of countering the domestic insurgency, even if

The Obama administration played a key role in helping Pakistan extend the fight against extremism into South Waziristan.

Pakistani Troops Deployed to the Northwest Frontier Province and Tribal Areas (in thousands)



Data from "The States of War," The New York Times (May 2010)

this acknowledgement did not extend to insurgent groups fighting in Afghanistan.¹²

The military offensives to date have met with some success: they have disrupted Taliban command, control, and logistics in key areas; secured vital lines of communication; cleared several villages of Taliban control; and recovered significant weapons caches.¹³ Ultimately, however, these gains remain tentative at best. High-ranking Taliban leaders have largely evaded being killed or arrested by the security forces, and the military has found it difficult to exercise control over territory seized from the militants. For example, soon after the army declared victory in the tribal agency of Orakzai in October 2010, six soldiers were killed in a Taliban attack and sixty-five men were flogged for alleged drug dealing.¹⁴ The fragile security situation has prevented the repatriation of refugees, who are reluctant to trust the army's assurances of security. In many regions, the Taliban have warned villagers through pamphlets and other propaganda not to return.

Overall, while Pakistan's counterinsurgency offensives since mid-2009 reflect a positive and substantial shift in the state's anti-terrorism intentions, its ability to exercise effective control over recaptured territory remains questionable.

The Reasons for Pakistan's Shift

Pakistan's decision to launch full-scale operations in mid-2009 was primarily driven by internal political developments, although the United States played an important enabling role. Three main factors explain this shift in behavior.

First, there was a significant change in the state's assessment of the threat, based on the fact that appeasing the various militant factions had only emboldened them. As the Taliban spread out of the distant tribal areas and encroached upon major urban centers, the state could no longer ignore the threat that they posed. Militants were repeatedly attacking key institutions of the military-intelligence complex; for example, they bombed the Inter-Services Intelligence's (ISI) Lahore offices in May 2009 and overran the army headquarters in Rawalpindi in October 2009.¹⁵ This systematic escalation of targeting military and intelligence leaders convinced the Pakistani leadership that some militant networks could no longer be controlled.

Second, General Musharraf's departure from the political scene helped mobilize sentiment in favor of military operations. As grassroots opposition to Musharraf rose, Pakistanis dismissed his anti-terrorism pronouncements as a political ploy designed to deflect attention away from his unpopular rule; public opposition to Musharraf gradually became synonymous with opposition to the counterinsurgency. The hard-line Islamist parties, which had benefitted from his sidelining of mainstream parties and were among his main political allies, also stoked public opposition to military operations. After the return of democracy in 2008, however, conservative Islamist factions were voted out. In 2009, the country's top political and military leaders came together to endorse military operations, deeming them "imperative" to eliminating extremism and terrorism in the country.¹⁶

Third, the peaceful resolution of a key dispute between civilian leaders allowed for a greater focus on the insurgency. Since assuming power, President Asif Zardari from the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) had refused to reinstate Supreme Court Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry, whose dismissal by Musharraf in 2007 had sparked widespread protests. The main opposition political party, the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), sided with the judiciary. Both political parties had a strong interest in influencing the Supreme Court because of the court's role in determining which candidates could stand for political office. When a lawyer's march began on 12 March 2009, Zardari asked Army Chief General Ashfaq Kayani to intervene. The crisis could have resulted in the fall of the civilian government; instead, the major players negotiated Chaudhry's reinstatement. This settlement removed a serious source of domestic tension and opened up political space to go after the Taliban.

The Obama administration played a key role in helping Pakistan extend the fight against extremism into South Waziristan. While U.S. financial assistance was an important factor in strengthening the state's capacity to fight, Washington's central contribution has been to prevent Pakistani leaders from making catastrophic mistakes that could upend the political system. Sustained diplomatic engagement at pivotal moments has increased the stability of the country's volatile politics and allowed its leaders to focus their attention and resources on extremism. For example U.S. diplomats, including Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and the late Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke, encouraged Pakistani leaders to reach a compromise over the judicial crisis.¹⁷

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The Limits of Pakistan's Transition

Pakistani officials, who distinguish between insurgent groups targeting the Pakistani state and other militant organizations, have launched a military struggle only against the first group. Of particular relevance to the United States, the Pakistani army has not acted against such major insurgent factions as the Haqqani Network and the Afghan Taliban, both of which are fighting coalition forces in Afghanistan.

Pakistani officials claim that their inaction stems from the need to prioritize limited resources and that they will move against all militant groups at some point in the future. The Pakistani Taliban's furious assault on the state has taken a heavy toll on Pakistan's armed forces. The state has been unable to secure its own institutions of power, and the army is genuinely concerned that taking on all jihadist groups in Pakistan at the same time could unleash an even larger tidal wave of violence.¹⁸

Yet Pakistan's avoidance of confrontation with Afghan insurgent groups goes beyond the constraints of limited resources. According to U.S. officials, at least some Pakistani intelligence officials are directly supporting the Afghan Taliban.¹⁹ In recent months, Pakistanis have openly touted their influence over the Afghan Taliban. Some Pakistani security officials have asserted that they helped capture Mullah Baradar, a top-ranking Taliban leader, because they wanted to terminate the secret peace talks between Baradar and the Karzai government, from which Islamabad had been excluded.²⁰ When Pakistan wants to act against militants, it can and does.

Indeed, it would have been surprising if Pakistan had completely abandoned its former policy of support for militancy in Afghanistan, given its historic concerns about Indian influence in the country. Since the Taliban fell in 2001, India's presence in Afghanistan has dramatically expanded: New Delhi has a close relationship with Kabul; India has a significant diplomatic and consular presence throughout the country, including along the Afghan-Pakistani border; and both the Indian government and its private sector have significant investments in the country's development. These realities have likely strengthened the conviction of Pakistan's strategic managers that their leverage over Afghan insurgent groups represents their best chance of influencing Afghanistan after a drawdown in U.S. forces.

A strategy based on supporting or tolerating some militant groups while attacking others is destined to fail. The militant networks sprawled across Pakistan are intrinsically connected, even if some differences in objectives and tactics distinguish them from each other. For example, the Pakistani Taliban have always supported the fight against foreign forces in Afghanistan by supplying fighters, training, and logistical aid. In February 2009, the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban formed the Council of United Mujahedeen. In a printed statement, the leaders vowed to put aside their disputes and focus on fighting the U.S.-led forces.²¹

The fact that some militant factions choose not to target the Pakistani state today does not mean that they will exercise the same restraint tomorrow. In fact, Pakistan's leverage over militant groups has substantially decreased over time. The insurgency's successes to date have demonstrated to the array of jihadist groups in Pakistan that the army can be confronted directly and substantial territory seized. Even if Taliban dominance in Afghanistan vitiates Indian influence, it nevertheless strengthens militancy inside Pakistan and, in effect, creates "reverse strategic depth."²²

Pakistan has not undertaken the fundamental strategic reorientation necessary to end the specter of militancy within its borders. Islamabad should be more concerned about the threat within, rather than being encircled by India. Some preliminary evidence indicates that the government and even the intelligence services are beginning to realize the need for change.²³ But there is a long way to go before a complete shift manifests itself.



Part III: The Politics of Democracy

The restoration of democracy in 2008 after almost ten years of dictatorship was viewed in Pakistan at the time as a historic moment. The promulgation of civilian rule was hastened by the so-called lawyer's movement, a series of large-scale civil society protests that mobilized public opinion, and helped overturn the existing political order. By the end of Musharraf's regime, Pakistanis overwhelmingly desired a return to democracy. The army's reputation, however, had collapsed. In the largely free and fair elections held in February 2008, Pakistanis overwhelmingly repudiated hard-line Islamist parties as well as the army's political allies and voted mainstream political parties into power.

By 2009, however, the public's faith in the civilian government had declined sharply, while the army's standing had risen dramatically. Since then, public opinion about the army has been far more positive relative to the civilian government. Pakistanis do not want the return of military rule—at least not yet—but their confidence in the ability of the democratic political process to produce solutions to their problems has considerably diminished.

Decline in Civilian Legitimacy

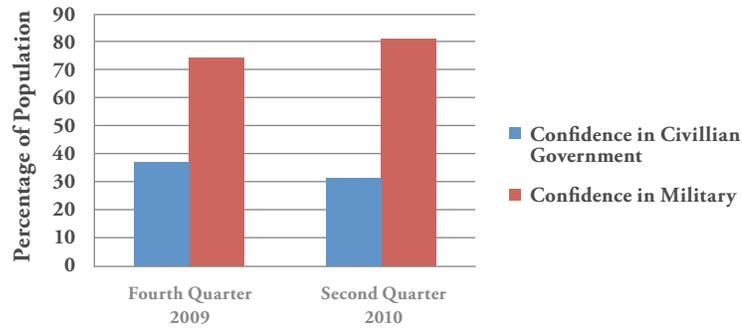
There are several reasons for Pakistani disenchantment with the civilian government. For one thing, Pakistan's civilian leaders function in a political environment where the rules of democratic contestation remain unsettled. This encourages leaders to angle for short-term political advantage rather than conduct the business of government. A vigorous if unruly twenty-four-hour news media helps exacerbate political controversy. Most Pakistanis who follow the country's politics inevitably lose faith in the competence of their political leaders.

Economic weakness has further undermined public confidence with inflation consistently high and economic growth projected to be an anemic 2.5% for the next fiscal year. Despite billions of dollars in foreign aid, there has been no discernible improvement in the lives of ordinary Pakistanis. A widespread perception that the current regime is strikingly corrupt has sharpened the edge of popular anger.

Islamabad's inability to deliver basic law and order has also cost it dearly. Over the last year, militants have ratcheted up their attacks on Pakistani civilians in heavily populated areas around the country. The law enforcement agencies' failure to protect the population from such

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Pakistani Confidence in Government Institutions



Data from The Wall Street Journal and the Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) Polling

violence has led to a popular backlash against the civilian government. The federal government and the provinces have sought to blame the other party for such security failures, which has further undermined confidence in the government's credibility.²⁴

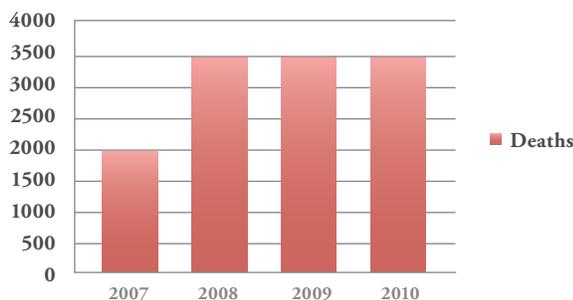
Although these reasons help explain the overwhelming lack of confidence in political leaders, they do not explain why the army is viewed so favorably. While there is no denying that Pakistan's political leaders have consistently displayed glaring deficiencies, a concomitant listing of the army's failures would read far worse. Corruption is an undeniably serious problem, yet there is even less transparency and accountability when it comes to how the army utilizes its financial resources. In fact, its unsupervised budget serves as the fulcrum for a giant patronage system that extracts resources from the state, awards preferential treatment to companies and industries associated with the military, and guarantees generals a lifetime of lavish living.²⁵

Similarly, civilian leaders have failed to mobilize state resources to protect the population from terrorism. But the security problem itself is largely the result of the army's actions over the last two decades. While seeking strategic depth in Afghanistan, the state is now desperately struggling to regain control over its own northwestern territories. Pakistan's regional influence has actually shrunk, and the country serves as the staging ground for terrorist groups plotting against the West. As inept as the political leaders may be, the army has done far more to undermine Pakistan's security and prosperity.

Pakistanis rate soldiers far more highly than civilians because the generals tend to be more proficient at politics than the professional politicians. The military usually succeeds in portraying its parochial institutional interests as being synonymous with the nation's interests and prestige. Its fractious civilian leaders, in contrast, have failed to generate a compelling narrative of national purpose that is detached from the army's narrow vision. This fact has constantly stymied attempts to advance democracy internally and promote peace regionally.

In the last two years, the army's strategic deftness was most prominently displayed in the Pakistani controversy over the United States' Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009, known in Pakistan as the Kerry Lugar Bill. Explicitly intended to strengthen Pakistan's civilian regime and promote democratic oversight over the military, its provisions tripled financial

Civilian Deaths from Militant Attacks



Data from "States of Conflict," The New York Times (December 2010)

assistance to civilian institutions and emphasized that the military should not interfere in the civilian political process. Washington hoped that this legislation would be perceived as proof that the United States supported democracy and was acting in Pakistan's long-term interests. The military, however, perceived the bill as a direct assault on its power and immediately made its displeasure known to Islamabad. The civilian government, the main domestic advocate of a renewed partnership with the United States, was further isolated as opposition political parties all jumped on the anti-bill bandwagon in order to embarrass the government.

Generals, former intelligence officers, and scores of pundits whipped up public sentiment against the bill in the media. Although the Kerry Lugar Bill delivered many of the things that Pakistanis had long requested from the United States, its opponents' propaganda effectively portrayed it as an attempt to subvert the country's national sovereignty. As a result, the ensuing internal debate focused on how much the bill infringed on the country's national pride instead of how it might help consolidate democracy.

The army does not currently appear to be interested in overthrowing the civilian government—there are too many political problems and the Pakistani people remain wary of a return to dictatorship. But it is bent on maintaining its status as the country's dominant institution and will have few qualms about assuming direct power if and when it considers the time to be right. Under Kayani's leadership, the army has pursued a long-term strategy designed to strengthen the army's political position. Since assuming this post, Kayani has lowered the army's public profile and avoided overt displays of military power in civilian politics, except when core military interests are threatened or public sentiment can be managed to produce approval of its actions. This strategy has paid off in terms of public support for the military versus the politicians.

As a result, the civilian government's repeated attempts to assert its supremacy over the military and its subsidiary institutions have all floundered. This has remained true even when the army's public prestige has been weakest—for example, in the months immediately succeeding Musharraf's rule. In 2008, just a few months after he was compelled to leave office, the Prime Minister's office announced that the country's premier spy agency would be placed under the Ministry of Interior's supervision in order to emphasize the principle of civilian control. Fewer

than forty-eight hours later, however, the civilian government caved in the face of intense military resistance, stating that it was only seeking to “re-emphasize the ties between the interior ministry and the ISI in relation to the war on terror.”²⁶

Important Democratic Reforms

Despite severe challenges, since 2008 Pakistan’s civilian politicians have legislated significant pro-democracy reforms. These efforts have tried to create a consensus on the basic norms of democratic governance. In the long run, these reforms have the potential to resolve some festering political conflicts and increase the quality of civilian governance.

For example, the eighteenth amendment to Pakistan’s original 1973 constitution removed scores of anti-democratic provisions put in place by successive regimes, including the dictatorships of Zia ul Haq and Musharraf. Among other things, the provision shifted the power to legislate and govern from the president to the prime minister and the Parliament, and from the federal level to the provinces.²⁷ Similarly, the nineteenth amendment resolved lingering ambiguity over the distribution of authority between the executive and the judiciary on such issues as senior judicial appointments.²⁸

Pakistan’s flawed electoral system, often charged with credible allegations of rigging and fraud, has also undergone important reform. After conducting an extensive review of the electoral system, the Parliament approved unprecedented regulations that will help the country conduct free, fair, and transparent elections.²⁹ This is especially important for the 2013 general elections, the integrity of which is critical if Pakistan’s democratic experiment is to have any meaningful future. The prospect of domestically supervised and locally verified elections yielding relatively free and fair results is significantly greater today than it has ever been.

The process that has produced these reforms is just as important as their content. To date, the constitutional and electoral reforms have been characterized by deliberative and inclusive parliamentary procedures. A broad range of stakeholders, including business interests, tribal leaders, political parties, and mainstream Islamist organizations, have participated in the legislative discussions, a remarkable feat given the traditional tensions between Pakistan’s civilian politicians.³⁰

Of course, far more remains to be done before democracy is truly consolidated. The current reforms need to be fully implemented and further built upon. In order for the eighteenth amendment to take full effect, governance capacity at the provincial level has to be significantly bolstered. Most importantly, the government needs to pass a comprehensive set of reforms that integrate the tribal areas into the civilian political system, for keeping the region's Pashtun population isolated from mainstream national life only strengthens the militant forces in the northwestern regions. Without addressing the concerns of these citizens through representative government, the prospects for an end to the insurgency are slight.

Looking ahead, there are significant challenges to realizing a sustained program of democratic reform. Despite a string of legislative successes, relations between feuding political parties at the federal and provincial levels remain highly volatile. In January 2011, unpopular economic reforms deemed by Washington as critical to shoring up Pakistan's economy failed because key provincial coalition partners of the ruling PPP threatened to bring down the government.³¹ Continuing systemic reform in such a political context is extremely difficult to realize.

Long-term democratic reform is also difficult to sell to the public. Democratic achievements to date have not bolstered Pakistani confidence in civilian government. The private sector still harbors deep reservations about the politicians' ability to guarantee the stability that generates profits, and some prominent business leaders are already talking about the benefits of a return to military rule.³² It will take time before current reforms are implemented and have any discernible impact. In the meantime, the weak economy and worsening security situation will continue to define the public's opinion of the civilian government.



Part IV: Constraints on U.S. Policy

The United States has several strategic interests with respect to Pakistan. First, it seeks to degrade Pakistani sanctuaries that aid the insurgency inside Afghanistan and increase the threat posed by al-Qaeda and affiliated entities to the U.S. homeland. Second, it wants to prevent extremists from destabilizing the state or otherwise gaining access to its nuclear program and arsenal.

The Obama administration has sought to strategically engage the Pakistani leadership in order to shut down terrorist safe havens.³³ In furtherance of this goal, it has tried to overcome a legacy of mutual distrust and create an enduring bilateral partnership. Washington is strengthening the Pakistani armed forces' capacity to fight an effective counterinsurgency campaign, while acting directly against terrorists when Islamabad is unable or unwilling to do so; building relationships with Pakistan's civilian leaders; and enhancing Islamabad's governance capacity by providing economic assistance.

The United States is also directly counteracting threats to the U.S. homeland and to coalition forces in Afghanistan emanating from Pakistani soil. This has primarily taken the form of CIA-led drone attacks that rely heavily on intelligence provided by the ISI. While the exact results of these attacks are unknown to the public, U.S. officials have repeatedly stated that their use has significantly depleted al-Qaeda's senior leadership and material assets. Outside observers agree that since 2008, better U.S. and Pakistani intelligence cooperation against al-Qaeda targets has contributed to a deadly air campaign.³⁴

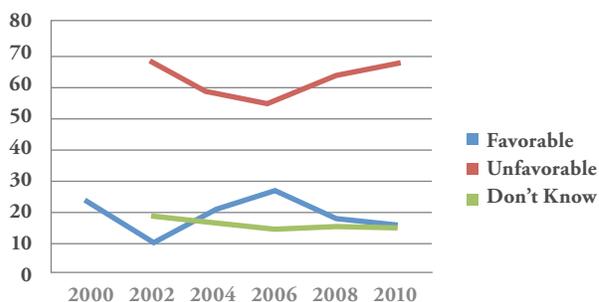
Overall, direct counterterrorism efforts in Pakistan have degraded the operational capabilities of al-Qaeda and other militant groups and increased intelligence cooperation between the two countries. There are clear limits, however, to Pakistan's acquiescence. The United States seeks to expand the CIA's footprint in the country so it can facilitate more aggressive Pakistani-led ground actions.³⁵ But Pakistan is resisting a greater American presence on its soil and has utilized such devices as denying visas to U.S. personnel to limit their entry into the country.

The Ideological Struggle

While the United States has acknowledged Pakistan's progress in the fight against militancy since 2009, U.S. officials have consistently expressed their frustration that Islamabad is not doing

The problem is the overwhelming sense in Pakistan that the United States' interests differ from its own, and that Washington's policies hurt Pakistani interests.

Pakistani Approval Ratings of the United States



Data from the Pew Research Center

enough. The most contentious issue is Islamabad's unwillingness to expand military operations in the tribal areas, a decision that a recent White House assessment concluded is "as much a political choice as it is a reflection of an under-resourced military prioritizing its targets."³⁶

The reluctance of at least some sections of the military and intelligence services to reconsider the use of jihadist groups obviously vitiates anti-militant efforts. But there is also an increasing unwillingness in the country as a whole to confront hard-line views. One reason for this is fear: the militants have systematically targeted government officials and local leaders who have been outspoken about the need to confront violent extremism, such as the late Punjab governor Salman Taseer. A second reason is that the terrorists are given ideological cover by right-wing Islamist organizations. Although Pakistanis have consistently voted against Islamist parties, the Islamists are organized and exercise an ideological influence on public debate that is way out of proportion to their actual representation in the population. Finally, in the two decades since General Zia's Islamist rule, Pakistani politics have shifted rightward significantly. Even some institutions affiliated with the Sufi Barelvi sect, touted within Pakistan and in Washington as a peaceful and moderate bulwark against extremist Islam, have been involved in mass rallies in support of the murderer of Salman Taseer.³⁷

In order to end terrorist threats emanating from its territory, Pakistan has to overcome this underlying ambivalence about confronting extremist ideology. Pakistan's military and political leaders need to have an honest national conversation about the causes and consequences of home-grown militancy and create a national anti-terrorism consensus. But the United States also needs to be aware of how perceptions of its policies impact the Pakistani debate about militancy.

The problem is the overwhelming sense in Pakistan that the United States' interests differ from its own, and that Washington's policies hurt Pakistani interests. This view is rooted in the difficult history of U.S.-Pakistan relations. Many Pakistanis believe that Washington "abandoned" Islamabad after the first Afghan jihad ended, leaving it to grapple with the ensuing insecurity. American sanctions in the 1990s were designed to punish the country for its covert nuclear program which increased anti-Americanism, especially among the army rank and file. The Bush administration's staunch support for Musharraf, long after he had lost all popular support, hardened these negative feelings. Finally, Pakistanis are troubled by the increasingly close U.S.-Indian relationship, which they see as harmful to the American-Pakistani partnership.

Today, Pakistan's historic fears are exacerbated by America's military presence in South Asia. Pakistan's unwillingness to act against all militant sanctuaries has increased the terrorist threat to U.S. forces in Afghanistan and to the American homeland. As a result, Washington has increasingly resorted to direct counterterrorism surveillance or operations on Pakistani soil. Constant media reports on drone strikes and the operation of foreign defense contractors and spy networks in Pakistan have generated ubiquitous conspiracy theories about U.S. intentions towards Pakistan.³⁸ Recent events have exacerbated Pakistani suspicions: the controversy over Raymond Davis, a CIA contractor currently accused of killing two men in Lahore, has been fodder for hard-line conservative and Taliban propaganda.³⁹

Pakistanis do not want to be ruled by the Taliban, but extremists have been extremely successful in exploiting the people's existing wariness of the United States. Influential voices in Pakistan argue that the war against terrorism is America's war, not Pakistan's struggle, and that the United States poses a direct threat to Pakistan. These arguments are inaccurate and denote a conspiratorial view of U.S. foreign policy; however, they are widely disseminated by the media and broadly accepted by vast segments of Pakistani society. Inevitably, they hamper the development of a firm anti-militant consensus.

Overcoming Pakistani Distrust through Carrots?

Since 2001, the United States has provided substantial financial assistance to Pakistan in an attempt to overcome these suspicions and induce Islamabad to act against militancy. Since 2009, the United States has significantly increased its economic aid to Pakistani civilian institutions. The Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2010 allocates \$7.5 billion for FY2010-FY2014: \$3.5 billion for "high impact, high-visibility" infrastructure programs, especially in the energy and agricultural sectors; \$2 billion for health, education, and humanitarian programs; and \$2 billion for building Pakistani government capacity by improving national and local governance as well as security and legal institutions.⁴⁰ After last summer's devastating floods, Washington diverted some of these development funds to humanitarian assistance.⁴¹ This financial assistance, which has buttressed the economy, is designed to show Pakistanis that the United States has a long-term interest in their country's security and prosperity.

While economic aid is important because it props up a fragile state, expectations about what such aid can accomplish should be low. Historically, the efficacy of U.S. foreign aid inflows into conflict-stricken regions has been ambiguous. Time is also a factor, for the Kerry Lugar Bill was only passed a little over a year ago. Given the bureaucratic constraints associated with financial aid outflows from Washington, not to say issues with transparency and capacity in Islamabad, it will be several years before ordinary Pakistanis see any discernible benefits from it. This limits the extent of potential improvements in Pakistan's governance capacity and public perceptions about the United States.

Equally importantly, many Pakistanis view foreign assistance as an entitlement rather than as an incentive, given the costs in blood and treasure incurred by the country. Foreign economic aid bolsters the government's capacity to fight; however, it neither increases Islamabad's underlying willingness to do so nor reduces its distrust of the United States.

Some experts have argued that the United States should explore game-changing strategic incentives that would engender a permanent shift in Pakistan's strategic mindset. Specifically, a "conditions-based" civil nuclear deal could radically transform the U.S.-Pakistani relationship.⁴² Pakistan has repeatedly sought U.S. aid for its civilian nuclear power program in a series of strategic dialogues held between the top officials of both countries.⁴³ Ever since the United States announced a civil nuclear deal with India in 2005, Pakistanis have believed that Washington has accepted India's nuclear program as legitimate while it repudiates their country's status as a nuclear-armed state. Therefore, it is argued that a civil nuclear deal could transform the two countries' relationship. A nuclear agreement would address a key strategic insecurity of Islamabad, undermine the dominant internal anti-American narrative, and enable the formation of a long-term anti-militant partnership.

The problem lies in the feasibility of Washington's ability to present such a deal to Pakistan. Developing a nuclear agreement with India took several years and had to overcome the concerns of a variety of domestic and international constituencies. The prospects of a nuclear deal with Pakistan gaining traction in Congress or international support are far lower. Pakistan's own history of nuclear proliferation, most prominently through the A. Q. Khan network, as well as concerns about the security of its existing nuclear assets, undermines the case for an expansive nuclear agreement.

Even though Islamabad has made significant advances since 2001 in protecting its nuclear program—it has established a Strategic Plans Division and is implementing far more rigorous export controls—these efforts are unlikely to easily overcome longstanding domestic and global reservations about accelerating the development of its nuclear program. This is especially true given the adverse sentiment in the U.S. Congress about Pakistan’s role in destabilizing Afghanistan. For a nuclear deal to be offered, the Obama administration would have to expend considerable time and political capital to obtain the necessary support from a wide range of stakeholders to voluntarily expand Pakistan’s nuclear infrastructure. Unless it is willing to do so, it is better not to raise, and then ultimately dash Pakistani hopes of obtaining a landmark nuclear agreement.

Transforming Pakistan’s Behavior through Sticks?

Another option is to increase the costs of recalcitrance. For example, Pakistan could be subjected to punitive measures for its insistence on its selective targeting of militant groups. Such “sticks,” some argue, could increase the likelihood of a course correction in the state’s behavior. On a scale from “least coercive” to “most coercive,” these options might include strong diplomatic censure, conditioning or curtailing military and civilian aid, economic sanctions, and even U.S. ground operations inside Pakistan.

One argument against applying coercive pressure is that the United States needs to manage competing interests. Not only does it want Pakistani attitudes toward militancy to change, but it also has a strong interest in the state’s survival. Even if the United States uses its leverage to try and force a change in Pakistan’s behavior—for example, through cutting off aid, isolating the country diplomatically, or ramping up direct counterterrorism operations—all of these actions will tend to weaken the state.

On the other hand, the likelihood of the state failing should not be overstated. Of course Pakistan is afflicted by numerous crises, among them a deep balance of payments problem and an inability to meet the most basic energy needs of its burgeoning population. But Pakistan is not Afghanistan: it has the world’s sixth largest population and fifth largest army. According to the government, foreign remittances from overseas migrants rose 17 percent to \$5.3 billion in the first six months of Fiscal Year 2011, money that is directly pumped into the economy.⁴⁴

The state is not nearly as strong as one that possesses nuclear weapons and is threatened by insurgency should be, but it is also not that weak. Applying punitive measures in this context will not necessarily lead to its collapse.

The real reservation with taking a harder line is the probable impact of such a policy on the development of a nation-wide anti-terrorism consensus. The United States may be able to force Pakistan to undertake short-term counterterrorism operations, but Washington should consider how its actions impact the state's commitment to fighting extremism over the long haul. Public pressure keeps the United States in the forefront of Pakistani debates about militancy. If Pakistanis believe that they are being forced to fight the Taliban on Washington's timetable or that the latter does not respect their country's sovereignty, they will be less inclined to fight extremism. The more Pakistanis refract their view of insurgency through the prism of their conflicted relationship with the United States, the more they become susceptible to right-wing propaganda and the less likely they are to support anti-militant efforts.

U.S. or coalition ground operations against Pakistan-based terrorist sanctuaries, for example, would have a sharply negative effect on the Pakistani debate about militancy. Absent a profound change in public perceptions about the United States, direct military operations will entrench Pakistani suspicions, weaken those who argue for a more robust approach against militancy, and ultimately drain away any support for counterinsurgency campaigns. Some experts argue that in such a situation Pakistani soldiers would feel compelled to engage in combat with international forces, even without approval from the army command.⁴⁵ The only scenario worse than a Pakistani state that attacks some jihadist groups while supporting others is a government that does not cooperate in the war on terror at all.

As a general rule, the United States should lower its public profile in an attempt to refute the popular misperception that it determines Pakistan's national destiny. If Pakistan must be penalized, coercive measures should be deployed as privately as possible so as to minimize the public fallout. Washington should also assess how its policies impact the distribution of political power between civilian and military institutions. Generally, applying public pressure redounds to the benefit of the army, which portrays the civilian government as subservient to the United States and itself as the only defender of the Pakistani nation. In reality, the army

desperately needs the assistance it receives from the United States; however, it tries to deflect attention away from this fact by making the civilian government's relationship with Washington a political issue. Punitive measures that the army is less likely to parlay into domestic political victories should be prioritized.

Employing large-scale economic sanctions will cause all Pakistanis to suffer and become even more anti-American. One way to avoid doing this, while at the same time still exerting pressure on Pakistan, is to narrowly target offending individuals, organizations, and institutions. For example, Pakistani military and intelligence officials often benefit from easy access to entering and exiting the United States. Individuals deemed to be supporting terrorism could be banned from procuring visas.⁴⁶ These are difficult policies to implement and require Congressional sanction, but the underlying principle should be to adopt targeted rather than indiscriminate measures.



Part V: Getting Pakistan to Do More: The Long Road Ahead

The United States lacks the credibility, access, and leverage to transform Pakistan's approach toward militancy overnight through game-changing carrots and sticks. Washington cannot persuade Pakistan's leaders to save their country unless they are committed to doing so themselves, and it is unlikely to be able to force a transformation in Pakistan's behavior without engendering potentially more destabilizing consequences.

Instead, Washington should try to subtly influence the underlying conditions that have fostered Pakistan-based militancy, through a strategy that is designed to be "enabling" rather than "transformative." The principal objective should be to strengthen Pakistan's counterterrorism and counterinsurgency capabilities while fostering a political environment inside the country that is amenable to a comprehensive, long-term anti-militant campaign.

This will primarily entail sustained and targeted diplomatic engagement on a variety of fronts, encompassing Pakistan's leaders, the country's regional rivals, and other key stakeholders who have an interest in its security and prosperity. By stabilizing Pakistani politics, encouraging good governance and population security, and reducing regional threat perceptions, Washington can help create more space inside Pakistan for the emergence of an enduring anti-militant consensus.

Stabilize Pakistan's Democracy

The most important thing the United States can do to help Pakistan commit to an unequivocally anti-militant campaign is to stabilize Pakistani politics. Conflict among the civilian political parties, as well as between civilian leaders and the military, distracts attention from fighting the militants. In particular, Washington should encourage the development of stable relationships among all of Pakistan's major institutions. The army has a key role to play in the country's national life, for despite its limitations and the active role it has played in creating the terrorism problem, it remains the only functioning institution that can control the country. Political leaders are also critical: if they do not respond to the population's democratic aspirations, then the insurgency will continue to metastasize beyond the northwestern regions. Newly resurgent civilian institutions such as the judiciary and the private television news media also enjoy an increasing, albeit ambiguous, influence.⁴⁷ They need to be guided toward the goal of strengthening, rather than undermining, democracy.

...Washington should subtly influence the underlying conditions that have fostered Pakistan-based militancy, through a strategy that is "enabling" rather than "transformative."

Of course Washington cannot completely change those military and political leaders who have been conditioned to act in authoritarian and corrupt ways. U.S. influence is further constrained by the fact that it does not want to be perceived as directing the course of events inside Pakistan. But the United States can prevent Pakistan's leaders from indulging their worst, anti-democratic inclinations primarily by engaging in carefully calibrated diplomatic interventions at strategic moments of opportunity. The United States should support and encourage Pakistani policies that are more likely to yield better governance, particularly the legislative passage of systemic democratic reform. Despite the civilian government's significant deficiencies and limited capacity, it has shown that it can develop mechanisms for effective representative governance. Washington should strongly urge the full implementation of all recently passed laws and encourage discussion on the reforms to come, especially with respect to FATA's integration.

Evidence over the last two years indicates that any public U.S. efforts to foster civilian control over the army will fail and even backfire, as they are domestically perceived as subverting Pakistan's national sovereignty. Instead, the United States should strengthen the capacity of civilian institutions to govern effectively, for better governance will increase civilian leverage over public opinion and permit politicians to expand their control over the army, if and when it overreaches.

Improve Indian-Pakistani Relations

A reduction in Indian-Pakistani hostilities will empower the civilian regime in Islamabad and lessen the state's incentive to use non-state actors to counter the Indian threat. The United States cannot resolve the complex range of issues that divide India and Pakistan, which include but are not limited to Kashmir, terrorism, and water disputes. An enduring settlement will ultimately hinge on each country's ability to overcome domestic right-wing voices and sell the benefits of an enduring peace. Washington can play a significant role in fostering a strategic environment that is more advantageous for pro-peace constituencies in both countries.

The United States should encourage the resumption of talks by urging Islamabad to do far more against jihadist groups that have targeted Indian civilians, such as those who have been implicated in the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai. It should also encourage New Delhi to

consider how escalating tensions with Islamabad retards, rather than strengthens, its capacity to act against jihadist groups. The normalization of relations with Pakistan is critical to India's ongoing rise to prominence, and it is not in India's interests to have its progress stymied by a weak state on its western border.

In addition, Washington should reinforce economic links between the two countries. Economic integration is an indirect method of creating more propitious conditions for peace, especially because it creates influential voices with an economic stake in the reduction of hostilities. Geographically contiguous economies benefit substantially from increased trade when transport and trade barriers are lowered through regional transit agreements.⁴⁸ The United States should directly supply technical expertise and assistance that both develops and integrates transportation infrastructure on both sides of the border.

Bring in Regional Stakeholders

Pakistan's distrust of the United States vitiates Washington's ability to persuade Islamabad to turn against all jihadist groups. Other countries, however, have more ideological influence inside Pakistan. The United States should work with these regional stakeholders, emphasize their critical role in stabilizing Pakistan, and generate specific ideas about how they can contribute to a prolonged anti-militant campaign by the state.

Two countries stand out in particular. First, Saudi Arabia has had a longstanding strategic relationship with Pakistan. Ever since the 1960s, Riyadh has provided more aid to Islamabad than to any country in the non-Arab world, in return for which Pakistan has supplied it with military expertise.⁴⁹ Saudi leaders have decades-long links to the Pakistani army, the intelligence services, major political leaders, and the conservative Sunni religious establishment. Finally, it has played a central role in the rise of militant Islam in Afghanistan and Pakistan since the 1980s. Any resolution of the terrorist threat from Pakistan is unlikely to occur without Riyadh's active participation.

The second country is China. Beijing's approval ratings inside Pakistan are as high as Washington's are low. Chinese development and construction projects are spread throughout

the country and include heavy investments in the transportation infrastructure. Beijing has also played a critical role in Pakistan's development of nuclear technology, including the recent inking of a deal on two new civil nuclear reactors. Most importantly, it has been successful in negotiating with Islamists inside Pakistan. Pakistan's main Islamist party, the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), has longstanding connections with the Taliban and other militant groups. In 2009, the JI signed a formal agreement with Beijing in which it promised not to become involved in the Muslim separatist movement in China's northern Xinjiang province.⁵⁰ The United States can learn from these tactics how to talk to Islamists and even encourage China to play a similar stabilizing role in the quest for stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Encourage Better Counterinsurgency

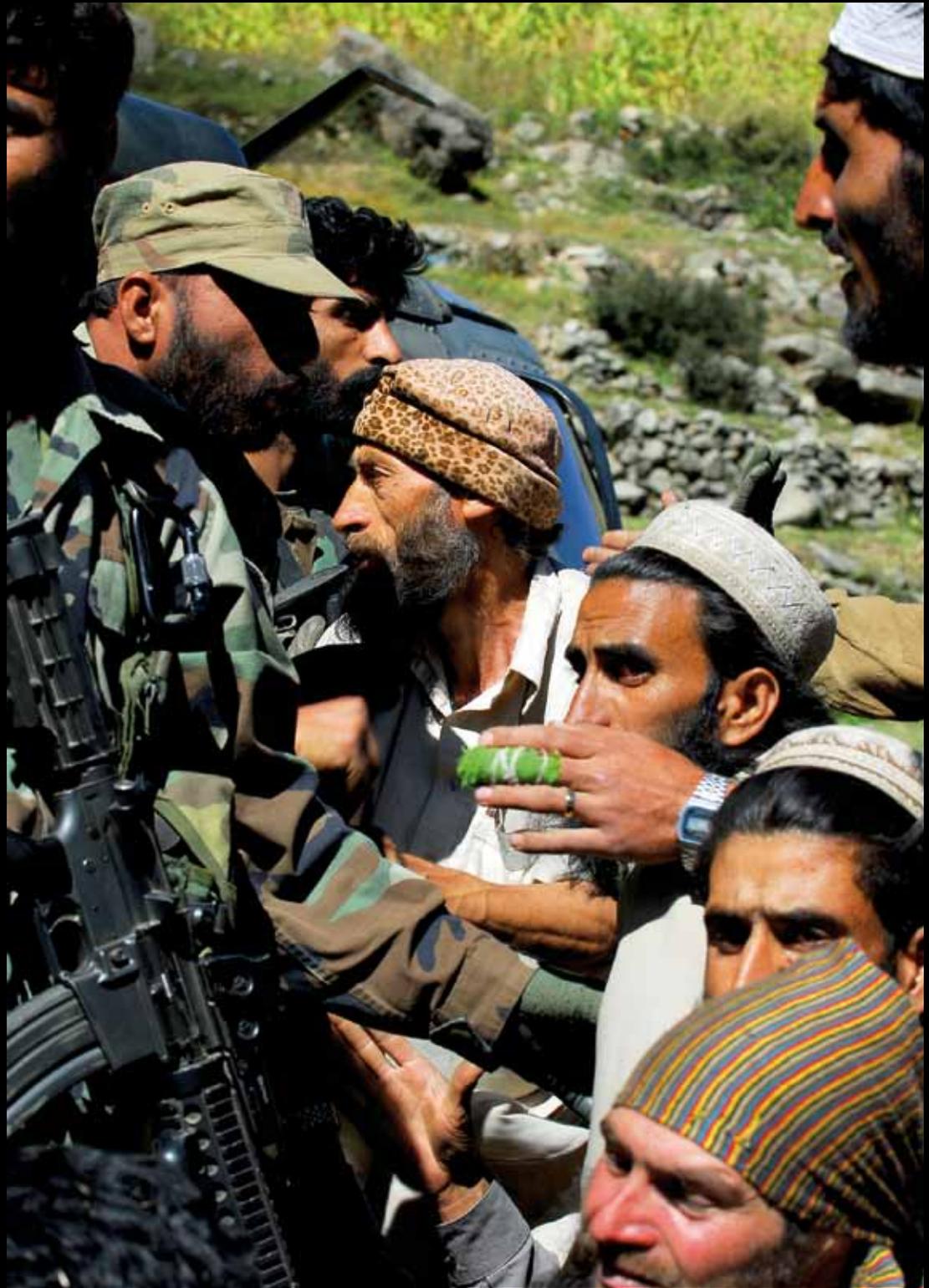
The Pakistani army should continue and expand its military operations against militant networks in the country's northwestern regions. But the manner in which it conducts its offensives is just as important as the initial commitment of troops to the battle. Military operations that kill scores of civilians and displace entire populations of towns and cities are unlikely to regain the people's trust and restore the state's writ. How Pakistani troops fight matters just as much as whom they fight.

The United States itself has come to this realization after years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Today, coalition forces in Afghanistan are implementing a counterinsurgency strategy that protects the population while simultaneously pursuing enemy fighters. The Pakistani army is beginning to move toward a similar approach. Previously, its combination of heavy air bombardment campaigns and sustained ground artillery and shelling alienated the local population. After the Swat Valley offensive ended in 2009, survivors spoke of feeling that that they were being attacked first by the Taliban and then by the Pakistani army.⁵¹

After acknowledging the deficiencies in its past approach, the army has significantly revamped its training to focus on irregular warfare and population security.⁵² Although it will take some time to internalize counterinsurgency best practices, the United States can help catalyze the spread of this awareness among Pakistani soldiers. In the past Washington has sent special operations trainers to train select army units in counterinsurgency; however, Pakistan's wariness

of an American military presence has limited the scale of such efforts. While continuing to press Pakistan to accept the military training that it clearly needs, the United States can also provide systems, practices, and procedures that the army command can use directly to train its soldiers. In addition, Washington can encourage more military-to-military training in the United States in order to reduce its footprint in Pakistan.

The United States should encourage the Pakistani army to utilize population-centric, rather than enemy-centric, military tactics. Pakistani army spokespersons are prone to describing a given operation's success or failure in terms of the numbers of enemy fighters killed. While this is good as far as it goes, Pakistan should be encouraged to define and report success in terms of population-centric metrics, such as the numbers of civilians killed and displaced. In recent months, the Obama administration has refused to train or equip several army units believed to have executed unarmed civilians.⁵³ This is a good first step, and Washington should keep an eye on the ongoing behavior of soldiers involved in military operations where civilians reside.



Conclusion

For Pakistan-based terrorism to be defeated, all its prominent national institutions—including the army, the intelligence services, the civilian government, major political parties, the judiciary, civil society, and other stakeholders—will have to generate an anti-terrorism consensus and then work together to implement it. Pakistan's major leaders need to agree on the fundamental rules of political contestation. Relatively stable relationships between different state organs will reduce the squandering of financial resources and attempts to undermine institutional competitors. In turn, this will create more political space for combating violent extremism in all its forms.

Democratic consolidation is also necessary if the militancy that exists inside Pakistan is to be weakened and, eventually, defeated. A strong civilian government can respond to its citizen's concrete aspirations by providing effective governance, the absence of which has catalyzed the spread of terrorism. Better civilian governance will increase the civilian leaders' legitimacy and make it easier for them to make the anti-militant case to their people.

The state's lingering strategic perception that non-state actors are useful to achieving regional objectives will also have to change. The more Pakistan feels vulnerable to India, whether in Afghanistan or its eastern border, the more it will focus on the threat posed by a large conventional enemy rather than the internal insurgency.

The United States should help create the internal political conditions that will reduce and ultimately eliminate Pakistan's ambivalence about combating militancy. But enforcing a wholesale strategic reorientation among Pakistan's leaders is unlikely. Pakistan's behavior will only change permanently when its military and political leaders realize that the costs of letting militancy fester through acts of omission and commission are simply unsustainable. Although the United States can increase the likelihood that Pakistan reaches this conclusion, which it is groping towards partially and hesitantly, it cannot force this result.

The state's lingering strategic perception that non-state actors are useful to achieving regional objectives will also have to change.

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