



TILAK

DEVASHER

PAKISTAN

'Devasher writes with empathy and his book is full of facts that cannot be ignored by Pakistanis or the rest of the world.' — Husain Haqqani

COURTING THE ABYSS

TERRORISM

IDEOLOGY

POPULATION

ECONOMY

IDENTITY

WATER

MADRASAS

EDUCATION

PARITY

PAKISTAN
Courting the Abyss

TILAK DEVASHER



HarperCollins *Publishers* India

To the memory of

my mother

Late Smt Kantaa Devasher,

my father

Late Air Vice Marshal C.G. Devasher PVSM, AVSM,

and my brother

Late Shri Vijay ('Duke') Devasher, IAS

'Press on... Regardless'

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Preface

MY fascination with Pakistan is not because I belong to a Partition family (though my wife's family does); it is not even because of being a Punjabi. My interest in Pakistan was first aroused when, as a child, I used to hear stories from my late father, an air force officer, about two Pakistan air force officers. In undivided India they had been his flight commanders in the Royal Indian Air Force. They and my father had fought in World War II together, flying Hurricanes and Spitfires over Burma and also after the war. Both these officers later went on to head the Pakistan Air Force. Though still in my teens, the Indo-Pak wars of 1965 and 1971 further heightened my interest in Pakistan. In college and university I studied the history of the freedom movement and the Partition of India. And I was hooked.

My curiosity grew at every twist and turn in Pakistan. The sophistication of Pakistani plays like *Dhoop Kinare* and *Tanhaiyaan* that two generations of Indians still rave about, the excellence of the Pakistani cricket teams and the brilliance of its squash players contrasted harshly with the trajectory of its political, economic and religious development. The difference between the democratic journey of India and the military dictatorships in Pakistan provoked questions as to why the two countries have developed so differently. The growth of intolerance and radicalization on the one hand and terrorism directed against India resulting in the deaths of hundreds of innocent Indian civilians on the other lent an ominous dimension to my questions. I was determined to understand what made Pakistan such a violent and inhospitable place, on the verge of being declared a terrorist state and the worst nuclear proliferator in the world. In short, why was Pakistan courting the abyss?

Two couplets by Pakistan's greatest poets, Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Habib Jalib, helped me narrow my quest. While the couplet from Faiz expressed anguish at the circumstances of the birth of Pakistan, Jalib's articulated what the rulers of Pakistan had done to the country. Combined, the two couplets expressed the ongoing tragedy of Pakistan.

Faiz: 'Subh-e-Azadi'/'Dawn of Freedom':

*Ye daagh daagh ujala, ye shab-guzida sehr
Woh intezaar tha jiska, ye woh sehr to nahin*

This tainted light, this night-bitten dawn
This is not the dawn we waited for

Jalib on the army crackdown in East Pakistan:

Mohabbat goliyon se bo rahe ho, Watan ka chehra khoon se dho rahe ho

Gumaan tumko ke raasta kat raha hei, Yaqeen mujhko ke manzil kho rahe ho.

You are sowing love through violence, smearing the face of the nation in blood;

You think your journey is being completed, I am certain you are losing your destiny.

Being a student of history, I was not satisfied with just skimming the surface, trying to understand Pakistan through current events and reporting. I wanted to dig deeper to know more about how Pakistan was created and the impact of those developments on the trajectory that Pakistan had adopted. I also wanted to understand what was behind the façade of a hostile neighbour, what were the real issues that plagued the country and its people. So much was being written on ‘exciting’ issues like the Pakistan Army, the nuclear programme, terrorism, and, of course, Indo-Pak relations, that scant attention seems to have been paid to what was happening inside the country. Seemingly ‘boring’ issues like identity, the situation in the provinces, water, education, economy, population, etc., seem to have been largely ignored, though they are critical to the survival and understanding of any country. I, therefore, decided to write a holistic book on Pakistan that would encompass the ‘exciting’ issues and the ‘boring’ ones, to analyse why Pakistan was hurtling towards the abyss.

This is a book about Pakistan. It is not about a comparison between India and Pakistan. In fact, I have tried to minimize comparisons with India as much as possible. It is equally not about Indo–Pak relations. There is already vast literature on the subject. Of course, no book on Pakistan is complete without India because Pakistan’s perception of India is central to its identity, its ethos, its world view and policies. Thus, there is a separate chapter on India and India does figure in various other chapters too. But, the book is essentially about Pakistan.



I would like to express my gratitude to a few people who in their own ways have helped me in the writing of this book.

To my wife Anjali for her patience in allowing me to spend hours, days and months in my ‘bat-cave’ (my study) reading, researching and writing this book instead of doing what normal civil servants do – take up a post-retirement job.

To my son for his wit and amazing sense of humour and my daughter-in-law for her courage and quiet strength in the face of life-changing adversity, both of whom helped me retain a sense of proportion.

To my daughter, for suggesting and digging up material that I was unable to locate, for being my staunchest critic as also a pillar of strength and with whom I had engaging discussions on several chapters of the book.

To Dr Ajai Sahni for encouraging me to write a book in the first place and for accessing some of the comparative indices.

To my editors Karthika V.K. and Antony Thomas at HarperCollins for all their effort in bringing out this book.

Despite the help, all the shortcoming and errors in this book are mine.

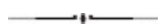
Introduction

THE contrast between the two flights could not have been sharper.

When Mohammad Ali Jinnah (henceforth Jinnah) boarded the viceroy's shining silver Dakota from Delhi to Karachi on 7 August 1947, he looked back towards the city and said: 'I suppose this is the last time I'll be looking at Delhi'.¹ As the plane was taxiing, Jinnah said enigmatically, 'that's the end of that'. He spoke only once on the four-hour flight to Karachi when he leaned over to his ADC, Flight Lieutenant Ata Rabbani, and offered him some newspapers and said, 'Would you like to read these?'² Jinnah received a tumultuous welcome in Karachi. In the words of the British high commissioner, 'Mr Jinnah found in the city of his birth an enthusiastic welcome. Tens of thousands of people thronged the airport, breaking through the police cordons; and hundreds of cars followed him to Government House...'³

A little over a year later, on 11 September 1948, Jinnah, weighing barely 70 pounds and suffering from consumption, compounded by cancer of the lungs, was carried on a stretcher aboard the governor general's Viking for the flight from Quetta to Karachi.⁴ He was in no position to read newspapers or talk. Despite his condition, however, he found the energy to return, from his stretcher, the salute given by the flight crew.⁵ There was no one to receive him at Mauripur airport (Karachi's military airport) barring his military secretary Colonel Geoffrey Knowles and an army ambulance, sans any nurse. The diplomatic corps had not been informed about his arrival, which was the norm whenever Jinnah landed in Karachi so that he was received in the approved official way.⁶ The ambulance would break down halfway to his residence and it took Col. Knowles two hours to fetch another, from the local Red Cross.⁷ Meanwhile, Jinnah was stranded on the road for two hours in an 'oppressive' ambulance that completely exhausted him. No one knew that that Jinnah was in the stranded ambulance. His pulse was weak and irregular.⁸ Jinnah was to die later that night. The tragic manner of his death was compounded by his last rites. A Twelver Shia, following his conversion from the Ismaili sect, Jinnah had to have two separate funerals – one according to the Sunni rituals in the open and the other before that according to Shia norms in his home.⁹

The poignancy and the depressing contrast between the two journeys symbolically captures the tragedy of Pakistan – from the blood-soaked yet enthusiastic creation in 1947 to the present-day exhaustion and gloom-and-doom scenarios. It is this journey from Faiz's tainted dawn to Jalib's tragic destiny that is the subject matter of this book.



The book aims to explain how this has happened and how Pakistan is courting the abyss. It traces Pakistan's development not only from 1947, when the country came into being, but also looks at the

foundations – the Pakistan movement; the impact that the British replacing the Mughals had on the Muslim psyche; and the role the colonial power played in crystallizing a separate Muslim identity. It looks at the internal and external dynamics of Pakistan to understand why it is careering towards the abyss. In that sense it is not a conventional book on Pakistan. It does not trace the history of Pakistan; neither does it detail developments chronologically. It is more in the nature of an interpretative study, looking at various elements of Pakistan's history and development to explain why Pakistan is such a persistently troubled state and why, without serious corrective actions, a tragic destiny looms.

On 7 August 1947, as Jinnah took off from Delhi could he have visualized that the country that he created would within twenty-four years be broken into two? Could he have visualized that the rump would come to be variously described as 'deeply troubled', 'in terminal decline', 'in crisis', 'failing', 'on the edge', 'on the brink', a state unable to provide minimum safety and law and order to its citizens, a state unable to survive without repeated external financial support, an insecure state looking for security primarily in narrow military terms, a hotbed of terrorism, both internal and external, a country rent asunder by sectarian killings, a nuclear proliferator?

Faced with today's Pakistan, the obvious question Jinnah would have asked is what went wrong. What happened to those hopes and aspirations, that 'jazba' and 'josh' of the people at the birth of a new country? In short, how did Pakistan manage to arrive at its present precarious condition? If, indeed, he could have anticipated the Pakistan that exists today, would he have striven so relentlessly to create it in the first place?

Jinnah would not be the only one seeking answers to such questions. Most Pakistanis are, a lot of Indians are, as are many concerned people across the world. The answers are necessary because Pakistan is a very important country. Geographically, it spans South Asia and Central Asia, lies at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, and provides land access to China. This has been a focal yet troublesome region that over the centuries has attracted great powers. Bordering Afghanistan, this region was the pivot of the Great Game between Britain and Russia. After its creation, Pakistan has been a front-line state in the Western coalition against the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1980s and in the war on terror in the first decade of the new century. Demographically, it is the sixth-largest country in the world. Militarily, it has the eighth-largest standing army with reportedly the fastest-growing nuclear arsenal in the world. It is also the epicentre of global terror, a part of which has turned against its own masters and it has the dubious distinction of being the world's worst nuclear proliferator with doubts continually being raised about the safety of its nuclear arsenal.

Unfortunately, the news from and about Pakistan today is mostly disturbing. Attention naturally gets focused on the latest maelstrom and its implications for Pakistan and the region. Many analysts have identified the various maladies that afflict the Pakistani state and society. Some have provided prescriptions and recommendations to the Pakistani leadership and others to the Western, especially, the US leadership. Yet it is not just the current crisis but the cumulative multiplier effect of these crises and the deeper malaise that afflicts Pakistan, which has put it on a tragic trajectory. While terrorism emanating from Pakistan captures attention, other issues such as the state of education, the looming water crisis, the precipice of an economic meltdown, the danger of an unrealized 'demographic dividend', to name but a few, have the potential to threaten and destabilize Pakistan in the longer term.

While each individual malaise is bad enough, each malaise actually feeds off the other making the

situation cumulatively worse. Using religion to forge unity and national identity has led to growth of radicalism and sectarianism which, in turn, has fed into terrorism and jihadi groups leading to an increasingly violent society. These jihadi groups have got sustenance from a state that sees security largely in military terms. Instead of coming to terms with its neighbours, especially India, policies adopted by successive rulers, civilian and military, have reinforced the military mindset. The use of non-state actors has backfired and the cancer of terrorism is destroying Pakistani society. Attention is focused on military security and the resultant military mindset has diverted resources and attention from the real sinews of society – economy, education, water and health.

Compounding matters is the deep polarization in the country. Where politicians continue to bicker over the validity of elections, long after a government has been sworn in, where the debate about who is a true ‘Muslim’ ravages even Muslim minorities like the Shias centuries after Islam was born and in a nation created in the name of Islam, where the meaning of Pakistan and a ‘Pakistani identity’ is contested, the state and society have an extremely difficult task to tackle the monumental mess that successive leaders have led to the nation into.

The totality of the malaise has put Pakistan today at the risk of multi-organ failure. The tragedy of Pakistan is that the hydra-headed issues that confront the government are fast going beyond the capability and reach of the state and society to resolve.

The increasing violence in society was perhaps best described by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan:

Attacks on religious minorities encroached into areas where they had been largely absent hitherto, and the government failed to take measures to reassure the citizens that it had the ability or the commitment to clamp down on faith-based violence. Extrajudicial killings, unlawful and arbitrary detention, custodial torture and enforced disappearance continued. Well over two million internally displaced persons, most of them women and children, had to leave their homes in search of safety and joined multitudes of others who had been displaced in earlier bouts of armed conflict between the security forces and militant extremists.¹⁰

However, such intolerance and violence is not a new phenomenon; it dates back to the origins of Pakistan itself. The trend of silencing all debate and forcing a hegemonic view harks back to Jinnah and the Muslim League. They had started the practice of denouncing anyone who opposed the League as a traitor to Pakistan, at times even to Islam itself. This trend continued after Pakistan was created. Among those dubbed as traitors in the early days were:

- a. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, also known as Frontier Gandhi. His crime was that he was a Congressman prior to the creation of Pakistan and even though he took an oath of loyalty to Pakistan and attended the Constituent Assembly, his loyalty was always suspect. He was jailed for many years and died when he was still deemed a traitor in 1988;
- b. Ghulam Murtaza Shah Syed, popularly known as G.M. Syed, the president of Sindh Muslim League and the person who moved the resolution to make the province a part of the proposed state of Pakistan. His crime was to articulate the rights of the Sindhis. He spent close to thirty years in the prisons of Pakistan and died in prison in 1995, deemed a traitor;

c. Others who have this distinction of being branded as traitors include stalwarts like Benazir Bhutto, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman; Pakhtun leader Abdul Wali Khan and his son Asfandyar Wali; Baloch leaders like Khair Baksh Marri, Sardar Attaullah Mengal, Ghous Baksh Bizenjo, Akbar Khan Bugti; poets like Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Habib Jalib. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is the latest to be included in this list. His crime – calling Pakistan a ‘liberal’ state.

A spillover from the intolerance of dissenting views has been the trend of political assassinations or death in mysterious circumstances. To name just a few: Liaquat Ali Khan, Dr Khan Sahib, Shaheed Suhrawardy, Hayat Sherpao, Samad Khan Achakzai, Shahnawaz Bhutto, Zia-ul-Haq, Ghulam Haider Wyne, Azim Tariq, Hakim Saeed, Murtaza Bhutto, Akbar Bugti, Benazir Bhutto, Imran Farooq, Salmaan Taseer, Shahbaz Bhatti, Bashir Bilour; the list is not exhaustive. Add to these the names of journalists and civil society activists such as Mohammed Salahuddin, Daniel Pearl, Hayatullah Khan, Musa Khankhel, Wali Babar, Saleem Shahzad, Murtaza Razvi, Rashid Rahman, Zahira Shahid, Parveen Rahman, and, of course, Sabeen Mahmud and noted qawwali singer Amjad Sabri. Except for the killer of Salmaan Taseer, who gave himself up on the spot and was tried and executed, very few perpetrators have so far been identified and captured, let alone punished. The state security apparatus has been unwilling or unable to bring the killers to book. These and the killings of many more reflect an increasingly intolerant society, unwilling to accept plurality.

Pakistan’s ranking in several international benchmarks over the past decade testifies to its alarming decline. For the last five years, Pakistan has been consistently ranked between ten and thirteen (one being the worst) on the Fragile (earlier Failing) States Index out of 178 countries. In 2012 and 2013 it was ranked thirteen, in 2014 it was ranked ten and again ranked thirteen in 2015. In the UN Human Development Index (HDI), Pakistan slipped from 120 in 1991 to 138 in 2002 to 141 in 2009 to 146 in 2014 and to 147 out of 188 countries in 2015. The World Economic Forum (WEF) rated Pakistan 113 out of 124 countries on the Human Capital Report in 2014–15, as against its score of 112 out of 122 countries in the 2013–14. In terms of Human Capital Index (HCI), Pakistan ranked at the bottom among twenty-two Asia-Pacific countries with a score of 52.63, far below the region’s average of 67.83. Economic participation, gender gap, labour force participation and poor performance in educational outcomes at all age group indicators had contributed to driving down Pakistan’s aggregate score.¹¹ The Global Hunger Index ranked Pakistan 88 out of 119 countries in 2006 and 93 out of 104 in 2015, showing a marked deterioration in the availability of food. The Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index ranked Pakistan 126 out of 175 countries in 2014 as against 127 out of 177 in 2013. There was some improvement in 2015 when Pakistan’s ranking was 117.

The Uppsala Conflict Data Programme has identified Pakistan as one of six countries that qualifies to be in the category of ‘war’, having crossed the unfortunate figure of one thousand battle-related deaths in a year’s time.¹² The Global Peace Index (GPI) positions Pakistan among the ten least peaceful countries in the world, ranked 154 out of 162 in 2015 and the second worst in South Asia after Afghanistan in terms of the number of conflicts fought. It notes that since 2004, Pakistan has ranked among the top five countries showing the fastest decline in peacefulness globally. Pakistan ranked 149 out of 158 countries in the 2012 GPI and slipped to 157 out of 162 for the year 2013,¹³ and 154 out of 162 in 2014. Thus while the army claims that it had broken the back of the terrorists, the GPI has another story to tell.

Pakistan has been termed as the most dangerous country in the world for media for the third consecutive year by the International Federation of Journalists.¹⁴ Fourteen journalists and media workers were killed in 2014 alone. According to the Press Freedom Index, Pakistan ranked 150 out of 167 countries in 2005, 151 out of 178 in 2010, 158 out of 180 in 2014 and 159 out of 180 in 2015. This does not speak much for freedom of expression, and any talk about a 'vibrant' media in Pakistan must contend with this sobering fact.

According to Alif Ailaan, a Pakistani NGO, twenty-five million children, 47 per cent of all Pakistani children, were out of school. Of these out-of-school children, 68 per cent has never attended school while 32 per cent did go to school at some point. Government expenditure on education has hovered around 2 per cent of GDP, the lowest in South Asia.

The Visa Restrictions Index ranks countries according to the number of other countries their citizens can travel to without having to obtain a visa. As per its latest report, Pakistan ranks 103 out of a total 104 countries, meaning that Pakistanis face the second-most visa restrictions in the world. Since visa requirements reflect the relationships between individual nations, the low ranking of Pakistan reflects its relations and status within the international community.¹⁵

The above sample of surveys and reports shows that Pakistan has serious issues that are not the products of a few years of mal-governance but have been allowed to fester for decades. Surveys like these taken together show the depth and intensity of the multidimensional challenges that Pakistan has to tackle. This book tries to look more closely at some of these problems that Pakistan faces internally and poses externally to the world, problems that have frequently called into question the trajectory of its very existence.

I

The Foundations

IN HINDSIGHT, the foundations of Pakistan can be traced to stirrings of Muslim insecurity due to loss of power and office during the long decline of the Mughal rule in India and the growing domination of the British. As important as the loss of power was the growing fear that the introduction of representative government, where numbers mattered, would allow the majority Hindus to dominate them. A combination of these factors and the responses that they engineered played a crucial role in the contours of the Pakistan movement. For its part, Britain as the colonial power, sought to preserve its Indian empire by playing the Muslim League against the Indian National Congress till it finally decided to leave India partitioned.

Thus, Pakistan did not start on a clean slate. It carried with it the legacy of the Pakistan movement, the history, culture and language of the predominantly Muslim populations of the areas that became Pakistan and the hopes and aspirations of those who migrated from the rest of India. This amalgam is fundamental to our understanding of Pakistan, not only its early years and the policies it adopted then, but the policies it adopts even today. It also provides some answers to the current problems being faced by the country.



1

The Pakistan Movement

This has been a very eventful day, an epoch in Indian history; this morning I have received the following letter from an official; ‘I must send Your Excellency a line to say that a very big thing has happened today. A work of statesmanship that will affect India and Indian history for many a long year. It is nothing less than the pulling back of 62 millions of people from joining the ranks of the seditious opposition.’

—Lady Minto

THE CREATION of Pakistan was not inevitable. Even as late as 6 June 1946, Jinnah was willing to put aside a sovereign ‘Pakistan’ and accept the British Cabinet Mission’s proposal for a federated India.¹ It was when the Congress refused to accept a weak Centre that the point of no return was reached. Thus, it was a combination of circumstances that included the insecurity among the Muslim elite in the Muslim-minority provinces of British India, the policies of the Indian National Congress (henceforth Congress) and the machinations of the colonial power, Britain, which led to the creation of Pakistan. Even if one of the three factors had not been present, or been present in a different form, it is debatable whether Pakistan would have been created at all. All three had to combine in a historical context for this new country to come into existence. And combine they did.

The feeling of insecurity that developed among the Muslim elite was due to the loss of power in the wake of the decline of the Mughal Empire and the growing domination of the British since the early nineteenth century. Faced with this reality, the strategy adopted by the Muslim elite, especially after the abortive 1857 War of Independence, can be summarized as sullenness and opposition to the British, giving way to the gradual adoption of Western education; the Simla Deputation pushing for separate electorates (1906); forming a separate political party – the All India Muslim League (AIML) in 1906; coming to an agreement with the Congress on separate electorates via the Lucknow Pact (1916); Jinnah’s break with the Congress and the fourteen points (1929); Iqbal’s ‘imagining’ and Rehmat Ali’s articulation of Pakistan (1930–34); Jinnah’s return to India from Britain (1935); the dismal performance of the Muslim League in the 1937 elections in the Muslim-majority areas; Muslim League capitalizing on the resignation of the Congress ministries in 1939 on the outbreak of World War II; the League’s demand for ‘independent and separate’ states (1940); the stunning performance of the Muslim League in the elections of 1945–46; the Muslim League’s acceptance and then rejection of the Cabinet Mission plan for a united India; violence unleashed through Direct Action (1946); and Partition of the subcontinent. A common thread in this entire journey was the role of Britain in propping up the Muslim League as the representative body of

the Muslims and Jinnah as its sole leader in order to obstruct the march of the Congress towards independence.

As it evolved, the British strategy to preserve and protect their Indian empire had to overcome one limitation and circumvent an objective reality. The limitation was that there were only a handful of Englishmen present in India compared to the huge Indian population they ruled over. Angus Maddison has pointed out:

There were only 31,000 British in India in 1805 (of which 22,000 were in the army and 2,000 in civil government). The number increased substantially after the 1857 mutiny, but thereafter remained steady. In 1911 there were 164,000 British (106,000 employed of which 66,000 were in the army and police and 4,000 in civil government). In 1931, there were 168,000 (90,000 employed, 60,000 in the army and police and 4,000 in civil government)... never more than 0.5 per cent of the population.²

This remarkable fact ensured that the British needed cooperation from elements of the local population.

The events of 1857 had taught the British the objective reality of India: a united India was a danger. Therefore, the British knew they would have to keep Indian society disunited and pitted against each other in order to preserve the British Empire. As Winston Churchill put it: ‘Hindu-Muslim antagonism was “a bulwark of British rule in India,”’ and noted that, ‘were it to be resolved, their concord would result in “the united communities joining in showing us the door.”’³

Taking these two factors into account, the policy adopted by the British was best summed up by Lord Canning, the last governor general and first viceroy of India, in a letter to president of the Board of Control of the East India Company on 21 November 1857 at the height of the War of Independence: ‘... as we must rule 150 million people by a handful [of] Englishmen, let us do it in a manner best calculated to leave them divided, (as in religion and national feeling that they already are) and to inspire them with the greatest possible awe of our power with the least possible suspicion of our motive.’⁴ This was to be British policy right up to 1947.

Cooperation from the local Indian population in ruling the vast Indian empire was achieved through education. Macaulay, through his minute of February 1835 had stated:

... it is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect...⁵

While the Hindus took to Western education, the Muslims were slow to do so, slow in accepting the reality that under the new British dispensation, their traditional Persian-based education was of little use in obtaining administrative posts. In not making the transition from Persian to English as the medium of instruction, the ulemas played a major role red-flagging the dangers to the community of Western culture, learning, language and sciences.⁶ This initial educational and intellectual imbalance continued for several decades increasing the insecurities of the Muslim elite. For example, in the twenty years before 1878, of the 1,373 BAs and 326 MAs who emerged from India’s colleges and universities, only thirty and five

respectively were Muslims.⁷

Faced with growing Muslim resentment and even sporadic violence, Governor General Lord Mayo (1869–72) asked a Bengal civil servant William Wilson Hunter on 30 May 1871, to write a book on the burning question of the day: ‘Are Indian Mussalmans bound by their religion to rebel against the Queen?’ He also wrote a note on 26 June 1871 on the means to persuade Muslims to enter government schools and colleges more willingly.⁸ Hunter’s influential work *The Indian Mussalmans* and Mayo’s note resulted in the Government of India Resolution of 7 August 1871, which drew special attention to the problems of Muslim education and proposed measures to attract the Muslim gentleman’s son into government schools.⁹ According to M.J. Akbar, ‘... in a remarkable piece of social engineering, the British turned, through positive discrimination in education, job benefits, and political empowerment, a hostile Muslim community into a resource for the Indian empire within just two decades.’¹⁰ The result of the acceptance of Mayo’s Note and Hunter’s recommendations was that by 1921 there was a higher degree of literacy among Muslims than among Hindus.¹¹

The British found a partner in Syed Ahmad Khan who was keen to convince the British that Muslims were genuinely loyal and, as a corollary, convince the Muslims that Western education was the key to compete in the new dispensation. Given their mutual interests, the British helped Syed Ahmad obtain land at Aligarh and gave a grant-in-aid. With the support of subscriptions from Muslim princes and landed aristocracy the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College started life as a primary school on Queen Victoria’s birthday, 24 May 1875, commencing BA classes in 1881. Apart from the number of degrees it awarded, ‘Aligarh’ as Peter Hardy puts it, ‘became an institution for coming to terms with the British-created world on a footing of equality, rather than for questioning that world from burning religious conviction.’¹² The alumni would play a leading role in the Pakistan movement.

Two other aspects of Syed Ahmad’s legacy are noteworthy: the drastic transformation in his ideas about Hindu–Muslim unity/relationship and the apprehensions that representative government would lead to subordination of Muslims. This would be the same path that Jinnah would tread in the next century. Till the early 1880s he was a believer in Hindu–Muslim unity.¹³ Yet by 1888, Syed Ahmad was saying that India was inhabited by two different nations, which would inevitably struggle for power if the British left: ‘Is it possible that under these circumstances two nations – the Mohammadan and the Hindu – could sit on the same throne and remain equal in power? Most certainly not. It is necessary that one of them should conquer the other and thrust it down. To hope that both could remain equal is to desire the impossible and the inconceivable.’¹⁴

Syed Ahmad was among the earliest to articulate that representative government in India would result in the permanent subordination of Muslims to Hindus. In one of his speeches at Lucknow he said:

Let us suppose first of all that we have universal suffrage as in America ... And first suppose that all the Mahomedan electors vote for a Mahomedan member and all Hindu electors for a Hindu member... It is certain that the Hindu member will have four times as many because their population will have four times as many ... and now how can the Mahomedan guard his interests? It would be like a game of dice in which one man had four dice and the other only one.¹⁵

Jinnah would echo similar sentiments in response to Gandhiji in the next century. Successive doses of representative government would heighten the fears among a section of the Muslims that they would be unable to safeguard their interests in a democratic dispensation due to the Hindus greatly outnumbering them.

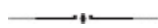
However, Syed Ahmad's most provocative statement was: 'The Congress is in reality a civil war without arms. We also like a civil war but not a civil war without arms; we like it with arms ...'¹⁶ Jinnah would also echo similar sentiments fifty-eight years later when he talked about having a pistol with reference to the Direct Action Day.

While Syed Ahmad Khan took to Western education, there were three other responses among the Muslims to the loss of political power: Deoband, Bareilvi and Jamaat-i-Islami movements. Despite major differences among them, in one way or the other they were opposed to Western culture and blamed the decline in the fortunes of the community to drifting away from pristine Islam.¹⁷

Meanwhile, the Hindus who had taken to Western education in a big way were now beginning to ask constitutional questions the British would rather not be asked. To channelize such debates, the Congress was set up in 1885 by A.O. Hume. It was supposed to be a debating society; however, almost immediately after it was founded, the British came to dislike the Congress. On 30 November 1888, Viceroy Lord Dufferin called it 'seditious and a microscopic minority' adding: 'Already it looks as if the Mohammadans were rising in revolt against the ascendancy which they imagine a rival and less virile race is desirous of obtaining over them.'¹⁸

One reason for this British concern was the appeal of the Congress, as yet slow, to the Muslims to join it. While only two Muslims attended the first session of the Congress in Bombay in 1885, thirty-three attended the Calcutta session in 1886; 254 attended the Allahabad session in 1888; 254 attended the 1889 session in Bombay; 300 attended the sixth session in 1890.¹⁹ The trend was obvious as borne out by Mohsin-ul-Mulk, secretary of the Aligarh College, informing its principal Archbold on 4 August 1906 that a more active political line was necessary, as 'young educated Mohammadans seem to have sympathy for the Congress'. The Aligarh students union had, in fact, passed a resolution advocating Hindu-Muslim political cooperation in May 1906.²⁰

Since a key prerequisite for the preservation of British rule was Indian disunity, the British embarked on a strategy that was to result in the crystallizing of a separate Muslim political identity. The instruments used were partition of Bengal, formation of the All India Muslim League and adoption of separate electorates.²¹ The controversial partition of Bengal in July 1905, done on religious grounds, set the precedent that religion could form the basis of a partition ignoring other attributes, under the garb of administrative convenience. This lesson would be repeated a few decades later to create Pakistan. British policy was also revealed in a dispatch by Viceroy Lord Minto to Morley, the Secretary of State, on 15 August 1906 to sanction a loan of Rs 14 lakh to Nawab Salimullah of Dacca as 'a political matter of great importance.'²² The 'political matter' would unfold in December 1906 with the formation of the All India Muslim League.



Against the backdrop of the British announcement on 20 July 1906 of increasing the number of seats in the legislative councils and also their powers as demanded by the Congress, a delegation of thirty-five

Muslim notables led by the Agha Khan, met the viceroy in Simla on 1 October 1906. The memorandum submitted by them asked for separate electorates and representation in excess of numerical strength in view of 'the value of the contribution' Muslims were making 'to the defence of the Empire'.²³ In response, Minto said, 'I am as firmly convinced as I believe you to be, that any electoral representation in India would be doomed to mischievous failure which aimed at granting a personal enfranchisement, regardless of the beliefs and traditions of the communities composing the population of this continent.'²⁴

Lady Minto recorded her views in her journal that very evening:

This has been a very eventful day, an epoch in Indian history; this morning I have received the following letter from an official; 'I must send Your Excellency a line to say that a very big thing has happened today. A work of statesmanship that will affect India and Indian history for many a long year. It is nothing less than the pulling back of 62 millions of people from joining the ranks of the seditious opposition.'²⁵

The meeting with Lord Minto is one of the determining events in modern Indian history. As noted by Sumit Sarkar,

... there is ample evidence that through the Principal of the Aligarh College W.A.J. Archbold, Mohsin-ul-Mulk and other Muslim leaders kept in close touch with the Viceroy's Private Secretary Dunlop Smith as well as with officials like the Lucknow Commissioner Harcourt Butler. What is clear is that the memorandum presented to Lord Minto had been drafted and agreed upon in advance between Principal W.A.J. Archbold, and Dunlop Smith. It was in Butler's private papers that historians discovered a first draft of the Simla memorial.²⁶

Thus, clearly, the whole delegation had been stage-managed by the British. It was to prove a game changer.

For the first time, the Hindu-Muslim conflict was escalated to the constitutional plane and the Muslims were to acquire, through the 1909 Act, a separate constitutional identity.²⁷ Jaswant Singh notes that the meeting helped to crystallize the Muslim identity in political terms and 'contributed to a "separation" mentality. And indisputably this rejection of personal enfranchisement and acceptance of the device of reservation, based on religion, finally moved the Muslim political personality of India towards an eventual separation.'²⁸ The inevitable consequence was the division of India.

Agha Khan confirmed this truth in his memoirs in which he wrote that in effect the Simla Deputation had asked the British government that the Muslims of India should not be regarded as a mere minority but a nation within a nation whose rights and obligations should be guaranteed by state. He pointed out that the acceptance of the demands of his delegation was the foundation of all future constitutional proposals made for India by successive British governments and its final, inevitable consequence was the Partition of India and the emergence of Pakistan.²⁹

Meanwhile, the All-India Muslim Educational Conference met at Dacca on 30 December 1906 and unanimously resolved to set up a political association called the All India Muslim League '... to promote among the Musalmans of India the loyalty to the British government ... to protect and advance the political rights and interests of Musalmans of India ... and to prevent the rise among Muslims of India of

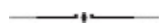
any feeling of hostility towards other communities, without prejudice to the other aforementioned objectives of the League.’³⁰

The results of the Simla Deputation were visible in the 1909 Minto–Morley Reforms that introduced the system for separate electorates which institutionalized a communal basis for politics. Henceforth, Hindus and Muslims would electioneer on religious instead of on political grounds. This became the role model for future constitutional advances in India. Thereafter, when additional instalments of self-governance were granted under the Government of India Acts of 1919 and 1935, the demand for protecting minority interests would only grow. The device of communal electorates duly served its purpose and the principle worked so well that ‘... once it has been fully established, it so entrenches communalism that one could hardly then abandon the principle even if one wished to do so.’³¹

As the national movement led by the Congress and Gandhiji grew in strength, the British were to further fine-tune their policy of divide and rule by appearing to be willing to relinquish control as soon as the Hindus and Muslims would come together. They knew they could utilize their influence over the Muslim League to ensure this never happened. What better way to perpetuate their rule? On 1 January 1925, the viceroy wrote to the secretary of state, ‘... the bridge Gandhiji had built to span the gulf between the Hindus and Mohammadans has not only broken down, but it has completely disappeared.’ The Secretary of State for India, Birkenhead, replied on 22 January 1925, ‘... the more it is made obvious that these antagonisms are profound and affect an immense and irreconcilable section of the population, the more conspicuously is the fact illustrated that we and we alone can play the part of the composers.’³²

While the partition of Bengal and separate electorates consolidated Muslim identity, the politically active Muslims were divided into several factions who, though prepared to accept the leadership of the British, were unprepared to accept the leadership of their own. The British also needed a man to be able to lead and head the various factions among the Muslims. There were two main factions in the Muslim League – one headed by Muhammad Shafi and the other by Jinnah. In March 1929, the viceroy met Jinnah and after the meeting became convinced that Jinnah could be won over. On 20 March 1929, the viceroy wrote, ‘I had a long talk with Jinnah a few days ago, which made it very clear to my mind that he and all the Bombay people, who are not disposed to Congress, are disposed to swing towards our direction if we can give them help later.’³³

Next, the viceroy used his influence to bring the two main factions of the Muslim League together. On 21 May 1929, he predicted ‘... the two wings of the Muslim League are to meet in Delhi at the end of this month, with a rapprochement between Mohammad Shafi and Jinnah. Jinnah may be expected to gain, from his commanding influence in the Muslim League.’³⁴ Thus even before the Muslim League factions met, the viceroy knew that the hatchet would be buried and that Mohammad Shafi would not be a hurdle any longer.



Muhammad Iqbal is credited with ‘imagining Pakistan’. In his presidential address to the rather thinly attended twenty-first session of the All India Muslim League at Allahabad (29 and 30 December 1930), by which time Jinnah had left for Britain, Iqbal stated:

I would like to see the Punjab, the NWFP, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state. Self-government within the British Empire or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim state appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of North-West India.³⁵

Interestingly, Iqbal's articulation left out Bengal, and Kashmir also for that matter. Even so, this speech is widely perceived as being the inspiration for the formation of Pakistan.

The word Pakistan (literal meaning Land of the Pure) was first used in a four-page leaflet entitled 'Now or Never', published in January 1933 and signed by Rehmat Ali and three other students in Cambridge. According to Rehmat Ali, Pakistan was an acronym composed of Punjab, Afghania (NWFP), Kashmir, Sindh and Balochistan. Rehmat Ali had actually met Jinnah in 1934, only days after he had authored his pamphlet. According to K.K. Aziz, Jinnah, after noticing the restless and impulsive nature of the young ideologue, told him 'My dear boy, don't be in a hurry; let the waters flow and they will find their own level ...'³⁶

Between 1883 and 1940, there were almost two dozen suggestions and proposals for separate Hindu and Muslim homelands in some form or the other.³⁷ Jinnah's signal contribution is that he provided unity and logic to the diverse thinking and converted them into a solid scheme for the creation of Pakistan by making the 'two-nation' theory (the idea that Muslims and Hindus constituted two 'nations', each deserving their own state) the pivot for crafting a parallel narrative to the secular narrative of the Congress.

However, Jinnah's journey to Pakistan was not a straight line. In fact, for the bulk of his political life he was an advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity, earning the title of the best ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity from Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Sarojini Naidu. Moreover, Jinnah did not have a clean run of the Muslim space. His greatest opponent was the religious scholar Abdul Ala Maududi who founded the Jamaat-i-Islami in 1941. For Maududi, the decline of Indian Islam could only be reversed by the revival of Indian Islam. As Tariq Ali notes, 'If Pakistan was to become a true Muslim state then it needed a Maududi not a Jinnah, to be its head. He denounced Jinnah and the Muslim League as blasphemers who were misusing Islam to promote a secular nationalism.'³⁸ Maududi was against the Western parliamentary model that Jinnah proposed to instal in Pakistan. He was equally opposed to Jinnah's leadership of the Muslims of India because of his Western attitudes, dress and lack of Islamic knowledge.

The Shia Political Conference too opposed Jinnah's scheme. They were better off than the Sunnis and saw little opportunities for themselves in an overwhelmingly Sunni Pakistan. On the contrary, they anticipated more pressure on themselves in Pakistan than in the large polyglot and multi-religious India.³⁹

Till the 1930s, the Muslim League was a dormant body despite Jinnah being its leading light between 1919 and 1930. Thus, in 1927, its total membership was 1,330. During 1930-33, its annual expenditure did not exceed Rs 3,000. In the 1930 Allahabad session when Iqbal made his historic address, the League meeting did not even have a quorum of seventy-five members. The annual session of 1931, held at Delhi, was described as 'a languid and attenuated House of scarcely 120 people in all'.⁴⁰ The weakness of the Muslim League was reflected in the elections of 1937 when it won only 4.6 per cent of the total Muslim votes. It seemed to have developed a new life only after 1940.⁴¹ The Lahore Resolution of March 1940 was clearly one reason. But equally, it was the behind-the-scenes helping hand of the British that

transformed the moribund Muslim League into a dynamic organization.

Given the state of the Muslim League, the British despaired at its ineffectiveness as a strong opposition to the Congress. For example, on 9 September 1934, Lord Willingdon, the viceroy, wrote to the secretary of state: 'But alas, our backers form a flabby crowd without any courage, while the Congress, however stupid their actions are, is not afraid of fighting.'⁴²

It is interesting that Jinnah finally returned to India in October 1935. While the credit of persuading him to return is given to Liaquat Ali Khan and even Iqbal, recent writings suggest that the credit may actually belong to Abdur Rahim Dard, an Ahmadiya missionary in London.⁴³ However, there does not seem to have been much research done on the possibility that Jinnah was persuaded to return by the British given the state of the Muslim League and the fact that the 1935 reforms were going to push for greater representation of Indians, especially at the provincial level. After all, the British had recognized Jinnah's abilities very early. Edwin Montague, the Secretary of State for India, wrote of him as early as in 1917: 'Jinnah is a very clever man, and it is, of course, an outrage that such a man should have no chance of running the affairs of his own country.'⁴⁴ There is now evidence of the secret correspondence between Jinnah and Churchill routed through one Elizabeth Giliat, a lady employed at Churchill's home in Kent to avoid detection as also the encouragement given to Jinnah by Viceroys Linlithgow and Wavell, both admirers of Churchill.⁴⁵

The results of the 1937 elections were a huge setback for Jinnah, the Muslim League and the British. The Congress was able to form governments in seven out of eleven provinces. It was clear that India had reposed its confidence in the secular programme and policies of the Congress and rejected the Muslim League. However, the refusal of the Congress to enter into coalition governments with the Muslim League was to be a decisive moment as far as Jinnah, the League and the British were concerned.

The change in attitude of the British towards the Muslim League after Jinnah's return is remarkable when compared to its attitude before. Writing in February 1910 to Hewett, the lieutenant governor of the United Provinces (UP), Lord Minto specifically refused to accept the League as the only spokesman for Muslims in India, although 'we should of course always accept the League as a very representative Mahommedan body to which we should naturally refer for an opinion on any question of importance'.⁴⁶ But by the late 1930s, in the face of the growing strength of the Congress party, especially after the 1937 elections, there was a big change. For example, in August 1938 Lord Zetland, the Secretary of State for India, noted that he '... could not resist a steadily growing conviction that the dominant factor in determining the future form of the Government of India would prove to be the All India Muslim League'.⁴⁷

The outbreak of World War II (WWII) changed the situation completely. Whatever their reasons, the resignation (in September 1939) of the Congress from the provincial governments for not being consulted at the declaration of war against Germany and without any war aims being enunciated was, in hindsight, a huge tactical miscalculation. The Quit India movement (August 1942) further compounded matters. The British viewed the resignations of the Congress and launch of an agitation with a great deal of suspicion. For them the pursuit of war was a matter of life and death and they looked upon any hindrance with a lot of distrust and hostility. In a real sense, the Congress caged itself politically during the war years.

For Jinnah and the Muslim League the war was a great opportunity. As Jinnah frankly admitted when he

considered what was going to happen in 1939: 'There was going to be a deal between Mr Gandhi and Lord Linlithgow. Providence helped us. The war which nobody welcomes proved to be a blessing in disguise.'⁴⁸ As a result of the Congress resignations, Jinnah and the League endeared themselves to the British for their cooperation in the war effort in recruiting soldiers for the Indian Army. As the viceroy wrote to the secretary of state on 5 September 1939: 'I feel it wiser to be patient with Jinnah and endeavour to lead him into the direction which we desire. And indeed, if I can give any help to these Muslim leaders to get together, then it is the time I shall do so.'⁴⁹ The viceroy did bring all the Muslims under the banner of the Muslim League, just as his predecessor had done with regard to Mohammad Shafi. On 5 October 1939, after meeting Jinnah, the viceroy wrote: '... he (Jinnah) thanked me with much graciousness for what I had done to assist him in keeping his party together and expressed great gratitude for this.'⁵⁰

On 22 March 1940, Jinnah delivered his presidential address to the Muslim League's open session at Lahore. He said that Hinduism and Islam '... are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are, in fact, different and distinct social orders and it is a dream that Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality. The Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religions, philosophies, social customs and literature ... and indeed they belong to two different civilizations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions ...',⁵¹. The operative portion of the resolution adopted at Lahore was:

Resolved that it is the considered view of this session of the All India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principle, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the area in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute Independent states in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.⁵²

Interestingly, the 1940 resolution, later called the Pakistan Resolution, did not mention Pakistan at all. Likewise, its formulation was so vague that it was not evident if the resolution envisaged one or two states. Though this resolution became the core of the demand for the creation of Pakistan, in its fundamentals, the resolution sought not 'independence from the British but a parting from the Hindus'.⁵³

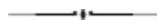
There is a body of literature that has put forward the argument that it was Viceroy Linlithgow who in March 1940 instructed Zafarullah Khan, a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, to convey to the League leadership that the government wanted it to demand a separate state. This could be as a result of pique for the Congress resignations from the ministries on the outbreak of WWII. According to Ishtiaq Ahmed, the idea of a separate state for Muslims was born in the viceroy's office. However, the British were not thinking of partitioning India at that time, nor was the Muslim League confident that such an idea could be realized without major upheavals taking place.⁵⁴

Viceroy Lord Linlithgow confirmed Zafarullah's role in his letter of 12 March 1940 to the secretary of state for India:

Upon my instruction, Zafarullah wrote a memorandum on the subject of two dominion states, I have already sent it to your attention. He is anxious, however, that no one should find out that he

has prepared this plan. He has, however, given me the right to do with it what I like including sending a copy to you. Copies have been passed on to Jinnah and I think to Sir Akbar Hydari. While he, Zafarullah, cannot admit its authorship, his document has been prepared for adoption by the Muslim League with a view to giving it the full publicity. (Zafarullah, being an Ahmadiya, was not keen that his name should appear as the author.)⁵⁵

It has been asserted that Jinnah was the 'lawyer' for the case of Pakistan which he argued and won. However, he was not a visionary or a strategic thinker to chart out the course of the nation. Such a visionary in the Muslim League was Zafarullah Khan who authored the Lahore Resolution, which for the first time chalked out the idea of Pakistan. Being an Ahmadiya, Khan's role was kept secret until the recent release of documents and letters written by Viceroy Linlithgow revealed his pivotal role.⁵⁶



With the Muslim League fully cooperating with them, the British did not recognize any other Muslim organization. For example, a large gathering of nationalist Muslims was held in Delhi chaired by the premier of Sindh, Allah Baksh Soomro. In his letter to the secretary of state dated 14 May 1940, the viceroy wrote:

I attach no particular importance to the Delhi Conference of the Muslims which took place a few days ago. It has been well organized and the British press had written it up admirably. We both are, of course, aware that there is a not unimportant Muslim element outside the Muslim League. Indeed, I am sure that Jinnah remains the man to deal with on the Muslim side.⁵⁷

By ignoring Muslims outside the Muslim League, the British signalled to every Indian Muslim that it was only Jinnah and the Muslim League who were recognized by them, implying that anyone wanting British support would have to join the League.

Though the British propped up Jinnah, there were times when they needed to show who the boss was. With the Congress having resigned from the ministries in 1939, Jinnah overreached himself and requested the viceroy that advisers be appointed as recommended by the Muslim League even though the League had not won elections in such provinces. This angered the viceroy who wrote in July 1940:

I hope that Jinnah will not continue to press his extravagant claim. If he does, I think myself that we may definitely have to consider whether we should continue the efforts which I have made so far to keep the Muslims together, whether we should not let the balance of the Muslim League as represented by Sikandar and Fazlul Haq have their break with Jinnah. But I don't want to see such a break if we can reasonably avoid it.⁵⁸

Again on 28 August 1940, the viceroy wrote: 'I hope that Sikandar and Fazlul Haq will be able to bring pressure on Jinnah to make him toe the line; if he does not, I shall go without him.'⁵⁹ This highlighted how dispensable Jinnah was for the British. This is further evidenced by the fact that when it became known that British relations with Jinnah were strained, several other Muslim leaders offered their services to the British. One such was the chief minister of Hyderabad, Sir Akbar Hydari. In a letter to the

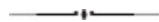
secretary of state, the viceroy wrote on 29 August 1940: 'You may be amused to hear that Hydari during a conversation a few days ago, coyly hinted to me, that if there should be trouble with Jinnah and Muslim League, there was, at any rate, a very prominent Muslim, who could steer the country through the troubled waters that may lie ahead.'⁶⁰

However, Jinnah knew his limitations and in due course the differences were papered over. As Viceroy Linlithgow, in a letter to secretary of state dated 10 June 1943, wrote:

Your comments on Jinnah's attitude... I think he probably looks a little more alarming from London than he does here. I don't, however, think he wants a row with the Government. Though, on the other hand, he insists on being as rude to the Government (and to his political opponents) as he thinks he dares. I doubt if anyone takes it very seriously, and his threats do not cause me any sleepless nights ... Jinnah would be quite as bad a master as Gandhiji. But Jinnah is not in as strong a position as Gandhi and the Congress, and he is never likely to be in the near future, since he represents a minority, and a minority that can effectively hold its own with our assistance. Nor, of course, is his organization as deep-rooted as that of the Congress. I would expect him to be likely to continue to not merely non-constructive, but positively destructive, and to play his hand so as to get maximum in the way of commitments favourable to his community and the maximum in the way of hurdles to be taken by the Hindus but without facing a show down with the government.⁶¹

Thus it is clear that the various viceroys cleared the decks for the Muslim League and Jinnah at the all-India level. By the end of WWII, the British wanted the Congress to recognize the League as the sole representative of the Indian Muslims. This was the note on which Viceroy Wavell concluded the abortive Simla Conference in 1945. In fact, Jinnah had ensured the failure of the Conference by demanding the exclusive right to nominate Muslims on both the Muslim quota and also the Muslims that the Congress would nominate on the non-Muslim quota for the Viceroy's Executive Council.⁶² The signal was also to other Muslims that if they wanted to be recognized, the only course was to sign up with the Muslim League. As H.V. Hodson, wrote on the failed Simla Conference: 'A minority party with unsupportable claim had been allowed to veto the whole project for advancing India's self-government.'⁶³ Interestingly, Dr Khan Sahib who was present there, asked Wavell, 'I am the Chief Minister of the largest Muslim province [NWFP], but not a member of the Muslim League. What do you have to say to me?'⁶⁴ This was, no doubt, extremely embarrassing to the British and hence, Wavell's answer was not recorded.

The clinching evidence of the role of Britain in propping up Jinnah was given by none other than Churchill when he told Mountbatten on 22 May 1947, 'By God! He [Jinnah] is one man who cannot do without British help.'⁶⁵



Another crucial resolution of the Muslim League was adopted at a meeting held in Bombay on 29 July 1946. Here the Muslim League Council passed a resolution withdrawing its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission plan and called on Muslims throughout India to observe 16 August 1946 as Direct Action Day.

In his concluding remarks, following the adoption of the resolution, Jinnah stated:

We have taken a most historic decision. Never before in the whole life-history of the Muslim League did we do anything except by constitutional methods and constitutional talks ... Today we have said goodbye to constitutions and constitutional methods. Throughout the painful negotiations, the two parties with whom we had bargained held a pistol at us; one with power and machine guns behind it, and the other with non-cooperation and the threat to launch mass civil disobedience. This situation must be met. We also have a pistol.⁶⁶

The imagery of a pistol was an unambiguous sign that violence was intended. The report of the director of the Intelligence Bureau to the governor general highlighted the following: (i) It defined 'Direct Action' as using violence to achieve the goals/agenda of the Muslim League, (ii) Direct Action could lead to bloodshed, butchery, slaughter of Hindus of East/West Bengal and Sind; (iii) 'Direct Action' would lead to violence which would result from (a) the movement for establishment of Pakistan fostered by Jinnah and (b) from the incitement to violence by the Muslim pirs.⁶⁷ Several authors have vividly recorded the mayhem in Calcutta that left over 4,000 dead and 15,000 wounded. It required Gandhiji's fast to control the situation after days of rioting.

In the aftermath of WWII, defence and security considerations became uppermost in the minds of British leaders as they considered withdrawal from India. Up to May 1946, the British general staff were of the view that to prevent a Soviet threat to the area and the oilfields of the Middle East (termed 'wells of power'), Britain must retain its military connection to the subcontinent, especially stressing the north-west from where British air power could threaten Soviet military installations. In a top secret note on 'Strategic implications of Pakistan' dated 16 May 1946 Field Marshal Auchinleck concluded that partition would not serve British interests in the Indian Ocean because Pakistan would be an economically and militarily weak state whereas a strong and independent Indian state (post-1947) estranged from Britain could move closer to the Soviet Union. He held: 'If we desire to maintain our power to move freely by sea and air in the Indian Ocean ... we can do so only by keeping in being a united India which would be a willing member of the Commonwealth, ready to share in its defence to the limit of her resources.'⁶⁸

A year later, however, there was a sea-change in the attitude of the British military on partition and the creation of Pakistan. The Chiefs of Staff Committee on 12 May 1947 strongly supported the assumption that it would be good for Britain if Pakistan remained in the Commonwealth. Shortly thereafter, in another report, chiefs of staff underlined British strategic interests focused on Pakistan: 'The area of Pakistan [West Pakistan or the northwest of India] is strategically the most important in the continent of India and the majority of our strategic requirements could be met...by an agreement with Pakistan alone. We do not therefore consider that failure to obtain the agreement with India would cause us to modify any of our requirements...'⁶⁹

The reason for this turnaround was the feeling that Jawaharlal Nehru, the future prime minister of India, may not be interested in joining a block against the Soviet Union. The Muslim League leadership, on the other hand, had been projecting Pakistan as a bulwark against communism. In addition, the British military came to believe that a smaller Pakistan would be more manageable and be far more dependent on Western help than India. As such it could serve as a strategic role in the future.

It was this changed assessment of the British military that Pakistan rather than a united India under

Nehru would serve its interests better that proved to be the last nail in the coffin of Indian unity.

As a later chapter will show, the United States (US) took over from where an exhausted Britain left the subcontinent. Pakistan's participation and usefulness in the Baghdad Pact, CENTO, providing air base for the US in Peshawar in the 1960s, being a front-line state against the Soviets in the 1980s and in the war on terror in the early years of the twenty-first century, all showed the validity of the strategic appreciation of the British general staff. The consequences this had for the state of Pakistan is, of course, another story.

To conclude, the Pakistan movement was essentially a movement of the Muslim elite in the Muslim-minority provinces to compensate for their loss of power, their apprehension of having to live under those whom they had governed and to secure their future in what they perceived would, under a system of representative government, be a country dominated by the vast Hindu majority once the British left. Picking themselves up from the despair of 1857, the Muslim elite would gradually take to Western education and soften their sullenness towards the British who had supplanted the Mughal rule in India. It required a Syed Ahmad Khan to plant the seeds, an Iqbal to imagine and especially a Jinnah to grasp the opportunity to convert the Muslim insecurity at having lost an empire into the demand for a separate homeland. The British policy too underwent a sea change from viewing the Muslims as rebellious to seeing in them a force to obstruct the Congress's march towards independence. In their attempt to ensure disunity between the Hindus and Muslims, their differences were escalated to the political and constitutional levels so as to develop a separate Muslim political consciousness and identity.

To implement this policy, they nurtured the Muslim League and Jinnah to make it the only representative body of the Muslims and Jinnah its 'sole spokesman'. They had grasped the essential weakness of the League that it was not rooted in the people and lacked the kind of foundations that the Congress had and that Jinnah was no mass leader. The British were thus able to mould the League and Jinnah to counter the Congress at every turn.

In the ultimate analysis, Jinnah and the Muslim League got Pakistan on a platter. They did not have to struggle against the British for the independence of India. That was left to the Congress to do. They got Pakistan because they kept their powder dry for the struggle against the Congress, in collaboration with the British. Jinnah's negotiating strategy was simple – '... he would let the British or the Congress make an offer that he would turn down and ask for more.'⁷⁰ The decks were thus, clearly, stacked against the Congress. Pakistan would, however, pay dearly for latching on to the finger of the colonial power instead of learning to walk on its own feet, using the strength of its own people.

The *Time* magazine summed it up well, though harshly:

The people of Karachi did not welcome Pakistan with the wild enthusiasm that swept the new dominion of India. After all, Pakistan was the creation of one clever man, Jinnah; the difference between a slick political trick and a mass movement was apparent in the contrast between Karachi and New Delhi.⁷¹

2

The Legacy

*Ajab andaaz se ye ghar gira hai
Mera malba mere upar gira hai*

This house has fallen strangely
My own debris has fallen on me

—Aanis Moin

THE NEW state of Pakistan that came into existence on 14 August 1947 did not begin on a clean slate. It carried with it the legacy of the Pakistan movement that has shaped its development over the past almost seven decades, helped, no doubt, by the policies of its rulers. Eight elements in particular that Pakistan inherited at birth were to shape its destiny.

The process of Partition itself was to leave an indelible mark on the future of Pakistan. In a fundamental sense, Partition congealed attitudes among a large section of Pakistan's ruling elite, especially Punjabi – attitudes which have lasted till today and explain the visceral hatred towards India. As Christine Fair puts it: 'Neither the army nor the country's security managers have ever been able to see the events of Partition as Pakistan's past; rather, Partition permeates the present and casts a long shadow over the future.'¹

Jinnah's conception of Pakistan hinged on the entire Muslim-majority provinces of Punjab and Bengal being a part of the new state since Partition was on the grounds of the division between Muslim-majority provinces and Hindu-majority provinces. The rationale was that 'Without the non-Muslim-majority districts of these two provinces [Bengal and Punjab], the [Muslim] League could not expect to bargain for parity between "Pakistan" and "Hindustan".'² In the event, however, Punjab and Bengal had to be partitioned due to the logic of Jinnah's own articulation of the two-nation theory – Hindus and Sikhs would hardly want to live under a Muslim-majority state once Partition was determined along religious lines.³ A disappointed Jinnah would call Pakistan 'truncated and moth-eaten'.

Partition led to the both-way migration of between fourteen and eighteen million people and the horrific killings of one to two million. Conceived as a homeland of the Muslims of the subcontinent, close to forty million, out of the nearly 100 million Muslims in 1947, nevertheless remained behind in India. However, Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan had to leave almost to the last man from Punjab and the then North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). It was only in interior Sindh and in East Pakistan that a community of some significance stayed behind. Not surprisingly, such an upheaval bequeathed a bloody

and bitter legacy of fear and hatred to both India and Pakistan.⁴

It is not as if the potential for a communal flare-up in Punjab was unknown. The governors of Punjab, Bertrand Glancy and later Evan Jenkins, warned repeatedly about it in their Fortnightly Reports (FRs) to Viceroy Wavell. For example, in his FR No. 561 dated 16 August 1945, Governor Glancy wrote: ‘... if Pakistan becomes an imminent reality, we shall be heading straight for blood-shed on a wide scale; non-Muslims, especially Sikhs, are not bluffing, they will not submit peacefully to a government that is labelled “Muhammadan Raj”.’⁵ In FR 598 dated 2 May 1946, Governor Jenkins (who took over from Glancy on 8 April 1946) wrote: ‘All communities are said to be preparing for widespread rioting and there is much talk about “volunteers” who constitute the “private armies” of the various communities.’⁶ Again, Special Report of 31 August 1946: ‘If an upheaval occurs it will I believe begin with communal rioting in the towns on an unprecedented scale. The Sikh villages of the Central Punjab and the Jats of the East will join in before long, and the Muslim villagers of the North and West will follow suit.’⁷

Despite there being adequate notice of trouble, with the old colonial government having been removed, the administrative machinery of the new Pakistan government was overwhelmed by the mass migration and the magnitude of violence that had not been anticipated.⁸ The populations were not shifted out in time and adequate security measures not adopted to mitigate the tragedy of Partition. Lord Ismay, Lord Mountbatten’s chief of staff, confirmed this while addressing a meeting of the chiefs of staff in London on 8 October 1947 that it was a mistake to imagine that the storm which broke out in August, and which was still raging, was unexpected. He, however, frankly admitted that neither its character nor its extent were anticipated by anyone in authority, whether in India, Pakistan or England.⁹

A major consequence of the forced migration of Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan was, according to Shahid Javed Burki, to ‘Muslimize’ the country. As a result, the proportion of Muslims in Pakistan increased from about 65 per cent to 95 per cent. He notes, ‘Had this Muslimization not occurred, the presence of a large non-Muslim population may well have prevented Pakistan developing such a radical Islamic identity.’¹⁰

Apart from creating hatred among communities, the partition of Punjab was based on the distribution of the population and not with an eye on defence. As a result, the Radcliffe Line that demarcated the border between India and West Pakistan saw the major cities of Pakistan like Lahore and Sialkot very close to the international border. Thus, right from its birth, Pakistan’s rulers saw their frontier with India as a security nightmare, heightening their anxiety. Given the imbroglio over Kashmir, the legacy of Partition was to make the physical defence of Pakistan a priority, and the practice of defence spending taking the biggest chunk of the national budget began at birth. This was to give the army a salience which has persisted.

A related issue was the perceived ‘injustice’ of Gurdaspur district being awarded to India, enabling land access to Kashmir that India would use to establish its hold on the princely state.¹¹ Gurdaspur was sought for Pakistan on the grounds of it being a 51 per cent Muslim-majority district. Ironically, Qadian, which is the spiritual headquarters of the Ahmadiyahs, is in Gurdaspur district. Since Pakistan does not consider Ahmadiyahs to be Muslims, it is indeed hypocritical to allege a ‘conspiracy’ of the British to have awarded Gurdaspur to India or to continue to claim it on the grounds of being a Muslim-majority district. Yet the narrative persists and is used frequently to paint India as a manipulative country.

For Jinnah and the Muslim League, parity between Hindus and Muslims and its by-product, parity with

the Congress, lay at the core of their demands. The fundamental difference between the two was that the Muslim League, ‘... wanted parity or equal weight in electoral rights for the minority Muslim population with the majority Hindu electorate’. Without this extra weight, the Muslim League believed, the Muslims were vulnerable to being denied their due political rights.¹² This was graphically demonstrated when in response to Gandhiji’s statement that Hindus and Muslims were brothers and equals, Jinnah, echoing Syed Ahmad, stated in his 1940 presidential address: ‘... brother Gandhi has three votes, I have only one.’¹³

This quest for parity, rather than being buried with the creation of Pakistan, was carried over into the new state and has become an obsession with its leaders and is perhaps the most consistent and overwhelming trend in Pakistan’s relations with India. Leader after leader has sought to equate Pakistan with India in this elusive quest for parity and has demanded of India and the rest of the world to be recognized as such. For the Pakistan Army, this quest is an article of faith, the quest is what makes and defines them as Pakistanis. Without assertion of such parity they would be seen to have acquiesced to ‘Hindu’ subjugation. (For a more detailed discussion of this element of parity, see [Chapter 14](#)).

A major dilemma that Jinnah faced was that he could not afford to state precisely what the demand for ‘Pakistan’ meant: whether it would be an Islamic or a secular state, what would be its geographical shape, etc., due to several reasons. First, Muslims were spread all over the subcontinent, apart from concentrations in north-west and north-east India. A Pakistan scheme based on Muslim-majority provinces would leave out the Muslims living in Muslim-minority provinces like the United Provinces, Bihar, Central Provinces, Bombay, etc. Jinnah’s dilemma, as Jalal puts it, was ‘how to cover the interests of all Muslims in the absence of a neat equation between populations and territory’.¹⁴ Jinnah had to reconcile the need for autonomy in the Muslim-majority provinces with affirmative action in favour of the Muslims in the Muslim-minority provinces through a strong Centre.

Second, right till mid-1946, Jinnah was not even sure about the creation of Pakistan. Thus, when Pakistan was formed, people did not know what to expect or what it even meant. Lieven sums it up well: ‘...all the evidence suggests that Jinnah and the League leadership were completely unprepared for the realities of complete separation from India. This was to have tragic consequences when Pakistan was created.’¹⁵ Not surprisingly, a few months before its creation, Khwaja Nazimuddin, who later became Pakistan’s second governor general as well as its second prime minister, candidly told a British governor that ‘...he did not know what Pakistan means and that nobody in the Muslim League knew’.¹⁶

Jinnah was obviously aware of these anomalies and thus it was a clever ploy to keep the idea of Pakistan as vague as possible for as long as possible. Likewise, the future boundaries of Pakistan were kept ambiguous till the very end. Instead, the focus was on the argument that in any post-Britain united India, Muslim identity would be challenged unless they had their own state. Jinnah’s contention was that till the achievement of Pakistan all Muslims needed to subordinate their differences to the national goal. As he put it, ‘We shall have time to quarrel ourselves and we shall have the time when these differences will have to be settled, when wrongs and injuries will have to be remedied. We shall have time for domestic programmes and policies, but first get the government. This is a nation without any territory or any government.’¹⁷

While keeping what Pakistan meant opaque may have been a tactic, Jinnah’s own conception of Pakistan was a bit hazy. For example, when the American journalist Bourke-White asked Jinnah to define

what he considered democracy, he declared, 'Democracy is not just a new thing we are learning. It is in our blood. We have always had our system of zakat – our obligation to the poor.' She later wrote in her book that the equation of democracy with charity made her very uncomfortable. All Jinnah told her was that the constitution would be democratic because 'the soil is perfectly fertile for democracy'.¹⁸ A very perceptive Bourke-White was to identify two key attributes of Pakistan soon after its birth. One was the 'bankruptcy of ideas in the new Muslim State – a nation drawing its spurious warmth from the embers of an antique fanaticism, fanned into a new blaze'.¹⁹ The second attribute is discussed in [Chapter 17](#) on the United States. Her assessment confirmed Mountbatten's caustic comment about Jinnah narrated by H.V. Hodson: 'Nevertheless', wrote Lord Mountbatten while recording their talk (with Jinnah, held on 9 April 1947), 'he gives me the impression of a man who has not thought out one single piece of the mechanics of his own scheme, and he will really get the shock of his life when he comes down to earth and try and make his vague idealistic proposals work on a concrete basis.'²⁰ Mountbatten was warning Jinnah about the difficulties that would arise from the creation of Pakistan.

In fact, in a meeting with Liaquat Ali on 19 April 1947, Mountbatten said that Jinnah was 'completely impractical'. Liaquat responded: 'If your staff will work out exactly what partition means and that if you present the full difficulties to Mr Jinnah, he will of course understand them even though he has not worked them out for himself.'²¹

This vagueness about what Pakistan meant was to have tragic consequences once the new country came into being. It was obvious that Pakistan had not been thought through, and its troubles were largely the result of this fact. It meant that there was no common vision of either what Pakistan would be or of its ideology. This contrasted with the Congress and its leaders who had a fairly good idea of how to govern India and what policies they would pursue once Independence was achieved. The early demise of Jinnah was to complicate matters. Even today, confusion and adhocery persist about the nature of Pakistan and the policies that need to be pursued.

Religion came to Jinnah's rescue to garner support for a vague concept. Given the dominance of the landed elite in the League, there was no way Jinnah could have launched a populist programme to mobilize the Muslim rural masses. Such mass movements were distasteful to Jinnah in any case. Hence, 'recourse to Islam made sense to a politician and a party with neither a populist past nor a populist present. Both politician and party needed to steal the populist march on their rivals.'²² The first sign of Jinnah going down this route was when, after the shock defeat in the 1937 elections, he exchanged his Saville Row suit for the dress of Muslim elite in the United Provinces – a sherwani and a Karkul cap.

According to Jalal, 'Jinnah's appeal to religion was always ambiguous; certainly it was not characteristic of his political style before 1937 and evidence suggests that his use of the communal factor was a political tactic, not an ideological commitment.'²³ While that may be so, the opportunistic use of Islam to win the 1945–46 elections in the Muslim-majority provinces was to unleash forces over which neither Jinnah nor the Muslim League, nor successive rulers in Pakistan, would have any control. Winning these elections was crucial to prove to the British and the Congress that the League, in fact, was the representative body of the Muslims of British India. The problem was that the Muslim League's presence, let alone hold, in the Muslim-majority areas was at best thin on the ground, if not non-existent. The League had been able to make some inroads here by supporting regional autonomy and showing an aversion to

land reforms. But it was ultimately the use of religion that won the Muslim League 460 of the 533 reserved seats for Muslims in the 1945–46 elections. This was a remarkable reversal of the 1937 results and was due largely to the use of religion and Islamic rhetoric during the campaign in which Islam and Pakistan became synonymous. Encouragement was given to ‘a vague feeling that they would all become better Muslims once a Muslim state was established’.²⁴

One of the tactics Jinnah used was to assure religious leaders that Pakistan would follow Islamic laws. As Khalid B. Sayeed notes:

In a letter to the Pir of Manki Sharif, the [Muslim] League leader clearly stated in November 1945: ‘It is needless to emphasize that the Constituent Assembly which would be predominantly Muslim in its composition would be able to enact laws for Muslims, not inconsistent with the Shariah laws and the Muslims will no longer be obliged to abide by the Un-Islamic laws.’²⁵

Islam with its symbols and slogans started to figure very prominently in the League meetings that Jinnah addressed, particularly in the Muslim-majority areas. For example, addressing the Pathans, he said, ‘Do you want Pakistan or not?’ (Shouts of Allah-o-Akbar, God is great). ‘Well, if you want Pakistan, vote for the League candidates. If we fail to realize our duty today you will be reduced to the status of Sudras (low castes) and Islam will be vanquished from India. I shall never allow Muslims to be slaves of Hindus.’ (Allah-o-Akbar.)²⁶

Another tactic was to appoint, in 1946, a Mashaikh Committee, consisting of eminent pirs and *mashaikh* to influence the faithful to vote for the Muslim League. It included religious leaders like Pir Sahib of Manki Sharif, Pir Jama’t Ali Shah, Khwaja Nazimuddin of Taunsa Sharif, Makhdum Raza Shah of Multan, etc. Included in the committee were also ‘politicians of dubious pretensions to piety – Mamdot, Shaukat Hayat, etc.’.²⁷ The Pir of Manki Sharif together with ulema like Maulana Shabbir Osmani and Maulan Abdul Sattar Khan Niazi played an important role in the victory of the Muslim League in the NWFP referendum.²⁸

For the League, three slogans worked beautifully: ‘Islam in danger’; ‘If you are a Muslim, vote for the League’; and ‘*Pakistan ka matlab kya?*’ (What is the meaning of Pakistan?); ‘*La ilaha ilallah*’ (there is no god but God).²⁹ According to Ishtiaq Ahmed, it was Asghar Sodai, a poet from Sialkot, who coined the slogan ‘*Pakistan ka na’ara kya* (What is the slogan of Pakistan?) *La ilaha ilallah*’ which later on became ‘*Pakistan ka matlab kya*’.³⁰

The Muslim League campaign was aptly described in the various Fortnightly Reports of Sir Bertrand Glancy, the governor of Punjab to the viceroy:

16 August 1945: ... I must confess that I am gravely perturbed about the situation, because there is very serious danger of the elections being fought, so far as the Muslims are concerned, on an entirely false issue. Crude Pakistan may be quite illogical, undefinable and ruinous to India and in particular to Muslims, but this does not detract from its potency as a political slogan. The uninformed Muslim will be told that the question he is called on to answer at the polls is – Are you a true believer or an infidel and a traitor?³¹

27 December 1945 – Among the Muslims, the Leaguers are increasing their efforts to appeal to the bigotry of the electors. Pirs and maulvis have been enlisted in large numbers to tour the

province and denounce all who oppose the League as infidels. Copies of the Holy Quran are carried around as an emblem peculiar to the ML. Firoz (Khan Noon who switched from the Unionist Party to the ML) and others openly preach that every vote given to the League is a vote cast in favour of the Holy Prophet.³²

2 February 1946 – The ML orators are becoming increasingly fanatical in their speeches. Maulvis and pirs and students travel all around the province and preach that those who fail to vote for the League candidates will cease to be Muslims; their marriages will no longer be valid and they will entirely be excommunicated ... It is not easy to foresee what the results of the elections will be. But there seems little doubt the ML, thanks to the ruthless methods by which they have pursued their campaign of ‘Islam in danger’, will considerably increase the number of their seats and Unionist representatives will correspondingly decline.³³

In reality, the use of religion by the Muslim League was illegal as per the prevalent electoral laws. Not surprisingly, therefore, of the seventy-three assembly seats captured by the Muslim League in Punjab, the results in forty-five were legally challenged after the polls on the grounds that League’s Islam-based pro-Pakistan electoral rhetoric in 1946 was corrupt as per the existing laws.³⁴

The use of religion was to become a millstone around the neck of its leaders after Pakistan was created. It was one thing to say that Hindus and Muslims were separate ‘nations’; it was quite another to use religion to fan the flames of hatred against the Hindus. With slogans like ‘*Pakistan ka matlab kya? La ilaha ilallah*’ being used in the 1946 elections, there was no way that the religious genie could be put back in the bottle. Even where the contest was between two Muslims, the contest was widely portrayed as one between Islam and its enemies, as one between ‘*haq o batil*’ (right and wrong) and between Islam and kufr. For example, during the campaign, the slogan in these constituencies was ‘*Islam aur kufr ka muqabala hai, aik taraf Islam ka naminda hai, doosri taraf kafroon ka*’ (It is a contest between Islam and kufr; on one side is the representative of Islam and on the other of the infidels.)³⁵ The tactical use of Islam sanctified by Jinnah was to have a fundamental impact on the new state, and almost immediately on its creation. Pakistan has not been able to put the genie back in the bottle ever since.

Jinnah’s early demise created a leadership vacuum, the impact of which could have been contained had a strong Muslim League been able to fill the breach. This was not to be, primarily due to the nature and structure of the League. The Muslim League did not fight for the creation of Pakistan through a political mass movement. It had no organization worth the name. Till the end, the League was a club of the Muslim elite and that too predominantly from the Muslim-minority provinces. For example, in the Council of the Muslim League for 1942, out of a total membership of 503, there were 245 members from the Muslim-minority provinces and 258 from the Muslim-majority ones, even though population-wise the latter far outnumbered the former. In its powerful working committee during 1945–47, there were only ten members out of twenty-three from the majority provinces.³⁶ It remained dependent on landlords and pirs to deliver votes on the one hand, and on the British to smoothen their way as representatives of the Muslims on the other. As the example of NWFP shows, it was left to the governor to cobble support for the Muslim League by bribing mullahs and pirs.

As a result, there was no political training, and no seasoned leadership could emerge at various levels. It was the Congress that struggled for India’s freedom with almost every Congress leader, including

Gandhiji, Nehru, Patel, etc., spending years in British jails for demanding India's freedom, and bearing the brunt of police atrocities. On the other hand, not a single League leader, including Jinnah, was ever sent to prison for seeking Pakistan. Jinnah himself claimed this as a virtue to Lord Mountbatten:

All the Muslims have been loyal to the British from the beginning. We supplied a high proportion of the Army which fought in both wars. None of our leaders has ever had to go prison for disloyalty. Not one of us has done anything to deserve expulsion from the commonwealth.... Mr. Churchill had assured me that the British people would never stand for our being expelled.³⁷

An additional facet of the Muslim League was that to demonstrate itself as the representative Muslim organization of Indian Muslims, it developed a mindset of narrow-mindedness, treating any opposition to it as illegitimate. Jinnah started the practice of dubbing as traitor or quisling any Muslim who stood against the League. Thus, political opponents like the chief minister of Punjab and Unionist Party leader Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana was denounced as 'infidel' and 'traitor' to Islam.³⁸ Some of the Muslim Leaguers went so far as to say that any Muslim who opposed the Muslim League had betrayed the cause of Islam itself.³⁹

Such precedents of political intolerance would become the template in Pakistan. As Talbot notes, 'The seeds were thus sown for a political culture of intolerance which has become the hallmark of successive elected as well as non-elected regimes. It has brought in its wake not only curbs on civil liberties and selective political accountability, but violence in the absence of a consensual and accommodationist political culture.'⁴⁰ The process began immediately after the creation of Pakistan when Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan and other Muslim League leaders denounced political opposition as anti-state and even Indian-inspired. Liaquat said, 'The formation of new political parties in opposition to the Muslim League is against the best interest of Pakistan. If the Muslim League is not made strong and powerful, and the mushroom growth of parties is not checked immediately, I assure you that Pakistan, which was achieved after great sacrifice, will not survive.'⁴¹

Identifying opposition to the Muslim League with opposition to Pakistan, which was a hangover from the Pakistan movement, was a dangerous trend, started right at the inception of Pakistan. Such intolerance would only grow at the expense of accepting dissent as a normal part of democracy. As noted in the Introduction, there is a long list of political stalwarts of Pakistan who have been declared as 'traitors' and periodically jailed for their taking up nationalist causes.

Another big failing of the Muslim League was that unlike the Congress, it failed to transform itself into a national political party, which could rule the newly created state.⁴² The League did not seem to have done any homework on how Pakistan was to be governed. There was no evidence of any planning on issues that the new country would face; it did not indicate the outlines of the political and economic agenda to be followed after Pakistan had been created. The only references in Jinnah's speeches that could be deemed economic were those pertaining to the economic plight of the Indian Muslims and economy in general. There were some references to asking a few Muslim business houses to start an airline, a shipping company and some banks that a new country would need, but there was no road map. In fact, his speech at the inauguration of the State Bank of Pakistan was a critique of the 'western economic system' for creating 'almost insoluble problems for humanity' and pledging to 'present to the world an

economic system based on the true Islamic concept of equality of manhood and social justice'.⁴³

This was also borne out by the diary of that governor of Bengal, Richard Casey, who noted that the Muslim League had had only the most cursory examination and thought given to the consequences of India's division. 'I believed that they relied too implicitly on their leader, Mr Jinnah – and that, apart from whatever thought he may have given to the subject, I did not believe that any other Muslim had really applied himself to the study of the many problems involved.'⁴⁴

India's first high commissioner to Pakistan, Sri Prakasa, provided one telling example of how this worked in practice. 'As Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, Zafarullah Khan used to preside over Select Committees on various Bills. Once after such a meeting when we Congress members had proposed endless amendments on one particular bill, he said to me, "You Congressmen do study very hard." I said: "We are here for that." "But", he went on, "members of the Muslim League do not do so. They are also here for the same purpose."⁴⁵

The structural weakness of the Muslim League coupled with lack of political experience and its lack of a road map or vision of how Pakistan was to be run were to be a huge impediment in the future development of the country. It seemed that the leaders were content just to get Pakistan but, having got it, were not sure what to do about it. This explains the inability of the Constituent Assembly to decide on a constitution till 1956, and the dominating role that the bureaucratic elite rather than politicians were to play in the formative years of Pakistan.

Many commentators have noted that from conception to fruition, Pakistan took only seven years. The Pakistan Resolution was moved in 1940 and Pakistan was created in 1947. Both Jinnah and his sister Fatima attested to this. On 7 August 1947 when Jinnah arrived in Karachi and was walking up the steps of Government House, he told his Naval ADC Lt S.M. Ahsan, 'Do you know, I had never expected to see Pakistan in my lifetime.'⁴⁶ Fatima Jinnah too articulated similar sentiments when she told Bourke-White: 'We never expected to get it so soon. We never expected to get it in our lifetime.'⁴⁷ Inadvertently, both Jinnah and Fatima Jinnah put their fingers on one of the key components of the legacy that Pakistan inherited. This was the fact that the leaders got Pakistan too easily. The titanic struggle for Indian independence was between the Congress and the British. A key beneficiary of the struggle was the Muslim League. They never had to struggle against the British. They did not have to resort to mass mobilization. Their battle was always with the Congress and they got a huge helping hand from the British.

However, because Pakistan was achieved so easily, leaders of Pakistan felt that they too could get everything easily and that things would fall into their lap. They just had to be determined and persevering like Jinnah and use force appropriately. This has bred complacency about governance and, worse, inculcated an attitude of not being responsible for their actions, and that, ultimately, others would bail them out.

Additionally, it is often forgotten that there was no universal suffrage in pre-Partition India. It is estimated that perhaps only 10 to 12 per cent of the total Muslim population of India voted in the 1946 elections. Thus, Jinnah's undoubted demonstration that the Muslim League represented Indian Muslims was, in fact, premised on a very narrow base. In a very real sense, therefore, Pakistan was created so quickly and without a mass base that there was no preparation for governing.

The British midwifing its birth was to have a lasting impact on Pakistan. It was British spoon-feeding that made the Muslim League the representative body of the Muslims as an effective counter to the Congress and made Jinnah its sole spokesman. Without the active assistance of Britain, none of this would have happened. At every step it was the British who cleared the hurdles for Jinnah in their quest to have an opposition to the Congress and to be able to show to the world that while they were willing to relinquish power, disagreement among the Indians made it impossible to do so.

Two consequences have flowed from this British midwifing. One, the Muslim League remained stymied as a political party. It depended upon British favours rather than developing roots among the people or even having an organization worth the name. Not surprisingly, when Iskander Mirza asked Jinnah, who had become governor general of Pakistan by then, to be ‘... considerate to the Muslim Leaguers as, after all, they gave us Pakistan’, Jinnah retorted haughtily: ‘Who told you the Muslim League gave us Pakistan? I brought Pakistan – with my stenographer.’⁴⁸ This tradition was to continue in Pakistan and continues even today.

The Muslim League today remains a party of notables in each district without a grass-roots organization. It is only at the time of elections that a rudimentary party organization at the district level gets created. Moreover, the fact that the Muslim League has split into so many factions reminds one of the fact that it was the British who intervened on several occasions to ensure unity of the party under Jinnah. Without an external authority backing one leader totally, the party would have collapsed during the run-up to Partition. Once the British left, there was no one to keep the party together, and it broke up repeatedly.

The most scathing attack on the Muslim League was by the editor of *Pakistan Times*, Mazhar Ali Khan. Less than two years after the creation of Pakistan, in an editorial in the *Pakistan Times* titled ‘Sabotage’, he wrote:

Once upon a time, not many years ago, the Muslim League was justly regarded as the sole representative of India’s ten crore Muslims. But since the establishment of Pakistan, this great organization has sunk steadily into the mire. Active public support for Muslim League policies has declined considerably and its front-rank leadership stands sharply divided into two main categories – those in office, and those trying to get into office.⁴⁹

Two, it was the strategic importance of the north-west of India for Britain that made them agree to Partition, when faced with the possibility that India under Nehru may plough a different furrow. The importance of their strategic location was not lost on the Pakistan leadership right from the beginning. Even before its creation, Jinnah projected the territorial importance of Pakistan to seek US assistance. This dependence on external elements has continued unabated. Ayub Khan went so far as to claim such assistance as Pakistan’s right. He wrote in an article that ‘... the English-speaking world ought to feel a special responsibility to assist Pakistan in attaining a reasonable posture of advancement. It is not just a claim. It is in fact the dictate of history.’⁵⁰ After a bit of hesitation, the US would slip into the role of the British and it is they who have sustained Pakistan for the past seven decades. Over the long term, as this book would show, it is precisely this geographical location that Pakistan has tried to exploit, but, equally, it is this strategic location that has warped its development.

Finally, an important component of the legacy of the Pakistan movement was tied up in the persona of

Jinnah himself. Jinnah's stature was unparalleled in Pakistan. Pakistan owed its creation to this one man. While fate was certainly cruel to Pakistan in removing Jinnah from the scene so soon after its creation, Jinnah can be faulted for not building up a second-rung leadership. His towering personality ensured that apart from Liaquat Ali Khan, there were no leaders who could carry the baton forward. After the assassination of Liaquat Ali in 1951, there was a dearth of political leaders. Not surprisingly, there were four governors general and seven prime ministers between 1947 and 1958, just when Pakistan needed political stability the most.

Two curious events involving Jinnah in the run-up to the Partition were to have a lasting impact on Pakistan. It is undisputed that Jinnah had a strong faith in constitutionalism just as he did not believe in street politics and disagreed with Gandhiji's policy of civil disobedience movements to fight the British rule. Yet, when it came to the crunch, it was he who gave a call for Direct Action in 1946 to achieve Pakistan through unconstitutional means if necessary, which led to mass killings in Calcutta. One lesson that successive generations of Pakistan leaders were to imbibe from this was that it was only force that the 'Hindus' would understand. Or as Ayub Khan was to put it so graphically, 'As a general rule Hindu morale would not stand more than a couple of blows delivered at the right time and place. Such opportunities should, therefore, be sought and exploited'.⁵¹ Many Pakistani leaders have lived to regret such a fallacy.

Second, NWFP remained a problem for the Muslim League. Neither elections nor the communal rioting was able to shake the Congress government in NWFP, or give the League a foothold. Like in the case of the Direct Action Day, Jinnah put his constitutional coat aside and hatched a dangerous plot with violent implications. This involved his commissioning Iskander Mirza, then a deputy commissioner and later the governor general of Pakistan, in February 1947, to raise a tribal lashkar to be used in NWFP to rouse the Pathans in favour of the Muslim League. He told Mirza that the prospects of getting Pakistan did not look good. He felt that Muslim anger had to be properly demonstrated, as otherwise the British would hand over the country to the Congress. He declared that if Pakistan could not be won through negotiations, it would have to be won by the will of the Muslims. He, therefore, decided that if negotiations failed by the middle of May, the Muslims must make a dramatic statement. While Mirza started preparations for this, ultimately the demand for Pakistan was conceded and he was not called upon to implement Jinnah's plan.⁵² However, since Iskander Mirza became defence secretary in 1947, his experience with tribal lashkars must have come in handy in organizing the raiders into Kashmir in October 1947.

Both these incidents do not do Jinnah's reputation as a constitutionalist a lot of good. There is also the tantalizing possibility of Jinnah having second thoughts about what he had achieved. Two strands are worth noting.

First, while attention has invariably been focused on '... you are free to go to your temples ...' portion of his 11 August 1947 speech to the Constituent Assembly, that speech also included the first signs of self-doubt. Thus, Jinnah said '... any idea of a united India could never have worked and in my judgement it would have led us to terrific disaster. Maybe that view is correct, maybe it is not, that remains to be seen.'⁵³ According to Wolpert,

... for the first time Jinnah openly challenged his own judgement, wondering aloud if it might not have been correct, sensing perhaps that the worst part of the dream – the true tragic

nightmare of Partition was about to begin, the hurricane waiting behind this ‘cyclonic revolution’. What a remarkable reversal it was, as though he had been transformed overnight once again into the old ‘Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity’.⁵⁴

Bourke-White, who spent several days at Government House in Karachi trying to take pictures of Jinnah for *Life* magazine, was shocked at Jinnah’s physical condition. She wrote in her book:

Later, reflecting on what I had seen, I decided that this desperation was due to causes far deeper than anxiety over Pakistan’s territorial and economic difficulties. I think that the tortured appearance of Mr Jinnah was an indication that, in these final months of his life, he was adding up his own balance sheet. Analytical, brilliant and no bigot, he knew what he had done. Like Doctor Faustus, he had made a bargain from which he could never be free. During the heat of the struggle he had been willing to call on all the devilish forces of superstition, and now that his new nation had been achieved the bigots were in the position of authority. The leaders of orthodoxy and a few ‘old families’ had the final word and, to perpetuate their power, were seeing to it that the people were held in the deadening grip of religious superstition.⁵⁵

Second, Jinnah died an exhausted man, unable to even get a functioning ambulance to take him from the airport in Karachi to his residence. According to M.J. Akbar, Jinnah’s personal physician in his last days, Col Ilahi Baksh, has recorded that once Jinnah, on his deathbed, lost his cool while speaking to Liaquat Ali, who had come to see him. Jinnah described Pakistan as ‘the biggest blunder of my life’. The story was printed in Peshawar’s *Frontier Post* in November 1987 and quotes Jinnah as saying, ‘If now I get an opportunity I will go to Delhi and tell Jawaharlal to forget about the follies of the past and become friends again.’⁵⁶ According to Sarila if Col Elahi Baksh, the doctor who attended on Jinnah during the last phase of his illness in August–September 1948 at Ziarat near Quetta, is to be believed, he heard his patient say: ‘I have made it [Pakistan] but I am convinced that I have committed the greatest blunder of my life.’ And, around the same period, Liaquat Ali Khan, upon emerging one day from the sick man’s room after receiving a tongue-lashing, was heard to murmur: ‘The old man has now discovered his mistake.’⁵⁷

To conclude, the cumulative effect of the various strands of the legacy of the Pakistan movement deeply impacted the development of Pakistan. The four most vital factors were the use of religion and communal rhetoric that Jinnah had sanctioned prior to the 1946 elections and what Bourke-White thought haunted him in the end; the fatal failing of the Muslim League to be dependent on the British to achieve Pakistan, rather than being a mass-based party with a programme and vision for the future; the vagueness of the Pakistan idea and the obsessive need for parity with the Congress that was translated, post-creation, into seeking parity with India.

Once Pakistan was created, neither could the religious genie be contained nor could the communal frenzy be kept at bay; neither could the weaknesses of the Muslim League be kept hidden nor could the vagueness of what Pakistan meant be sustained. Seeking parity with India, especially military parity, has been perhaps the single most important factor that has warped Pakistan’s development. Jinnah’s early demise ensured that confusion continued on whether Pakistan was to be modelled on his 11 August 1947 speech to keep religion out of politics or Pakistan would be an Islamic state as per the League’s own

statements just before Partition.

Given these formidable issues, Pakistani leaders harked back to the last stages of the Pakistan movement in which religion had provided the glue to forge Muslim unity. They chose to define a common Pakistani national identity in religious terms. The fundamental error was that while religion could create temporary unity, especially when faced with a supposed external threat, forging long-term unity or national identity by suppressing ethnolinguistic identities was far more challenging. Even after the sell-by date of religious unity as demonstrated in 1971, Pakistan has continued to harp on it with adverse consequences.

Thus, Pakistan, which came into existence on 14 August 1947, had to carry a heavy burden for which it has paid and continues to pay an enormous price. The superstructure of Pakistan, built on such foundations was bound to be skewed, shaky and suspect. Over the decades, the weight of this legacy has grown heavier, beckoning it towards the abyss.

II

The Building Blocks

THIS SECTION looks at the issues of identity and ideology that go to the heart of the problems being faced by Pakistan. Into the seventh decade of its creation, there continues to be a debate over the meaning of ‘Pakistani identity’. This was and remains a critical issue since Pakistan was a new country carved out of India and precisely for that reason had to be distinct from India. Created in the name of Islam, the emphasis on an Islamic identity was natural. However, the rulers were to find that Islam was not nearly as effective a glue to keep the country together as it was in creating one.

Various strategies have been tried to blend the several nationalities residing in Pakistan into one overriding national identity. Apart from religion, these have included centralization, use of Urdu and a virulent anti-India posture. Of these, religion and anti-India sentiments have been the dominant narratives, both blending into what came to be called ‘Nazaria-i-Pakistan’ or Pakistani ideology. This term, however, was conspicuous by its absence during the movement to create Pakistan itself. The father of the nation, Jinnah, never used it, nor did his immediate successors.

The conundrum that faced Jinnah and all his successors was that the geographical area that came to constitute Pakistan shared only a common religion and little else. There was no common history, culture, language or ethnicity. In fact, since Islam had never been in danger due to the overwhelming majority of Muslims in these areas, Islam was not the salient identity in these provinces like it was in the Muslim-minority provinces of undivided India. Here the impulses of ethnolinguistic nationalism were far stronger and have become even more so after the creation of Pakistan due to the policies of its rulers and the dominating role of its largest province – Punjab.

3

A Question of Identity and Ideology

The world may like to call us Pakistanis, but there are few within the borders of this country that identify themselves by that moniker. No, many of our citizens are ashamed to call themselves Pakistani and that is where the problems of this nation start and end. Pakistan is a divided nation to say the least. We are divided on ethnic, linguistic, political, religious, education and provincial lines. We gather together under different political flags. We pray in masjids that are 100 feet from each other because of slight differences in the way we practice Islam.¹

FOR PAKISTAN'S leaders, defining a Pakistani identity was a critical issue for two reasons. First, the geographical areas that came to constitute Pakistan had never before existed as a country. As Selig Harrison notes aptly:

There is no precedent in the history of South Asia for a state consisting of the five ethno-linguistic regions that made up Pakistan as originally constituted in 1947, or even for the truncated Pakistan consisting of the four regions that remained after Bangladesh seceded in 1971. The ideologues of Pakistani nationalism exalt the historical memory of [Mughal emperors] Akbar and Aurangzeb as the symbols of a lost Islamic grandeur in South Asia. By contrast, for the Baluchis, Sindhis and Pashtuns, the Moghuls are remembered primarily as the symbols of past oppression.²

Second, the identity had to be different and distinct from India since Pakistan had been carved out of India and as a new country with an unfamiliar name had to be acknowledged by the world as such. Simply put, India was a historic entity, not always politically but certainly as a concept, while there was no Pakistan before 1947. This need for distinctiveness led to the emphasis of an identity that was Islamic, taking its cue from the two-nation theory that was the philosophy behind Pakistan's creation. In a fundamental sense, as Aparna Pande notes, creating a Pakistani identity amounted to erasing any traces of 'Indian-ness' within Pakistan, 'Denying the "Indian-ness" of Pakistan's identity meant emphasizing the "Hinduness" of India and reinforcing the "Islamic" nature of Pakistan.'³

To complicate matters, the new state perceived itself to be the successor of the Muslim empires in India, especially the Mughals who had ruled India prior to the coming of the British. Unfortunately, Pakistani leaders had to face the uncomfortable reality that these Muslim empires were centred in India

while Pakistan had been pushed to the periphery of those empires, to areas that did not have even a shared history. The symbols of Islamic splendour like the Taj Mahal (Agra), Red Fort (Delhi), Char Minar (Hyderabad), were in India, leaving the new state with very little to show for the proclaimed grandeur of its past. This made the task of developing a national identity even more difficult.

Reflecting the preoccupation with a definition for Pakistani identity, as late as 2000, the newspaper *Dawn* stated: ‘Since its inception Pakistan has faced the monumental task to spell out an identity different from the Indian identity. Born from the division of the old civilization of India, Pakistan has struggled for constructing its own, a culture which will not only be different from the Indian culture but that the whole world would acknowledge.’⁴

Four instruments have been used to try and forge a common identity – religion, centralization, Urdu and playing up a supposed threat from India. (The last is discussed in detail in the chapter on India).

At its creation, Pakistan inherited four provinces in the west (Balochistan, NWFP, Punjab and Sindh), and one in the east. East Pakistan was the most homogeneous province, ethnically and linguistically. In the west, however, there was considerable ethnic and linguistic diversity. Moreover, each province did not contain a single ethnolinguistic group. Thus, Balochistan had the Baloch, but also a significant number of Pakhtuns in the north; NWFP had Pakhtuns but also significant numbers of Hindko-speakers; Punjab, dominated by the Punjabis, had a significant Seraiki population; Sindh had Sindhis but, post-Partition, saw a massive influx of Mohajirs from India who settled in the urban areas.

The challenge for the new state was to weld these disparate identities into one Pakistani identity. The country was founded on the basis of the two-nation theory that claimed that the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent constituted a separate ‘nation’ which bore a distinct and potentially sovereign political identity and that religion could bind diverse ethnolinguistic identities. The shaping of a Pakistani identity thus became hinged on Islam. Prof. Waheed-uz-Zaman graphically enumerated Pakistan’s identity dilemma in these words:

‘... the wish to see the kingdom of God established in a Muslim territory was the moving idea behind the demand for Pakistan. If we let go the ideology of Islam, we cannot hold together as a nation by any other means. If the Arabs, the Turks, or the Iranians give up Islam, the Arabs yet remain Arabs, the Turks remain Turks, the Iranians remain Iranians, but what do we remain if we give up Islam?’⁵

A rhetorical answer was given in 1980: ‘If we are not Muslims, what are we? Second rate Indians?’⁶

While an Islamic identity was a continuation of the two-nation theory, it had the added advantage of potentially papering over the multiple identities of the geographical area that became Pakistan. As Liaquat Ali said after the passage of the Objectives Resolution (see [chapter 7](#)) ‘...as Pakistan was created for the Muslims to live by Islamic teachings and traditions, the state would therefore do more than merely leave them free to profess and practice their faith.’⁷ In effect, the state would superimpose a common religious identity over existing multiple identities.

The forging of a unique religion-based Pakistani identity, however, was problematic because it had to be forged in a geographical area that had historical states with significant linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversities and where people instinctively thought of themselves as Bengalis, Sindhis, Baloch, Pakhtuns, Seraikis rather than as Pakistanis. As noted above, even the geographical regions in the west had never

before been strung together as one country. Additionally, these provinces were not even in the forefront of the Pakistan movement and had no shared history. Given their Muslim majorities, there was never any danger to Islam. Yet, Pakistan largely ignored the diversity of its people and tried to superimpose a common Islam-based Pakistani identity on the dominant ethnolinguistic identity. This would eventually cost the state half its territory. Failure to acknowledge ethnic diversity in the elusive quest of a national identity was a challenge in 1947. It remains a challenge even after seventy years.

Moreover, as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad said in an interview,

It [Pakistan] is being demanded in the name of Islam ... Division of territories on the basis of religion is a contraption devised by Muslim League. They can pursue it as their political agenda, but it finds no sanction in Islam or Quran ... Strictly speaking, Muslims in India are not one community; they are divided among many well-entrenched sects. You can unite them by arousing their anti-Hindu sentiment but you cannot unite them in the name of Islam. To them Islam means undiluted loyalty to their own sect.⁸

In a sense, Maulana Azad foresaw that the overt use of Islam would ultimately lead to sectarianism and strife.

Even otherwise, the concept of 'qaum' (nation) in the Quran is composite. The believers and the unbelievers, according to the Quran, do not constitute separate qaums. They belong to one nation, one group only.⁹

In fact, even before the creation of Pakistan, there were significant warnings. For example, in 1944, the president of the Bengal Muslim League, Abdul Mansur Ahmed, declared in his presidential address:

Religion and culture are not the same thing. Religion transgresses the geographical boundary but tamaddum [culture] cannot go beyond the geographical boundary. ... Here only lies the difference between 'Purba' [Eastern] Pakistan and Pakistan. For this reason the people of Purba Pakistan are a different nation from the people of the other provinces of India and from the 'religious brothers' of Pakistan.¹⁰

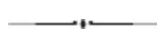
These prophetic words became a reality with the creation of Bangladesh in 1971.

That apart, continuing with the two-nation theory after Pakistan's creation generated problems of its own. It meant that Pakistan would need a 'Hindu' India constantly as an essential reference point for its raison d'être. This ensured that Pakistan could not succeed in evolving a separate and positive national identity. Its national identity would continue to be a negative, anti-India narrative.¹¹

Centralization of power began immediately after the creation of Pakistan. With Jinnah as governor general, all pre-Partition talk of provincial autonomy was given a hasty burial. This centralizing policy of the Pakistani state was meant to forge a common identity by suppressing any provincial aspirations. Unfortunately for Pakistan's leaders, such attempts at centralization had the reverse effect and were to give encouragement to provincial discontent. For example, the one-unit scheme adopted in 1955 was a crude effort of the West Pakistan elite to join all the provinces in West Pakistan in order to neutralize the electoral influence of the Bengali majority in East Pakistan. While the Bengali majority could not be neutralized, the smaller provinces of West Pakistan chafed at being denied autonomy. One consequence of

centralization was that the ruling elite did not feel the need to evolve a consensus over crucial political and economic issues like provincial autonomy, distribution of resources, etc. Policies were rammed down the throats of the smaller provinces, which only had the effect of bringing out in greater relief the multiple identities constituting Pakistan.

Ethnic identities have also been reinforced by the simple fact that after the creation of Pakistan the fear of a Hindu majority suppressing a minority Muslim population was taken out of the equation. Muslims were faced with the prospect of competing with other Muslims for jobs and loaves of office, and not with the Hindus. Such competition was on the basis of quotas – of language and ethnicity. Thus, once Pakistan was created, an overarching Islamic identity that had been useful against the ‘Hindu’ was no longer valid in a situation where a Muslim had to compete against another Muslim.



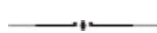
Urdu was made the national language in 1947 even though it was the language of the refugees who came from India – Mohajirs – and not an indigenous language of either East or West Pakistan. Moreover, it was spoken by only 3.7 per cent of the population. Strict measures were undertaken to implement Urdu; Bengali legislators were warned that if they used their own language, they would be tried for treason.¹² Liaquat Ali Khan told the Constituent Assembly in February 1948: ‘It is necessary for a nation to have one language and that language can only be Urdu and no other language.’¹³

Jinnah compounded matters by echoing Liaquat when he stated (in English) on 21 March 1948 in Dacca, before an estimated crowd of 300,000 non-Urdu-speaking Bengalis: ‘The state language of Pakistan is going to be Urdu and no other language.’¹⁴ He added for good measure that Urdu embodied the best in Islamic culture and Muslim tradition, thus denigrating Bengali and other regional languages as being something less than Islamic.¹⁵ The negative reaction of the crowd was loud and clear.

Jinnah’s assertion was indeed ironical since he himself did not know Urdu and his speeches at the annual sessions of the Muslim League had to be translated into Urdu by Nawab Bahadur Yar Jung from Hyderabad (Deccan), president of the All-India States Muslim League.¹⁶

Moreover, prior to 1947, Jinnah had recognized the importance of language in forming the basis of a separate identity. He had argued during the proceedings of the third meeting of the subcommittee on Sindh in 1931 that ‘the social and linguistic differences between the inhabitants of Sindh and those of Presidency of Bombay proper provided an impressive case to separate Sindh from Bombay’.¹⁷

The enforcement of Urdu was to have disastrous consequences in East Pakistan and was to prove to be the first nail in the coffin of Pakistan’s unity. Bengali nationalism took shape during the language riots of 1952. As Ian Talbot puts it, ‘Urdu has proved much less effective in promoting a national Pakistani identity than Bengali, Sindhi, Pashto, Seraiki or Balochi have been in articulating ethnic identity.’¹⁸



The moot question is why, despite the passage of almost seven decades, Pakistan has not been able to develop an overarching national identity. There is no easy answer but the fact is that the alienation of different ethnic groups, despite being Muslims, has been a persistent phenomenon in Pakistan. For, it was not Islam that kept them united but their linguistic, cultural and historic bonds. Islam could not supplant

these bonds in the same manner that it could in the Muslim-minority provinces of British India. In these provinces, especially in north India, due to their minority status, the Islamic identity was very salient.

In Pakistan the elite that was predominantly from the minority provinces sought to transplant such a Muslim identity, post-Partition. It was to come a cropper precisely because in the Muslim-majority provinces Islam or an Islamic way of life was not threatened. Added to this were the exploitative policies of Punjab (see the next chapter) that led to a Punjabi–non-Punjabi divide. Apart from Punjab monopolizing the resources of Pakistan, the centralizing policies of the state were a betrayal of the much-promised provincial autonomy during the Pakistan movement. All this made forging an overarching Pakistani identity problematic.

As Pakistan developed, the process of Islamization, which stressed a religious (non-territorial) rather than a secular national identity, was to further impede the idea of a common identity. Islamization put the people in a dilemma concerning their identity: whether they were first Muslims and then Pakistanis, or first Pakistani and then Muslims.¹⁹ For example, a survey of 2,000 young Pakistanis in the 18–27 age group found that three quarters identified themselves first as Muslims and only secondly as Pakistanis. Just 14 per cent defined themselves as citizens of Pakistan first. ‘This result should be no surprise,’ writes Pervez Hoodbhoy. ‘Pakistani schoolchildren learn to chant in unison: *Pakistan ka matlab kya? La ilaha ilallah!* (What is the meaning of Pakistan? There is no god but God!)’²⁰

The issue of sectarianism (discussed in [chapter 7](#)) distorted the possibility of religion providing a national identity. Islamization has ensured that the state itself has started insisting on seeing all its citizens through the prism of religious affiliation. For example, security clearance forms in many government organizations, including the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) and Special Plans Division (SPD), require the applicant to state his sect, name of murshid (religious mentor), name of mosque usually prayed in, as well as zat (tribal affiliation). But, as Hoodbhoy notes, ‘... as primal identities are reinforced, citizenship is proportionately weakened.’²¹ Such a process is now being extended to some universities in Sindh where federal security agencies have begun to collect records of sectarian identification of the teaching faculty, students and staff.²²

Thus, the issue of a religion-based Pakistani identity has taken a hit from two sides. For the various ethnic groups already present in the geographical region that became Pakistan, a religious identity did not have the same salience as for those in the Muslim-minority provinces of British India. Second, pushing the Islamist agenda with its underpinnings of an ummah without state borders further weakened territorial nationalism.

While the issue of a Pakistani identity was generic, it also posed several other questions. As Farzana Shaikh points out, since its inception Pakistan has been conflicted by two fundamental questions: who is a Pakistani and who is a Muslim? The former was the tension between the migrants from India who felt they were the ‘real’ Pakistanis because they had given up their all for the sake of Pakistan and the local population that felt they were the ‘sons of the soil’. Issues arose with regard to the Bengalis who were not considered ‘Muslim-enough’ because of their closeness to the Hindus, and their Muslim-ness was judged to fall below the necessary credentials required to qualify as a Pakistani.²³ Ayub Khan remarked several times that the Bengalis should be free from the ‘evil influence’ of the Hindu culture. He even banned the playing of Tagore songs on Radio Pakistan because Tagore was Hindu and therefore, an evil influence.²⁴ One look at the turmoil within the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), the dominant ethnic political

party of Karachi, and the serious violence targeting Muslim minorities like the Shias shows that the answers to these questions continue to rent Pakistan asunder. The issue of who is a Muslim is discussed further in [Chapter 7](#) on Islamization.

An equally fundamental issue is that even after seven decades since its creation, the meaning of Pakistan remains contested. Was it a homeland of the Muslims of the subcontinent or was it an Islamic state? The deliberate opaqueness of the meaning of Pakistan during the Pakistan movement, the deliberate use of Islamic rhetoric to garner support in the 1945–46 elections, Jinnah’s contradictory statements have all led to this confusion about the meaning of Pakistan. The confusion has been well summed up by H.A. Rizvi that sixty-seven years after its creation,

... its intellectuals, societal leaders and political activists continue to debate Pakistan’s state identity, especially its relationship with Islam; whether it was created as a homeland for the Muslims of British India or as an ideal Islamic state which would strictly implement the classical Islamic state and legal system and enforce the societal values of that period in letter and spirit. Alternatively, it would be a modern constitutional democratic state that seeks ethical inspirations from the teachings and principles of Islam.²⁵

An interesting development in the identity debate has been the gradual Arabization of the lingua franca, Urdu. By trying to deny its subcontinental roots, Pakistan has tried to locate them in the deserts of Arabia and the arrival of Muhammad bin Qasim in Sindh in ad 712. As a spin-off, there is now a linguistic struggle that reflects the identity dilemma of Pakistan. The gradual Arabization is indicated by the replacements of subcontinental words by their Arab counterparts, like Ramzan by Ramadan, Khuda hafiz by Allah hafiz, namaz by Salat and even Pakistan by Al-Bakistan.

The one identity that Pakistan could have laid claims to was a homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent. This, however, was put paid to by no less than Jinnah and Liaquat Ali. In August 1947, just before he left for Karachi, some reporters asked Jinnah as to what message he wanted to give to the Muslims who would remain behind. Jinnah said that they should be loyal Indian citizens and he expected the Indian government to treat them fairly. Ishtiaq Ahmed notes that Jinnah’s line of argument had thus changed fundamentally – it acknowledged that a Congress government (upper-caste-Hindu dominated) could treat Muslims fairly.²⁶ This was a repudiation of the two-nation theory and of the Pakistan movement itself. If Muslim minorities could live safely in a ‘Hindu’ area, was there any justification for the creation of Pakistan? Jinnah never answered this question.²⁷

Then, the first prime minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan, himself a refugee from India, stopped the entry of Muslims from India from 10 October 1947, except those from East Punjab. In 1950, they too were banned, a ban that continues till today. This has seriously impacted the 300,000 ‘Bihari’ Muslims in Bangladesh who had migrated from India into the then East Pakistan in 1947. They live in pitiable conditions, shunned in Bangladesh for siding with West Pakistan in the 1971 liberation war and deserted by Pakistan, which has refused to take them into Pakistan.²⁸ Thus, Jinnah’s statement and Liaquat’s action put paid to Pakistan developing as a homeland of the Muslims from the subcontinent.

The vivisection of the country with the creation of Bangladesh in 1971 was a traumatic experience for Pakistan since it shattered the very *raison d'être* for the creation of Pakistan. The myth of Islam as the unifying identity of Pakistan was crushed. The bond of religion had proved to be an inadequate one. Yet the failure was rationalized as a failure of a secularized Islam that did not bridge sectarian and ethnic divisions within and between regions.²⁹ Under the circumstances, the argument propounded was that it was misused by the ruling classes and never implemented in its true spirit. 'Islam has been misused ... to justify and sustain status quoism, impose authoritarianism or semi-authoritarian rule and even protect vested interests. This exploitation of Islam by the various regimes and the vested interests led to a growing disenchantment with the ideology itself.'³⁰ Of late, this has been buttressed by the argument that it was Indian machinations and aggression that led to the creation of Bangladesh rather than any inherent fault with the policies of Pakistan. Such rationalizations probably led Pakistan to embark on a journey of Islamization on the one hand and resort to the 'Ideology of Pakistan' or Nazaria-i-Pakistan, on the other.

In the run-up to the Bangladesh crisis, the term Islamic ideology was replaced by a new term 'Nazaria-i-Pakistan'. This was meant to strengthen the unity of the country since for East Pakistan religion had less of an appeal than language. The new term placed more emphasis on the country than on Islam, but religion remained the basis of the ideology.³¹

What is the 'Ideology of Pakistan' or Nazaria-i-Pakistan? There is no authentic document or official statement that defines this elusive term. Reduced to its essentials, the ideology means the use of Islam, the avowal that Pakistan came into being to enforce Islamic principles of life as enshrined in the sharia and the projection of a Pakistani uniqueness as Muslims to create a state identity. The two-nation theory and hatred of the Hindu India are an intrinsic part of the ideology. The objective clearly is to create an ideology that is acceptable to all Pakistanis and binds them in a common nationalist narrative. It is, in fact, another manifestation of the quest for a coherent national identity that has eluded Pakistan since its inception.

However, clues to the opaqueness of the concept are many. Historically, Jinnah did not use the term 'Ideology of Pakistan' either before or after the creation of Pakistan and nor did it form part of the Pakistan movement. In his monograph 'From Jinnah to Zia', Justice Muhammad Munir identified the time when the phrase was coined: 'For fifteen years after the establishment of Pakistan, the Ideology of Pakistan was not known to anybody until in 1962 a solitary member of the Jamaat-e-Islami used the words for the first time when the Political Parties Bill was being discussed. On this, Chaudhry Fazal Elahi, [who later became Pakistan's president during Z.A. Bhutto's regime] rose from his seat and objected that the "Ideology of Pakistan" shall have to be defined. The member who had proposed the original amendment replied that the "Ideology of Pakistan was Islam".'³²

General Zia-ul-Haq included the term in an order that was made part of the 1973 Constitution. Zia declared that 'Pakistan's armed forces were responsible for not only safeguarding the country's territorial integrity but also its ideological basis.' Elaborating he added, the 'preservation of that Ideology and the Islamic character of the country was ... as important as the security of the country's geographical boundaries'.³³ However, even he failed to define the term, leaving it to the ideologues to do so.

After 1971, the term reinforced the Islamization of the state and the two-nation theory especially by those political forces that needed a prop to justify their politics, like the Jamaat-e-Islami and other religio-political parties who had earlier opposed the creation of Pakistan. Currently, the concept of the

Pakistan ideology has become the preserve of the Pakistan Ideology Coordination Council under the chairmanship of the international terrorist Hafiz Saeed.³⁴

The concept of the Ideology of Pakistan suffers from several infirmities. First, if Pakistan was meant to enforce Islamic principles, it was indeed ironic that most of the orthodox Islamic scholars led by none other than Syed Abul Ala Maududi of Jamaat-e-Islami opposed the creation of Pakistan. Second, Jinnah would have shuddered at the very thought of enforcing orthodox Islamic laws. As noted earlier, for him the use of Islam was a tactic to garner support, to mask the internal divisions among Indian Muslims, though the genie he unleashed was to have severe consequences for Pakistan.

Third, the break-up of the country in 1971 and the creation of Bangladesh in effect buried the idea of Islam providing a glue for holding the country together. Finally, as is becoming so apparent today, Islamization of the country in the name of Nazaria-i-Pakistan has unleashed the forces of sectarianism. It is no longer that Islam is the *raison d'être* of Pakistan but the question is whose Islam? It is no longer even Sunni Islam but the various sects under Sunni Islam – Barelvi, Deobandi, Ahl-e-Hadis. In a nutshell, the divisions among the Muslims are too deep to remain quiescent for long. Religion alone could not be the glue needed for nation building.

Despite this, various strata of society, including the army, continue to stress on the Ideology of Pakistan as a cementing force in the absence of anything else. Amazingly, even though, as pointed out by Justice Munir, Jinnah never mentioned the Ideology of Pakistan, the Pakistan school curriculum documents insist that the students be taught the Ideology of Pakistan as enunciated by the Quaid. A sample from curriculum documents shows how this has been sanctified and turned into an article of faith.

For example, the Pakistan Studies Curriculum for Classes XI–XII, states: ‘The chapter should present the Ideology of Pakistan as enunciated by Quaid-i-Azam and should include relevant documented references.’ Needless to say, no textbook has ever been able to cite a single reference to Jinnah using the term Ideology of Pakistan.³⁵

Likewise, the Curriculum Document, Primary Education, Classes K–V, 1995, states: ‘The Ideology of Pakistan be presented as an accepted reality, and be never subjected to discussion or dispute.’³⁶

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) notes: ‘Hatred against India and the Hindus has been an essential component of Ideology of Pakistan because for its proponents, the existence of Pakistan was defined only in relation to Hindus, and hence the Hindus had to be painted as negatively as possible...’

An interesting point made by the SDPI is that pre-‘Ideology of Pakistan’ (before the 1970s) textbooks in Pakistan did not contain this hatred, despite the Partition riots. For example, the early history books contained chapters on the Hindu mythologies of Ramayana and Mahabharata as well as great Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms of the Mauryas and the Guptas. Even in the somewhat biased history of politics of independence, the creation of Pakistan was attributed to the intransigence of the Congress and its leadership rather than on ‘Hindu machinations’. Some books also clearly mentioned that the most prominent Islamic religious leaders were all bitterly opposed to the creation of Pakistan. While the print and electronic media often indulged in anti-Hindu propaganda, the educational material was by and large free of bias against Hindus.³⁷

It was after the so-called Ideology of Pakistan came to be stressed in the 1970s that created an ideological straitjacket in which history of Pakistan, especially that of the Pakistan movement, came to be

rewritten. Four themes came to dominate the curricula: Pakistan was created to establish a truly Islamic state in accordance with the tenets of the Quran and Sunnah; the ulema who had bitterly opposed the creation of Pakistan were converted into heroes of the Pakistan movement; Jinnah was represented as a pious practising Muslim; and hatred and denigration was created for Hindus. A few examples of the expression of this hate in some curriculum documents and textbooks are given below.³⁸

Curriculum documents (Primary Education, Classes K–V 1995) defined the following as the specific learning objectives: To make the child ‘*understand the Hindu and Muslim differences and the resultant need for Pakistan*’ (emphasis added).³⁹ The textbooks then respond in the following way to the curriculum instructions: ‘Hindu has always been an enemy of Islam; ... but Hindus very cunningly succeeded in making the British believe that the Muslims were solely responsible for the [1857] rebellion. After 1965 war, India conspired with the Hindus of Bengal and succeeded in spreading hate among the Bengalis about West Pakistan and finally attacked East Pakistan in December ’71, thus causing the breakup of East and West Pakistan.’⁴⁰

A more recent report titled ‘Teaching Intolerance in Pakistan: Religious Bias in Public School Textbooks 2016’, commissioned by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom found that the content of Pakistani public school textbooks related to non-Islamic faiths and non-Muslims continued to teach bias, distrust and inferiority. Moreover, the textbooks portrayed non-Muslim citizens of Pakistan as sympathetic towards its perceived enemies: Pakistani Christians as westerners or equal to British colonial oppressors, and Pakistani Hindus as Indians, the arch enemy of Pakistan. These perceptions predispose students early on that the non-Muslim population of Pakistan are outsiders and unpatriotic.⁴¹

For its part, the army too chipped in majorly with expressions like the ‘ideology of Pakistan’ and the ‘glory of Islam’ being used frequently by the military high command. Ayub Khan kick-started the process by stating on 12 April 1959: ‘Man as an animal is moved by basic instincts for preservation of life and continuance of race ... His greatest yearning is for an ideology for which he should be able to lay down his life ... Such an ideology with us is obviously Islam. It was on that basis that we fought for and got Pakistan ...’⁴² Successive army chiefs have followed suit. For example, former army chief General Kayani stated on 14 August 2011: ‘The basis of our existence is the ideology of Pakistan’; and on 1 May 2012, ‘We would be successful when we have a strong belief in the ideology of Pakistan. Any doubt about this ideology would weaken the country.’⁴³ In 2013 he stated: ‘We as a nation would only succeed if we remain committed to the Islamic Ideology of Pakistan.’⁴⁴

To conclude, Pakistan has been on an elusive and unsuccessful quest for a national identity since its creation. Being a new state carved out from India, establishing a national identity, distinct from that of India, was an urgent priority. Pakistan’s inability to develop an identity was because of being stuck in a time and space warp. It could not resolve the contradiction between denying any Indianness in its identity and failure to look beyond India by clinging to the two-nation theory.

From the outset, the people of Pakistan have had difficulty subsuming their ethnic and linguistic identities into a single national narrative, primarily because the demand for Pakistan was lukewarm in these areas and Islam was not the salient identity. Coupled with successive doses of Islamization that has injected the poison of sectarianism, the binding force of Islam itself has diminished, making it unable to provide an overarching identity. As Jafferlot notes, ‘This development is more challenging than ethnic

separatist movements because it takes place in the heartland of Pakistan – the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) – and amount to a kind of ethnicization of Islam ... If Islam does not form a valid reference, on what basis can the ideology of Pakistan establish itself? How can Pakistan articulate a nationalist identity and how much can this ideology borrow from Islam?⁴⁵

Resultantly, Pakistan has resorted to the time-tested tactic of raising the threat from India as a cement to bind the multiple identities of Pakistan. In fact, as has been aptly noted, Pakistan's nation-ness is not because of the love for itself but on account of its hatred of others, especially India.⁴⁶ Thus, even after seven decades, Pakistani identity continues to be defined negatively as anti-Indian. While this can hardly be the basis of a sustainable national identity, it has implications for Indo-Pak relations. In fact, as soon as India became the negative reference point for defining Pakistani nationalism, there was no way Pakistan could develop a new identity for itself, or develop normal relations with India. That is the continuing tragedy of Pakistan.

4

The Provincial Dilemma

We can survive without Pakistan. We can remain without Pakistan. We can prosper outside Pakistan. But the question is what Pakistan would be without us ... If Pakistan wants to treat us as a sovereign people we are ready to extend the hand of friendship and cooperation. If Pakistan does not agree to do so, flying in the face of democratic principles, such an attitude will be totally unacceptable to us, and if we are forced to accept this fate then every Baloch son will sacrifice his life in defence of his national freedom.¹

—Ghaus Bux Bizenjo

JINNAH'S ARGUMENT that Hindus and Muslims constituted two nations was based at least partly on the concentration of Muslims in the north-east and north-west of India, parts that eventually constituted Pakistan. The dilemma was that Pakistan was created by putting together geographical provinces which shared a common religion but had never before shared a common history, culture, language or ethnicity. All of them had a strong attachment to their traditions and were resentful of any central control. Not surprisingly, while the Bengalis managed to get away, elements of the Baloch, Pakhtun and Sindhi have been struggling to free themselves from the grip of Punjab. After East Pakistan broke away to form Bangladesh, the fear of secession by other provinces has come to haunt Pakistan's rulers.

Balochistan has been racked by intermittent insurgencies since 1948, with the last one continuing since 2005. The reasons for it have as much to do with its strategic location and demography as with the historical context of its accession to Pakistan, and policies of successive federal governments. The strategic location of Balochistan due to its coastline, nearness to the Straits of Hormuz and abutting Iran and Afghanistan contrasts with its skewed land to population ratio. The largest province in Pakistan with 43 per cent of the land area, it has a population of only 7 per cent of the total, half of which is Pakhtun. The scanty population has been an open invitation for 'settlers' raising fears of the Baloch being converted into a minority in Balochistan.

The historical context of Balochistan's accession to Pakistan is as salient as its strategic location and demography. The status of the princely state of Kalat (as Balochistan was then called) was different from other princely states of India in that the British, by the treaty of 1876, had recognized the independence of Kalat. Thus, Kalat in 1947 was not really obliged to join either India or Pakistan as were the other princely states in British India. It is an irony of history that Jinnah was the lawyer of the Khan of Kalat who argued the case for Kalat's independence before the Cabinet Mission in 1946. In August 1947, just

before the creation of Pakistan, Jinnah even acknowledged this in an agreement with the Khan of Kalat as a result of which the Khan declared Kalat to be an independent state. However, by February 1948, Jinnah was urging the Khan to accede to Pakistan. When he resisted, the Pakistan Army marched into Kalat and forced the Khan to sign the instrument of accession.²

The roots of Baloch separatism lie in the forced manner of the accession of the state of Kalat to Pakistan and the treatment meted out to Baloch nationalists thereafter. Dishonouring solemn pledges made on the Quran of safe passage to Baloch leaders like Abdul Karim and Nauroz Khan (who had risen in rebellion in 1948 and 1958 respectively) and executing their family members, have added to the grievances of the Baloch and their distrust of the Pakistani state.

The Baloch have been further estranged by the policies followed by successive Pakistani rulers, and the handling of the province. The causes, the issues, the demands and the goal of the current insurgency that began in 2005 continue to be the same as the insurgencies in 1948, 1958, 1962 and 1973–77 – independence. What is different is the scale of the violence, the geographical spread of the insurgency and, most important, the participation of ordinary middle class Baloch in it who are seeking an independent and democratic Balochistan rather than an independent Balochistan dominated by the sardars.

The government, especially the military, however, continues to see the insurgency as being led and instigated by a few tribal sardars for the sake of their vested interests and personal fiefdoms. The army typically is looking for a military solution by using brute force coupled with a media blackout. Apart from ‘operations’, they have adopted the strategy known as ‘kill and dump’ – picking up suspects who then ‘disappear’ and their dead bodies are found dumped. Amnesty International’s report ‘Denying the Undeniable’ in 2008 exposed the tragic reality of what was happening in Balochistan.³

The development of Gwadar port provides the classic example of the insensitivity and arrogance of the federal government that has led to the alienation of the ordinary Baloch. Gwadar is the lynchpin of the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), but for the Baloch it is the symbol of how wrongly they have been treated: they have not been consulted about the project; they are not the beneficiaries of the project, which will adversely alter Balochistan’s demography due to the influx of non-Baloch to take up prime jobs. In short, the Baloch feel threatened by the project. Baloch fears were confirmed by advertisements in the national and even international media inviting investment into Gwadar city, which was initially visualized for 2.5 million people but later raised to five million. Given that the entire population of Balochistan is only 6–7 million, Baloch apprehensions of being converted into a minority in their own homeland and their identity being wiped out are clearly justified.

The Baloch insurgency that has sustained itself for the last eleven years is, even in its current low-key phase, likely to continue to be a big thorn in the side of the Pakistan Army.



I have been a Pakhtun for thousands of years, a Muslim for 1,300 years and a Pakistani for just over forty.

—Wali Khan⁴

The roots of the Pakistan movement were extremely weak in the NWFP partly due to the strong Pakhtun consciousness, institutional weakness of the Muslim League in the province and the presence of the

Khudai Khidmatgars led by the larger-than-life Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, popularly called ‘Sarhadi Gandhi’ (Frontier Gandhi). He was a Pakhtun nationalist, strongly anti-colonialist and a Congressman opposed to the creation of Pakistan. The League had no presence in the province in the 1937 elections when the Congress formed the government under Dr Khan Sahib, Ghaffar Khan’s brother. Like elsewhere, the Congress government resigned in the wake of the WWII. Viceroy Lord Linlithgow, asked Governor Cunningham to help Jinnah instal a Muslim League ministry. This the governor did by making a Muslim League leader, Aurangzeb Khan, as chief minister though he did not last long.⁵ This was a task that only the British could have accomplished since not a single Leaguer had been elected in the 1937 elections. Even in the crucial 1946 elections when the British rallied the maulanas and the pirs in favour of the Muslim League, the Congress won and formed the government again.⁶

Unlike the other provinces that voted on the partition plan, the British devised a special procedure of holding a referendum for NWFP, bypassing the elected assembly, to determine the wishes of the people. This was done to ensure that a Congress majority assembly did not vote for accession to India. As early as March 1946, Cripps, as a member of the Cabinet Mission, had said in a secret memorandum ‘... the majority in the legislature (of NWFP) is against Pakistan but as the population is predominantly Muslim; if there is to be a Pakistan, it must fall within the Muslim rather than the Hindu area.’⁷

Ghaffar Khan and his brother Dr Khan Sahib first opposed the referendum and when it became inevitable, asked for the third option of Pakhtunistan. When this was refused, they boycotted the referendum. Even so, the Muslim League and the British mobilized their entire strength to ensure that people voted for Pakistan, using the Islamic card liberally and dangerously. The results were a foregone conclusion.

Jinnah dismissed Dr Khan Sahib’s ministry within a week of Pakistan’s creation and banned the Khudai Khidmatgars. Even though the Khan brothers swore allegiance to Pakistan, Jinnah, as Farzana Sheikh notes, could not accept a separate Pakhtun identity that would have vitiated his whole argument that there were only two nations – Hindus and Muslims and only two legitimate successors to the British in India – Congress and Muslim League.⁸ The call for Pakhtunistan was to sow the seeds of doubt in the Pakistan establishment about the loyalty of the Khan brothers and of their progeny towards Pakistan, for decades. The issue itself was seen as the most potent internal threat to the existence of Pakistan. It was also because of such suspicions that it took Pakistan over six decades to change the name of NWFP to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and that too by adding the name Khyber to distinguish it from the Pakhtuns of Afghanistan.

The legacy of the Pakhtunistan movement lingers and the key issue even today is of identity – whether the Pakhtun identity is nationalist or religious. The thirty-five years of war in Afghanistan with Pakistan playing the role of a front-line state has had one pivotal impact in KPK, above all else. This has been to stress the religious content of the Pakhtun identity. While such an identity was egged on by the US for the tactical purpose of defeating the Soviets in the 1980s, for Pakistan it had a salience that was more than tactical. For Pakistan, preservation of the Durand Line (see [Chapter 15](#) on Afghanistan), underplaying the nationalist element in the Pakhtun identity and the intermittent support the idea of Pakhtunistan got from several leaders in Afghanistan have been an existential problem since 1947. Hence, Pakistan willingly and enthusiastically jumped on the bandwagon of painting the conflict in Afghanistan in religious terms and stressing the religious content of Pakhtun identity. But Pakistan was playing with fire in doing so. As

Wali Khan put it in the late 1970s, ‘This fire you have lit in Afghanistan will one day cross the Attock Bridge and burn Pakistan.’⁹ Given the violence unleashed by the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Wali Khan’s words have proved prophetic.

For a while, this fire was masked with the Taliban control of Afghanistan, and Pakistan was assured that the issue of the Durand Line would not be raised. The mistake that Pakistan made was in turning a blind eye to the steady growth of the al-Qaeda in Afghanistan together with terrorists from other countries who sought shelter there after the Soviet jihad, and to whom the Taliban played hosts. The second mistake Pakistan made was not to recognize that the traditional structures of the Pakhtun society had broken down. The Taliban filled the vacuum and were able to get rid of the last vestiges of the old structures – the maliks – and establish their own version of a sharia-based system. In the process, it was the Pakhtuns and their culture that suffered the most.

Today, while the nationalist threat has diminished, the birth of the TTP has become a serious menace (see [Chapter 9](#) on terrorism). The real danger to Pakistan, of course, would be if the TTP were to take on the nationalist mantle. For this to happen, they would have to tone down the Islamic agenda of imposing sharia in Pakistan and restrict themselves to Pakhtun nationalism. For the present this seems a remote possibility since the TTP is challenging the Pakistani state largely in religious terms, i.e., to overthrow the current system and replace it with their version of sharia.

However, just as Pakhtun nationalism in Pakistan has over the years mutated into a religious form, the idea of Islamism combining with Pakhtun nationalism could well be taken to a new level with the rise and spread of the TTP. While at present the Taliban have subsumed ethnic nationalism under religious fervour, there is no denying that they are a predominantly Pakhtun force with a strong sense of Pakhtun tribal nationalism. It is this, as much as religion, that motivated the armed resistance against the US/NATO forces in Afghanistan. Thus, as J. Paris cautions, ‘explicit Taliban appeals to Pashtun identity, either in Pakistan, or across the border in Afghanistan’ would be worth watching out for.¹⁰

While it would therefore be comforting for the Pakistani state to have blunted the edge of Pakhtun nationalism, the jury is still out on the final shape of politics in KPK – Islamist, nationalist or whether the Pakhtuns would forsake both ethnic nationalism and religious radicalism in favour of a larger Pakistani identity. A lot would depend on how Pakistan plays its cards in tackling the Islamist insurgency both in Pakistan and in Afghanistan. A victory of the Taliban in Afghanistan may not be the prize that Pakistan has been looking for all these decades.



Punjab lost its identity in order to gain a larger Pakistani identity, it began to perceive itself alone as Pakistan, while others started calling Pakistan the greater Punjab.¹¹

The above statement of Hanif Ramay, a former chief minister of Punjab and Speaker of the Punjab Assembly, succinctly sums up Punjab’s dilemma – to distinguish between a Punjabi provincial identity and a Pakistani identity, so interwoven have they become. Not surprisingly, it is Punjabi nationalism, Punjabi ideas and concepts that have come to define Pakistani nationalism, ideas and concepts. Punjab was the essential element in Jinnah’s demand for Pakistan. It formed the heartland of a future Pakistan state – Jinnah called it the ‘corner stone’ of Pakistan.¹² Even the Punjab Muslim League had declared: ‘It

has been said often enough that we are the heart, the brain and the sword arm of Pakistan ... Without our decisive and critical struggle, Pakistan would not have been realized.’¹³ As the most populous and dominant ethnic group in Pakistan, Punjab does not have an ethnic problem itself but all the other provinces have a problem with it. As Talbot puts it: ‘The Punjab can be seen both as the cornerstone of the country and as a major hindrance to national integration because of the use of Punjabi military and paramilitary forces during civil unrest in Balochistan and Sindh.’¹⁴

Though Jinnah was infuriated when Punjab had to be partitioned, calling the residual Pakistan ‘moth-eaten’, yet the history of the Muslim League in pre-Partition Punjab was dismal. No Muslim League government held office in Punjab until Partition. This was the legacy of the Muslim League in a province that was considered so vital that Pakistan would not be complete without it.

Post-Partition, Punjab found itself dominating Pakistan due its strong presence in the bureaucracy and, especially, the army. Punjab’s domination of the army has continued apace and with the army ruling Pakistan, directly or indirectly, Punjab continues to dominate all aspects of Pakistan. It would have done so in any case given that post-1971 it constituted 56 per cent of the population. In the National Assembly, Punjab with 148 seats out of 272 general seats and thirty-five out of sixty seats reserved for women has more seats than all the provinces combined.¹⁵ Thus a purely Punjab-based party with 171 seats can form the government in Pakistan without needing representatives from the other provinces. In the 2013 elections, Nawaz Sharif’s Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had 163 seats from Punjab alone, just eight short of a majority. No wonder that Punjab rules the roost and need not care for the development needs of the other provinces. Punjab’s domination of the army and the army’s domination of Pakistan has been the icing on the cake.

Of course, not all of Punjab speaks Punjabi. South Punjab speaks Seraiki, a well-developed language in itself. In the 1981 census, Seraiki was counted as a separate language for the first time and it was determined that 9.8 per cent of Pakistan’s and 14.9 per cent of Punjab’s households spoke it. As a result, Punjabis, for the first time, were shown to be less than the majority of the then Pakistan’s population (48.2 per cent). This boosted the demand for a Seraiki province consisting of either the erstwhile state of Bahawalpur or a larger province consisting of south Punjab. While the Seraiki issue is not one of secession but for the creation of a separate province, the reason why it assumes importance is the fact that the greatest amount of radicalization and sectarianism in Punjab is concentrated in this area.

Ayesha Siddiqi has argued that ‘radicalization is a greater issue in Punjab than militancy primarily because militants tend to groom people for battles outside the country or the province. Thus, there is violence in the province but those figures are not commensurate with the actual amount of radicalization that takes place in Punjab.’ In Punjab, it is now difficult to find a city or area that has not been touched by some form of radicalism, be it latent or active. While the Deobandi madrasas are highest in number in Punjab, within Punjab, the highest number can be found in south Punjab.¹⁶

In fact, Punjab, especially south Punjab, has been the site of sectarian violence since the 1980s between the Deobandi Anjuman Siphah-i-Sahaba (ASS) and the Shia Siphah-i-Mohammadi Pakistan (SMP). The Shia–Sunni conflict in Punjab is actually a Deobandi–Shia tussle. Not surprisingly, of Pakistan’s 1,764 most wanted persons, 729 hail from southern Punjab. Over fifty-seven banned organizations are spread out in southern Punjab, several among whom have evinced a desire to hoist the ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) flag in Pakistan.¹⁷ Punjab, in fact, has become the ideological centre and recruitment

ground for terrorist organizations, at times operating out of mosques and madrasas.

The last twelve months have seen some de-escalation in terrorist and sectarian attacks in south Punjab largely due to the targeting of the sectarian Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and violence shifting elsewhere, mainly to the northern cities, in the province. This is borne out by the fact that the ‘footprints’ of the terrorists in the province have frequently led back to the southern districts. Not surprisingly, therefore, the police claimed to have arrested 140 suspects from south Punjab just days after a suicide bomber assassinated provincial home minister Shuja Khanzada along with several others at his election office in Attock in mid-August 2015.¹⁸ Even one of the two California shooting suspects, Tafsheen Malik, had links with south Punjab.

A recent example of the disturbing situation is that in the first phase of local body polls held in Punjab on 31 October 2015 in twelve districts, over 500 candidates out of the 2,000 fielded by the banned outfits have made their way into Punjab’s local governance system. As many as thirty of them have grabbed chairmen slots in different Union Councils (UCs). Rest have been elected as general members.¹⁹

Compounding the problem of south Punjab has been the discriminatory development policies being followed by the Punjab government. According to Prof. Nukhbah Taj Langah, president, Pakistan Seraiki Party, such discriminatory policies was resulting in unemployment and illiteracy in the region and consequent attraction of the madrasa and jihadi culture. She warned that it would be impossible to confine the extremist tendencies within one specific region as it may spread and impact the entire Punjab and, eventually, the rest of the country.²⁰

Such discriminatory policies were confirmed by the outgoing head of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Pakistan who told a seminar held in Islamabad on 10 August 2016: ‘Investment (of public funds) in Lahore, the most developed district of Punjab, is six times more than the allocations of the Seraiki belt of the province.’ This according to him was increasing the inequality between the rich and poor regions of Pakistan. He underlined that the concentration of public spending was politically driven, implying that by depriving the Seraiki belt of funds, the state was deliberately keeping the region underdeveloped. Akmal Hussain, a renowned economist and social activist, revealed that as much as 80 to 85 per cent of total physical expenditures of the province was incurred in Lahore.²¹

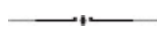
The problem has been aggravated by the fact that the PML-N government in Punjab, headed by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s brother, Shahbaz Sharif, is not ready to admit that there is a problem in south Punjab and other districts. This is despite numerous reports that the breeding grounds of all the leading sectarian organizations is in Punjab. The reason for this myopic attitude is believed to be that the PML-N has used its rapport with the terrorist groups in Punjab to broaden its electoral support. Hence, it is reluctant to take the kind of hard steps taken in other parts of the country, like Karachi, to eliminate terrorists and get rid of organizations that promote sectarian and terrorist violence. Most observers, and even politicians, are convinced that a Rangers operation is required in south Punjab too because the police and the counter-terrorism department do not have the capability to deal with hard-core terrorists in this region.

On several occasions the army chief and the provincial apex committees have asked Nawaz Sharif and the Punjab chief minister Shahbaz Sharif to deploy Rangers in Punjab, especially south Punjab. However, neither the provincial nor the federal government has paid heed to such recommendations, raising doubts about their sincerity to move against terrorist outfits in Punjab.²² Thus far, apart from allowing such

organizations to fester, the impression has been reinforced that Punjab is different from other parts of Pakistan where the National Action Plan (NAP) to eliminate terrorists is being implemented. All of this has raised serious questions over Punjab government's sincerity to act against terrorist outfits.

However, after the suicide attack on Easter Sunday in Lahore on 27 March 2016, in which seventy-odd people were killed, there has been a change. Despite the government's ambivalence, the army on its own has launched a crackdown on terrorist elements across Punjab under the broad objectives of the NAP. This action of the army has raised the level of tensions with the civil government who apprehend that their electoral base in Punjab could get eroded. How this will play out and how successful the operation will be and whether it will be an all-encompassing one to include elements of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) remains to be seen. It is significant that the Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, a splinter group of the Pakistani Taliban, claimed credit for the attack and it has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State.

Thus, while Punjab has reasons to be satisfied about its dominance of Pakistan, there could be severe trouble brewing under the surface. If the burgeoning radicalism, the growth of jihadi culture and sectarianism is not tackled on a war footing, Punjab could go the KPK way in terms of jihadi violence and set a new record of sectarian killings.



Historically, Sindh is regarded as the Gateway of Islam since it was here that the Arab general Muhammad bin Qasim landed in ad 712 and defeated the Sindhi ruler Raja Dahir. The British took control in 1843 when Sindh became a part of the territories of the East India Company through the conquest of General Charles Napier. Napier apparently seized the province without authorization. Legend has it that he sent the message (in Latin) to Calcutta, Peccavi ('I have sinned').²³ Subsequently, Sindh was brought under the administrative control of the Bombay Presidency where it was to remain till 1936.

The Muslim League was to find Sindh a more fertile ground than it did in Punjab or NWFP. A Sindh Muslim League set up base in 1938 but the growth was slow. Nevertheless, on 3 March 1943, in a motion moved by G.M. Syed, Sindh became the first province in undivided India to support the 1940 Pakistan resolution. On 26 June 1947 Sindh assembly was also the first to decide to join Pakistan. Most analysts agree that by supporting the cause of Pakistan, the Sindhis were actually looking for autonomy to rule their province. When Syed realized what Pakistan was all about, he left the Muslim League, termed the Partition of the subcontinent on the basis of the so-called two-nation theory 'unnatural, inhuman and unrealistic' and became an ideologue for Sindh nationalism.²⁴

Population and the population mix are central to the problems in Sindh and, more particularly, its capital, Karachi. In 1947, while the majority of the refugees from India settled in Punjab, about one million (18 per cent of total refugees) settled in Sindh. They were predominantly Urdu-speaking and ethnically and culturally quite distinct from the local Sindhi population. Though they came to Sindh from different regions of British India, they had enough in common culturally and ideologically to enable the development of a sense of common identity and started calling themselves Mohajirs,²⁵ a moniker that has continued till today. According to the 1951 census, the demographic composition of urban Sindh, showed the Mohajirs at 57.55 per cent in Karachi, 66.08 per cent in Hyderabad, 54.08 per cent in Sukkur, 68.42 per cent in Mirpurkhas and 35.39 per cent in Larkana.²⁶ According to the 1998 census, Urdu speakers made up 21 per cent of the population of Sindh, compared to 59 per cent Sindhi speakers.

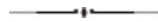
The large and compact Mohajir settlement in an urban environment allowed the group to develop its own identity. The declaration of Urdu as the national language of Pakistan and the separation of Karachi, as the national capital, from Sindh in 1948 diminished the possibility that the Urdu speakers in Karachi would merge in the Sindhi milieu. Even their children did not have to learn Sindhi. For the first two decades, the Mohajirs did extremely well. They were the flag-bearers of the centralizing policies of the state and positioned themselves as having created Pakistan. They, together with the Punjabis, dominated the civil services and the military. They were allowed to occupy properties and businesses left by emigrating Hindus and a large number benefited from real or bogus property claims. Ayub Khan made the final settlement of the Mohajir property claims, which he found to be correct only to the extent of 7.5 per cent.²⁷ Yet property deeds were issued to the Mohajirs for thousands of urban residences and for roughly half a million acres of agricultural land in Sindh left behind by Hindu Sindhis who migrated to India. The Sindhi peasants in possession of these lands were forced off the land or made to pay rent to the new absentee landlords.

From the early 1970s onwards, the Sindhis started getting their due under Z.A. Bhutto. While the Mohajirs felt squeezed by the Sindhis from one side, they were increasingly under pressure on account of migration of Punjabis and Pashtuns into Karachi, on the other. The Punjabis were also replacing them in the bureaucracy once the capital shifted to Islamabad. As a result, a sense of Mohajir alienation and insecurity began to develop. Very much like the insecurity among their ancestors during the decline of Mughal power, the present-day Mohajirs too felt insecure after running out of official patronage in the country they felt they had created through their sacrifices. The insecurity was only to grow. The year 1971 was a major wake-up call. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, a Sindhi prime minister, refused to take back the 250,000 East Pakistani Mohajirs who had migrated there at the time of Partition in 1947 but were now trapped in Bangladesh. This set many Mohajirs thinking about their own fate especially when coupled with the pro-Sindhi measures taken by Bhutto.

This insecurity was to crystallize into the formation of a political party – the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) in August 1986 led by Altaf Hussain. By giving the Mohajirs a political identity, the MQM has won every election since then in the urban areas of Karachi and Hyderabad. For the first time, people from the lower-middle class tasted power in Pakistan and were able to rub shoulders with the feudals and industrialists in the corridors of power. It was a huge sense of empowerment for the entire community. That is why, even today, sitting in London, Altaf Hussain has been able to run the party like a well-oiled machine. Perhaps the most controversial position of the MQM has been its insistence on calling the Mohajirs a nationality. The Mohajirs distanced themselves from Pakistani nationalism; now it was ‘Mohajir identification within a Pakistani framework’.²⁸

A major consequence of the ethnic mix in the urban areas, especially Karachi, has been in terms of violence. The security forces had to have periodical crackdowns to bring peace. Starting with an ‘operation’ in 1992, the latest ongoing operation started after Nawaz Sharif became prime minister in 2013. All these operations have followed the same pattern – arrests, display of illegal weapons supposedly recovered, activists with multiple crimes arrested, ‘confessions’, a huge media mobilization, attempts to split the organization, etc. In a few months the episode is forgotten, till the next time. What is alarming about the current operation is the huge spike in extra-judicial killings. According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan’s (HRCP) annual report on violence in Karachi, the year 2015 saw fewer

targeted killings (387) but a rise in police encounters that led to the deaths of 586 people.²⁹



One of the key points of difference that Jinnah had with the Congress was his opposition to the centralized state system based on the Government of India Act of 1935. He termed it a 'dangerous scheme' and that 'it must go once and for all' because it would impose a highly centralized federal government with no room for regional autonomy.³⁰ Not surprisingly, the first point in Jinnah's fourteen points of 1929 was: 'The form of the future Constitution should be federal with the residuary powers vested in the provinces.' For Jinnah the issue of provincial autonomy was central to keep the Muslim-majority provinces interested in the idea of Pakistan. Thus, on 8 November 1945, Jinnah gave an interview to Associated Press of America, saying: 'The component states or provinces of Pakistan would have autonomy.'... Pakistan's theory, he said, guaranteed that federated units of the national government would 'have all the autonomy that you will find in the constitutions of the US, Canada and Australia. But certain vital powers will remain vested in the central government, such as the monetary system, national defence and other federal responsibilities.'³¹

In retrospect, clearly this was a tactic. Once Pakistan was created, Jinnah moved towards a centralized system, concentrating powers in himself. He was the governor general, president of the Constituent Assembly, president of the Muslim League and even a minister in the cabinet of his own prime minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, with the portfolio of States and Frontier Regions.³² He dismissed provincial governments of NWFP (22 August 1947) and Sindh (26 April 1948) and, in fact, extended the 1935 Act which he had so opposed.³³ He proclaimed:

What we want is not talk about Bengali, Punjabi, Sindhi, Baluchi, Pathan and so on. There are of course units. But I ask you: have you forgotten the lessons that was taught us thirteen hundred years ago. You have carved out a territory, a vast territory. It is all yours: it does not belong to a Punjabi, or a Sindhi or a Pathan or Bengali. It is all yours. You have got your central government where several units are represented. Therefore, if you want to build yourself up into a nation, for God's sake give up provincialism.³⁴

Jinnah's dismissal of the NWFP and Sindh governments as well as the banning of the Khudai Khidmatgars, a popular mass movement among the Muslims of NWFP, ensured that the foundations were laid of a weak democracy. This was also to foreshadow how other movements catering to ethnic interests would be treated – rather than being accepted, such movements would be dealt with by force.³⁵

The Government of India Act of 1935 was to govern Pakistan till March 1956. The continuance in force of this colonial viceregal system sharpened the provincial identities and put their autonomy at the top of the political agenda. The first Constitution of Pakistan (1956) largely denied provincial rights, and the second Constitution (1962, imposed by a military dictator) repudiated parliamentary democracy. It was only after the debacle of 1971 and the separation of East Pakistan that the Constitution of 1973 conceded a somewhat reasonable measure of provincial autonomy.³⁶ Even so, problems arose when this Constitution was not respected in practice, starting with Bhutto himself. The document lost a great deal of its sanctity as a result of drastic changes introduced in it by military regimes of Zia-ul-Haq and Pervez

Musharraf.

When elections were finally held in Pakistan in 1970, more than two decades after Partition, the results were not accepted in West Pakistan, for that would have meant the transfer of power from the Punjabi–Mohajir oligarchy to the Bengali majority. Even earlier, there were efforts by the West Pakistani rulers to ‘assimilate’ the Bengalis into Pakistan’s ‘mainstream’. For example, prominent individuals within the government mooted proposals for adopting Arabic as the national language and for changing the script of the Bengali language from its Sanskrit base to an Arabic–Persian one.³⁷ Martial law ensured that East Pakistan was unable to democratically assert its demographic strength while the brutal army crackdown led to more exploitation and repression of East Pakistan.³⁸ In the ensuing civil war, Pakistan was dismembered.

Two examples reflect the concerns of the provinces. In 1955, the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan heard and ignored the warnings of an ultra-conservative Bengali leader:

‘... the attitude of the Muslim League coteries here was of contempt towards East Bengal, towards its culture, its language, its literature and everything concerning East Bengal. ... In fact, Sir, I tell you that far from considering East Bengal as an equal partner, the leaders of the Muslim League thought we were a subject race and they belonged to a race of conquerors.’³⁹

Allah Nawaz Khan, Speaker of the Frontier Provincial Assembly, articulated the basis for a Pakhtun identity when he declared in 1946: ‘Pathans and Punjabis are two major nations by any definition or test of a nation and the very thought of grouping the NWFP with the Punjabis is revolting to the Pathan mind. ... we the Frontier Pathans are a body of people with our own distinctive culture, civilization, language, literature ... history and traditions and aptitudes and ambitions. In short, we have our own distinctive outlook on life and by all canons of international law, a Pathan is quite separate from a Punjabi.’⁴⁰

Jinnah’s legacy of centralization was to be followed by his successors, to the detriment of Pakistan’s unity. Both Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan being soldiers were in any case intolerant of any dissent. They were concerned that an emphasis on the provinces would weaken central authority, undermine the concept of an Islamic Pakistan and would lead to the break-up of the country. The state machinery encouraged the imposition of cultural uniformity based on Islam. Bhutto was authoritarian by nature. His dismissal of the elected Baloch government was to lead to an uprising that lasted four years. Zia, like his uniformed predecessors, was aghast at the possibility of autonomy. According to Selig Harrison, ‘... on the critical autonomy issue, Zia made it clear that he had little sympathy for the concept of a “multinational” Pakistan in which Baluch, Pushtun, Sindhis and Punjabis are entitled to self-rule.’ Zia said, ‘I simply cannot understand this type of thinking. We want to build a strong country, a unified country. Why should we talk in these small-minded terms? We should talk in terms of Pakistan, one united Pakistan.’⁴¹ The democratic governments of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif in the 1990s were too busy fighting with each other and ensuring their own survival to have rectified the situation.

After he overthrew Nawaz Sharif in October 1999, Musharraf started by big announcements on provincial autonomy. He promised to ‘strengthen the federation, remove inter-provincial disharmony and restore national cohesion’ as one of the seven-point agenda he laid out before the country.⁴² However, like most of his other ideas this too fell by the wayside. Thus, provincial autonomy was to remain a major issue in Pakistan.

A big step to resolve the issue of provincial autonomy and to restore the balance in the Constitution was taken by the eighteenth amendment to the Constitution that was adopted under the PPP government in April 2010. The amendment sought to remove the distortions in the Constitution introduced by military dictators like Zia and Musharraf that had converted Pakistan's parliamentary system into a semi-presidential one. Thus, the amendment did away with the sweeping powers of the presidency and gave a large measure of provincial autonomy, restoring the balance between the Centre and the provinces.

Has the amendment actually worked in practice? If the recent complaints of the chief ministers of Sindh and KPK are to be believed, clearly the eighteenth amendment has not made much of a difference in practice. Even though the issue of provincial rights has, at times, got intertwined with the political wrangling between Opposition governments in the smaller provinces and the PML-N governments at the Centre and Punjab, the fact remains that provincial autonomy is not working as smoothly as it should. The reason for the scepticism is that the implementation of the devolution of power to the provinces has not taken full effect. According to Peter Jacob, 'Operating in an environment of lack of trust and lack of civil society input, the constitutional review process has been marred by bottlenecks and the failure of the government to appoint a body to supervise the devolution of ministries from the federal to the provincial level.'⁴³

For example, despite the abolition of seventeen ministries after devolution of powers to the provinces, the federal budgeted current expenditure (excluding defence) has actually risen from Rs 1.8 billion in 2011–12 to Rs 2 billion in 2012–13.⁴⁴ Six years after the amendment, some fear a 'rollback' to the pre-2010 order. At a discussion organized by the HRCP in Islamabad in September 2015, speakers highlighted that 'forces' could be trying to undo the progress made. A reference was made to two specific cases: the presence of the National Curriculum Council as an example of 'federal encroachment' and failure of the Council of Common Interests to meet regularly. According to *Dawn*, there have also been issues with division of resources and funds between Islamabad and the provinces. It has been pointed out that departments with liabilities have been handed over to the provinces, while the Centre is reluctant to let go of profitable institutions.⁴⁵

One issue that has really agitated all the three smaller provinces is that of ownership of oil and gas. Sindh and Balochistan jointly contribute more than 93 per cent of the national gas production and are the energy basket of Pakistan. The grouse of these provinces is that while Sindh consumes about 46 per cent of its production and Balochistan consumes just 25 per cent, Punjab utilizes an astounding 930 per cent against its production in the national output of gas. The federal government gives 12.5 per cent royalty to provinces based on the well-head price. The injustice is the discriminatory well-head prices. Balochistan's average gas field well-head price is Rs 66.34 per MMBTU (Million Metric British Thermal Unit), for Sindh, it is Rs 142.57 and for Punjab it is Rs 162.93. Thus all arrangements favour Punjab.⁴⁶

Six years after the passage of the eighteenth amendment, the three smaller provinces are still waiting for a decision by the Council of Common Interests (CCI) on the controversy around the interpretation of the Constitution's Article 172(3). This Article inserted in the Constitution through the eighteenth amendment, vested ownership of oil and gas resources jointly and equally in the federal government and the relevant provinces. The Balochistan, KPK and Sindh governments have been repeatedly requesting

that a meeting of the CCI be held to decide on this issue. According to the KPK government's interpretation, under Article 172(3) the provinces own 50 per cent of oil and gas resources. However, the federal petroleum ministry has not accepted this. Its stand is that the amendment only recognizes joint ownership of the federal and provincial governments and not 50 per cent ownership of the provinces.⁴⁷

As per Article 154(3) of the Constitution, a meeting of the CCI has to be held every quarter. Thus, since the PML-N government came to power in 2013, there should have been ten meetings of the CCI till December 2015 but only four were held. This does reflect poorly on the federal government's commitment to resolve power-sharing disputes between the Centre and the provinces in any serious manner.⁴⁸ Resultantly, the chairman of the Senate was constrained to rule on 12 February 2016 that the federal government was violating the Constitution by not convening the CCI meetings within the stipulated time, adding, 'the consequences, arising from this delay, were grave and could have a chaotic effect, bringing the entire state machinery dealing with relevant items in the Federal Legislative List to a grinding halt'.⁴⁹

In fact, a possible reason for not convening a meeting of the CCI for so long may have been to avoid the vexed issue of ownership of oil and gas resources. It is thus increasingly becoming evident that the Centre is just not ready to relinquish its powers and the governance structure remains more or less the same.

Finally, when a meeting of the CCI was held on 29 February 2016, the only major decision it seems to have taken was to once again defer the census⁵⁰ due to security concerns as the required numbers of troops were not available at the moment. The last meeting of the CCI in March 2015 had decided to hold the much-postponed census in March 2016.

The general feeling among the smaller provinces is that despite the eighteenth amendment, the domination of Punjab continues and the Punjab elite, represented in the federal government, is not really interested in devolution of powers. Worse, left to itself it would rather roll back what has been done. This is certainly not a happy template for provincial harmony.

One of the major hindrances to provincial harmony is the obvious economic disparities and gross differences in the status of development and quality of life between Punjab and the other provinces. For example, according to the Economic Survey of Pakistan 2015–16 as against the national literacy rate of 60 per cent, literacy in Punjab was 63 per cent followed by Sindh with 60 per cent, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with 53 per cent and Balochistan with 44 per cent. According to a report titled 'Clustered Deprivation', published by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute in 2014, the highest incidence of poverty was in Balochistan where more than half (52 per cent) of the households were living under conditions of poverty and 35 per cent of them under severe poverty. Poverty in both KPK and Sindh, being 32 and 33 per cent respectively, of which 20 and 21 per cent respectively fell below the severe poverty line, was equal to the national average while Punjab, had least poverty with only 19 per cent households falling below the poverty line of whom 11 per cent fell in the category of severe poverty.⁵¹

A study titled 'Provincial Accounts of Pakistan: Methodology and Estimates 1973–2000' conducted by Kaiser Bengali and Mahpara Sadaqat for the Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC) concluded, somewhat despairingly, that '... on the whole, Balochistan appears—at best—to remain trapped in a low-level equilibrium and—at worst—regressing further into under-development.' Such a conclusion was based on a study that disaggregated Pakistan's gross domestic product (GDP) into its provincial components for the years 1972–73 to 1999–2000 – a period of twenty-eight years – and found that Punjab

alone had seen its share of national GDP rise. The NWFP had managed merely to maintain its share while Sindh and Balochistan provinces saw theirs reduced by about one percentage point each – in Balochistan's case falling from 4.5 to 3.7 per cent. The figures looked even more dismal, when seen in terms of per capita GDP. In Punjab, per capita GDP rose annually in the period surveyed by about 2.4 per cent, in the NWFP by 2.2 per cent, in Sindh (even with the country's industrial colossus of Karachi included) by only 1.7 per cent, and in Balochistan by a miserable 0.2 per cent.⁵²

How this works on the ground is shown by the fact that while the Human Development Index (HDI) for Lahore is 0.806, for places like Awaran, Qila Abdullah and Jhal Magsi districts in Balochistan it is 0.467, 0.499 and 0.435 respectively, making them the worst places on earth to live. Ten districts of Balochistan are worse off than the impoverished regions of sub-Saharan Africa in terms of their human development ranking.⁵³

Another example of Punjab getting a vastly disproportionate share is the distribution of the annual development budget that is used at the discretion of parliamentarians. The amount allocated to KPK and Balochistan is less than that allocated to Islamabad, a city with a population of less than two million. More than half of the total Rs 19 billion has gone to Punjab. Balochistan, by far the most underdeveloped among the provinces, got 2.3 per cent or Rs 445 million – little more than chicken feed in the overall picture of development funding; KPK got Rs 480 million or 2.5 per cent and Sindh 4.2 per cent of the funding.⁵⁴

Thus, on all parameters, Balochistan is the most deprived province in Pakistan and the disparity is only growing. Sixty-three per cent people of Balochistan are suffering from food insecurity, according to the National Nutrition Survey of 2011. This deplorable situation is a direct result of the lack of employment opportunities for the people of the province. People are unable to earn for their families, resulting in malnutrition and other health-related problems across Balochistan.⁵⁵ According to the social sector member of the Planning Commission, Dr Naeem-ul-Zafar, with the exception of Quetta, the best performing districts of Balochistan were worse than the worst performing districts of Punjab.⁵⁶ Even when development schemes have been initiated, the Baloch grouse has been that outsiders have benefited. For instance, Punjabis were allotted most of the land that became arable following the construction of the Pat Feeder canal. For these reasons, many a Baloch have come to see insurgency as the last option to defend their homeland against the predatory colonization by the Punjabi-dominated civil and military governments in Islamabad.

Thus the issue of provinces is a serious one in Pakistan. In its origins, it harks back to the Pakistan movement when religion was believed to be a bond strong enough to weld together the disparate nationalities that came to constitute Pakistan. Two other issues aggravated the problem: the failure of the early leadership to follow through on promises of provincial autonomy made during the Pakistan movement and the centralizing response of successive leaders to such demands. The history of the amalgamation of these provinces should have alerted the leaders to handle issues far more sensitively than they did. The result was the breakaway of East Pakistan to become Bangladesh and bruising insurgencies in Balochistan, the fifth of which is continuing today. The situation in KPK, Sindh and in Punjab itself is festering and could explode for differing reasons. Devolution of powers under the eighteenth amendment was a welcome development. Unfortunately, it has not worked successfully in practice. On the crucial issue of mineral resources of the provinces, the Centre seems unwilling to

concede the space to the provinces that the eighteenth amendment had given.

Whether or not Pakistan's separatist movements and provincial discontent repeat the Bangladesh example is a matter of conjecture. However, what is undeniable is that they do pose a significant challenge to the state of Pakistan. If nationalist movements morph with growing Islamist sentiments as they potentially can in KPK, or if the growing radicalization and sectarianism in Punjab explodes, or if the ethnic cauldron in Sindh, especially Karachi, gets out of hand and if the insurgency in Balochistan gathers momentum, the challenge to the Pakistani state apparatus would be severely enhanced. It is an irony that Islam and the slogan of provincial autonomy, which were seen as the binding forces during the Pakistan movement, today pose serious threats to the existence of the Pakistani state and have become among the key drivers for Pakistan courting the abyss.

III

The Framework

THIS SECTION looks at the internal functioning of Pakistan, keeping the focus on the Pakistan Army and civil–military relations. The fact that the army dominates Pakistan is not disputed, though why it does so is a frequently asked question, and one that is hotly debated. What the domination has ensured is that it has been the army which has determined the security threats for the country, and as for any army, the security threats are seen primarily as physical. Hence, the policies it has framed are largely meant to provide physical security to Pakistan, ignoring a host of other security parameters.

Such domination has also ensured that civilians have been shut out of crucial areas like defence and foreign policies, as well as the nuclear programme. The political class as a whole is weak in Pakistan and does not have the capacity to question the security threats, which the army has defined for decades and the strategies it has adopted to meet these self-defined security challenges. In fact, civil–military relations are actually a misnomer since the ‘civil’ in the relationship exists only to the extent the military allows it to.

To a large extent, the politicians are themselves to blame for this state of affairs. A crucial legacy of the Pakistan movement was the weakness of the Muslim League as an organization and this has persisted even after the creation of Pakistan. Similar is the case with other parties too. Jinnah failed to develop a second and third rung of party leadership that could run the affairs of the party after him. Even when the politicians have had the opportunity to cut the army to size, they have faltered. Moreover, the politicians have invariably broken ranks and many have provided legitimacy to the army in search of civilianizing its rule.

The present phase in civil–military relations can best be described as a ‘soft coup’ or even a ‘creeping coup’ where the army chief Gen. Raheel Sharif is far more popular and acceptable than Nawaz Sharif, the elected prime minister, and seems to provide the leadership that the civilian Sharif is unable to do.

5

The Army Has a Nation

*No army which concerns itself with politics is ever of any value. Its discipline is poor, its morale is rotten and its reliability and efficiency is [sic] bound to be of the lowest order. You only have to look at certain foreign armies which are constantly mixed up in politics to realize the truth of what I have to say.*¹

—Sir Roy Bucher

VOLTAIRE'S FAMOUS quip, 'Where some states have an army, the Prussian army has a state', has been used frequently, and realistically so, with regard to Pakistan and its army. So all-powerful has the army become that instead of being an organ of the executive, the army has become identified with the state itself. It is not just the sheer size of the army (the eighth largest in the world) nor its huge business interests, but the army's claim to be the defender of Pakistan's territorial frontiers and the 'ideology of Pakistan' that has given it a larger-than-life role in Pakistan. So much so that the threat perceptions of the army have become the threat perceptions of the state. As Stephen Cohen puts it, 'time and time again the army's way has been Pakistan's way'.²

The army has crafted Pakistan's strategic concerns and policies since the 1950s. Even when there has been a civilian government in power, it is the army that has called the shots as far as key foreign policy, defence and security issues are concerned. As a consequence, since the army thinks of security largely in military terms, the military aspects of security have predominated Pakistan's strategic thinking at the cost of non-military ones. This is a major part of the tragedy that Pakistan faces today.

The key to the army's dominance was the advice given by Maj. Gen. Sher Ali Khan to Gen. Yahya Khan in 1969 that the army's ability to rule lay in its being perceived by the people as 'a mythical entity, a magical force, that would succour them in times of need when all else failed ... the army was the final guarantor of Pakistan and its well-being.'³ Every military ruler has made this the cornerstone of his policy. It is when the army's charisma starts to fade that the generals know their time is up.

The army that Pakistan inherited at birth was Punjabi-dominated, and Punjab was the dominant province in Pakistan, especially after 1971. According to Cohen,

After Partition it was determined that over 77 per cent of the war-time recruitment from what became Pakistan had been from the Punjab, 19.5 per cent being from the NWFP, 2.2 per cent from Sindh and just over 0.06 per cent from Balochistan. Today the percentages have not changed dramatically: 75 per cent of all ex-servicemen came from only five districts – three in

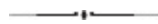
Punjab (Rawalpindi, Jhelum and Attock) and two adjoining districts in NWFP (Kohat and Mardan).⁴

Shuja Nawaz notes a decline in the percentage of representation of soldiers from Punjab, between 1990 and 2005, from 63.86 per cent to 43.33 per cent, but that of the officers rising from 66.46 to 66.93 per cent. Within Punjab there was a shift to the more populous and emerging urban centres of central and even southern Punjab. These bigger cities and towns were also the traditional strongholds of the growing Islamist parties and conservatism, associated with the petit bourgeoisie.⁵

However, according to a 2007 information brief by the military's mouthpiece, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), in 2001 Punjabis comprised over 71 per cent of the army. Contrary to this, according to a government report laid before parliament in August 2014, Punjab still sent the maximum number of officers (1,018, or 59 per cent) to Kakul (Pakistan Military Academy) and Risalpur (Air Force Academy). Khyber Pakhtunkhwa remained second in the list for Pakistan Army and Pakistan Air Force. The story of 48,639 soldiers, sailors and airmen recruited during 2011–12 was a replica of the pattern of officers' induction. The share of Balochistan still remained the lowest, at 4 per cent. Out of 1,379 recruited officers only 55 were from Balochistan.⁶

Clearly, there are some discrepancies in the exact composition of the Pakistan Army but the fact that stands out is that Punjab dominates the other provinces, though perhaps not to the same extent as before and that the areas of recruitment have shifted from being predominantly in Potohar in north Punjab to central and south Punjab and to the urban centres.

The total strength of the army is believed to be around 800,000-plus, including over 550,000 regular troops and the rest as reserves.⁷ Of these, interestingly enough, troops, almost as large as two divisions, are employed as servants in officer's messes and homes.⁸



Like the Pakistani state, Partition also shaped the army's world view and development, especially in injecting an element of insecurity based on its geographical borders. On the west, Afghanistan refused to recognize the new state and claimed the Pakhtun territories that had been taken over by Britain in the nineteenth century (see [Chapter 15](#) on Afghanistan). On the east, while India did not claim any territory, there was a feeling that the Partition had been unfair since bulk of the military industries and training establishments were located in India; that the Radcliffe Award had given Gurdaspur to India giving it access to Kashmir.

Adding to threats on its western and eastern borders was Pakistan's geographical construct itself. As noted earlier, when Jinnah sought Pakistan as a homeland for the Indian Muslims, he was talking about the Muslim-majority provinces. He did not view the nascent state in militarily defensible terms. The Pakistan that came into being had most of its population centres close to the Indo-Pak borders and, except for Balochistan, in easy range of India. In the 1970s, after the loss of East Pakistan, this geographical disadvantage would lead to the articulation of the concept of 'strategic depth' in Afghanistan, when faced with numerically superior Indian forces. This concept initially was territorial but has increasingly become political, i.e., a weak and dependent government in Kabul, which would deny any space to India. In the future, the concept will encompass water security as Afghanistan starts to implement plans to store the

waters of the River Kabul for its own use.

Another legacy of Partition was Kashmir. In 1947, the Pakistani leadership had presumed that Kashmir, being a Muslim-majority princely state, would accede to Pakistan on account of the two-nation theory. The feeling that Partition had been unfair was aggravated when it was realized that the Maharaja of Kashmir was prevaricating over acceding to Pakistan, and would rather remain independent. Though it had signed a 'Standstill Agreement' with the maharaja, Pakistan broke it on 22 October when it sent in tribal 'raiders' to seize Kashmir forcibly. The tribal invasion not only failed to achieve the objective but resulted in the maharaja acceding to India and the Indian forces repulsing the so-called tribal 'raiders'. With Kashmir becoming a part of India and Pakistan failing to take it by force, hatred for India intensified, heightened by a host of issues like the Partition riots, not getting its share of military stores, etc.

The visceral hatred for India has had severe consequences for Pakistan. According to Lieven, 'The Pakistani military ... suffers from one tragic feature which has been with it from the beginning ..., which could in some circumstances destroy Pakistan and its armed forces altogether. This is the military's obsession with India in general, and Kashmir in particular.' He quotes Lt Gen. (Retd) Tanvir Naqvi telling him that the average Pakistani officer of today, 'has no doubt in his mind that the adversary is India, and that the whole *raison d'être* of the army is to defend against India. His image of Indians is of an anti-Pakistan, anti-Muslim, treacherous people. So he feels that he must be always ready to fight against India.'⁹

Maj. Gen. Mahmud Ali Durrani too describes this belligerent attitude towards India: 'I grew up with the firm conviction that the only good Indian was a dead Indian. To add to the ranks of the good Indians I joined the Pakistan Army.'¹⁰

According to Christine Fair this visceral hatred for India goes beyond the antagonism over Kashmir. She notes: '... Pakistan's defense literature clearly maintains that Pakistan's army also aims to resist India's position of regional dominance and its slow but steady global ascent, and more often than not this threat from India is described in ideological and civilization terms rather than those of security.'¹¹

Given that both India and Pakistan are nuclear-armed states, the obvious question that arises is whether Pakistan will continue with its policy of trying to change the status quo with regard to Kashmir and impede Indian efforts at global ascent. Fair answers this brilliantly:

For Pakistan's men on horseback, not winning, even repeatedly, is not the same thing as losing. But simply giving up and accepting the status quo and India's supremacy, is, by definition, defeat ... By seeing victory as the ability to continue fighting, Pakistan's army is able to seize victory even from the jaws of what other observers would deem defeat.¹²

Even if, and this is a big if, the army is constrained to seek accommodation with India given the economic conditions of Pakistan, its visceral hatred for India is unlikely to change. Neither will it discard its strategy of bleeding India via non-state actors. Unless the army examines its and Pakistan's first principles, the mindset will not alter though tactically it may be forced to make adjustments.

Two of the core beliefs of the army stem from the circumstances of Partition. The first is that Partition itself was unfair and is incomplete. A linked belief is the perception that India has not accepted Partition and, given an opportunity, would undo it. Post-1971, after the creation of Bangladesh, this belief has been further strengthened and has given rise to the third core belief that Bangladesh must be avenged. The

fourth is that the army is not only the guardian of the territorial frontiers of Pakistan but also of the 'ideological frontiers' and the custodian of the 'Nazaria-i-Pakistan or the 'Ideology of Pakistan'. A fifth element is that politicians cannot be trusted, as given an opportunity they would compromise Pakistan's interests. A final element, arising out of its geographical insecurities vis-à-vis India, is the concept of 'strategic depth' in Afghanistan.

After the 1965 Indo-Pak war, and especially after the 1971 war, the one big dent in the army's belief system is that it no longer brags that one Muslim soldier is worth five or ten 'Hindu' soldiers. As Gohar Ayub put it, 'In the past if any officer was asked what his dream was, he would say it was to hoist the Pakistani flag on the Red Fort in Delhi. Everyone was ready to take on India. But after 1971, the most anyone would be willing to say is that we could fight a defensive war for a short period against India.'¹³ Yet, as will be seen in the [Chapter 14](#) on India, the belief system continues to hold that the 'Hindu' is weak and Pakistan can continue to bleed it with impunity.

Based on these core beliefs, the army had developed a doctrine whose key elements are: 'Borrowed power' in conventional capability from the US and conventional and nuclear capability from China to neutralize Indian conventional superiority and its nuclear weapons; use of non-state actors, initially the concept was to militarily seize Kashmir that later transformed into bleeding India by 'a thousand cuts' to bring it to the negotiating table in a weakened position and ultimately change the status quo in Jammu and Kashmir; continuing to use non-state actors against India under the nuclear overhang; not to allow politicians any independence of action on foreign, defence and nuclear policies lest they compromise Pakistan's interests; to ensure a weak, dependent and friendly (towards Pakistan) government in Afghanistan to choke the Indian footprint and deny it any space there; and despite internal threats taking on a greater salience and hence a focus on counter-terrorism, the threat from India remains the priority given Indian capabilities.

The army was also influenced and shaped by the ideological underpinnings of the Pakistan movement, a process that began in 1947 itself with the army adopting the number 786 as the identification number for the GHQ (General Headquarters) of the new Pakistan Army.¹⁴ The number 786 is the numerological equivalent of the opening sentence of the Quran, *Bismillah ir-Rehman ir-Rahim* (In the name of Allah, the Merciful and Beneficent), the words that all Muslims say before beginning anything. The second overt Islamic symbol was adopted in 1976, when Zia-ul-Haq, as army chief, changed the motto of the army from Jinnah's Unity, Faith, and Discipline to *Iman, Taqwa and Jihad fi sabeelillah* (Faith, Obedience to God and Struggle in the path of Allah).¹⁵ To this was added defence of the ideological frontiers of Pakistan.

The army too was subjected to Zia's Islamization zeal with Islamic teachings being introduced into the curriculum of the Army Command and Staff College and the officers being required to read the 'Quranic Concept of War'; signboards were put up around the cantonments quoting the Quran and the Prophet; evaluation forms were redesigned to include comments on an officer's religious sincerity; the Tablighi Jamaat was encouraged to visit cantonments. One result of these measures was an increase in the number of officers with beards.

The result of Zia's policies was the growth of religious orthodoxy in the armed forces. It was Zia, according to Cohen, 'who oversaw the transition from a largely secular army with an occasional nod in the direction of Islam to a still-secular army that paid more attention to Islam, but whose major innovation

was the use of Islam as a strategic asset at home and abroad'.¹⁶

An example of how this worked was provided by former army chief Aslam Beg. In a press conference in September 1989, on the eve of the large-scale military exercise code-named Zarb-e-Momin (Blow of the True believer) he explained that one of the objectives of the exercise was to '... fulfil ideological and professional obligations ...' Elaborating on the ideological functions, the general declared, 'Allah ordains on all Muslims to always remain in a state of preparedness and the Pakistan Army, by holding this exercise, has complied with a Divine Order and fulfilled its religious duty.'¹⁷

A concern frequently raised is whether the army as a whole, or parts of it like the junior officers and men, might support an Islamist revolution, or at least subscribe to an ideology that is akin to that of some of the jihadi organizations. The question is provoked by two developments: one, the change in the social class of the officer corps from the earlier Western-educated upper class to a more lower-middle class and, second, despite being in a cocoon of military cantonments, the officers and men can hardly be immune to the greater radicalization and Islamization of society around them. As Shuja Nawaz stated in a Congressional hearing, 'My own research into the recruitment of the Pakistan Army over 1970 to 2005 indicates that the army is now recruiting heavily in the same area from where the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) springs. Unless we change the underlying social and economic conditions, the Islamist militancy will start seeping into the military.'¹⁸

Ominously, as will be noted later, over 80 per cent of all the madrasas in Punjab are located in south and central Punjab. This is the same area from where the army and the jihadis recruit extensively. It would be fascinating to know the percentage of soldiers recruited from these areas who have studied in a madrasa. That would give the real indication of the depth of Islamization in the Pakistan Army.

There have been several instances where the army has refused to open fire under the influence of Islamists. For example, in the 1977 Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) agitation, which was dominated by the religious parties and led to Bhutto's ouster, there were reports about the army declining to shoot on protestors in Lahore.¹⁹ On 26 September 1995, Maj. Gen. Zahirul Islam Abbasi, along with thirty-five officers, was arrested for plotting to assassinate the corps commanders, during a conference, as well as the cabinet.²⁰ Between 2004 and 2007, there were numerous instances of mass desertions and refusal to fight in the Frontier Corp units deployed to target militants in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).²¹ There were two attempts to assassinate Gen. Pervez Musharraf in which armed forces personnel were involved.

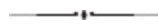
In May 2011 the army arrested Brig. Ali Khan and four other officers for links with the UK-based Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HT) which believes in establishing an 'Islamic Caliphate'. Also, the attack on the Mehran Naval base (22 May 2011) and the earlier 10 October 2009 attack on the GHQ revealed that the attackers had inside knowledge and knew where the blind spots were.

Tariq Ali writes about an incident in December 1999, when India had informed Pakistan that one of the peaks in Kargil–Dras was still occupied by Pakistani soldiers, contrary to the ceasefire agreement. A senior officer went to investigate and ordered the captain in charge of the peak to return to the Pakistani side of the LoC (Line of Control). The captain accused the senior officer and the military high command of betraying the Islamist cause and shot the officer dead. The Islamist officer was finally disarmed, tried by a secret court martial and executed.²²

In October 2011, Tassaduq Bashir, a retired colonel of the Special Services Group (SSG), was arrested for being the mastermind of a missile attack plan on Parliament House. Police recovered fifteen missiles, suicide jackets and nine hand grenades during a search operation.²³

In May 2016, a naval tribunal sentenced five officers to death in the Karachi Naval Dockyard attack case of 6 September 2014. The five were charged with having links with the Islamic State, mutiny, hatching a conspiracy and carrying weapons in the dockyard.²⁴

Such incidents can be termed as isolated and stray, but it would be a mistake to dismiss them out of hand. They are reflective of the weakening of discipline on account of Islamization of the army that can grow given the trajectory of radicalization in the country.



Many have wondered why the army has ruled Pakistan directly for so many years, dominated it in the periods it was not ruling directly and why it continues to do so. There are several reasons for this. Historically, the initial post-Partition developments and the insecurities they bred, made the nascent state place great importance on the physical defence of the country. Massive resources were allocated to the army. The priority of building up the armed forces was spelled out by Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan in a broadcast to the nation on 8 October 1948: ‘The defence of the State is our foremost consideration and has dominated all other governmental activities. We will not grudge any amount on the defence of our country.’²⁵ Five years later, Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Bogra declared in his defence policy statement that he would rather starve the country than allow any weakening of its defence.²⁶ Successive prime ministers have reiterated such sentiments.

However, merely allocating bulk of the funds did not in itself create a dominating position for the armed forces in Pakistan. In the initial years, it were the politicians who called the shots but their failure to institutionalize democracy and the infirmities of the Muslim League noted earlier, allowed the army to step in. With the fear of a physical threat from India played up since Partition, it was easy for the army to glide into power. Once in power, they made sure that national security was projected and internalized as the number one priority for the country. To quote T.V. Paul, ‘Elevating national security to the highest salience is in the interests of the military, in order to maximize resources from the national economy.’²⁷ Having done so, it is easy to understand why the army has been able to dominate Pakistan for so long, even when it is not directly in power.

A factor ignored by most analysts is that in 1947 the civil leadership of Pakistan had come largely from India – Jinnah, Liaquat and bulk of the cabinet. They had no roots in the territory that became Pakistan. Given the composition of the army in 1947, the army leadership, on the other hand, was predominantly rooted in the soil of Pakistan – Punjab and NWFP. Officers like Ayub Khan, Muhammad Musa, Yahya Khan, etc., were from the territories that became Pakistan. Being unfamiliar with Pakistan and not rooted in it, the politicians needed assistance to find their way. This is where the infirmities of the Muslim League, including its lack of a second-rung leadership and party organization came to play. This made it far easier for one or two generations of the army leadership to dominate the political leadership and set the trend for their successors.

The manner in which the first martial law was implemented was to be an important precedent in public memory. It was imposed in Lahore on 6 March 1953 when the Punjab government was unable to deal with

the anti-Ahmadiya riots. The local military commander Maj. Gen. Azam Khan, brought the situation under control in a few hours and Lahore returned to normal in a few days. Despite this, the army remained in control for over two months during which Azam Khan introduced the 'Cleaner Lahore Campaign', in which the city was given a big facelift – streets were widened, drains were cleaned, public buildings painted and parks spruced up.²⁸

As a result, when the army was withdrawn, *Dawn* on 16 May 1953 commented: '... Memories of the army rule in Lahore will linger for a long time to come and the new look that Lahore has acquired and the sense of discipline among its people inculcated by the army will bear eloquent testimony to the good work done by Maj. Gen. Azam Khan and his men.'²⁹ The memory of this precedent has had lasting consequences for Pakistan. It created a public impression of the capability of the army in not only restoring peace when the civil administration had failed but in providing an effective government too. The army too noted the ease with which the problem of Punjab had been solved. If Punjab could be sorted out in a few days – why not the whole country if so required?

If the army does not like democracy, as will be noted in the next chapter, the politicians have not exactly exhibited wild enthusiasm for it either. As noted, by holding the three most important positions of governor general, president of the Constituent Assembly and president of the Muslim League (later relinquished) at the same time, Jinnah set a tradition by which a powerful individual came to be more important than the institutionalized distribution of state power. As Adeel Khan notes, 'by becoming the all-powerful first Governor General, Jinnah founded a unitary political system that retarded the growth of the parliamentary system'.³⁰ More recently, those who are out of power seem to be far more vociferous in their commitment to democracy than those in power. But once in power, all politicians seem to develop selective memories. Unless the political leadership learns to appreciate and internalize democratic norms, democratic consolidation will remain a distant goal. The attitude of the politicians seems to be that since they have been elected, Pakistan is a democracy. Being responsible to the people and therefore responsive to their needs is routinely ignored.

Further, the army gets an opportunity to intervene when the politicians create a mess of governance. As the International Crisis Group (ICG) puts it, 'Failing to deliver good governance, civilian governments have undermined their domestic legitimacy, rendering themselves vulnerable to military intervention.'³¹ The favourite excuse of politicians is that democracy has not been given a chance. For this, they have to share the blame since they have repeatedly refused to accept democratic principles. In addition, none of the political parties have provided solid intellectual inputs on policies, governance or national security. According to Gohar Ayub who was Speaker of the National Assembly, 'The National Assembly library was used by only 3.5 per cent of all MNAs – and that too, mostly for newspapers and magazines.'³² All politicians have exhibited the same symptoms of exploiting the system for personal benefit rather than concentrating on governance.

Additionally, there are a number of politicians who are eager to be co-opted by the army, knowing that it is the only way they can come into power. It is these politicians who facilitate the continuation of army rule. According to Musharraf, as a corps commander, he saw how '...opposition politicians – regularly visited the army chief to encourage him to oppose the sitting government. ...Whenever any government was performing poorly (unfortunately, that was the norm in the "democratic" decade of the 1990s) or was in political trouble, all roads led to the army GHQ.'³³

Moreover, the democratic system itself has lacked credibility because the fairness of elections has been repeatedly questioned. Imran Khan, the Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaf (PTI) leader, had not only questioned the fairness of the last elections in 2013 but launched an agitation alleging massive rigging in favour of the PML-N of Nawaz Sharif. Allegations of rigged elections have battered public confidence in electoral institutions, hampered Pakistan's democratic development and eroded political stability. Concerns that parliaments did not represent the will of the people have undermined the credibility of politicians and of democracy itself.³⁴

Except on the rare occasion when their own future is at stake, no politician has used the power of parliament to strengthen democracy. Most prime ministers, including Nawaz Sharif, have treated parliament with disdain, rarely condescending to attend its sessions. Thus, those whose greatest strength it could have been have themselves undermined parliament's role. Taking their cue from the prime minister, ruling party parliamentarians too have not taken their role seriously. As a result, parliament has been reduced to being little more than a debating club instead of being an institution concerned with legislation and supervision that could have put checks on the army. The ploy frequently used by politicians, both in government and in the Opposition is to call all-parties conferences (APCs) to discuss important issues. Since these are held outside parliament, the role of this institution gets further devalued.

Compounding the problem is the fact that political parties in Pakistan are weak. The infirmities of the Muslim League as well as the intolerance of the early leaders towards other political parties have been noted earlier. This was not a good augury for democracy. In a stinging editorial the *Pakistan Times* noted: 'Today, more than ever before, it is true to say that the Muslim League, bereft of what little was left of its integrity and idealism after post-Partition scramble for power and pelf, is in office not because it is a healthy, living organization, deriving its strength from genuine public backing; but ... only because it retains a monopoly of power. A complete lack of democracy characterizes the Muslim League's internal functioning.'³⁵ The criticism levelled against the Muslim League in 1953 is as valid today and for all political parties.

Another debilitating factor is that present-day political parties have become dynastic fiefdoms. Barring the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) and the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), all the other significant mainstream political parties are family enterprises without any inner-party democracy. Thus, the Bhuttos/Zardari dominate the PPP; the Sharifs have an iron grip on the PML-N; Wali Khan's heirs rule the roost in the Awami National Party (ANP); and despite his claims to clean up the system, Imran Khan is PTI. Additionally, none of the parties have a party organization, bottom upwards. While the PPP does have a cadre, it is hampered by the lack of an effective party organization from the village or tehsil level upwards. The PML-N is in any case a district-wise, notables-based party that comes together during elections.

The fact that political leaders are allergic to internal democracy was shockingly demonstrated in April 2010 when the constitutional obligation to hold party elections was deleted by the eighteenth amendment of the Constitution. This speaks volumes for the commitment of the politicians to democracy.³⁶ As a result, barring a few exceptions like the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) against Zia, political parties are not able to mobilize masses against the army for any prolonged period of time.

Finally, the army has developed tremendous expertise in manipulating the media. The ISPR, the media wing of the army, knows which journalists will do their bidding. In fact, it is the media 'talk shows' that

first create an environment of uncertainty and rumour-mongering, which is then capitalized by disgruntled politicians with a nod from the army.

In terms of using social media, the army is miles ahead of the civilian government. The impression that has been created by the slick use of the media, especially the social media, is of a selfless army making sacrifices for the sake of the safety of civilians. This is contrasted with the selfish and corrupt politicians who are busy lining their pockets than in improving the lives of the people. The recent army campaign has catapulted army chief Gen. Raheel Sharif as the most popular man in Pakistan, leaving his namesake, Prime Minister Sharif, the civilian, far behind. Not surprisingly, the head of the ISPR has been elevated to a three-star general, and the incumbent, Asim Saleem Bajwa's Twitter account has more than 1.5 million followers, and the ISPR's Facebook account more than 2.8 million likes.

Ironically, while the army's manipulation of the media has paid rich dividends, the record of army chiefs writing books is somewhat dubious. Ayub Khan had to relinquish the presidency barely eighteen months after the publication of his autobiography *Friends not Masters*. Similarly, Musharraf barely survived two years as president after publishing his *In the Line of Fire* in 2006, having to resign as president in August 2008.

An interesting question is how has the Pakistan Army managed to retain its credibility despite its many failures. The low points for the army were after the 1965 and especially the 1971 war, post-Kargil, at the end of Musharraf's rule, the US raid on Abbottabad, at the end of General Kayani's extended tenure and so on. Every time, however, the army has bounced back. The short answer has to be the weaknesses of the politicians who were unable to capitalize on the opportunities that were provided to cut the army down to size (see [Chapter 6](#)). Given the misgovernance by politicians it did not take the army very long to project itself as the only functional organization in the country, an organization that the people could look to in times of dire need – in other words, to regain its mystique as 'a mythical entity, a magical force'. Additionally, despite its reverses, at no point in time has the army's access to budgetary resources or its control over defence, foreign and security policies ever been questioned by politicians.

While the army has certainly bounced back after every disaster to reclaim its mystique, a moot question is the credibility of the army leadership within the army. At times, army officers themselves have challenged the quality of military leadership. For example, military leadership has been described, in a paper by a senior officer at the National Defence Complex (NDC), as 'inept and weak ... We have no vision and perspective of the future and thus live on a day to day basis.' The author goes on to cite lack of creativity because of bondage to standard operating procedures, sycophancy, conformity and careerism.³⁷

This has also been confirmed by Brian Cloughley who observes, that

[I]f the students of Staff College devoted more time to genuine study and original thought rather than (many of them, but not all, it must be said) attempting to acquire past years' papers and identify "correct solutions" then they and the army would benefit greatly. There is too much activity that takes place for the sake of appearing energetic, and not enough quiet, thoughtful, hard work.

One reason Cloughley identifies for this was that Zia encouraged rote learning of religious detail at the expense of intellectual probings and teaching of English.³⁸ This has also been confirmed by Iqbal Akhund

who noted that under Zia, the ‘Islamic’ element was given greater prominence in the courses taught at military academies and other training institutions, whereas there were no courses on subjects of contemporary importance such as development economics or international economic relations.³⁹

As a result, ‘Standards in many of the most prestigious schools have been permitted to fall to levels that would have been unthinkable only twenty years ago. Some below-standard young men join the army as officer cadets.’⁴⁰ Unless the trend is reversed, with a combination of an inept civilian leadership and an inept military leadership, Pakistan’s march towards the abyss is assured.

Over the past decade, the Pakistan Army has been confronted with serious internal security issues. These include the ongoing fifth insurgency in Balochistan that intensified after the killing of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti in 2006, as well as the birth of the TTP to seek vengeance against the army after the bloody army action in the Lal Masjid of Islamabad in 2007. Sartaj Aziz, the prime minister’s adviser on foreign affairs, in a statement that would embarrass him now had revealed earlier, ‘For every ten [militants] who are trained here to fight in Kashmir, one goes and the rest stay in Pakistan to cause trouble.’⁴¹ Not surprisingly, successive army chiefs, starting with Ayub Khan down to Musharraf and Kayani have underlined the danger from internal threats (see [Chapter 14](#) on India). Following Kayani’s assertion, there was a review of Pakistan’s military doctrine to fight the non-state actors posing a threat to Pakistan. A new chapter, ‘Sub-conventional warfare’ was included in the army’s *Green Book* for the first time underlining that the Pakistan Army saw ‘internal threats’ as the greatest security risk rather than India.⁴² The current army chief, Gen. Raheel Sharif, speaking at the Eighth International Defence Exhibition and Seminar, IDEAS-2014 in Karachi (4 December 2014), stressed that in today’s world, security concept does not apply only to borders, ‘... but securing our cultures and way of life are also seen as primary security concerns’. According to him, the enemy ‘... lives within us and looks like us’.⁴³ However, this has not resulted in changing the army’s traditional hostility towards India or induced it to give up use of jihadi terrorism as a strategic weapon against India.⁴⁴

It is worth noting that the Pakistan Army’s forays into domestic security situations have not had a happy ending. The army’s operations in East Pakistan in 1971 led to the vivisection of the country; against the Baloch in the 1970s created conditions for Zia’s coup and the post-1977 military dictatorship; the Lal Masjid operation led to the formation of the TTP; the operation in Swat led to the rise of Mullah Fazlullah. The jury is, therefore, out on the army’s operation in North Waziristan, launched since June 2014, called Zarb-e-Azb, and the operation in Karachi launched since March 2013. Historical precedents apart, one reason for scepticism about the army’s domestic success is due to its selective use of Islamist/jihadi groups as instruments of foreign policy. The operations are not across the board, targeting every single group of terrorists. Several groups that are considered ‘strategic assets’ are left out.

Despite the economy being frequently in crisis, the expenditure on defence has never been affected. For example, on an average, Pakistan spent 59.51 per cent of the total government expenditure on defence during the period 1948–59 going up to as high as 71.32 per cent in 1948–49 and 73.32 in 1949–50.⁴⁵

The percentage of expenditure on defence and services in the national budget over the past few years has been:⁴⁶

2008–09	14.72 per cent
2009–10	13.92 per cent
2010–11	15.99 per cent
2011–12	7.89 per cent
2012–13	17.02 per cent
2013–14	15.73 per cent
2014–15	16.27 per cent
2015–16	17.54 per cent
2016–17	17.6 per cent (estimate)

The defence expenditure figures, however, do not include the nuclear programme, Rs 177.6 billion allocated for military pensions that is booked under the civilian budget and a separate allocation of Rs 100 billion for ‘security-related’ expenses. The increase in defence spending contrasts with a 3.6 per cent increase in the government’s current expenditure and a 7.3 per cent growth in the total expenditures. The comparison with the national budget shows how much money is going to the armed forces in real terms.⁴⁷

Since fiscal 2000–01, defence expenditure is being calculated net of defence pensions. As a result, defence expenditure in 2000–01 showed a sudden decline of 12.8 per cent to be subsequently increased by 13.6 per cent in 2001–02 and further by 6 per cent in 2002–03. In a written reply in the Senate, Defence Minister Khwaja Asif stated that expenditure on account of pension was not being reflected in the defence budget since July 2000. Giving the year-wise data, the minister informed the senators that Rs 105.98 billion was paid to the retired defence service personnel in the year 2011–12, Rs 131.74 billion in 2012–13 and Rs 142.89 billion in 2013–14, making a total of Rs 513 billion paid as pension to retired personnel of the armed forces since 2011 from the ‘civilian kitty’.⁴⁸

No discussion of the Pakistan Army is complete without referring to its commercial interests. For the past several decades, the military has managed to establish an extensive network of business enterprises involved in economic activities ranging from manufacturing to construction, from logistics to financial services and, above all, real estate.

According to a July 2014 report by Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) titled ‘Military’s Commercial Interests’, the commercial activities of defence forces date back to 1942 when the government of British India established a Military Reconstruction Fund. Today, its successor, the Fauji Foundation, has become the largest industrial conglomerate of Pakistan with assets worth Rs 321 billion. The Pakistan Air Force and Navy have their own Shaheen and Bharia Foundations engaged in a large number of commercial activities. As important as the commercial activities are the massive landholdings, especially in urban areas, that have now come to distinguish the three services. The army’s most important asset and reward for loyalty is the land parcelled out to officers during their careers and again when they retire. The army owns an estimated twelve million acres, equivalent to 12 per cent of total state-owned land.⁴⁹

In a pioneering study, Ayesha Siddiqi coined the term *Milbus* to refer to ‘... military capital that is used for the personal benefit of the military fraternity, especially the officer cadre, which is not recorded

as part of the defence budget or does not follow the normal accountability procedures of the state, making it an independent genre of capital'.⁵⁰ She underlines the following: (i) there is an element of illegality in such military capital since it involves transfer of funds from the public to the private sector without proper transparency;⁵¹ (ii) it creates vested interests which do not encourage democratic norms and institutions and discourage the army from giving up political control;⁵² (iii) Milbus has significant financial and socio-political costs, 'because the profit-making role is dependent on the armed forces' preferential access to decision-making, and this is detrimental for creating a free-market economic environment'.⁵³ According to her, '... economic and political interests are linked in a cyclic process: political power guarantees economic benefits which, in turn, motivate the officer cadre to remain powerful and to play an influential role in governance.'⁵⁴

How this works in practice is instructive. A Karachi-based NGO, Shehri, had submitted an RTI request to the defence ministry in March 2012 asking about the details of plots allotted to the Army Welfare Trust (AWT). The AWT is a private NGO registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, and not a defence organization or connected with the defence of Pakistan. The RTI request was prompted by the lease of 25,000 square yards to the AWT in the commercial hub of Karachi for a mere amount of Rs 6,000. The AWT subleased the plot to a commercial organization for an annual amount in excess of Rs 17.5 million thus making a huge profit in the process and causing a substantial loss to the public exchequer. After getting no response, the NGO sought the intervention of the Federal Ombudsman which responded: 'Your complaint has been examined. It shows that the matter relates to a defence organization or is connected with the defence of Pakistan. In such circumstances, the Ombudsman cannot take cognizance of this matter, as per the law.' A representation filed before the president of Pakistan in 2012 has been pending since. Even a request to the Cantonment Executive Officer of Karachi inquiring about the laws and notification regarding the fee charged for car parking was also not answered by the concerned department. A subsequent appeal to the Ombudsman against the refusal of information was also dismissed on the grounds that the matter is related 'to the defence of Pakistan'.⁵⁵ Clearly, the leasing of state-owned land to a private organization at throwaway prices or charging car parking fees without legal sanction is nothing more than institutionalized corruption and reinforces the fact that the army is a law unto itself.

Business interests of the armed forces, especially land acquisitions, seem to have kept pace with increased defence allocations over the years. Real estate have grown so fast that at one point a judge of the Lahore High Court, when examining the map of Lahore showing the expansion of Defence Housing Authority (DHA), remarked that 'it seems half of Lahore is going to be DHA'.⁵⁶

The damage that such activities have done to the army's image is reflected in the comparison that Shuja Nawaz makes between the slogans of 1965 and 2007. In the middle of the 1965 war with India, one of the popular patriotic songs was '*Ae watan ke sajeele jawanon; meray naghme tumhare liye hain*' ('O splendid soldiers of the homeland, my songs are for you'). By 2007, the country saw the jarring banner carried by lawyers who were protesting the removal of a chief justice by the military rulers of Pakistan: '*Ae watan ke sajeele Gernailo; saaray ruqbey tumhare liye hain*' ('O handsome generals of the homeland, all the plots are just for you').⁵⁷

Given the huge commercial interests that the three services have developed, it would not be too far-fetched to imagine that their corporate interests have started dictating the trajectory of their policies and

attitudes, at least domestically. Moreover, the military leadership regards even a fair criticism on its corporate interests as a deliberate campaign to malign the military and hence treasonous.⁵⁸

The periodic bouts of martial law and the army dominating even during periods of civilian rule have had severe consequences for the development of Pakistan and for the army itself. Lt Gen. Gul Hassan probably summed it up best when he wrote:

Our environment went askew because martial law became a part and parcel of our very existence, thereby burdening the army with the dual tasks of administering the country and defending it in any emergency. I shall frankly state that we failed miserably in both these undertakings. Our commitment to martial law was total in 1971, when in spite of the fact that the Army was all-in-all, there was no communication whatsoever between the Government and the GHQ. The void was absolute, and it had to be experienced to be believed.⁵⁹

Musharraf too commented on the effects of martial law: 'Our past experience has amply demonstrated that martial law damages not only military but also civilian institutions, because as the army gets superimposed on civil institutions the bureaucracy becomes dependent on army officers to make the crucial decisions that they themselves should be making.'⁶⁰

While bouts of martial law have been bad enough, worse has been the army's propensity to see security primarily in military terms. As a result of this, a huge proportion of funds has had to be allocated to the military. The argument of the army, which has been bought by politicians trying to secure their own future, has been that such spending is necessary for the defence of the territorial and ideological frontiers of Pakistan against India, and that it is not Indian intentions but their capabilities that have to be factored in. Resultantly, allocation of such massive resources to the military has left very little for economic development and investment in issues of long-term security like education, water, infrastructure, health.

Given the poor shape of its economy, Pakistan can only sustain such massive expenditure on the military by ignoring other vital sectors. Such a skewed model has become a recipe for disaster. As the discussion in the chapters on water, economy, education and population will show, Pakistan is facing an emergency in each of these, primarily because of lack of investment over the decades.

National security does not reside solely in military power but also in several non-military areas. Both hard and soft power have to be blended to provide a holistic security to any country. In fact, in today's world it is not so much military prowess as economic strength that could prove to be decisive. As Paul Kennedy, surveying the rise and fall of great powers over the past five centuries, concludes: '... the fact remains that all the major shifts in the world's military power balances have followed alterations in the productive balances ... [In] the Great Power wars ... victory has always gone to the side with the greatest material resources.'⁶¹

A common thread that runs through the army's thinking and actions since 1947 has been its tactical nature. Whether it was sending 'tribal raiders' into Kashmir in 1947, or 'infiltrators' in 1965, or 'mujahideen' into Kargil in 1999, the moves were all tactical, without considering the long-term consequences, or even

seeing their logical conclusion. Such a conclusion was confirmed by Gen. Aslam Beg at a press conference in September 1989 in which he described the 1965 and 1971 wars with India as ‘a pathetic story of how not to fight a war’. Both wars, he said, were fought with only tactical aims and without clear strategic objectives. As a result, the army had some tactical victories but Pakistan lost the wars.⁶²

In each of these tactical forays, Pakistan has lost much more than what it could have gained. The attitude seems to have been ‘throw the first punch and the consequences will take care of themselves’, or more likely, the ‘US or China will bail us out’. Likewise, in Afghanistan, the chimera of seeking ‘strategic depth’ may have gained Pakistan a seat at the high table temporarily, but the cost the country has paid over the last twenty-five years is incalculable, and the story is by no means over. For one thing, the goal of Pakistan evolving into a moderate, democratic and developmental state has ebbed ominously.

There is no doubt that under the present trajectory, the army will continue to dominate politics and especially its core areas of interest – defence, foreign and nuclear policies. The Pakistan Army will continue to use Islam and project itself as an Islamic army without becoming an Islamized army. Likewise, the chain of command is likely to hold, and there is unlikely to be a civil war with or without Islamic overtones unless something drastic – a black-swan event – happens.

What the army needs to ask itself is whether by such domination Pakistan is a more, or a less, secure state today than it was, say, thirty years ago. It also needs to introspect whether Pakistan’s fragile economy can sustain such a security model without further worsening Pakistan’s structural problems, which all the nuclear weapons in the world will not resolve. Finally, it needs to ask itself whether India is the problem or is the problem its own need to dominate Pakistan for which the Indian bogey has been sustained.

6

Civil–Military Relations

Whatever be the constitutional position, one thing is clear that in the final analysis, political sovereignty in Pakistan resides neither in the electorate, nor the Parliament, nor the executive, nor the Judiciary, nor even the Constitution which has superiority over all the institutions it creates. It resides, if it resides anywhere at all, where the coercive power resides. In practice it is the ‘pouvoir occulte’ [the hidden power], which is the ultimate authority in the decision-making process in Pakistan. They decide when to abrogate the Constitution; when it should be held in abeyance; when elected governments should be sacked; and when democracy should be given a chance. Behind the scenes, they also decide whether an elected prime minister shall live or die.¹

—Roedad Khan

IN MOST democracies, civil–military relations are subject to laid-down guidelines and protocol, with the armed forces being responsible to the executive. In Pakistan, however, civil–military relations have been the central issue in governance. If one takes an overview of governments in Pakistan from the 1950s till 2016, a clear pattern of alternating civilian and overt military rule emerges.

While the army has intervened directly in the governance of the country four times since 1947 (for a combined period of thirty-four years), it has called the shots in areas that pertain to national security even when civilians were in charge. Iqbal Akhund explains this succinctly:

On Afghanistan, Kashmir and India the government was faced with very complex and thorny issues, but the decision-making in all of these had been taken over by the army and the intelligence agencies in Zia’s time and there, in the ultimate analysis, it remained. The role of the Foreign Ministry was scarcely that of primus inter pares.²

Moreover, when the civilians have tried to step out of line, they have been removed. Thus between 1988 and 1999, with a nod from the army, four civilian governments were removed – twice of Benazir Bhutto and twice of Nawaz Sharif – by the president using the infamous Article 58(2) (b) of the Constitution. A more recent example is of the March 2009 period of political turmoil, when General Kayani told the American ambassador in Islamabad that he ‘might, however reluctantly’, pressure Mr Zardari (the then president) to resign and mentioned Asfandyar Wali Khan, leader of the Awami National Party, as a possible replacement. ‘Kayani made it clear regardless how much he disliked Zardari he

distrusted Nawaz even more’, the ambassador wrote in a cable leaked later by WikiLeaks.³ Thus, it would perhaps be more accurate to say that Pakistan has been under military control for most of its existence.

Such a state of affairs could never have been imagined in 1947. At the reception given by Jinnah on 14 August 1947 when Asghar Khan and Lt Col (later Maj. Gen.) Akbar Khan met Jinnah, Khan told Jinnah that they were disappointed that the higher posts in the armed forces had been given to British officers who still controlled their destiny. According to Asghar Khan, ‘the Quaid who had been listening patiently raised his finger and said, “Never forget that you are the servants of the state. You do not make policy. It is we, the people’s representatives, who decide how the country is to be run. Your job is only to obey the decision of your civilian masters.”’⁴

Could any politician have the temerity to say this to the army chief today? The answer has to be a resounding no. Hence, democratic governance in Pakistan instead of being a tripod of the executive, legislature and judiciary looks more like a garden umbrella in which the army is the central pole around which the other organs of the state revolve. Consequently, civilian governments in Pakistan have neither defined national security objectives nor developed strategies to implement them. Two examples illustrate this graphically: one, the continuing ambiguity about whether the then prime minister Nawaz Sharif was aware of, or had been briefed about, the 1999 Kargil intrusions; second, the civilian leadership in Pakistan has no real control over the country’s nuclear assets and policy. Both these examples underline the gravity of the issue of civil–military relations.

In its essentials, the tussle between the civil and military authorities in Pakistan is not just about power and supremacy. It is about the contempt that the military holds the politicians in and about their belief that left to themselves, the political class will destroy Pakistan one way or the other, or, at the minimum, compromise its vital security interests. A telling comment is the instructions given by the then commander-in-chief Ayub Khan to Pakistan’s first military attaché in Washington DC, Brigadier Ghulam Gillani, in 1952, barely five years after Pakistan was created. He was told that his main task was to procure military equipment from the Pentagon, and he need not take either the ambassador or Foreign Office into confidence because in his view, ‘these civilians cannot be trusted with such sensitive matters of national security’.⁵

Later, Ayub Khan wrote in an article in *Foreign Affairs*:

The former politicians are no problem to us now or in the near future. We have taken good care to spare them the usual tragic fate of those overtaken by revolutionary upheavals. On the contrary, we are content to treat them as a big joke, just as they turned a perfectly sound country into the laughing-stock of the whole world. When they are confronted with skeletons collected from their cupboards, most of them wisely prefer to retire and, possibly, from public life for five to six years rather than face the risk of open trial. This saves a lot of dirty linen from being washed publicly, and decent folk prefer this quiet exit of errant politicians.⁶

Another example is in the Foreword of Gen. K.M. Arif’s book on Zia-ul-Haq:

Like many other soldiers, he had contempt for politicians; however, his dislike of politicians ... was rooted in a knowledge of the seamier aspects of their personal and public behaviour ... Zia

was convinced that most politicians had a price; and experience confirmed his opinion that only a few were prepared to rise above their petty personal ambitions.⁷

The curriculum at the National Defence College and the writings of officers in the army's internal publication, the *Green Book*, have one underlying theme: distrust of politicians.⁸ For example, the entire 322-page *Green Book 2000*, published after Musharraf's coup, was dedicated to celebrating the role of the military in saving Pakistan after civilians had failed.⁹

Lt Gen. Hamid Gul probably expressed the army's sentiments well when he told Iqbal Akhund,

[A] democratic government by its very nature tended to compromise, and political compromise might sometime run counter to the national interest. So ... there must be some means of defining and promoting the national interest, some means of rising above political partisanship and compromise on issues of high policy – such as Afghanistan, Kashmir, or relations with India.¹⁰

One reason for such contempt is the failure of the politicians to understand the military and its belief systems. Shuja Nawaz notes pertinently:

The gap between the cantonment and the city, where the civilians lived, was huge and almost insurmountable. This divide continued well into the first couple of decades of independent Pakistan, leading not only to separate economic and social systems for these entities, but also to a different world view and indeed to a different view on national issues. Even today, the cantonment functions as an autonomous economy within the cities and towns of modern Pakistan.¹¹

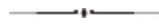
A consequence of such an attitude towards the civilians is the army's obsessive need to control every aspect of Pakistan's national security. On the other hand, any democratically elected government worth its salt would like to have full control over all policies, and pursue developmental strategies to ensure a re-election. A clash is inherent in such a dichotomy and so far it has been the civil governments that have blinked first. For example, one way that the politicians can restrain the army's clout is to reduce the defence expenditure. Having better relations with its neighbours – India and Afghanistan – is one way to do it. This, however, is unacceptable to the army which sees such efforts as an attack on Pakistan's ideology, or *Nazaria-i-Pakistan*, that implies unending hostility towards India and compromising the objective of 'strategic depth' in Afghanistan. In the ensuing tussle, it is the army that wins simply because the political class in Pakistan is both timid and not united – politicians will always break ranks to do the army's bidding, while in the army there are no serving dissenters.

Contempt for politicians apart, the army, since the inception of Pakistan, has not really believed that democracy is suited to Pakistan. The key element in the 'Rawalpindi Conspiracy' hatched in 1949–51 by Maj. Gen. Akbar Khan was his open scorn for politicians 'whom he blasted for incompetence, indecision and corruption'.¹² Seven years after the Rawalpindi Conspiracy, Gen. Ayub Khan stated: 'It is now the fashion to blame the politicians outright for this mess. Yes, they were guilty of many misdeeds of omission and commission; but there is one fundamental point in which, I have a feeling, they were rather sinned against than sinning. That is, they were given a system of government totally unsuited to the temper and

climate of the country.’¹³ On another occasion, Ayub Khan stated, ‘We must understand that democracy cannot work in a hot climate. To have democracy we must have a cold climate like Britain.’¹⁴

Echoing Ayub but using Islam instead of climate, Zia at a press conference stated: ‘Our present political edifice is based on the secular democratic system of the West, which has no place in Islam ... In Pakistan neither anarchy nor Westernism will work. This country was created in the name of Islam and in Islam there is no provision for Western-type elections.’¹⁵

Musharraf gave his own twist by stating, ‘Our democracy is not mature in the country. I think many politicians do not behave in a mature manner ... I have a belief that democracy has to be modified to an environment; that is the reason of my retaining the power of dismissing an assembly.’¹⁶



The trend of the army’s role in politics began almost at the very creation of Pakistan. For example, Pakistan’s political leaders failed to foresee or politically analyse the repercussions of endorsing Maj. Gen. Akbar Khan’s plan of sending ‘raiders’ into the Kashmir Valley, which led to the first India–Pakistan war in 1948. Gen. Frank Messervy, the first commander-in-chief of the Pakistan Army (1947–48) was quick to recognize the signs and warned about the erosion of the army’s apolitical tradition. He said he was fed up with what was going on in Kashmir; the manner in which it was going on; all behind his back. He predicted that politically minded young officers would make a mess of things under the garb of patriotism. He added, ‘Politicians using soldiers and soldiers allowing themselves to be used, without proper approval of superiors, were setting a bad example for the future.’¹⁷

Having donned the mantle of saviours of Pakistan with the power to determine what is in Pakistan’s best interest, the army also claims the right to take charge directly when, as determined by them, the civilians are unable to govern. Thus, the army has intervened periodically to pause democracy in an attempt to ‘sort out the bloody civilians’. However, every military dictator has had to ‘civilianize’ himself because every military dictator realized that he could not govern a country as complex as Pakistan without the ‘bloody civilians’. Ayub Khan and Yahya co-opted Z.A. Bhutto, Zia co-opted Muhammad Khan Junejo and Musharraf had to get Taj Muhammad Jamali and Shaukat Aziz. In June 2001, Musharraf declared himself president in the ‘supreme national interest’. The *Dawn* summed this up brilliantly:

Military rulers in Pakistan traverse a familiar and well-trodden route, sooner or later assuming the title and office of president. It took General Ayub Khan three weeks to arrive at this stage, General Yahya Khan a few days. General Zia-ul-Haq about a year and it has taken General Pervez Musharraf a little over eighteen months to cover the same journey.¹⁸

The army has rationalized its ‘reluctant’ takeover in two ways. First is the ‘threat to national security’ argument – that Pakistan was under threat due to the activities of the politicians, the army could not allow this to continue, and only the army could secure Pakistan; second is the disinterested democrat argument – the army did not hanker after power, democracy would not be derailed, the army would ‘reform’ the system and elections would be held soon. Such rationalization is evident in the statements made when martial law has been imposed.

In October 1958, Gen. Ayub Khan said that the armed forces were forced to impose military rule, ‘with

great reluctance – but with the fullest conviction that there was no alternative except the disintegration and complete ruination of the country. History would never have forgiven us if the present chaotic conditions were allowed to go on any further.’ The military’s only objective, he stressed, was to give the country ‘a sound democratic system and lay the foundations for a stable future ... our ultimate aim is to restore democracy ... but of the type that people can understand and work.’¹⁹

In 1969, the chief martial law administrator, Gen. Yahya Khan, asserted:

The situation has deteriorated to such an extent that normal law enforcing methods have become totally ineffective and have almost completely broken down. ... The nation has to be pulled back to safety and normal conditions have to be restored without delay. The Armed Forces could not remain idle spectators of this state of near anarchy. They have to do their duty and save the country from utter disaster.

My sole aim in imposing Martial Law is to protect life, liberty and property of the people and to put the administration back on the rails. ... I have no ambition other than the creation of conditions conducive to the establishment of a constitutional government.²⁰

In 1977, the chief of the army staff, Gen. Zia-ul-Haq said:

When the political leaders failed to steer the country out of a crisis, it is inexcusable for the Armed Forces to sit as silent spectators. It is primarily for this reason that the Army perforce had to intervene, to save the country. ... I want to make it absolutely clear that neither I have any political ambitions nor does the army want to be detracted from its profession of soldiering. I was obliged to step in to fill the vacuum created by the political leaders. I have accepted the challenge as a true soldier of Islam. My sole aim is to organize free and fair elections which would be held in October this year.²¹

In October 1999, General Pervez Musharraf said that he had taken over power ‘in extremely unusual circumstances – not of my making’ – and accused Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of ‘intriguing to destroy the last institution of stability left in Pakistan by creating dissension within the ranks of the armed forces of Pakistan’.²² ‘This is not martial law, only another path to democracy. The armed forces have no intention of staying in charge any longer than is absolutely necessary to pave the way for true democracy to flourish in Pakistan.’²³

There are, of course, limits to how often the army can directly intervene or even indirectly push the civilians. For one thing, there is the fear that the US would cut off aid on which the army is greatly dependent. Second, as previous experiences of direct intervention have shown, Pakistan is not an easy country to govern. As Ayub Khan lamented: ‘We are a very difficult country structurally. Perhaps I pushed it too hard into the modern age. We are not ready for reforms. Quite frankly, I have failed. I must admit that clearly. Our laws were for a sophisticated society.’²⁴ Moreover, the systemic faults in the Pakistan economy are beyond the competence of the army to fix, even though it has managed to acquire and run a vast business empire. Not surprisingly, the army has found that its own credibility has taken a beating every time it has intervened.

Ayub Khan provided a damning indictment of his own eleven years of military rule in his last address to the nation on 25 March 1969. He said:

It hurts me deeply to say that the situation is no longer under the control of the Government. All government institutions have become victims of coercion, fear and intimidation ... Every principle, restraint and way of civilized existence has been abandoned. Every problem of the country is being decided in the streets. Except for the Armed forces there is no constitutional and effective way to meet the situation.²⁵

This being so, the obvious question is why they did not let the 'bloody civilians' continue in the first place. While that question remains unanswered, the fact is that it has taken the country years to recover politically from every intervention of the army.

The alternating civil and military rule suggests that neither the civilians nor the military have been in a position to provide suitable governance to the country. This is borne out by the fact that each time a civilian government is booted out, the public has welcomed the military with garlands, and each time the military bows out and democracy is restored, the same public has equally welcomed the politicians with garlands. In short, neither has the army been able to manage the affairs of the state any better than the civilian government it got rid of, nor have the civilian governments demonstrated the ability to do so any better than the army. Ultimately, it is the public that is left dangling, in an elusive search of a leader who could ameliorate their problems.

Is then Pakistan ungovernable, or are its leaders incapable of governing Pakistan? Given the situation Pakistan is in, the jury is still out on this all-important question.



There have been at least three occasions when elected prime ministers could have taken firm control of the army and clipped its wings. On all three occasions, the civilians failed.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had the best opportunity of taking the army head-on and cutting it down to size in the wake of the army's humiliating defeat to India in 1971, when its macho image was destroyed and its reputation was at an all-time low. As Ziring puts it: 'At the end of Yahya's tenure, Pakistan was even more "moth-eaten" than at the time of partition. The Pakistan Army, the recipient of the greater portion of resources, lay in a shambles, even more demoralized than the general population.'²⁶

Bhutto was also inclined to do so. In 1966, in London, Tariq Ali had asked Bhutto why he had embroiled the country in an unwinnable war (1965). The reply, says Tariq Ali, was 'breath-taking': 'It was the only way to weaken the bloody dictatorship. The regime will crack wide open soon.'²⁷ Likewise, in 1968 during the student uprising, Bhutto promised the students that after the people's victory, they would 'dress the generals in skirts and parade them through the streets like performing monkeys'.²⁸

However, according to Ziring, 'Bhutto was too close to the disaster that engulfed the former Pakistan to understand the significance of the dismemberment. ... It must be remembered that Bhutto declared Pakistan had been 'saved' on his return to Karachi from Dacca the day after the Pakistan Army attacked the precincts of Dacca University.'²⁹ Moreover, Bhutto's attitude towards India was similar to that of the army. He was blinded by his hatred for India and was determined to continue the confrontation. After all,

he had famously remarked: 'If India builds the bomb, we will eat grass and leaves for a thousand years, even go hungry, but we will get one of our own.' It was this imperative of pursuing an anti-India policy that made him need the army rather than trim it down to size.

What Bhutto did was to insert a legal deterrence in the shape of Article 6 of the 1973 Constitution, which prescribed capital punishment for any attempt to overthrow or subvert the Constitution in any way. However, this did not prevent his overthrow by Zia. As Akhund notes, 'The armed forces are trained and programmed to unquestioning obedience, so when an order comes down the proper chain of command, the man who is to carry it out is unlikely to check it first with his copy of the Constitution.'³⁰

Nawaz Sharif had the second opportunity when Musharraf was discredited as army chief for the failure of the Kargil intrusions in 1999. Instead of taking action against Musharraf immediately, Nawaz waited for six months by which time Musharraf had bounced back through a massive media campaign that it was Nawaz who had let the army and the country down.

Finally, Zardari as president and Gilani as prime minister had another opportunity on 2 May 2011 when the US killed Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, followed very soon by the attack on the Mehran naval base on 22 May 2011. The events were a disaster for the army. Then there were many in Pakistan who felt that either the army knew and had hid Osama, or that it was an incompetent and dysfunctional army. This led to questions like whether such an army should be entitled to massive chunks of the budget. In either case, a bold civilian government should have taken the army to task, and the army chief and DG, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) should have been sacked to set an example of civilian supremacy. But this was not to be. Like after the 1971 debacle when the army got its media lackeys to turn the tables on Bhutto, here too the 'talk show' hosts started questioning the US violation of Pak sovereignty. Thus, PM Gilani had the mortification of having to threaten the US a few days after the raid.

The army was able to quickly regain the upper hand and the whole debate turned on its head with the focus on the violation of Pak sovereignty rather than the role of the army and the ISI in either hiding Osama bin Laden or in their failure to prevent the US raid. This opportunity too was lost. Even the leaked Abbottabad Commission report in 2013 put the blame on 'collective failure' of state military and intelligence authorities and 'routine' incompetence at every level of civil governance structure, rather than identify any person or institution for specific blame.³¹

As noted in the previous chapter, the army is likely to dominate Pakistan and its core interests. Gul Hassan puts his finger on the reason:

As far as I can foresee, the specter of Martial Law will be ever-present in Pakistan, unless she produces political leaders who can look beyond provincial horizons, be above-board, possess honesty of purpose, command the solid support of the masses, and be genuinely concerned with their welfare, and last but by no means least, be patriots. This would be a tall order for our political community to fulfill, and it will be equally wishful to console ourselves that one fine day the leadership of the Army may decide to devote themselves wholly to their profession.³²

To this summation, Cohen adds: 'Because it believes it is Pakistan's guardian, and because it has the means to enforce this belief, the army will remain the most important institution in Pakistan for many years ... Since the army thinks it has the only true professional ability to handle national security or the national interest, Pakistan is likely to be in for a long spell of direct and indirect military rule. Therefore the

beliefs of the officer corps will shape both Pakistan's domestic and foreign policies.'³³

Recent developments confirm the prognosis of Gul Hassan and Cohen. The establishment of military courts to try terror suspects, bypassing the regular judicial system, in the wake of the terrorist attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar in December 2014 and the stemming of any progress on relations with India has reiterated the army's ascendancy in foreign and security affairs. Military courts apart, the army is seen to have taken charge, and the civilian government, having failed to cope with internal security issues, especially religious extremism and terrorism, has chosen to sit on the sidelines and abdicated its responsibility. As a result army chief Gen. Raheel Sharif's profile has increased by leaps and bounds in comparison to that of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and members of his cabinet who are perceived as indecisive, lacking in leadership and vision. General Sharif is perceived to be taking all major policy decisions on issues pertaining to internal and external security. Little wonder then that columnists have started describing the ascendancy of the army and the current state of civil-military relations as a 'soft coup' or a 'creeping coup'.

The key mechanism of the 'soft coup' is the system of apex committees set up to monitor the implementation of the National Action Plan.³⁴ Committees consisting of the civilian and military leadership have formally given the army a role in the civilian administrative domain and relegated federal and provincial cabinets into the background. They have become the pivotal body for taking decisions on issues that fall primarily in the civilian domain. To mask the fundamental change that has taken place in the cabinet system of governance, the word being used is that the civilian and military leadership are on 'one page', or 'same page', a euphemism for the former having abdicated its responsibility and being allowed to stay on in power.³⁵

How did this incremental shift of power come about and where will it end? It is indeed a remarkable U-turn from May 2013 when everyone hailed the democratic transition from one civilian government to another as a sign of Pakistan's maturing democracy. Two signposts that heralded the shift are noteworthy. The first was Nawaz Sharif's flip-flops over involving the army chief to resolve the protests of Imran Khan and Tahir-ul-Qadri in August 2014. After asking the army chief to facilitate a peaceful resolution, Nawaz Sharif later tried to backtrack by putting the onus on the Opposition. It was left to the ISPR to rebut the PM publicly. The second was his lack of leadership after the tragedy in Peshawar in December 2014. Let alone visit the school immediately Nawaz Sharif did not even come on TV to console the nation. This was in contrast to the army chief who was seen as leading from the front. It was this abdication of political and constitutional responsibility and leadership that contrasted with the vigorous moves by the army chief in the hour of tragedy. Resultantly, more and more space has been conceded to the military on internal security matters and an incremental shifting of power towards the military has taken place.³⁶

The current imbalance in civil-military relations was graphically demonstrated when, after a meeting of the corps commanders in November 2015, the ISPR through a press release, expressed concern about the poor implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) by the civilian government. The statement quoted the army chief as having underlined the need for matching/complementary governance initiatives for long-term gains of operations and enduring peace across the country. It further stated that 'progress of National Action Plan's implementation, finalization of FATA reforms, and concluding all ongoing [investigations by Joint Investigation Teams] JITs at priority were highlighted as issues which could undermine the effect of operations'.³⁷

While the wording of the statement was a severe indictment of the civilian government, the fact that the army chose to go public barely twenty-four hours after a high-level meeting between the PM, the army chief and their top aides made it much worse. All that the government could do in the face of such blatant criticism was to issue a rejoinder saying that the NAP was a joint responsibility. Even though many believe that the army is stepping outside its domain, such moves are popular because the civilians – provincial governments in Sindh and Punjab and the PML-N federal government – hardly ever cracked down on terrorism and corruption.

Where this will end would depend entirely on the ability of the civilian leadership to retake control and provide leadership, and on the appetite of the army chief – how much would he want to assert control. As Ayub Khan told his son Gohar Ayub at a time when he was not well and the army chief, Gen. Yahya Khan, was sniffing at power, ‘You have served in GHQ and should know that if the Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army gets it into his head to take over, then it is only God above who can stop him.’³⁸

Indicative of the changed equations is the fact that the GHQ has now become an important destination for visiting foreign dignitaries, including the Afghan president, the Iranian foreign minister and others. The three chiefs even met the Chinese president in his hotel without the defence minister being present. All this signals the enhanced role of the military.³⁹ Even the Chinese ambassador in Islamabad has taken to meeting the army chief to resolve issues relating to the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) rather than rely on the civilians to do so.

The danger, of course, is that such public adulation could get out of hand. As Abbas Nasir, a former editor of *Dawn*, told the *Guardian*: ‘My worry is this completely one-sided praise, if it gets to the head of some military leaders, may lead us back to misadventurism, whether that’s a march on Islamabad or some sort of an attack on India. If you are constantly told you are great, sooner or later you will believe it.’⁴⁰ Gen. Raheel Sharif may or may not nurse dictatorial ambitions, having already announced that he does not want an extension, but what about his successor? What about greater involvement of the army in internal affairs, normally a preserve of the civilians? What about the heightened expectations of the public from the army rather than from the civilians? These are issues that should be of serious concern for the future of civil–military relations.

Moreover, the appointment of the recently retired Lt Gen. Janjua as the national security adviser (a role being performed so far by Sartaj Aziz) institutionalizes the army’s role in security policy, especially on issues like Indo-Pak relations and Pak-Afghan relations. The caveat, of course, is that he continues to enjoy the confidence and trust of the army chief.

A moot question is whether Pakistan would gradually become less of a security state were the civilians to gain an upper hand, unlikely though it may seem today. Would, for example, a civilian government’s India and Afghan policies be any different, would it be able to jettison the jihadi structure nurtured over the decades for foreign policy purposes? There is no easy answers precisely because the odds of the civilians getting the upper hand are so long. And it is unlikely that the army would ever permit the civilians to emerge on top.

The only way the civilians can reverse the trend is when they strengthen inner-party democracy as well as parliament, which would, in turn, strengthen democracy in the country. They would have to raise the bar of governance to ameliorate the condition of the people and come to be seen as effective administrators. If the politicians can’t do that they will be left to blame themselves and lament their fate.

The West has not helped civil–military relations in Pakistan either. As Cohen puts it, for the US in particular, a ‘pro-Western Pakistan, a stable Pakistan, a prosperous Pakistan and a democratic Pakistan were all desirable but in that order’.⁴¹ Not surprisingly, the army chief is given far more importance by the US than cabinet ministers of the Pakistan government, undermining the civilian establishment. The classic example was the first Pak-US strategic dialogue in the US where the star was army chief Gen. Kayani rather than Shah Mehmood Qureshi, the foreign minister who was the leader of the delegation. Gen. Kayani demonstrated his importance again in the third US–Pakistan Strategic Dialogue in October 2010 by meeting both military and civilian leaders, including President Obama.⁴² It has been no different for Gen. Kayani’s successor, Gen. Raheel Sharif. His visit to the US in November 2015 got far more attention and was billed as being more important than the October 2015 visit of Prime Minister Sharif during which the PM had met President Obama.

According to David Sanger, when formal meetings with the Pakistanis were held for the cameras, American leaders would sit down with the Pakistani president or prime minister and laud the arrival of a democratically elected civilian government. That was almost entirely for show. When they wanted something done, they ignored the civilians and called Kayani.⁴³

To conclude, at the heart of the distorted civil–military relations has been the failure of the democratic process to deepen and take firm roots. Despite the passage of sixty-nine years since its creation, Pakistan has been unable to create vibrant, mature and credible democratic political institutions which can withstand the manipulations of the army. If the 2013 elections that heralded the first-ever democratic transition in more than six decades are to have the potential of eroding the overwhelming influence of the army, at the very minimum Nawaz Sharif has to ensure that the 2018 elections result in another civilian government. It will only be a succession of democratic governments that can give the civilians the confidence to stand up to the army.

The fact that military rulers have had to co-opt civilians to legitimize their rule is indicative of the fact that the army realizes its limitations. If the politicians did not have black sheep in their midst and if they were able to close ranks and bide their time for power, it is unlikely that the army could either take over power or prevent any democratic government in exercising full powers, including those relating to Pakistan’s security. This, however, may be a tall order, given the disruptive, personality-oriented and polarized nature of politics in Pakistan. In the near to medium term, Pakistan’s civilian institutions and politicians are unlikely to have the required capabilities to genuinely exercise control over the military. That is why the army would be happy with the current ‘soft coup’.

The conundrum faced by the army is that if it allows the civilian government space to govern like in any other democratic country, the government will want to interfere and control matters the army considers its preserve like defence and foreign policy. This would be anathema to the army since it does not trust the civilians to do the right thing. However, without strengthening civil government, without giving it space to govern, the country will continue its dangerous slide. The army has yet to resolve this conundrum; and till it does, Pakistan will continue courting the abyss.

IV

The Superstructure

THIS SECTION looks at the interrelated issues of Islamization, sectarianism, the madrasas and, finally, terrorism. The common thread between them has been the cynical use of religion by successive rulers for tactical objectives, ignoring the fact that they were playing with fire. Though Gen. Zia-ul-Haq is most associated with Islamization, he was following a tradition established during the Pakistan movement, the only difference being that he was a true believer, unlike the other rulers who preceded and succeeded him. However, periodic doses of Islamization have radicalized society on the one hand and injected the poison of sectarianism, on the other. Over sixty years ago, the Justice Munir Enquiry Report of 1954 highlighted how each of the forty-odd ulema belonging to different sects, who appeared before the Enquiry Commission declared every other sect as kafir and asserted that his sect alone was truly Islamic. Things have only become worse since then.

The mushroom growth of madrasas has been an adjunct to the Islamization and growth of sectarianism, with each sect setting up its own madrasas. The anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan and the need for fresh recruits for the jihad provided an added fillip to the growth of madrasas. They have become such a force as to resist periodic attempts by different governments to regulate them and their curriculum.

The growth of terrorist organizations in Pakistan is the direct result of the support given to them by the state which uses terrorism as an instrument of domestic and foreign policy. Their continued existence is primarily because of the selective approach adopted by the army in dealing with terrorists, targeting some and encouraging others. Resultantly, Pakistan today is perhaps the most radicalized and violent state in the world.

Today, the enforcement of the sharia is being demanded not only by the Taliban and other terrorist groups but also by all mainstream religious political parties as the panacea of all the ills of Pakistan. But if implemented, whose sharia will it be?

Islamization and Growth of Sectarianism

Surely, it is time to reflect on what makes so many Pakistanis disposed towards celebrating murder, lawlessness and intolerance. To understand the kind of psychological conditioning that has turned us into nasty brutes, cruel both to ourselves and to others, I suggest that the readers sample some of the Friday Khutbas [sermons] delivered across the country's estimated 250,000 mosques ... Often using abusive language, the mullahs excoriate their enemies: America, India, Israel, Christians, Jews, Hindus, Shias, and Qadianis. Before appreciative crowds, they breathe fire against the enemies of Islam and modernity.¹

—Pervez Hoodbhoy

PAKISTAN CAME into being in the name of Islam and defined itself as *mamlekat khudadad* – a divinely granted nation. Jinnah demanded a separate homeland for the Muslims so that they could practise Islam, free from being swamped by the Hindu majority. His successors, civil and military, have all, in varying degrees, strengthened the Islamic character of Pakistan, either out of conviction or opportunistically for political survival. A plethora of Islamic political parties (including some that had opposed the creation of Pakistan), groups and organizations ensure that the Islamic nature of Pakistan is reiterated on a daily basis.

Where has all this left Pakistan? One fact conceded by most observers is that there is far more violence associated with religion in Pakistan in 2016 than there was in 1947 (leaving aside the Partition riots, of course). As Musharraf asks, ‘We were once a perfectly normal, religiously harmonious society, with only occasional tension between the Sunni and Shia sects of our religion. How did we reach the present-day epidemic of terrorism and extremism?’²

How did this come about? The seeds, as noted earlier, were sown during the Pakistan movement itself. Successive rulers incrementally added to the trajectory of Islamization till today when there is a situation where one sect of Islam is almost at war with another.

Several writers and historians have pointed to the secular nature of Jinnah, especially in his personal life. But that is to miss the point that it was not Jinnah's secular lifestyle but his public persona that was relevant to the Pakistan movement and the legacy that he left behind. Moreover, after the 1937 elections there was a definite change in Jinnah's sartorial style to appear Islamic. More substantively, he started using an appeal to Islam and sanctioned Islamic rhetoric. And the Muslim League started using ulemas and pirs to garner support for the party in the name of Islam during the 1945–46 elections. Thus, despite Jinnah's secular persona, the logic of the two-nation theory and the use of Islam during the last stages of

the Pakistan movement tilted the political discourse in Pakistan towards Islamization.

In some of his interviews to the Western media, Jinnah had said that Pakistan would not be a theocratic state and that the state had nothing to do with one's religion, a point that he reiterated during his famous address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on 11 August 1947:

You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed; that has nothing to do with the business of the state. ... We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens, and equal citizens, of one state. ... you will find that in the course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the state.

However, two statements of Jinnah were to throw doubts on the above assertion. One, during the Muslim League Council meeting at Karachi on 14 and 15 December 1947 he said, 'Let it be clear that Pakistan is going to be a Muslim state based on Islamic ideals. It was not going to be an ecclesiastical state. In Islam there is no discrimination as far as citizenship is concerned. The whole world, even UNO, has characterized Pakistan as a Muslim state.'³ Second, on 25 January 1948, just months before he passed away and in failing health, he publicly retracted his earlier commitment to democratic citizenship by declaring that Pakistan's Constitution would be based on Islamic law (sharia) 'to make Pakistan a truly great Islamic State'.⁴

There is also evidence of Jinnah's assurance to the ulema about the role of Islam in Pakistan. For example, Maulana Zafar Ahmed Thanvi and Allama Shabbir Ahmad Usmani met Jinnah in Bombay on 11 June 1947, when he assured them that Pakistan would have an Islamic Constitution; that it would be an Islamic state and the pattern of secular Turkey would not be adopted.⁵ In an earlier chapter, Jinnah's letter to the pir of Manki Sharif⁶ in November 1945 that the Constituent Assembly would be able to enact laws for Muslims not inconsistent with the sharia laws has been noted.

While Jinnah had given contradictory statements, there was similar confusion among the ulemas on Pakistan. The Jamaat founder, Syed Abul Ala Maududi was opposed to the creation of Pakistan on the grounds that 'the demand for Pakistan was insufficiently Islamic to warrant support from Muslim believers'. Once created, however, Maududi led an aggressive campaign to make Pakistan an Islamic state.⁷ The stand of the central leadership of the Jamiat Ulema-i-Hind (JUH) led by Maulana Husayn Ahmed Madani was pro-Congress: 'In the modern age, nations are founded on homelands; nations are not founded on the basis of race or religion. The dwellers of England are recognized as one nation, whereas they have Jews and Christians as their citizens, and such is the case with America, Japan and France.'⁸ Some prominent dissidents from Deoband, however, like Maulana Thanvi and Allama Usmani supported the Muslim League. Maulana Thanvi even issued a fatwa calling on Muslims to support the Muslim League and to join it as the only course in accordance with sharia.⁹

A question frequently asked is that being a secularist did Jinnah really understand the impact of the Islamic forces he was unleashing would have on the future of Pakistan. As noted earlier, if the *Life* correspondent Bourke-White is to be believed, Jinnah did realize what he had done and was tortured by it. Moreover, if his speech of 11 August 1947 was an indicator, was he trying to make amends? Was he

trying to claw back the space that had been conceded in the ambition to get Pakistan? Whatever be the case, Jinnah had clearly underestimated what he had done. After slogans like '*Pakistan ka matlab kya, la ilaha ilallah*' to say 'you are free to go to your temples', etc., was quite a somersault. Given such a legacy of opportunistic and contradictory politics, it is hardly surprising that since Pakistan's creation Jinnah's 11 August speech has become hotly contested between those wanting to establish an Islamic order and those a full-fledged democracy.

The incremental growth of Islamization began even before Jinnah's death, in fact, during the debates in the Constituent Assembly. On 11 August 1947, same day as Jinnah's celebrated address, the Assembly approved the design of the new Pakistan flag. It was the old Muslim League flag with a white crescent and a white five-pointed star with the addition of a vertical band of white near the mast, one fourth of the breadth of the flag, intended to represent Pakistan's minorities. This was not comforting to the Hindu elements in the Assembly, who argued for a less historically controversial emblem. The government spokesman, however, denied blandly that the crescent and the star had any religious connotation.¹⁰

Less than two years later, in March 1949, Liaquat Ali Khan who was fond of jazz sessions moved the Objectives Resolution in the Constituent Assembly which said that sovereignty belonged to God and that the authority He had delegated to the state of Pakistan, 'through its people', would be exercised 'within the limits prescribed by Him'; that the state would fully observe the principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance and social justice as enunciated by Islam; and that it would enable Muslims to order their individual and collective lives according to the teachings and requirements of Islam as set forth in the Quran and Sunnah.¹¹ As noted earlier, speaking on the Resolution, Liaquat Ali underlined that the state would interfere in the lives of the people on the pretext of implementing Islamic teachings.

After its passage, Liaquat Ali Khan described the Objectives Resolution as 'the most important occasion in the life of this country, next in importance only to the achievement of independence'.¹² It did prove to be so because it was the first milestone on the way to making Pakistan ideologically an Islamic state. Though he stated that Pakistan would not become a theocracy, the door had been opened for the Islamists. The Objectives Resolution became the preamble of three Constitutions Pakistan subsequently had.

The Objectives Resolution raised immediate concerns among the minorities, whose members held almost 20 per cent of the seats in the Constituent Assembly. Pakistan's first justice and labour minister, Jogendra Nath Mandal, a Hindu, resigned stating: 'Muslim League leaders are repeatedly making declarations that Pakistan is and shall be an Islamic State. Islam is being offered as the sovereign remedy for all earthly evils. ... In that grand setting of the Sharia, Muslims alone are rulers while Hindus and other minorities are jimmies [members of other faiths, living in a Muslim state] who are entitled to protection at a price.'¹³

Begum Shaista Ikramullah (one of the two female representatives in the Constituent Assembly) provided a dose of reality after the passage of the Objectives Resolution:

What exactly have we achieved? I do not think that for a State where the majority of the population is Muslim, it is such a tremendous achievement to have declared that the sovereignty of this universe belongs to God alone ... I do not think mere declaration of it is such a great achievement justifies an orgy of praise we have been giving to ourselves.¹⁴

The impact of the Objectives Resolution can be gauged from the ‘Report of the Court of Inquiry Constituted Under Punjab Act II of 1954 to Inquire into the Punjab Disturbances of 1953’. The inquiry, headed by Justice M. Munir as president and Justice M.R. Kayani as member, was constituted to enquire into the anti-Ahmadiya riots in Lahore in 1953 that were instigated to declare the Ahmadiyas non-Muslims. Known as the Justice Munir Report, it is one of the very few enquiry reports that have seen the light of day in Pakistan. The report is an amazing document and fundamental to our understanding of where the origins of the problems plaguing Pakistan lie, and how they continue to plague the country even more virulently today. It questioned a large number of ulema representing different points of view. Almost all the ulema stated that the demand to declare the Ahmadiyas as non-Muslims was a corollary to the Objectives Resolution. The judges noted that it was vehemently urged that:

Pakistan was claimed and was brought into existence so that the future political set-up of the new State may be based on the Qur’an and the sunna and that the actual realization of the demand and the express recognition by the Objectives Resolution, had created in the mind of the ulema and the citizens of Pakistan the belief that any demand which could be established on religious grounds would not only be conceded but warmly welcomed by the people at the helm of affairs of the State who had during the last several years been crying themselves hoarse over their intention to establish in Pakistan an Islamic State with a set-up of political, social and ethical institutions of the Islamic pattern.

The judges went on to state that the Quaid-i-Azam’s conception of a modern national state as articulated in his 11 August 1947 speech, ‘... it is alleged, became obsolete with the passing of the Objectives Resolution on 12th March 1949’. The Report also noted ‘that the form of government in Pakistan, if that form is to comply with the principles of Islam, will not be democratic is conceded by the Ulama.’ The Report’s conclusion was that a democracy, based on the will of the people, was incompatible with an Islamic State.¹⁵

Ayub Khan tried to steer a middle course. He banned the Jamaat and imprisoned Maududi because of his dislike of Islamists. As he wrote in his autobiography,

Since no one had defined the fundamental elements of an Islamic Constitution, no Constitution could be called Islamic unless it received the blessings of all the Ulema. The only way of having an Islamic Constitution was to hand over the country to the Ulema and beseech them, ‘lead kindly light’. This is precisely what the Ulema wanted.¹⁶

However, he used Islam for the purposes of strengthening the state. He saw Islam essentially as an ideology that could strengthen Pakistan. In a message to the nation on 24 December 1962, Ayub Khan stated: ‘Pakistan came into being on the basis of an ideology which does not believe in differences of colour, race or language. It is immaterial whether you are a Bengali or a Sindhi, a Balochi or a Pathan or a Punjabi – we are all knit together by the bond of Islam.’¹⁷ Ayub’s lasting contribution to Islamization of Pakistan was the introduction of a course titled ‘Islamiyat’ in the school curriculum. Curricula and textbooks were standardized, presenting a version of history showing that Pakistan was the culmination of

the journey that was started in ad 712 when Mohammed bin Qasim landed in Sindh.

To Ayub's efforts, Yahya Khan, his successor, added that the armed forces would henceforth also be the guardians of Pakistan's 'ideological frontiers',¹⁸ a concept that was further developed by Zia-ul-Haq. These frontiers, however, did not last long. Bangladesh broke away in 1971 because religion proved to be an inadequate glue when confronted with linguistic identity coupled with lack of acceptance of the majority principle. Unfortunately, Pakistani leaders were to learn the wrong lessons from this debacle – they have resorted to more Islam, rather than other elements to strengthen nationalism and identity.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, another leader with a secular lifestyle, continued Pakistan's opportunistic use of Islam. Bhutto gave Pakistan its third Constitution in April 1973 in which the Objectives Resolution of 1949 was included in the preamble; Islam was declared the state religion, and a Council of Islamic Ideology created to ensure that laws were in harmony with Islam. The Constitution required both the president and the prime minister to be Muslims and to 'strive to preserve the Islamic ideology which is the basis for the creation of Pakistan'.¹⁹ For the first time it was made 'incumbent for holders of both offices to publicly confess their faith as "believers" by acknowledging the finality of Muhammad's Prophethood, thereby implicitly offering a definition of "the Muslim"'.²⁰ More significantly, Ahmadiyas were declared non-Muslims by a constitutional amendment in 1974. Faced with an agitation by the combined Opposition against rigging of the 1977 elections, Bhutto tried opportunistic appeasement. He changed his motto of 'Islamic Socialism' into 'Musawat-e-Muhammadi' (Muhammad's egalitarian system); imposed a ban on liquor, made Friday (Islamic holy day) the weekly holiday.

None of this worked and Bhutto was overthrown in a coup by his hand-picked army chief, Gen. Zia-ul-Haq. Zia remains inseparably associated with the Islamization of Pakistan, but in a very real sense he continued what had been started during the final stages of the Pakistan movement and the passage of the Objectives Resolution. Unlike his predecessors and successors, he actually believed in Pakistan becoming an Islamic state and that through Islam Pakistan would achieve the unity that had been elusive so far. His across-the-board Islamization touched every aspect of society, from politics and the military to law, education and personal life.²¹ His measures would have a deleterious impact on the status of women and on the minorities. Equally, it would impact generations of children through Islamization of the curricula and inject the poison of sectarianism into society. Such has been the force of these changes that no succeeding government, military or civilian, has been able to touch any of the Islamic measures introduced by Zia.

It was Pakistan's participation in the Afghan jihad in the 1980s that was to turn the ground prepared by Zia into militant Islam. Zia's policies and encouragement to madrasas did the groundwork of creating a much more religiously aware society than it had been before. The Afghan jihad added a substantive change by patronizing the concept that Islam sanctioned the use of terror to achieve state objectives. While Bhutto had already begun a low-intensity war with Afghanistan (see [Chapter 15](#) on Afghanistan), it lacked any Islamic backing. Zia was to change that and give an Islamic colouring to the extremist groups in the context of first the Afghan conflict and later the separatist movement in Kashmir. Pakistan and the mujahideen were to view the Soviet disintegration as an Islamic victory. For Pakistan, asymmetric warfare that had its origins in 1947, reinforced in 1965, was now here to stay.

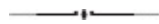
The Afghan jihad was to lead to a massive expansion of the influence of 'radical' Islamic ideology in Pakistan. 'Pakistan practised an open-door religious policy to foreign fighters and countries and soon

became a battlefield for a proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia.’²² The Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) and the Deobandi Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (JUI) were promoted by the Zia regime to function as vehicles for channelling aid coming in from international Islamic organizations, which mostly belonged to the Salafi-Wahabi/ Deobandi genre like the Saudi Arabia-based Rabitat al-Alam al-Islami (The Muslim World League), the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), etc., with intimate links with Saudi official and non-official Islamic bodies. Other Pakistani Islamic sects like the Shias, Barelvis, Ismailis, etc., had little or no role in the Afghan jihad and hence no access to the millions of dollars pouring into the country.

During the alternating regime of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif in the 1990s, Islamization per se saw no further advances, except the passage of the Sharia Bill in the National Assembly. Before the bill could be passed in the Senate, Nawaz Sharif had been dismissed. However, the momentum of Zia’s Islamization policies continued apace with little effort made by either of the two leaders to slow it down.

By conviction, Musharraf was not a believer like Zia, but nevertheless followed his predecessors in trying to co-opt religious parties to support his government. In the process he had to grant concessions to the religious parties allied in the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) as a quid pro quo for their parliamentary support in the wake of the seventeenth amendment.²³ For example, in June 2003, Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, a member of the government, admitted that ten MMA demands for Islamization had been accepted. These included legislation in accordance with the recommendations of the Council of Islamic Ideology; restructuring the economy, education and media along Islamic lines; ensuring rights for women in accordance with Islamic injunctions; and giving Islamic subjects equal importance with other fields of study in all educational institutions.²⁴

The net result of the Musharraf period was further Islamization of society due to the critical role played by the religious parties in supporting the government. The madrasas continued to churn out religious extremists and the jihadi parties continued to spew venom against India. In the post-Musharraf era, like during the decade of the 1990s, none of the political parties have been able to resist, let alone roll back, the growing strength of the Islamic forces. As later examples will show, the government has been on the back foot when confronted with the force of religion.



The first sectarian test for the nascent state, as noted above, was the anti-Ahmadiya protests in Punjab in 1953. The comments of the Munir Committee, set up to inquire into the riots, on the Objectives Resolution, have been noted earlier. Even more significant were the committee’s findings on the definition of a Muslim. The committee asked leading ulema ‘to give their definition of a Muslim, the point being that if the ulema of the various sects believed the Ahmadis to be kafirs (non-Muslims), they must have been quite clear in their minds not only about the grounds of such belief but also about the definition of a Muslim.’ After hearing all the ulema, justices Munir and Kayani noted, ‘But we cannot refrain from saying here that it was a matter of infinite regret to us that the ulema whose first duty should be to have settled views on this subject, were hopelessly disagreed among themselves.’²⁵

Keeping in view the several definitions given by the ulema, need we make any comment except that no two learned divines are agreed on this fundamental (definition of a Muslim). If we attempt our own definition as each learned divine has done and that definition differs from that

given by all others, we unanimously go out of the fold of Islam. And if we adopt the definition given by any one of the ulema, we remain Muslims according to the view of that alim but kafirs according to the definition of everyone else. The net result of all this is that neither Shias nor Sunnis nor Deobandis nor Ahl-i-Hadith nor Barelvis are Muslims and any change from one view to the other must be accompanied in an Islamic State with the penalty of death if the Government of the State is in the hands of the party which considers the other party to be kafirs. And it does not require much imagination to judge the consequences of this doctrine when it is remembered that no two ulema have agreed before us as to the definition of a Muslim.²⁶

The status of Shias was also debated, since leading Deobandi ulema had issued similar edicts of apostasy against them. ‘What is happening now’, said the judges, ‘seems almost a writing on the wall, and God help us if we do not stop these ... people from cutting each other’s throat.’²⁷

The report clearly recognized the dangers that the use of Islam in the Pakistan movement had created and tried to warn succeeding generations about the explosive issue of sectarianism, which is tearing Pakistan apart today. Unfortunately, the fundamentals of the report were ignored then and continue to be ignored even today.

Prior to the late 1970s and early 1980s, sectarian conflicts in Pakistan were sporadic, primarily during Muharram. The state did not have a sectarian programme. This changed under Zia; it was not long before Islamization moved inexorably towards ‘Sunification’.²⁸ Zia’s Islamization measures sharpened sectarian tensions because ‘of their emphasis on Shariah and Fiqhi (juristic) hair-splitting, rather than on maqasid-i-shariah (objective of Shariah). This legalistic approach to “Islamization” naturally raised the question as to which interpretation of the Islamic law was more authentic and should, therefore, be incorporated in public policy. Islamic revival thus created dissensions among various Islamic sects more than it unified different social strata of Pakistani society.’²⁹ Hence, the government’s efforts to implement sharia brought out the old juristic and doctrinal differences not only between the Shias and the Sunnis but also among the four Sunni schools themselves.³⁰

The most serious conflict over Islamization measures introduced by Zia was between the Sunnis and the Shias. Zia tried to implement the Sunni Hanafi fiqh that led to massive Shia opposition, especially on the issue of collection of Zakat. An aggressive stance towards the Shias was taken by the Deobandi organizations and publications associated with the JUI of Mufti Mahmud. The anti-Shia rhetoric on the part of the JUI religious leadership can be gauged from the following editorial that appeared in a prominent Deobandi monthly:

The Shias are controlling the entire Sunni auqaf (religious endowment). There are five Shia cabinet ministers in the (central) government and they happen to control the most important portfolios. The Shias are also controlling the key positions in the (civil and military) services and are in the majority (in these services). This is despite the fact that they are hardly two per cent of the total population of Pakistan. ... We must also remember that the Shias consider it their religious duty to harm and eliminate the Ahl-e-sunna...The Shias have always conspired to convert Pakistan into a Shia state since the very inception of this country. They have been trying very hard towards that end and have been conspiring with our foreign enemies and with the Jews. It was through such conspiracies that the Shias masterminded the separation of East

Pakistan and thus satiated their thirst for the blood of the Sunnis.³¹

Interestingly, Mumtaz Ahmed notes that when in 1988, Pir Karam Shah, a moderate Barelvi scholar from Sargodha, convened a meeting of religious scholars belonging to different schools of thought in order to foster 'unity, tolerance and harmony' among the different sects, he was reprimanded by a Barelvi publication *Raza-i-Mustafa*, in its November 1988 editorial:

There is a tradition of the Prophet (PBUH) which says that my ummah will become divided into 73 sects. Pir Karam Shah's efforts to unite different Islamic sects are thus a direct violation of what our Prophet has said. There can be no formula for unity which can succeed against the prophet's prediction.³²

Undoubtedly, Zia's Islamization spurred sectarianism, but there were other reasons too. These include the impact of the Iranian revolution on the Shias of Pakistan and the reaction of Saudi Arabia to it, which added fuel to the fire. With both countries funding rival sectarian organizations, Pakistan became the battleground for their contest for leadership of the Islamic world. A cable from the US consulate in Lahore, leaked by WikiLeaks, stated that 'financial support estimated at nearly \$100 million annually was making its way to Deobandi and Ahl-i-Hadith clerics in south Punjab from organizations in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates ostensibly with the direct support of those governments'. These funds fuelled the fire that was consuming Pakistan.³³

Other reasons include the post-9/11 convergence of al-Qaeda and the anti-Shia Lashkar-e-Jhangvi; the fusion of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi with the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan as the latter emerged and spread, particularly in the Kurram Agency and Karachi; the permission of the Punjab provincial government for the ostensibly banned anti-Shia Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat organization to operate with impunity; and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi's cooperation with military-backed and/or anti-state militias or militant groups in Balochistan.³⁴ Thus, what is commonly called Sunni-Shia violence is more precisely a Deobandi-Shia conflict in which the Deobandis have appropriated the term Sunni for themselves³⁵ and the main driving force being the Sunni Deobandi militant groups especially the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan who want to officially declare Pakistan's Shias as non-Muslims.

Sectarian violence has taken a huge toll on Pakistan. Between 2001 and 2015 (up to 1 November) there were 1,431 incidents in which 4,174 were killed and 7,240 injured. The maximum number of incidents so far were in 2007 (341) followed by 2012 (173); the maximum number killed was in 2013 (525) followed by 2010 (509) and 2012 (507); maximum injured were in 2010 (1,170) followed by 2013 (914).³⁶

The nature of the sectarian conflict has also undergone a change. Till the mid-1990s, sectarian killings targeted leaders and activists of both sects. Gradually, the killings shifted to those associated with the government: police officers, judges and the likes. By the late 1990s, there was an escalation and ordinary citizens became target because they happened to be Sunni or Shia.³⁷ The latest trend is to target professionals among both communities – doctors, lawyers, etc. From early in the first decade of the twenty-first century, with the coming into prominence of such Sunni terrorist outfits like the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and from later in the decade, with the appearance of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), sectarian conflict has, in fact, transformed itself into what is being called Shia genocide using suicide bombers.

The geographical spread of sectarian violence has also increased. In the 1980s and 1990s it was limited to Jhang in Punjab, parts of Karachi, and the Khurram Agency in FATA. Today sectarian violence covers the entire country. The extent of violence against the Shia Hazara community in Balochistan is the new phenomenon. The real fear, however, is the sectarian war exploding in Pakistan's heartland, Punjab.

Ominously, a 2012 Pew Global Survey showed that 41 per cent of the respondents in Pakistan believed that Shias were non-Muslim. As sectarianism takes deeper roots, the question of what is true Islam has taken on greater salience. Since Shias are seen as diverging from mainstream (Sunni) Islam, their killing seems to attract less sympathy, adding to the impunity of the killers.³⁸

It is indeed tragic that a state founded on the principle of Muslims being a nation was converted into one where being a Muslim was no longer the sole religious identity; orthodox Sunni circles require a denominational prefix. Even former prime minister Shaukat Aziz had to identify his religious sect at his inaugural press conference in Islamabad. 'I am a Sunni Muslim', he said, confronting rumours that he was a Qadiani (a member of the Ahmadiya sect) and thus constitutionally ineligible for the post.³⁹ Aziz had to further identify his Sunni sub-sect by citing his family's religious rituals.⁴⁰

This being the case of the Muslim population, the plight of the religious minorities and decreed non-Muslims like the Ahmadiyas can well be imagined. The most notorious weapon to beat the minorities with has been the blasphemy law. It was Gen. Zia who 'Islamized' the blasphemy law with the focus on protecting Islam by inserting a specific provision in the Pakistan Penal Code for blasphemy related to Islamic holy figures. The punishment prescribed was death, with no room for pardon. A study titled 'Blasphemy in the Digital Age' has revealed that blasphemy accusations increased by almost two hundred times after Gen. Zia's amendment in 1987. Prior to this, there had been only seven blasphemy accusations between 1927 and 1986. Since 1987, however, the number of blasphemy cases has jumped to 1,335.⁴¹

The impact of the law on minorities has been disproportionate to their population. According to one estimate 702 cases have been registered against minorities, (494 Ahmadiyas, 187 Christians and twenty-one Hindus) under various clauses of the blasphemy law since 1987, which equals to 52 per cent of total cases as against 4 per cent of their population of Pakistan. The laws are routinely used to target religious minorities to settle personal scores: take over properties and businesses; for forced conversions to Islam and forced marriages of minority women to Muslim men.⁴²

The law came into renewed prominence with the killing of the Punjab governor Salman Taseer by his own guard Muntaz Qadri, who shot him twenty-seven times in front of other guards. For this, he was treated as a hero and showered with flowers by Islamist lawyers and some members of the public. In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court upheld the death penalty of Qadri and ruled that raising objections about the misuse and flaws of the existing blasphemy law, as Governor Taseer had done, was not an act of blasphemy itself. In a courageous move, the government hanged Qadri on 29 February 2016.

Given the treatment of minorities, the annual US congressional report titled 'US Commission on International Religious Freedom' mentions that Pakistan represents one of the 'worst situations' for religious freedom anywhere in the world. The commission has been recommending, since 2002, that Pakistan be given the status of countries 'of particular concern' that would warrant sanctions.⁴³ In addition to mob violence, the Report raises the issue of '[f]orced conversion of Christian and Hindu girls and young women into Islam' and 'forced marriages to Muslim men' as a 'systemic problem.'

Where have all the incremental doses of Islamization left Pakistan? Have they strengthened a unique Pakistani identity or unity? Has Islamization led to greater security for the citizens of Pakistan? Or has it led to greater intolerance and insecurity? Has the debate whether Pakistan is a homeland for the Muslims or an Islamic state been set at rest? And the fundamental question whose Islam is to be followed: Shia, Deobandi, Barelvi, Ahl-e-Hadis?

A report titled 'Wake up Pakistan' released in Islamabad in May 2015 provides part of the answer. It states: 'Public opinion has changed and the space to challenge widely-held orthodoxies about religion in Pakistan has almost completely evaporated. This process has been directed by the religious right wing, with active and sustained support from mainstream political groups and the endorsement of state policy.'⁴⁴

Islamization has clearly neither created nor strengthened a unique Pakistani identity or unity. Sectarian killings indicate that ordinary citizens of Pakistan are neither safe nor secure. If anything, successive doses of Islamization have led to greater intolerance and insecurity. As early as 1954, the Justice Munir Commission report had pointed out that given the Shia, Deobandi, Barelvi, Ahl-e-Hadis divisions of society, attempts to enforce any one ideology would rent the country asunder. This is borne out by the fact that every sect has apostatized all others in Pakistan. Thus the Barelvis and Deobandis have denounced each other; both Barelvis and Deobandis have denounced the Shias; the Barelvis have called the Ahl-e-Hadis infidels and pure devils; the Ahl-e-Hadis have denounced all Hanafi sects to be against the teachings of Quran and accused them of committing shirk; while all the Sunni sects fawn on Saudi Arabia, the clerics of the latter country pour scorn on all subcontinental sects calling their attributes as being of kufr (disbelief) and *bid'ah* (innovation).⁴⁵

Two examples would suffice to judge the impact of Islamization in Pakistan. In January 2016, in the district of Okara, a fifteen-year-old boy apparently misheard a question related to the Holy Prophet and mistakenly raised his hand in response. The local prayer leader and a section of the congregation pounced on him, accusing the boy of having committed blasphemy. To 'atone' his mistake, the boy later reportedly chopped off his own hand using a fodder-cutting machine and presented his appendage to the preacher on a plate. The boy's family celebrated the action. As the *Dawn* put it: 'The mindset that apparently led the cleric to denounce the boy for "blasphemy" is far too common. In villages, small towns, and even cities in Pakistan, semi-literate clerics often shape the narrative and in some cases, especially where matters of faith are involved, end up playing judge, jury and executioner.'⁴⁶ *The Nation* noted aptly: 'If people are ready to hurt themselves in the name of religion, imagine what they would be willing to do to others?'⁴⁷ *The Daily Times* asked ominously:

The sheer savagery of this act compels one to ask: have we really been driven to the edge of insanity in our subservience to the maulvis and mullahs that we now chop off our limbs in order to acquire the status of a believer who has been indoctrinated by their parochial and dogmatic interpretations? Unfortunately, the black and white mindset has coloured religious interpretation in such a way that people have turned religion ... into a convoluted version that constantly demands violent retribution from others and from one's own self.⁴⁸

Second, Islamization has strengthened religious parties at the expense of security of the ordinary citizen. Take, for example, the Protection of Women Against Violence Bill passed by the Punjab Assembly in March 2016. Though passed by an elected assembly, the religious parties opposed it threatening to whip up mass hysteria and launch a big agitation against it. In other words, the religious parties have arrogated to themselves the power to reject a law passed by an elected assembly – an unelected veto power over the will of an elected assembly. The government seems to have buckled under pressure and assured to form a committee to look into grievances. In fact, an emboldened Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief threatened, ‘Though we can’t form government, but we can certainly topple one.’

That the future is ominous can be judged from just two developments. First, seven Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD)/LeT ‘Sharia courts’ have been functioning for many years, one each in Lahore, Gujranwala, Bahawalpur, Multan, Karachi, Quetta and Islamabad dispensing ‘justice’ among people in the light of sharia laws. Hafiz Saeed, the LeT supremo, is the head of all these ‘courts’ and he is empowered to appoint judges as head qazi (chief judge). Similarly, he is also an appellate authority, as he reserves the right to hearing appeals and can dismiss decisions made by the ‘subordinate judges’. Called Darul Qaza Sharia and Saalsi Sharai Adalat-i-Aalia (Arbitration Court of Sharia), they have been summoning the ‘defendants’ in person or through a legal counsel with warnings of strict action under the sharia laws in case of no response.⁴⁹ A person who had received such summons took the matter to the Lahore High Court. He was kidnapped and threatened by two unidentified men of dire consequences if he did not withdraw the case and reconcile the matter.⁵⁰

Though the Constitution does not allow any private organization to use the word ‘court’, an official in the office of inspector general of police, Punjab, was quoted by *The News* saying that legality did not matter in the case of the JuD because they were free to do anything as they were more powerful than others. ‘They have established a state within the state.’⁵¹

Second, the ministry of education and professional training had finalized its proposed curriculum for public educational institutions, making a strong pitch for all federating units to introduce teaching of the Quran as a compulsory subject from grade one to twelve. The Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), though only a recommendatory body, found that in the proposed syllabus verses about jihad had been deleted. It has demanded that the 480-odd verses about jihad in the Quran be included in the syllabi.⁵²

Both these representative developments show that the Islamic forces are gaining more confidence in Pakistan. In fact, these are clear indications that the abdication of the state from performing its duties is now gathering greater steam. This does not augur well for the future of Pakistan.

During the last seven decades, the space and opportunity for Pakistan to be a moderate and inclusive state has shrunk enormously. The perceived safety valves of lack of electoral support for the religious parties (something that is touted frequently by scholars) and the reservoir of Barelvi–Sufi influences are fast depleting. Religious intolerance, confined to pockets at one stage, is now widespread. The warning signs for the next generation are everywhere. The huge pool of madrasa-educated unemployable youth as also the millions coming out of government schools imbued with hatred of others in a stagnant economy would be fodder for jihadi outfits that thrive on a culture of intolerance.

In reality, Pakistan is reaping the fruits of the dangerous seeds the early leaders had sown in the Pakistan movement. The steady progression of Islamization is the natural outcome of the Muslim League’s

rhetoric to implement Islamic laws in Pakistan and of religious nationalism that was aroused. As a result, the Islamists have gone from strength to strength and demanded that Pakistan be made an Islamic state. Where Jinnah and Liaquat erred was to think that religion could be exploited for a secular objective and once the objective was met, religion could be sidelined. Their successors, whether civil or military, continued to use Islam to legitimize their rule and to forge a national identity in the face of ethnic and regional diversity in society. Instead of opposing the efforts to establish an Islamic state, every Constitution – 1956, 1962 and 1973 – proclaims Pakistan to be an Islamic state with the Objectives Resolution as the Preamble to the Constitution.

Pakistani leaders of all hues, including religious, would do well to recall what the 1954 Justice Munir Commission report had to say: ‘The sublime faith called Islam shall live even if our leaders are not there to enforce it. It lives in the individual, in his soul and outlook, in all his relations with God and men, from the cradle to the grave, and our politicians should understand that if Divine commands cannot make or keep a man a Musalman, their statutes will not.’ ⁵³

8

Madrasas

*These universities of ignorance, to whom we give donations and hides, are giving an ideology of hatred and conservativeness to the society.*¹

—Pervaiz Rashid

MADRASAS HAVE intermittently come into the spotlight in Pakistan as being the roots of extremist Islam and connected to terrorism. During the anti-Soviet jihad in the 1980s, they were seen as the nurseries for producing jihadis to be sent to fight in Afghanistan; after 9/11, they were held responsible for creating the Taliban mindset; the 9/11 Commission report released in 2004 said some of Pakistan's religious schools or madrasas served as 'incubators for violent extremism'². Madrasas were blamed after the July 2007 Lal Masjid/Jamia Hafsa incident (when the Pakistan Army stormed the complex in which over 150 people were killed) and, more recently, in the wake of the 16 December 2014 attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar that led to the massacre of 135 schoolchildren. Madrasas also came into focus after Tashfeen Malik and her husband killed fourteen people in San Bernardino, California, in December 2015. Tashfeen had studied at the Al-Huda Institute in Pakistan. Four female students at its affiliate in Ontario tried to join the Islamic State according to the Canadian Broadcasting Corp.³

The notoriety of the madrasas can be judged from the fact that bulk of the leadership of the Afghan Taliban (including Mullah Omar, Akhtar Mansoor and Jalaluddin Haqqani), and the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) (Hakimullah Mehsud and Mullah Fazlullah) are products of madrasas. Other 'luminaries' who have attended madrasas include Hafiz Gul Bahadur, Waliur Rehman Mehsud, Khalid Haqqani, the mastermind of suicide bombers, Qari Hussain and many more. It was after the Peshawar outrage that the government formulated another action plan (the twenty-point National Action Plan), one of the key provisions of which was the registration and regulation of madrasas.

The Peshawar tragedy forged a consensus that the national narrative needed to change. While military operations and expanding the jurisdiction of military courts to try terrorism cases were to be the immediate actionable triggers, for the long-term a change in the extremist mindset was identified as being necessary. The unchecked proliferation of madrasas was identified as one of the main causes for growing extremism. According to the *Daily Times*,

Although not all madrasas have fundamentalist curriculums or extremist agendas and some, if not most, are actually doing good work, in the current security climate, they cannot go unchecked. Children in madrasas are often at risk of psychological, physical and sexual abuse.

More troublingly, according to reports, a significant number of madrasas have become recruitment centres for terrorist organizations, breeding future militants through teachings based upon on [sic] distorted, fundamentalist Islamic views, and are funded by questionable sources.’⁴

For almost a millennia, madrasas produced successive generations of Islamic scholars and clerics. But today, madrasas in Pakistan are a far cry from the eleventh-century madrasa of Ibn Sina in Isfahan where students would flock to study mathematics, medicine and astronomy. Today, madrasa curriculum has shrunk to doctrinal religion with all other subjects excised.⁵

Undoubtedly, madrasa reform has to be one of the key elements of a long-term strategy to purge Pakistan of three of its ills – the culture of radicalization, the growth of sectarianism and the extremist mindset – through a curriculum that is modern, inclusive and which shuns violence instead of glorifying it. This, as will be noted in [Chapter 11](#) on education, is equally applicable to the government school system as it is to the madrasas. Pakistan’s National Internal Security Policy (NISP) 2014–18 while referring to madrasas noted that religious rhetoric was used to motivate the young people to commit suicidal missions. ‘The narrative of extremism revolves around the religious discourse and is presented, to comparatively less educated people, with great zeal and primitive logic. Many scholars are afraid to challenge the archaic views of extremists and some of them have been martyred for speaking the truth and exposing the fallacy of terrorists’ narrative,’ the policy stated.⁶

However, militancy is only a part of the madrasa problem. Even though most madrasas do not impart military training or education, they do sow the seeds of extremism in the minds of the students. Further, students are educated and trained to counter arguments of opposing sects on matters of theology, jurisprudence and doctrines. This leads to a narrow world view that encompasses rejection of other sects. In short, a madrasa education indoctrinates and greatly contributes to intolerance of other religious beliefs.

Madrasas pose several challenges. First, according to Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, ‘90 per cent of madrasas had no connection to terrorism, based on intelligence reports received’.⁷ On another occasion he was at pains to point out that his government was not painting all seminaries with the same brush; he said that ‘around 10 per cent of madaris were involved in terror activities’.⁸ This would imply that 10 per cent of the madrasas, where anywhere between 150,000 and 300,000 students study (estimates vary hugely about the total number of students studying in madrasas) could be potential terrorists. Even if 1 per cent of them were to become suicide bombers, there could well be around 3,000 potential suicide bombers waiting to blow themselves up. Even if they do not blow themselves up, the limited education they have received would make them dysfunctional members of society, prone to being incited to violence.

What about the balance 90 per cent? According to *The Nation*, while they may not directly contribute to terrorism, they certainly create an environment conducive to it.

The students that graduate from these institutes, about 200,000 a year, have only ever been educated in religion. They have no marketable talents, little experience of the outside world, and the only social setting they feel comfortable in is the only one they have known; composed of segregated, zealous acolytes. They inevitably fail in the outside world and return to this one

track world, where advancement is limited and interaction with terrorists highly probable.⁹

Even though the interior minister played down the number of madrasas that had links with terrorism – 10 per cent – this was belied by the extraordinary measures taken ahead of the Pakistan Day military parade in March 2015 when all the thirty-nine madrasas in a 2-km vicinity of the venue in Islamabad were closed and vacated for a week in advance of the parade that was being held after eight years.¹⁰

Second, the madrasas are no longer just bastions of medieval theology. They have evolved into training centres for radical anti-Western and anti-India propaganda, and cultivate the sentiment of Muslim victimhood. They inculcate in young minds hatred for non-Muslims in general and Jews and Hindus in particular. As Dania Ahmed notes:

They tend to indoctrinate children to discriminate against non-Muslims, raising children to classify non-Muslims and Muslims outside their sects as kafirs (infidels), mushrakeen (pagans), *dhimmis* (non-Muslims), murtids (apostates), and enemies of the state. As a result, many of these madrasas produce graduates who lack critical and analytical thinking and are intolerant of other sects; graduates who go on to become maulvis who issue irrational fatwas and spew hate speech against minority groups.¹¹

Third, there is a huge gap – economic, intellectual and social and lifestyle – between students who graduate from private and government schools and those from the madrasas just as there is a similar gap between those graduating from private schools and government schools. This yawning divide can hardly be conducive to the stability of the country. As Syed Moazzam Hai notes,

The contemptuous rage with which stick-wielding madrassa students act during road protests gives us a glimpse of the ostensible grudge many of them seem to carry against the world outside their madrasas. Limited interaction between the madrassa students and the “outsiders” further widens the gap. The absence of an economic dream in the lives of madrassa students further adds to the sense of indignation against the world outside.¹²

Fourth, links between madrasas and terrorist groups have been identified. According to the Punjab police, an analysis of the profiles of suicide bombers who have struck in Punjab showed that more than two-thirds had attended madrasas. There were also several instances where accidental detonations inside madrasas had killed would-be suicide bombers. The Special Branch of the Punjab Police has identified dozens of madrasas that are linked to terrorist groups.¹³

Fifth, bulk of the madrasas have political affiliations apart from their religious ones. A survey of 251 madrasas across the country belonging to the five madrasa education boards found that 172 (62 per cent) had political affiliations – 59 per cent were affiliated with religio-political parties, 3 per cent with other mainstream parties and 18 per cent with sectarian or jihadi parties. Eighteen per cent did not express any such association. The survey showed that Deobandi and JI madrasas were more inclined towards politics as 82 per cent of Deobandi and 100 per cent of JI madrasas had political affiliations. The affiliations of the madrasas with political, sectarian and militant organizations are certainly a cause of concern.¹⁴

While the madrasa problem is complex enough, the extent of problem is unknown. No one seems to have a clear idea of how many madrasas there are in the country, registered as well as unregistered. It is estimated that in 1947 Pakistan had 136 madrasas and till 1980 there were only 700, growing at the rate of 3 per cent. By the end of 1986, however, they had increased by 136 per cent. In the early years of the millennium they had further increased to over 12,000.¹⁵ In 2014, according to the interior ministry, there were at least 22,052 registered madrasas in Pakistan, but there was no record of the unregistered ones. According to a July 2015 report titled ‘The Madrassa Conundrum — The state of religious education in Pakistan’, the number of madrasas in Pakistan had crossed 35,000.¹⁶

It is not just the numbers but the quantum increase in the numbers that is worrying. Thus, according to a March 2016 report in the *Dawn*, the number of madrasas had increased threefold in Sindh during the past one year alone. More than 4,000 madrasas had been recorded until April 2015, while their number jumped to 9,590 in October and around 12,000 by March 2016. Of these, only 6,711 madrasas were registered with the government.¹⁷

Punjab has the most madrasas at 13,000. Within Punjab, south Punjab dominates with around 7,000, central Punjab has around 4,000 and north Punjab 2,000 madrasas. Apart from the maximum numbers, south Punjab also hosts around 70 per cent of all madrasa students in Punjab. Of the cities, Multan topped the list with 1,108 madrasas, followed closely by Lahore with 1,102 madrasas. South Punjab cities of Muzaffargarh and Rahim Yar Khan followed with 900 and 811 madrasas respectively.¹⁸

The estimate of the numbers of students in madrasas varies widely from one million to three million even according to government statistics. According to a report launched by the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training on 21 April 2015, around 1.8 million children, nearly a tenth of all enrolled students in Pakistan, study in religious seminaries. However, talking to the media on 7 September 2015, the interior minister said that there were more than three million students studying in 18,000 madrasas.¹⁹

The Ittehad-i-Tanzeemat-i-Madaris-i-Deenia (ITMD), the umbrella organization representing five major wafaqs or boards in Pakistan (The five wafaqs are Wafaqul Madaris al Arabia [Deobandi], Tanzeemul Madaris Ahle Sunnat Pakistan [Barelvi], Wafaqul Madaris al Shia, Wafaqul Madaris al Salfia [Ahle Hadis] and Rabtatul Madarisul Islamia [seminaries affiliated with Jamaat-i-Islami]) claims that the number of registered madrasas in the country is 26,000 and that of unregistered 4,000. The ITMD’s general secretary and spokesman, Maulana Mohammad Hanif Jalandhri, says that three million students are enrolled in madrasas affiliated with the organization.²⁰

Numbers apart, the funding of these madrasas is another vital but grey area. The madrasas receive funding from different sources – overseas entities, regular contributions from their graduates working in big cities, local influential figures and now even provincial governments. In April 2014, the interior ministry, in reply to a question before the Senate had said that Saudi Arabia and four other Islamic countries – Qatar, UAE, Bahrain and Kuwait – had provided Rs 258 million to fifteen seminaries in one year. However, such funding was through banking channels and could be monitored. The issue was about the funds that came in through non-banking, informal channels like hawala and hundi, which were illegal and much larger in volume.²¹ As the interior minister admitted in a written reply to parliament in January 2015, ‘... it is often difficult to trace the transaction of such money’, though he did admit that some madrasas were receiving financial support from Muslim countries.²²

The confusion about funding is evident from the fact that the Senate was informed in January 2015 that only twenty-three madrasas, two in Sindh, twelve in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and nine in Balochistan, were receiving foreign funding. Punjab maintained that, 'No madrassa involved in receiving financial and training assistance from Islamic countries has come to our notice during surveillance carried out by field formations.'²³ Subsequently, Punjab informed that 147 madrasas in the province receive funds from abroad.²⁴ The flip-flop by Punjab was a thinly disguised attempt to hide the extent of the problem in the province.

However, it is not just the Punjab government that has a soft spot for the madrasas. The KPK government, led by Imran Khan's PTI, has recently allocated Rs 300 million for just one madrasa – the Darul-Uloom-Haqqania – which has the dubious distinction of being the alma mater of some of the most dangerous terrorists on international wanted lists. This money exceeds the total budget of the provincial religious affairs ministry. The justification given was that it was an attempt to 'mainstream' the madrasa. However, the head of the madrasa, Maulana Sami-ul-Haq and a known father figure of the Taliban has categorically said the grant was aimed at building new blocks of the school and nothing else.

The madrasa and Sami-ul-Haq have a dubious record. In 1997, the madrasa was closed for many months to enable students to join the Taliban's war to capture the Afghan province of Mazar-i-Sharif. Just months before the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the school hosted a conference of Islamic parties and militant groups to express solidarity with Osama bin Laden and the Taliban regime. In 2015, addressing a ceremony at the madrasa, Sami-ul-Haq pledged complete support to Mullah Mansour who, like his predecessor Mullah Omar and other terrorists like Jalaluddin Haqqani, were alumni of the madrasa. Sami-ul-Haq also heads the Difa-e-Pakistan council, an umbrella coalition of more than forty groups, including Hafeez Saeed-led Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) and the banned Sipah-e-Sahaba.²⁵

One aspect of funding, though not directly related, is the fact that a large number of madrasas have been built illegally on government land. For example, nearly 10 per cent of the 649 madrasas in the Hyderabad police range are built on state land, according to a report compiled by Hyderabad DIG's office.²⁶ In Islamabad, at least 446 unregistered madrasas are built illegally on government land, out of a total of 633 madrasas.

Another crucial area is what is being taught in the madrasas. The core curriculum taught in madrasas is known as Dars-e-Nizami, but each of the five madrasa wafaqs follows their own exclusive texts, projecting their specific and sectarian interpretations of Islamic teachings.²⁷ In recent years, while some madrasas have started teaching 'modern' subjects (such as science and mathematics) the overwhelming attention is mostly on religious education emphasizing, apart from the Quran, hadith (sayings of the Prophet) and fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence). It is this focus on religious instruction along sectarian lines that gives the students a narrow and limited world view, which boosts religious intolerance. In a conservative society, a large number of people attend the Friday prayers where such narrowly educated persons subject them to sermons. Even if they themselves have not attended a madrasa, the Friday sermons give them enough food for radicalization. Thus, without a major restructuring of the madrasa curriculum, not much progress will be made in reclaiming society from radicalization.

Not surprisingly, the job market for a student with a madrasa education is rather limited to performing a religious function of a particular sect. With the number of students far outnumbering the mosques, there is a glut of religiously trained students who are unsuitable for any other kind of employment. Not

surprisingly, many students easily fall prey to terrorist organizations.

A related problem is that different sects of Islam have started running their own brand of madrasas. As a result, the sectarian divide in society has got deepened and perpetuated. Other Islamic sects, let alone the minorities, are looked at with suspicion and even hatred. An interesting survey was carried out by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), the Jamaat-i-Islami's research institute,²⁸ in 2002, that showed that 20 per cent of the madrasa students interviewed were intolerant of other sects; only some 60 per cent of students in the Deobandi and 49 per cent in Barlevi madrasas expressed readiness to accept the existence of other sects. Significantly, areas with the highest concentration of madrasas have become the focal points of sectarianism. For example, Karachi's central district has more than 813 madrasas and more than 74 per cent of all sectarian killings in Karachi are carried out in this district.²⁹

The impression that there is a direct connection between madrasas and jihad was the result of Zia's policies that fostered a mushrooming of madrasas to produce recruits for the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan. However, newer studies have provided a correction. Christine Fair, for example, noted that while madrasas proved to be a hotbed for disseminating ideology, they were not a major source of militant recruitment. Of the 141 cases studied by her, less than a quarter, thirty-three of 141 ever attended theological schools. Of those thirty-three madrasa products, twenty-seven attended a madrasa for four or fewer years, and most also attended public schools. In contrast, the remaining eighty-two were well educated by Pakistani standards, at least a matriculate.³⁰ Another survey of ten major jihadi groups revealed that of the over 15,000 people from Punjab who died in Afghanistan and Kashmir only 40 per cent had actually studied in madrasas. The survey also reported that out of 800 Harkat-ul-Mujahideen members who were killed, only 188 went to madrasas – the rest went to state schools or were dropouts. This obviously meant that a majority of the jihadis from Punjab, and more specifically the Seraiki belt, were coming from the state school system.³¹

However, as Ayesha Siddiqi notes, madrasas are the vital cogs that produce the ideology that feeds the jihadi, even if he is a product of public schools. What the madrasa does is to contribute to and sustain a narrow ideology and the narrative that rejects opposing ideas which feeds radicalism and militancy in Pakistan.³²

A study by Tariq Rehman has shown that madrasa students are more likely than students in the other two school systems to support violent extremism, though students from the public school system were not too far behind. He found that whereas 60 per cent of interviewed madrasa students supported the use of open war to take Kashmir, 40 per cent of students from Pakistan's Urdu-medium public schools, and 26 per cent of students in private schools, held the same view. A similar pattern held when students were asked whether they supported taking Kashmir through the use of jihadist proxies: 53 per cent of madrasa students shared this view, compared to 33 per cent of those in public schools and 22 per cent in private schools. While the madrasa students show consistently higher support for political violence, public school students, who comprise some 70 per cent of the educational market, display worrying levels of support for the same policies.³³

The case of suicide bombers, however, seems to be different. There has been concern that madrasas in Pakistan's tribal areas provided suicide attackers in Afghanistan. A 2007 report by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan found that suicide attackers in Afghanistan 'draw heavily from madrasas across the border in Pakistan'. The report noted the recruits were also drawn from Afghan

refugees settled in Pakistan.³⁴

One factor that needs to be noted is that the overwhelming majority of the madrasas are from the Deobandi school of Islam. It was this school that was in the forefront of the Afghan jihad and the largest percentage of militant organizations in Pakistan also belong to the Deobandi school of Islam, including the Afghan Taliban, the Pakistani Taliban, Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), and Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI). They also include groups that have focused on killing Shias, such as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi.



In a society where there is limited access to public education, madrasas will continue to have a role in educating the youth. However, the moot point is, why should a religion-based education per se become the conduit for radicalization? The major reason, of course, is the repeated doses of Islamization that successive rulers have injected into Pakistan. Another reason is the intervention of the state in the placement of madrasa students. For decades now, the Pakistani state has facilitated the use of these alumni as recruits for the various terrorist organizations that it uses as instruments of state policy, especially in India and Afghanistan. Likewise, the religious parties have used these students to bolster their street power. Unless this nexus is broken by the state, radicalized madrasas will always remain in business and no amount of madrasa reform will help to de-radicalize the Pakistan society.

The dubious role of the state was enhanced in the 1980s when the products of the madrasas were sent to Afghanistan to take up arms against the Soviet Union. In the 1990s, they were sent for jihad in Kashmir. In the early years of the twenty-first century, it was again Afghanistan. While the JI and the JUI were in the forefront in the 1980s, by the turn of the century terrorist organizations like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, backed by the Pakistan Army, were leading the fight in Kashmir. Both have a strong presence in south Punjab and documents reveal that hundreds of their recruits from south Punjab have been killed in Kashmir.

As part of the implementation of National Action Plan (NAP),³⁵ the government informed the National Assembly on 24 February 2016 that it had closed 254 madrasas across the country due to their suspicious activities (167 in Sindh, thirteen in KPK, two in Punjab and another seventy-two unregistered madrasas in Sindh).³⁶ Though welcome, the closing of only two madrasas in Punjab, which is the hub of extremist organizations and madrasas, is indeed strange and has raised many an eyebrow, reinforcing the impression that the Punjab government is soft on extremists.

Reforming the madrasas is an old project. Under the Musharraf regime, several initiatives to reform the madrasas were instituted in 2001, funded in part by international donors. Such efforts through the Pakistan Madrasa Education (Establishment and Affiliation of Modern Deeni Madaris) Board Ordinance, 2001, included introduction of subjects like English, mathematics, computer science, economics, political science, law and Pakistan studies in the curriculum. The Voluntary Registration and Regulation Ordinance, 2002, was promulgated to control and regulate the admission of foreigners into the madrasas of Pakistan, and to keep a close tab on their activities.³⁷ All these initiatives fell by the wayside due to opposition from the religious parties and the Madrasa Board on the grounds that state interference in the affairs of religious education was unacceptable.

Due to coalition compulsions, no decisive action could be taken, especially changing the jihadi

curriculum of the madrasas by adopting government-prescribed syllabi, or monitoring their funding, despite several assurances. A large number of madrasas remained unregistered and gradually the government reassured the religious parties, on whom it was dependent for political support, that there would be no interference in the internal affairs of the madrasas.

A five-year reform project was launched in 2004–05 by the Ministry of Education targeting 8,000 madrasas, with the government offering to provide funds to hire four teachers each to teach ‘modern’ subjects. The idea was to create a balance between formal and religious education and expand the curricula to include the teaching of social and physical sciences, religious tolerance and human rights. However, only 6.3 per cent of the targeted madrasas were accessed. In 2008, the education ministry reported it had only spent \$4 million of the allotted \$100 million for madrasa reform over the past six years.³⁸ In fact, the initial funding of \$50 million provided by the US to the Ministry of Religious Affairs was used to modernize its offices and buy new Sport Utility Vehicles (SUVs) for the babus.³⁹

Again in 2010, the government had reached an agreement with madrasa leaders about registration. The October 2010 accord was a comprehensive one as it focused on mainstreaming of madrasas through introducing contemporary education, among other points. A committee was constituted with representation from religious leaders and the government to draft a law on reform but not a single meeting was held.⁴⁰

Under the National Action Plan, efforts have again been made to tackle the madrasas. However, at a meeting of the collective board – the ITMD – in March 2015, it was decided to strongly resist government measures against the madrasas and to reject all unconstitutional steps of the rulers pursuing the agenda of the imperial powers.⁴¹ In May 2015, the five wafaqs again rejected the plan to register and reform the madrasas saying it is being done ‘at the behest of the Western powers’, and pledged to resist government efforts to put any restrictions on their independence.

The deputy chairman of the Senate, Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, said action against madrasas would harm education and that those who were talking about taking action against madrasas did not understand the fallout of such an action on the educational structure of the country.⁴² In September 2015, madrasa leaders met the prime minister and it was agreed to set up a committee to work out modalities of audit, registration, etc. At the time of writing, the government and the ITMDs appear to have reached an agreement over registration and curriculum that will include modern science subjects, English and Pakistan studies. The catch is that the recognition to the madrasa education will be given through an Act of Parliament and all educational boards and universities will hold examinations of compulsory subjects to issue them certificates and degrees.⁴³ How this pans out in actual practice will have to be seen.

A second source of opposition to madrasa reform has been the religious parties. The madrasas are their constituency, the students the main source of their street power. Given their dismal performance in election after election, any dilution in their hold over madrasas would reduce their relevance and street power. Thus, they have to oppose any reform of the system for their own self-preservation. Not surprisingly, thirty religious parties and organizations affiliated with Tahaffuz-e-Namoos-e-Risalat Mahaz (TNRM), a platform of Barelvi school of thought, decided to launch a countrywide agitation from 27 February 2015 against the alleged crackdown on madrasas, victimization of ulema and prayer leaders in the wake of the Army Public School killing in Peshawar, especially their arrests and the removal of loud speakers from mosques.⁴⁴

Let alone madrasa reform, any criticism of madrasas has invited swift retribution. The most recent case

has been that of Information Minister Pervez Rashid who said at a book launch in Karachi: ‘These universities of ignorance, to whom we give donations and hides, are giving an ideology of hatred and conservativeness to the society.’ The minister’s speech resulted in a tirade of condemnation from the religious right. Wafaqul Madaris, castigated Rasheed and announced countrywide protests. Noted cleric Mufti Naeem of Jamia Binoria declared him an apostate, arguing that he had ‘ridiculed the bastions of Quran and Hadith’. Asked if criticizing madrasas could be equated with criticizing Islam, he said the seminaries represent Islam.⁴⁵ Ultimately, with no support from his own party, Rashid had to eat humble pie, apologize in the Senate that his remarks were directed towards only 3 to 4 per cent of madrasas that were involved in spreading militancy while the rest were not centres of ignorance

Pakistan is faced with a twin problem vis-à-vis the madrasas. On the one hand is an economy that is not growing fast enough to absorb the almost three million young persons entering the job market every year. On the other, there is a large pool of madrasa-educated youth who would be competing with a much larger number of government/private-school-educated youth. Even though the education and skill levels of the latter category are not very high, they will still edge out the madrasa-educated in most jobs. Thus, the options for the madrasa-educated are limited and joining a jihadi outfit or a religious political party seems an attractive offer.

While religious motivation will help, it will be the economic circumstances that will impel them towards violent organizations. In such a scenario, arguments like Pakistan has a strong Barelvi–Sufi tradition will not matter. Moreover, the growing socio-economic, intellectual and ideological gap between madrasa students and other students will also add to the frustration of the madrasa alumni.

The Pakistani state would also have to pay attention to the madrasa children. As pointed out by Jalees Hazir in *The Nation*,

These children are the collective responsibility of our society and we must not leave them to the mercy of professional peddlers of faith who fill their innocent minds with ignorance and prejudice. We must not leave them to be used by them as fodder for their convoluted political agendas and to be abused by them in myriad ways. When we talk about reforming the madrasas, we should not think only about countering militancy but also coming to the rescue of children trapped in them.⁴⁶

So far, the government and the army have looked at madrasa students as cannon fodder for elusive foreign policy goals. As and when Pakistan decides to pull back from the brink, a priority would be to start looking at these madrasa students as a resource. They are much too large a number to be ignored, and they will continue to be ignored unless the government works out an economic strategy to give them skills to enable them to earn a livelihood. This should be as much a priority as madrasa registration and changing the curriculum.

Military courts and hanging terrorists will not de-radicalize society. Registering madrasas, even changing the curriculum will only make a dent. The real impact will come when the nexus between the state agencies supporting terrorist groups and the terrorist groups needing madrasa recruits to fulfil the

Pakistani state's agenda is broken and the state comes up with a realistic plan to mainstream madrasas and their students. Until that happens, reforming madrasas or bringing them into the mainstream will remain a mirage. As has been brilliantly put, 'History of negotiations on seminary reforms indicates that enthusiasm is consumed at meetings and ends at the press conferences.'⁴⁷

9

Terrorism

*You can't keep snakes in your backyard and expect them to only bite your neighbor. Eventually, those snakes are going to turn on whoever has them in the backyard.*¹

—Hillary Clinton

WHILE ISLAMIZATION had a certain salience in a country created on the basis of religion, the growth of jihadi terrorism and violence prevalent in Pakistan today is the result of deliberate state policy. Even before its creation, and more so afterwards, Pakistan has used jihadis of various hues as instruments of state policy without examining their long-term effects on Pakistani society. Not surprisingly, Pakistan is seen the world over as the epicentre of terrorism. Fareed Zakaria summed it up best when he wrote, 'For a wannabe terrorist shopping for help, Pakistan is a supermarket.'²

There are a confusing plethora of jihadi organizations in Pakistan with ostensible niche agendas. These can be subdivided into (i) Sunni sectarian, notably the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) now called the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ) and the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ); (ii) Kashmir-centric Deobandi groups like Jaish-e-Muhammed (JeM) and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM); the Ahl-e-Hadis group like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and the Jamaat-e-Islami-supported Hizbul Mujahideen (HM); (iii) anti-Pakistan groups like the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The LeT, of course, has an agenda beyond Kashmir and even beyond India as will be seen below.

While the above distinctions are useful to understand the complexity of the jihadi scenario, and the primary agendas of various groups, on the ground, these distinctions are not watertight and at times, sharing of resources and volunteers is common between them. For example, as the International Crisis Group (ICG) puts it,

But such distinctions are tenuous at best. Sharing idiosyncratic religious interpretations and seeking to propagate them through force, all these local, regional and international jihadi groups have combined resources and recruits to fight Islam's perceived enemies within and beyond Pakistan's borders.³

According to the Global Terrorism Database, there were about 1,000 terror-induced deaths in Pakistan in the 1980s, largely perpetrated by the sectarian outfits and the Al-Zulfikar Organization that was formed by Z.A. Bhutto's sons to avenge his murder. The next decade saw a 300 per cent increase in terrorism, largely perpetrated by the SSP. The decade after 9/11 witnessed a further 100 per cent increase in

terrorism, largely perpetrated by the TTP and the LeJ.

According to partial data compiled by the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), since 2003 and up to 1 July 2016, 60,772 combatants and non-combatants have been killed. The military has lost 6,516 soldiers and officers.

The figures for terrorism-linked fatalities are as follows. In 2014, the numbers of fatalities were 5,496, including 1,781 civilians, 533 security force (SF) personnel and 3,182 terrorists. In 2015, the respective figures were 3,682 fatalities, including 940 civilians, 339 SF personnel and 2,403 terrorists. The number of major incidents also declined from 402 to 322 over this period. Till 1 July 2016, 1,078 terrorism-linked fatalities had occurred in Pakistan, including 307 civilians, 146 SF personnel and 625 terrorists. During the corresponding period of 2015, Pakistan had seen 2,210 terrorism-related fatalities, including 539 civilians, 170 SF personnel and 1,501 terrorists. Operation Zarb-e-Azb⁴ launched on 15 June 2014, in the tribal areas of Pakistan has been significant in bringing about this relative improvement, though doubts continue to be expressed about whom exactly it has been targeting.⁵

Despite the decline in the number of terrorist incidents there have been several high-profile incidents in 2015 and 2016 as shown in the table below:

High-profile terrorist incidents (2015–16)

Year	Date	Details
2015	30 January	Sixty-two killed in a Shia mosque in Shikarpur district.
	13 February	Twenty-two killed in a Shia mosque in Peshawar.
	15 March	Seventeen killed in twin suicide-bomb attacks that targeted churches in Lahore.
	13 May	Forty-three Ismailis killed in Karachi.
	18 September	Twenty-nine, mostly servicemen, killed in an air force base near Peshawar.
	23 October	Twenty-four Shias killed in Jacobabad; and twenty-three, mainly Shias, killed in FATA.
	29 December	Twenty-six killed in Mardan.
2016	20 January	Twenty-one killed in a university in Charsadda.
	27 March	Sixty-five killed in Lahore. ⁶
	8 August	Seventy, mostly lawyers, killed in Quetta.

The continuing violence could indicate that despite Operation Zarb-e-Azb and the National Action Plan,⁷ the terrorists have been regrouping and perhaps even regenerating. Finding security targets harder to access, the strategy now is to go after soft targets.

Casualties apart, the financial cost of terrorism has been enormous. In a written reply, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar informed the Senate in May 2016 that due to terrorism, the national economy sustained direct and indirect losses to the tune of Rs 5,193.95 billion (US \$56.88 billion) during the last five years. He added that most losses, i.e., Rs 2,037.33 billion were recorded during 2010–11 and least Rs 457.93

billion in 2014–15.⁸

The Pakistan Army's use of the Islamists as instruments of state policy has come to be termed the 'mullah–military alliance'. As Haqqani notes, 'The alliance between the mosque and the military in Pakistan was forged over time, and its character has changed with the twists and turns of Pakistani history.'⁹ It has two key components: allowing the state to play a duplicitous game by using non-state actors to realize foreign policy objectives while maintaining deniability for themselves and selectively empowering and targeting the non-state actors who follow/do not follow respectively, the laid-down agenda of the state.

The history of using non-state actors predates the creation of Pakistan as noted in an earlier chapter. While Iskander Mirza, then a joint secretary, later defence secretary and president of Pakistan, did not have to use the tribal lashkars to foment trouble in the then NWFP on the instructions of Jinnah in February 1947,¹⁰ Mirza's preparatory efforts were to bear fruit in October 1947, just two months after Pakistan's creation, to try and force the issue and capture Kashmir militarily.

In its current form, however, the growth of the jihadi phenomenon dates back to Pakistan's participation in the Afghan jihad that led to the maturing of the mullah–military alliance. Ahmed Rashid estimates: 'Between 1982 and 1992, some 35,000 Muslim radicals from 43 Islamic countries in the Middle East, North and East Africa, central Asia and the Far East would pass their baptism under fire with the Afghan mujahideen.'¹¹ Lt Gen. (Retd) Hamid Gul, former chief of the ISI, boasted about how his organization had channelled Islamists from a large number of Muslim countries: 'We are fighting a jihad and this is the first Islamic brigade in the modern era.'¹²

Pakistan hasn't looked back since. What pushed the jihadi culture further was that after the anti-Soviet jihad, the ISI diverted the returning jihadis from Punjab, especially from south Punjab, towards Kashmir. This allowed the jihadis to consolidate themselves, ideologically and physically, especially in the 1990s, and develop agendas of their own, not always in line with that of the military. Unlike the Afghan Taliban whose agenda was territorially limited to Afghanistan, the jihadis in Pakistan developed a much wider agenda, territorially and ideologically. In implementing this, they were able to feed off tensions in society; using their muscle power to help the business community, the land mafia and the local politicians for mutual benefit.¹³

Once Pakistan became a nuclear-weapon state in 1998, the army under Pervez Musharraf resorted to a high-risk strategy of using non-state actors under a nuclear overhang. The assumption this time was that India would not dare to retaliate due to the fear of escalation to the nuclear level. Christine Fair notes how the acceptability of low-intensity conflict (LIC) under a nuclear overhang was reflected in the writings of army officers.¹⁴

One of the fundamental problems in Pakistan has been that every leader has promised to crack down on terrorism to end the jihadi culture when he comes to power but forgets those promises in due course. For example, Musharraf in his celebrated 12 January 2002 address outlined an action plan of targeting terrorism that included an assurance that Pakistani territory would not be used for terrorism in India; that terrorists would not be allowed a free run; that madrasas would be reformed and so on.¹⁵ While it is true that several Pakistani groups were banned, no follow-up action was taken for prosecution; banned groups continued as before by adopting new names but with the same leadership. For example, Hafiz Muhammad Saeed (LeT) and Maulana Azhar Masood (JeM) were detained only for a few months under the

Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance but not under the Anti-Terrorism Act. The LeT's name was changed to Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JD) and JeM to Khudam-ul-Islam. Both leaders and organizations were able to carry on their activities as before.

Hafiz Saeed, an international terrorist, has been openly and repeatedly calling for jihad in Kashmir. At its annual congregation in Patoki in October 2003, barely a year after Musharraf's assertion, the LeT/JuD openly announced jihad in Kashmir.¹⁶ A decade later, in December 2014, Hafiz Saeed held a massive two-day rally at Lahore's Minar-e-Pakistan that was attended by more than a lakh of participants, whose movement and logistics had been facilitated by the authorities. During his speech, Saeed reiterated his favourite topic of 'Ghazwa-e-Hind' or war against India. Subsequently, on Pak TV talk shows he blamed India for the Peshawar school massacre, dramatically demonstrating that nothing had changed.¹⁷ On 30 May 2016, JuD hosted a meeting of projihadi organizations in Islamabad under the auspices of Defence of Pakistan Council. Leaders of different outfits expressed their determination to continue their support for militants fighting in the neighboring countries. On 5 June 2016, the same conglomerate of extremist organizations came out for a public show of strength in Islamabad. Finally, a public rally was organized by Hafiz Saeed and other extremist outfits on 31 July 2016 in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, ostensibly in support of J&K. The organizers of the rally publicly collected financial donations. This shows Pakistan's lack of commitment to fight terrorism and its duplicitous policies.

Astonishingly, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his brother Shahbaz Sharif, the chief minister of Punjab, protect the Jamaat-ud-Dawa. Under Shahbaz Sharif, the Punjab provincial government took over JuD's operations, essentially rendering its workers employees of the provincial government.¹⁸ According to files released from the Abbottabad compound where Osama bin Laden was hiding, there was a reference to Shahbaz Sharif, initiating negotiations for a deal with the TTP as long as the latter agreed to halt all operations in the Punjab. This not only shows the lack of seriousness on the part of the government in eliminating terrorism across the board but also its complicity.¹⁹

It was left to the Punjab law minister, Rana Sanaullah, and Musharraf to confirm the role of the state. Sanaullah told BBC Urdu that legal action against proscribed organizations like Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) was not possible since 'state itself has remained a part of this'.²⁰ For his part, Musharraf admitted in an interview that Pakistan supported and trained groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in 1990s to carry out militancy in Kashmir. 'In 1990s the freedom struggle began in Kashmir ... At that time Lashkar-e-Taiba and 11 or 12 other organizations were formed. We supported them and trained them as they were fighting in Kashmir at the cost of their lives.' He said Hafiz Saeed and Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi type people enjoyed the status of heroes at that time.²¹

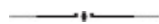
Despite launching of operation Zarb-e-Azb against the TTP, it is often forgotten that not so long ago, Fazal Hayat, better known as Mullah Fazlullah, the head of the TTP was actually a hero of the army and the administration. On 3 April 2009, Fazlullah led the prayer at his home village, Mamdirai. A report about the event states that he was warmly received by his followers, as well as military officials and officials of the district administration. Those who prayed behind him were key military and civil officers – including Brigadier Tahir Mubeen, Syed Javed Hussain, the commissioner of Malakand region, Khushhal Khan, the District Coordination Officer of Swat, Danishwar Khan, Swat's District Police Officer and the man in charge of Operation Rah-e-Haq. After the prayers Fazlullah gave an emotional but threatening speech, which was heard with respect by all, including the military and civil officials, like

obedient subjects. The army does owe the people an explanation as to how key state functionaries, including from the Pakistan Army, prayed along with a terrorist who had killed soldiers, NWFP police officers and civilians of the valley. This was at a time when the Swat police had registered at least sixty cases related to suicide bombings, kidnappings, attacks on civilians, police and armed forces and damage to public and private property against Fazlullah.²²

Moreover, instead of ensuring that terrorist leaders get no publicity, such leaders are frequently given prime-time exposure in the electronic media. Hafiz Saeed is a frequent guest on 'talk shows' as is the patron-in-chief of the virulently anti-Shia outfit, the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamat (ASWJ). Muhammad Ahmed Ludhianvi, Saeed and the Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin have used such occasions to spew venom against India. This is despite the fact that a circular issued on 2 November 2015 by the media regulator, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), had announced a blanket ban on coverage of seventy-two proscribed organizations, including the 'banned Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Falah-i-Insaniat Foundation (FIF) under UN Resolution 1267'.²³

The ambiguity of the state was further underlined by the adviser to the prime minister on national security and foreign affairs, Sartaj Aziz, stating in an interview to BBC Urdu on 17 November 2014 that Pakistan should not target militants who do not threaten the country's security, adding, 'Why should America's enemies unnecessarily become our enemies?' When speaking about the Haqqani network, he said, 'Some of them were dangerous for us and some are not. Why must we make enemies out of them all?'²⁴ Sartaj Aziz also acknowledged in March 2016 that Pakistan had, in fact, been sustaining the Taliban in sanctuaries in Pakistan all these years. (This is discussed in detail in a subsequent chapter.)

The failure of every government to crack down on terrorists is simply because of their unwillingness to do so. Musharraf, like those before him and those who have succeeded him as army chiefs – Generals Kayani and Raheel Sharif – deliberately failed to neutralize the jihadi factories because of the role these organizations played in their perception of Pakistan's national security. Hence, the measures announced and implemented have been cosmetic with an eye on the international community, to ease international pressure.²⁵ Given the interlinkages between the groups, Pakistan will find it increasingly difficult to isolate and degrade the capabilities of those opposing the state without targeting those who seemingly carry out its agenda.



The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) that has become the most dangerous terrorist group for Pakistan is a loose network of Deobandis straddling FATA and parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) with linkages in Punjab. The primary focus of their violence is the Pakistan state and the objective is to establish their brand of sharia in Pakistan. The attack on the Lal Masjid in 2007 is believed to be the catalyst when various jihadi groups in FATA came together to form the TTP throughout the Pashtun belt, under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud. He was killed in a drone attack in August 2009 and was replaced by Hakimullah Mehsud who was killed in another drone attack in November 2013 and was replaced by Fazlullah, who comes from a different social context from Baitullah and Hakimullah. 'Having lived and worked in Swat as a low-level mullah in a society known for its hierarchy, Fazlullah brings a hatred of the Swat elite that is not tempered by any kind of code.'²⁶

Apart from its strict ideology, the TTP has been able to attract followers due to poor governance and

especially an expensive and corrupt judicial system. In places like Swat, the TTP has also won support for redistributing land to landless peasants. It is areas of poverty due to lack of jobs, economic stagnation and underdevelopment that have become fertile grounds to seed extremist ideology, though they are not the only areas.

The TTP belief system is fairly simple: First, the TTP movement rejects the legitimacy of the Pakistani state and the Constitution since they believe that neither is Islamic. They only recognize the sharia as the Constitution. Second, according to Joshua White, ‘they are somewhat more takfiri in their ideology than the mainstream Islamists.’ (Takfir is the practice of accusing other Muslims of apostasy.) In other words, ‘they are willing to sanction jihad against other Muslims who reject their sectarian or ideological position.’ In fact, they claim that these other groups are not truly Muslim.’²⁷

Ideology apart, one notable feature of the TTP is its linkage with criminal networks, especially transport networks engaged in smuggling, and the timber mafia.²⁸ In many places, armed criminal gangs have adopted the label of the Taliban to give themselves a protective facade. According to statistics compiled by the interior ministry, the TTP runs a syndicate worth \$50–120 million per month from protection racket, drugs and extortion alone. Karachi has become their financial hub with large investments in various businesses, apart from connection with organized crime.²⁹

The links between the TTP and the al-Qaeda are worrying for the Pakistan government and the international community. Describing the TTP as an ‘extension of al-Qaeda’, Rehman Malik, the then adviser of the interior ministry, admitted that the suicide bombers, their handlers and financiers were Pakistan-based, dispelling the notion that terrorism was foreign-funded and an offshoot of the Afghan conflict.³⁰ An editorial in the *Daily Times* commented that this was ‘a realistic diagnosis of the problem of terrorism’ in Pakistan.³¹ A key factor in the TTP’s growth and strength is its mobility. Taliban militants can move across the border from Pakistan to Afghanistan and from Afghanistan to Pakistan with ease.

Another term being increasingly used is the ‘Punjabi Taliban’. According to Hassan Abbas, the name Punjabi Taliban was first used for ethnic Punjabis associated with the Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI) who, under the leadership of Qari Saifullah Akhtar, went to support and join the regime of the Taliban leader Mullah Omar in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s. The second time the name was used was during 2001–03 when Musharraf banned some militant and sectarian groups (LeJ, SMP, SSP, TeJ, JeM, LeT) that had a support base in Punjab. As a result, some of these elements began moving to FATA to seek safe havens and establish new camps.³²

The current Punjabi Taliban network has a number of key features. First, it lacks any organization or command structure and operates as a loose network of elements from distinct militant groups. Members from LeJ, SSP, JeM and their various splinter groups are all considered to be part of this loose network. Second, many of these militants were professionally trained in guerilla tactics and sabotage by the Pakistani state. Third, most of the groups are Sunni and Salafist in orientation. Fourth, Deobandi LeJ and JeM are Punjab-based and are components of the TTP. They have conducted a series of attacks in Punjab in the name of the TTP. A worrying question for Pakistan is whether its heartland – Punjab – is becoming the new Taliban focus.

The army formally launched an operation against the TTP in North Waziristan on 15 June 2014 and gave it the name Zarb-e-Azb (the name of the sword that the Prophet used in the battles of Badr and Uhud; literally sharp and cutting strike). Army chief Raheel Sharif has gone on record to say that the military

operation in progress was ‘against all hues and colours, and it is without any exception, whether it is Haqqani Network or Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan or anything’. However, his more recent pronouncements have gone beyond terrorism in FATA per se. For example: ‘We are determined and will go to any length to finish all pockets of terrorists from every nook and corner of the country,’³³ declaring 2016 as ‘the year of national solidarity’, one where complete elimination of the nexus of terrorism, crime and corruption will be achieved.³⁴

Three factors need to be noted here. First, it is generally accepted that prior to the launch of the operation, the cadres of the Haqqani network had fled to Afghanistan.³⁵ Second, even Pakistani commentators agree that there are clear indications that the LeT and the JuD are not in the targeted category.³⁶ Third, to defeat terrorism in all its manifestations requires a defeat of the terrorist mindset and the closure of recruitment factories that breed such terrorists. There is little to suggest that any serious attention and action has been focused on such issues.

Over two years later, the moot question is how effective the operation has been. The army, of course, has been claiming that the operation was a huge success and has periodically been touting statistics of the number of terrorists killed and areas that have been cleared. For example, the ISPR claimed that since the launch of Operation Zarb-e-Azb in June 2014, more than 21,000 suspects had been arrested in nearly 14,000 intelligence-based operations and 200 killed while resisting arrests. However, there has been no independent verification of the army’s claims. Such figures do beg the question: if despite the scale of such arrests, terrorist attacks are continuing, clearly the number of terrorists must be massive or multiplying at a fast rate. As *The Nation* asked: ‘If thousands of people were arrested in thousands of operations, and still we are facing terrible attacks, is the army saying that the terrorist horde is so massive that it just can’t be contained despite thousands of operations? 14,000 intelligence operations should have scared these men witless, yet they find their way to bombs, Afghani SIMs and innocent children.’³⁷

Neither do periodic announcements that the operation is now in its final stages inspire confidence particularly since the operation has been extended till 2019. This speaks volumes about its results. While the army operation seems to have had success against the TTP in terms of reducing their activities, the Haqqani network, as the *Daily Times* noted, was still as powerful and brutal as it ever was, if not more so, suggesting that it had not been degraded.³⁸

International opinion is also quite cynical about the success of the operation. For example, the US state department report on global terrorism, 2014, acknowledged that the ongoing military offensive in North Waziristan and Khyber Agency has severely dented al-Qaeda’s presence in South Asia. Even so, it held that some groups continued to find space to orchestrate and launch attacks into Afghanistan and against minorities in Pakistan. It said that while operations carried out by Pakistan’s military and security forces disrupted the actions of many militant outfits in the country, groups like the Afghan Taliban, the Haqqani network and Lashkar-e-Taiba were spared by the offensive, and they continued to operate, train, rally, propagandize and raise funds in Pakistan.³⁹

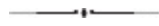
That the Haqqani network operatives have been allowed to melt away raises serious doubts about whether the Pakistani security establishment would actually take on the Haqqanis, who have been its oldest jihadi asset. One can reform and regulate the madrasas but so long as there is a demand for the jihadis, they will keep churning out more.

Pakistan would do well to refer to the 2008 study of the Rand Corporation of 648 terrorist groups

existing between 1968 and 2006. The study found that military operations resulted in the elimination of terrorist groups only in seven cases whereas 40 per cent of the groups were crushed through police and intelligence work and 43 per cent renounced militancy by joining political parties. Military force has rarely been the primary reason for the end of terrorist groups. While it acknowledged the importance of hard force, especially against large and well-organized groups, it also stressed a range of policy instruments including policing and intelligence networks.⁴⁰ This element is largely absent in Pakistan.

The government formulated a twenty-point National Action Plan (NAP) in December 2014, against the backdrop of the Peshawar school attack, to crack down on terrorism. Both Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and army chief Gen. Raheel Sharif stated categorically that no distinction would be made between good and bad terrorists. The plan included a long list of measures including counter-terrorism, choking off the financial lifeline of terrorism, a crackdown on hate speech, on madrasas and on sectarian organizations, etc. A key element was the setting up of military court to try cases of terrorism through a constitutional amendment.

More than two years later, it is clear that the leadership, both civilian and military, lack the political will to fully implement the NAP. The army has no intention to act against anti-India groups like the LeT/JuD and Jaish-e-Mohammad and anti-Afghan groups like the Haqqani network and the Afghan Taliban. The freedom enjoyed by terrorists like Masood Azhar, Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi and Hafiz Saeed proves this. Despite its own failings, the army has strongly criticized the failure of the civilian government to implement the NAP. For its part, the civil leadership has not acted on issues like operationalizing the National Counter-Terrorism Authority (NACTA) or undertaking the madrasa reforms or formulating a counter-narrative, thus showing its lack of seriousness. As a result, tackling terrorism holistically remains a distant goal.



The LeT/JuD has emerged as the most important terrorist group in Pakistan with international dimensions. What gave it additional notoriety was the Mumbai attack in November 2008. Several facets distinguish the LeT from other terrorist groups. First, unlike other Pak terrorist groups, the LeT has not yet staged attacks in Pakistan or targeted the interests of the Pakistan Army/ISI. Massive support given by the ISI in its formative stage is partly responsible for such loyalty. Second, the LeT is predominantly a Punjabi terrorist group that has natural ethnic affinity to the predominantly Punjabi army. Third, the LeT/JuD had condemned in January 2010 the killing of Muslims by suicide bombing as un-Islamic and said that such attacks ‘played into the hands of the US, Israel and India’ and argued that focus should be on jihad in Kashmir and Afghanistan – against non-Muslims. Fourth, it has also condemned sectarian violence in Pakistan.⁴¹

Fifth, the LeT also plays a crucial role domestically. Lieven, for example, notes that due to its charitable work and fight against India, the LeT has managed to establish itself in Punjab. This is significant because its Ahl-e-Hadith theology is foreign to most Punjabis.⁴² Christine Fair argues that the LeT’s domestic role is hinged on its opposition to other terrorist groups attacking the state. As a result, Pakistan would not abandon the LeT even if it were not required in the Indo-Pak context. She sees Pakistan’s reliance upon LeT deepening as the internal security problems of the state worsen.⁴³

For these reasons, the Pakistan Army is unlikely to take action against the LeT just as the latter is

unlikely to turn against the Pakistani state. One of the fears that haunts the Pakistan Army is that targeting the LeT could push it into collaborating with the TTP. Equally, there is the fear that dealing with the LeT militarily, as with other Punjabi terrorist groups, could test the loyalty of the predominantly Punjabi army. This is all the more so now that part of the recruiting ground of the army and the jihadis is the same – south Punjab.⁴⁴

Though a Punjab-based group, the LeT has been spreading its tentacles to other parts of the country too. It has set up camps and established its footprint in areas like Tharparkar in Sindh, which has seen a surge in infant deaths due to malnutrition over the past two years. The LeT also has an agenda that goes beyond Kashmir. Bruce Riedel summed this up well: ‘LeT’s ideology as laid out by Saeed goes far beyond recovering the Muslim parts of Kashmir for Pakistan. He seeks the creation of a Muslim caliphate over the entire subcontinent. The vision of Saeed and his fellow leaders of LeT requires the literal destruction of India as a state. Saeed announced this goal in a speech in 1999 after the short Kargil war with India, saying, ‘... today I announce the break-up of India, Inshallah [God willing]. We will not rest until the whole of India is dissolved into Pakistan.’⁴⁵

For a long time the West, especially the US, saw the LeT as predominantly an India-specific threat while their focus was on the al-Qaeda. But when LeT-trained terrorists started getting implicated in terrorist plots in Europe and North America, the West began to understand the true nature of LeT. For example, in a testimony before a subcommittee of the House of Representatives, Lisa Curtis, a senior research fellow at The Heritage Foundation, stated,

... the US must develop policies that approach the LeT with the same urgency as that which the US deals with the threat from al-Qaeda. Given the potential for LeT-linked terrorist cells to conduct a Mumbai-style attack here in the US, Washington must pursue policies that contain and shut down the operations of this deadly organization ... given that the LeT has cooperated with al-Qaeda and shares a similar virulent anti-west Islamist ideology, it makes little sense to believe one can dismantle al-Qaeda without also shutting down the operations of the LeT.⁴⁶

LeT’s efforts to access nuclear weapons should also be noted. In his book, *Call for Transnational Jihad*, Arif Jamal reveals that since his days as a teacher in the University of Engineering and Technology (UET), Hafiz Saeed and co-founder of the JuD Zafar Iqbal had been encouraging their students to join the country’s nuclear science and technology institutions like Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) and Khan Research Labs (KRL) after graduating from UET. Jamal believes that dozens of JuD members from UET and other universities have joined Pakistan’s nuclear and technology institutions. It is this penetration of state institutions, including nuclear ones, that seems to have convinced the JuD that it is likely to acquire access to nuclear technology. This may come sooner than imagined given the JuD’s ability to realize its plans systematically and cool-headedly, he warns.⁴⁷

In this context it is worth noting that Dr A.Q. Khan was reported to have attended the rallies of Hafiz Saeed together with other nuclear scientists like Sultan Bashiruddin Mehmood, former director of PAEC and Abdul Majid. The latter’s charity Umma Tameer-e-Nau (UTN) was found to be in correspondence with the LeT and papers on construction and maintenance of nuclear weapons were found on their premises. These two scientists had separately met Osama bin Laden.⁴⁸ Speaking at a Kashmir Solidarity Day rally in Lahore on 6 February 2004, Hafiz Saeed said: ‘He [A.Q. Khan] shared the technology for the

supremacy of Islam and he acted on Allah's command.'⁴⁹

Before concluding, it is worth looking at the reports about the presence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), or just the Islamic State, in Pakistan. These reports initially centred on the presence of some Pakistanis (Abdul Rahman al Amjad al Pakistani) in Iraq, expression of support to the ISIS by some splinter TTP groups; ISIS logo and name appearing in some graffiti, posters and pamphlets across Pakistan, etc.⁵⁰ More importantly, the Balochistan government in a 'secret' memo reported to the federal government in Islamabad on 30 October 2014 that 'ISIS has created a 10-man "strategic planning wing" with a master plan on how to wage war against the Pakistani military'. The report also mentioned the group's links with Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and other associated sectarian groups, and claimed that it was actively and successfully recruiting in FATA.⁵¹

In October 2014, a number of senior commanders defected from the TTP and pledged their allegiance to the ISIS and al-Baghdadi. These included Hafiz Saeed Khan (TTP chief for Orakzai Agency), Shahidullah Shahid (former TTP spokesman), Daulat Khan (TTP chief for Kurram Agency), Gul Zaman al-Fateh (TTP chief for Khyber Agency), Shiekh Mufti Hasan (TTP chief for Peshawar) and Khalid Mansoor (TTP chief for Hangu). A previously unknown outlet calling itself Khurasan Media released a professionally made video in January 2015, in which Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, an ISIS spokesperson, endorsed the formation of his organization's chapter in Pakistan and Afghanistan and declared Hafiz Saeed Khan as its supreme leader.

However, despite mounting evidence to the contrary, the government appeared to have an ostrich-like attitude regarding the ISIS. For example, the army chief, Gen. Raheel Sharif, while addressing the Royal United Services Institute (London, 9 October 2015) asserted that Pakistan would not allow 'even a shadow' of Islamic State (IS) in its territory.⁵² The interior minister has on several occasions stated that the ISIS had, 'no organized presence in Pakistan' and that 'terrorist organizations are using Da'ish as a façade to mount attacks in the country'. The Foreign Office spokesman, echoing the army chief, reiterated on 1 January 2016 that the Islamic State had no footprint in Pakistan. 'We will not tolerate even the shadow of the Islamic State in Pakistan. We have alerted our security agencies to the threat posed by the Islamic State. They will take appropriate action, if required,' he said.⁵³

Several instances, however, reveal that the government's assessment about the presence of the ISIS in Pakistan has been wrong. The ground in Pakistan is undoubtedly fertile for the ISIS to take root not merely because of the jihadi ambience but because of the large pool of virulent anti-Shia sentiment in Pakistan that finds common ground with the ideology of the ISIS. Not surprisingly, it was the gruesome killing of forty-five Ismailis in Karachi in May 2015 by which the ISIS first announced its presence in Pakistan, though clumsy attempts were made to pin this act on an alleged Indian spy.

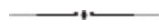
Another disturbing factor is that reports from eastern Afghanistan indicate that bulk of the terrorists affiliated with the ISIS were actually Pakistanis. Most of them in Achin, Nazian and Kot districts of Nangrahar province hail from Orakzai, Khyber and Bajour Agencies. They were part of the TTP and had fled after the Pakistan Army launched its military operation. There has been an active supply line to these fighters in Afghanistan from Tirah Valley in Khyber Agency which is geographically adjacent to these Afghan districts. Lashkar-e-Islami (LI) led by Mangal Bagh from the Khyber Agency has been the main supplier.⁵⁴ The Afghan ambassador in Islamabad Janan Mosazai also confirmed these developments when

he stated at a seminar in Islamabad that the majority of the terrorists escaping military operations in Pakistan's Orakzai and Mohmand Agencies had joined the IS.⁵⁵

In the face of mounting evidence, the government's point of view seems to be gradually changing. Thus, almost immediately after the Foreign Office statement mentioned above, the Punjab law minister stated that over 100 people from Punjab, including JuD workers and women from Al-Huda madrasa and thousands from other provinces had left to fight for ISIS.⁵⁶ The director general of the Intelligence Bureau (IB), Aftab Sultan, informed the Senate Standing Committee on Interior on 10 February 2016 that the ISIS was emerging as a threat because several militant groups had soft corner for it. He named Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan as examples. He disclosed that the IB had busted a big IS network after several members reached Punjab following Karachi's Safoora Goth carnage in May 2015.⁵⁷ In March, the Karachi police admitted that they had killed Kamran Aslam, alias Kamran Gujjar, the operational commander of the ISIS in Pakistan.⁵⁸ In April 2016, the counter-terrorism department of the Karachi police announced in a press conference that more than two dozen Islamic State-inspired militants were found operating and planning some major terror attacks in the metropolis. Previously, they belonged to the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan and al-Qaeda but now had jumped on the IS bandwagon.

However, it is unlikely that the ISIS has an identifiable physical organizational structure and leadership in Pakistan. Neither is it necessary for the ISIS to physically shift to Pakistan. Yet, when scores of men and even a few women have gone to fight in Syria and when reports indicate that members of the banned Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Jamaat-ud-Dawa have joined the group in significant numbers can its 'presence' be denied? All that it needs are local sympathizers and supporters who are recruited for missions. As *The Nation* aptly noted, 'IS is not going to march from Iraq and Syria to Pakistan to make a claim; it will be locals who will pledge allegiance, create links and then be recruited for a mission. This is already happening.'⁵⁹ A looming danger is when these indoctrinated people return to continue the jihad in Pakistan.

At the same time the jihadi groups connected with the Pakistani military are unlikely to see any benefit going the ISIS way, even if they had the option. The TTP, barring a few disgruntled splinter groups and individuals, is strongly connected with either the Afghan Taliban or the al-Qaeda. Whether or not the ISIS finds a physical and organized home in Pakistan would depend a great deal on the army and the ISI. In case the ISI finds the ISIS a useful tool or label to achieve tactical results, like keeping the attention of the US focused in the area, the ISIS could find a berth in Pakistan. But this would mean either breaking with the Afghan Taliban or developing a modus vivendi between the ISIS and the Taliban.⁶⁰ Till then, the ISIS presence could grow as an idea appealing to a section of the population.



To conclude, Pakistan's security crisis is rooted in its own skewed foreign and internal policies – which have traditionally and selectively distinguished between good non-state actors such as Afghan Taliban, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and the Haqqani network and the bad ones like the LeJ, TTP, etc. The continuous support to these jihadi groups since the time of Zia-ul-Haq and the policies of Islamization introduced by him and followed by successive governments has ensured that the moderate civil society in Pakistan is faced with shrinking space and is much too weak to take on the jihadi challenge. Decades of military rule has also stunted the growth of political parties and of democracy itself, making political leaders toe the

army's line in security matters. And so long as the army looks at security, internal and external, through the prism of India, there is little likelihood of any change in its policy of treating jihadis as anything but 'strategic assets'.

For long, the army's presumption has been that the jihadi groups and especially the Kashmir-centric groups do not hurt Pakistan. This assumption has been unravelling for quite some time, on at least three levels. First, as the example of the TTP shows, jihadi groups have turned against their master. The worst example of this was the brutal massacre of 135 schoolchildren in the Army Public School in Peshawar. Second, jihadi groups in Pakistan can be hijacked for international terrorism – for example, become affiliated with or show loyalty to groups like the AQIS (al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent) and ISIS, or develop agendas of their own. Third and most critical, jihadi terrorism may lead to a potential nuclear conflict with India in case of another 2008 Mumbai-type attack. For the army, keeping the Indo-Pak normalization process derailed through the use of jihadis may be par for the course but it can pose serious dangers to Pakistan's well-being.

Encouragingly, there is growing realization in Pakistan about the impact that the policy of breeding jihadis has had on Pakistan. For example, in an editorial, the *Daily Times* commented: 'We can by no means continue the old pattern of following a duplicitous foreign policy that contradicts itself in speech and action. Neither Afghanistan nor the US believes that Operation Zarb-e-Azb is targeting terrorist groups operating from Pakistani soil without discrimination. ... the Haqqani network is still as powerful and brutal as it ever was, if not more so, suggesting that it has not been stymied. ... Pakistan's descent into a state of perpetual chaos and violent terror attacks was in part the state's own fault for fostering Islamist groups to use as proxies in the region. At this point, the state must realize that there is absolutely no benediction in fostering terror groups.'⁶¹

The moot point is whether the Pakistani leadership, especially the military, will rethink its strategy of using non-state actors and distinguishing between good and bad jihadis. As Hillary Clinton, the former US secretary of state put it so brilliantly: 'You can't keep snakes in your backyard and expect them to only bite your neighbor. Eventually those snakes are going to turn on whoever has them in the backyard.'⁶²

However, stopping the use of such elements as instruments of state policy will only be the start. It will have to be followed up by dismantling the infrastructure of jihad – the madrasa network, the training camps – and provision of jobs, after a period of re-educating the madrasa graduates and changing the mindset in government schools. This would mean massive investment in industry and agriculture to create jobs and in education to provide modern education. Pakistan would have to build a counter-narrative to join the battle against the Islamic hardliners and present a viable alternative. Unfortunately, Pakistan has yet to acknowledge, let alone deal with, the ideology of hatred and militancy that has been cultivated as state policy for over four decades. Given that for decades the Pakistan has viewed jihadis as an instrument of state policy against India, it will be extremely difficult to change that policy in the immediate future, or even medium term. With terrorism continuing to fester internally, Pakistan's slide on the slippery road towards the abyss will hasten in the years to come.

V

The WEEP Analysis

THE FIFTH section undertakes a WEEP analysis, looking at the critical issues of Water, Education, Economy and Population. Individually, each of these factors have not only a far-reaching impact on every strata of society but are decisive elements in the security of any state. Collectively, they are a fundamental factor in determining the quality of life, health and longevity of the country. The degradation in each of these parameters takes a long time to manifest itself just as rectification and reversing the trends take a considerably longer time.

Pakistan today has become a water-scarce country from a water-abundant one in 1947. It is in danger of becoming an absolute water-scarce country by 2035, though some analysts even predict this will come to pass by 2020. What this means for an agricultural-dependent country with a rapidly expanding population can well be imagined.

Pakistan also faces an education emergency. With twenty-five million children out of primary schools and those who attend school getting an indifferent education, the scale of the problem is colossal.

Compounding the problem is the fact that requisite investments have not been made in these crucial sectors for decades on account of the Pakistan economy suffering from major structural imbalances. As a result of such imbalances, it is in constant need of external aid without which it would collapse. It has squandered the vast amounts of foreign assistance it has received on physical security rather than on the real sinews of power.

An increasing burden on all the resources of Pakistan is the rapidly expanding population. Though Pakistan is undergoing a demographic transition, it faces the prospect of missing out on the once-in-a-lifetime 'demographic dividend'. Instead, it may well be left with a large youthful population that is unemployed and unemployable and will become easy prey for the terrorist organizations.

Pakistan faced an emergency situation in all these four areas about a decade ago. Today, it should be in the disaster management mode, but there are no signs that it is. Collectively, these issues strongly suggest a looming multi-organ failure in Pakistan. The failure has been made worse by these critical issues being ignored by a succession of leaders, civilian and military, since its creation. Increasingly, these issues will haunt the country and will be the primary factors impelling it towards the abyss.

Water: Running Dry

When the well is dry, we know the worth of water.

—Benjamin Franklin (1746)

THE PER capita availability of water in Pakistan has decreased from 5,650 cubic meters (m³) per year in 1951 when it was a water-abundant country to roughly 1,040 m³/year in 2010, to 964 m³/year in 2013¹ and 940 m³/year in 2015,² a decline of more than 400 per cent. It is estimated that by 2020, water availability would have fallen to 855 m³/year.³ The country is expected to become absolute water-scarce – less than 500 m³/year per capita – by 2035, or earlier as some analysts predict.⁴ A new report of the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) says that the country will approach absolute water scarcity by 2025.⁵

The severity of the looming water crisis has been red-flagged by several indicators. The chairman of the Indus River System Authority (IRSA)⁶ wrote to the federal secretary, water, on 25 February 2015, asking for a freeze of the country's entire development programme for five years, and to divert the funds towards the construction of major water reservoirs on a war footing, as a national priority, since agriculture was the backbone of the country. The seriousness of the recommendation was underlined by the fact that the letter was issued after a meeting of the Authority, attended by all the five members. While not specifying the major water reservoirs, he mentioned that at a very minimum a storage capacity of 22 million acre feet (MAF) should be developed at the earliest. He pointed out that the 'total water availability of the country is 145 MAF (average) while the existing live storage capacity is only 14.10 MAF, i.e., 9.7 per cent. By comparison the world average is 40 per cent, which requires achievement expeditiously'.⁷

The 2013–14 and 2014–15 Economic Surveys of Pakistan have also flagged the urgency of the water problem. According to these reports, the decline in water availability from 5,650 m³/year per capita in 1951 to the current low of 964 m³/year per capita was compounded by the 1.9 per cent growth rate of Pakistan's current population of 191.7 million that made future water prospects grim. Moreover, Pakistan's storage capacity was only 132 m³ per capita whereas in the US and Australia the per capita storage was 6,150 m³ and 5,000 m³, respectively. Additionally, Pakistan can barely store thirty days of requirement of water in the Indus basin. The international standard is 120 days.⁸

Furthermore, Pakistan's productivity per unit of water and land is one of the lowest in the world. India and China have reduced substantial amount of water usage in the agricultural sector and enhanced productivity manifold. Pakistan's productivity per unit of water is 0.13kg/m³ only, one-third of India's and

one-sixth of China's. Similarly, Pakistan's productivity per unit of land is one-third of Egypt's, half of Saudi Arabia's and half of India's.⁹

According to the IMF, Pakistan's water intensity rate – the amount of water, in cubic metres, used per unit of GDP – is the world's highest, which means that Pakistan's economy is more water-intensive and water-dependent than that in any other country in the world. It is also indicative of the inefficiency of water usage. Its per capita water withdrawal is the third highest in the world.¹⁰

Such levels of water consumption can only increase given the rate of population growth, and will have perilous repercussions. In 2009, when Pakistan's water availability was about 1,500 m³ per capita per year, a study titled 'Running on Empty' had estimated that Pakistan would not become water-scarce (i.e., fall below the benchmark of 1000 m³/year per capita) until 2035. However, thanks to the rising consumption rates, Pakistan is nearly water-scarce today.¹¹

These statements and reports underline the extent of the looming water crisis that Pakistan faces. For years, local and international water experts, including the World Bank, have been warning Pakistan that the unusually fast depletion of the Himalayan glaciers, low storage capacity, unwise use and other related uncertainties would lead to acute water shortage and crisis – flood and drought – in the next 10–40 years. However, nothing tangible has been done to salvage the situation.

It is estimated that about 90 per cent of Pakistan's land area is arid or semi-arid, and is totally dependent on irrigation for its food production. This makes Pakistan a country with the highest irrigated and rain-fed land ratio in the world. Irrigation, in turn, is dependent on one major river system – the Indus – as the country's other rivers are seasonal in nature. The Indus river system consists of the Indus river and its tributaries, three major reservoirs, nineteen barrages or headworks, forty-three main canals, with a conveyance length of 57,000 km of canals and 89,000 water courses with a running length of more than 1.65 million kilometres. It feeds more than 40 million acres of irrigated land in Pakistan.¹² It is the largest contiguous irrigation system in the world.

The Indus itself contributes the largest flow with a mean annual of 91.26 MAF. Its western tributaries, the Jhelum and Chenab rivers, contribute 23.28 MAF and 27.1 MAF respectively. The rivers receive 75 per cent of the flows during four summer months and 25 per cent during rest of the year. The problem is that the water demand is 60 per cent in summer and 40 per cent in winter. This necessitates sufficient water storage during the short surplus period for use during the longer water stress period.¹³ Without storage, much of the water in the Indus must inevitably run to the sea. However, the Indus's massive irrigation system has a storage capacity of only a month's supply.¹⁴

Pakistan receives the majority of its water from three river basins – the Indus, Karan and Makran. Of these, Pakistan is most dependent on the Indus river basin as it covers 71 per cent of its territory – comprising the whole of Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the eastern parts of Balochistan – and provides water for 77 per cent of the population. The other two river basins – Karan and the Makran – originate along the plains of Balochistan and they cover only 15 per cent and 14 per cent of Pakistan's territory respectively.¹⁵ The average annual flow of the entire Indus river system is estimated (average during 1976–2002) to be 142 MAF. This includes flows from the Kabul river (approx. 16.5 MAF). The Karan and Makran combined contribute less than 4 MAF to Pakistan's total water resources. Groundwater accounts for around 55 MAF. The remaining 2.4–3.2 MAF are a combination of miscellaneous sources such as small rivers and lakes making a grand total of approximately 200 MAF

(availability varies between 194 and 209 MAF).

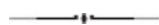
However, the availability of water is changing due to climate change, change in rainfall pattern, melting of glaciers, etc., as borne out by the trends of water availability. A statistical comparison of surface water availability between the last thirty and ten years points towards declining water flows. While average flows for the years 1978 to 2008 equal 140 MAF, the same for 1998–2008 is 128.52 MAF. In years without super floods (four out of five years), average flows have declined from 135.6 MAF during 1978–2008 to 123 MAF during 1998–2008. The highest river inflow in the last three decades was 172.10 MAF in 1977–78; the highest inflow since 1998 has been 152.69 MAF in 2006–07.¹⁶

This is also borne out by the Economic Surveys of Pakistan according to which during 2013–14, the availability of water for the Kharif season (sowing in April–June and harvesting in October–December) 2013 was 2.4 per cent less than the normal supplies of 67.1 MAF. The water availability during the Rabi season (sowing in October–December and harvesting in April–May) 2013–14 was estimated at 32.5 MAF, which was 10.7 per cent less than the normal availability of 36.4 MAF. According to the Economic Survey 2014–15, the availability of water during the Rabi season 2014–15 was estimated at 33.1 MAF, which was 9.1 per cent less than the normal availability of 36.4 MAF. According to media reports for the Rabi season 2015–16, the availability of water was estimated at 31.70 MAF, or as much as 20 per cent less than normal.¹⁷

Pakistan and Afghanistan share nine rivers with annual flows of about 18.3 MAF of which the Kabul river accounts for an average flow of 16.5 MAF. The flow, however, fluctuates from as low as 11.2 MAF to as high as 34.8 MAF. A decline in the flows of the Kabul river has been noted at Attock in Pakistan – more severe during the Kharif season than in the Rabi possibly due to climate change over the last seventy years.

At present there is no institutionalized framework of cooperation for sharing of water from the Kabul river between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Attempts to draft a water treaty failed in 2003 and 2006. This has assumed importance because Afghanistan plans to build twelve dams on this river with the help of the World Bank and the international community including India to generate 1,177 MW of electricity. When constructed, there will be a total water storage capacity of 4.7 MAF. Since the entire flow of the Kabul river has been factored in by Pakistan as part of its own water resources, its fear is that these dams could lead to a 16–17 per cent drop in water supply from Afghanistan, which would seriously affect its own water availability.¹⁸ Pakistan will be especially vulnerable because this drop will occur during the winter when the flow of the Indus is already low.

In fact, increasingly in the future, the territorial and political strategic depth concept will shift focus to ensuring water security for Pakistan.



Of the estimated long-term basin-wide water availability of approximately 194 to 209 MAF, 142 MAF is extracted in Pakistan. Of this, approximately 71 per cent is from surface water (accounting for about 74 per cent of the total surface water available), and 29 per cent from subsurface groundwater (accounting for 83 per cent of total renewable groundwater available).¹⁹

Of the 55 MAF of groundwater, about 45 MAF is being exploited to supplement the surface water

through public sector and private tube wells numbering about 1.1 million by 2014. This is unsustainable because the gap between withdrawal and recharge is growing. Groundwater supplies are depleting at 16–55 centimetres a year, according to a study carried out by the International Waterlogging and Salinity Research Institute (IWASRI), part of the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA).²⁰ The irrigation department of Punjab has stated that while in the 1990s, water could be extracted in the province at a depth of 20–40 feet below ground, in the 2010s, drilling has to take place at close to 800 feet below ground. Additionally, this indiscriminate pumping and heavy use of pesticides are contaminating the aquifer, where tube-well salinity is increasing. It is estimated that 14 per cent of the groundwater reserves are highly saline, unfit for drinking purposes as well as irrigation, and there is now saline water intrusion into mined aquifers.²¹

Groundwater is akin to the family gold – to be used as a last resort when there are problems with surface supplies. In Pakistan, however, groundwater has been used indiscriminately leading to falling water tables. New NASA satellite data indicates that the Indus basin aquifer is now the second most stressed in the world. This rapid depletion of the aquifer means that Pakistan does not have much groundwater in reserve that can be used as the river system becomes more stressed.²²

Consumption of water is heavily skewed towards agriculture – the agricultural sector presently consumes 90–95 per cent of total water withdrawal. Some experts, however, feel that almost 97 per cent of water withdrawal is for agriculture. Water withdrawal for municipal use is estimated at 5.2 per cent and industrial use 0.76 per cent. This is unlikely to change in the next few years as agriculture plays a pivotal role in Pakistan. First, about 60 per cent of Pakistan’s population lives in rural areas and is dependent on agriculture directly or indirectly. Second, the agriculture sector accounts for about 20 per cent of the GDP. Third, it absorbs 43.7 per cent of the labour force. Fourth, over 70 per cent of Pakistan’s exports depend on agriculture-based products. Crucially, out of the total cropped area in Pakistan, Punjab accounts for 76.38 per cent (16.10 million hectares). Nearly 63 per cent of rural workforce in Punjab is employed in agriculture while Sindh is relatively less agricultural, relying more on industrial and service sectors.²³ Given the dominance of Punjab in Pakistan, the importance of agriculture can well be understood.

The UN estimates that water demand in Pakistan is growing at an annual rate of 10 per cent.²⁴ This demand is projected to rise from the current levels to 274 MAF by 2025 while total water availability by 2025 is not likely to change from the current approximately 200 MAF. This gap of about 74 MAF is almost two-thirds of the entire Indus river’s current annual average flow.²⁵ The International Monetary Fund report, ‘Is the Glass Half Empty or Half Full?’, takes the figures of water availability at 191 MAF and so projects a water shortage at 83 MAF by 2025.²⁶

All this calls for careful management of water. However, there are many issues that bedevil water management in Pakistan. These are discussed in the following paragraphs.

(i) The UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) measures the pressure on national water resources by calculating water withdrawal as a percentage of total renewable water resources (TRWR). Stresses are considered high if the TRWR value is above 25 per cent. Pakistan’s water pressure amounts to a staggering 74 per cent. This pressure is exorbitant even compared with neighbouring high-pressured countries, including India at 34 per cent and Afghanistan at 31 per cent.²⁷

Cropping intensity is another factor that has led to unsustainable use of water. When developed, the

irrigation system was designed for 64 per cent cropping intensity. The Canal and Drainage Act of 1873 legally mandates enough water delivery to sustain 64 per cent cropping intensities (A farmer sowing 100 per cent of his or her land twice a year would be equivalent to 200 per cent cropping intensity.) Today real cropping intensities are between 150 and 200 per cent, thanks partially to green revolution technologies to keep pace with population growth.²⁸ To meet such cropping patterns, excessive water is being extracted.

(ii) According to a ‘Special Report on the Water Crisis in Pakistan’ by Pakissan.com (Pakistan’s largest agricultural web portal), 25 per cent of the water diverted to the country’s canal system is wasted in ‘line losses’ in the canals or pipe leakages. ‘Water losses between canal heads and watercourses, and losses within watercourses, are generally accepted to equal one-third of the total amount of water delivered. Another 25 per cent is lost within the farms’²⁹ resulting in a final water efficiency that does not exceed 36 per cent.

Former foreign minister S.M. Qureshi elaborated this in an interview with a Pakistani news channel in April 2010. He said, ‘The total average canal supplies of Pakistan are 104 MAF and the water available at the farm gate is about 70 MAF. Where does the 34 [MAF] go? It’s not being stolen in India. It’s being wasted in Pakistan.’³⁰ This was also confirmed in a March 2013 seminar held by the Pakistan Agriculture Research Council wherein the then secretary of the Ministry of National Food Security and Research said, ‘... about two-thirds of our water resources are lost in transmission and seepage’.³¹

(iii) Cotton exports from Pakistan generate more foreign trade income than any other export item. However, cotton is a water-intensive crop and it is grown for eight out of twelve months in Pakistan. One kilogram of cotton, which is enough to produce one T-shirt and a pair of jeans, consumes 13,000 litres of fresh water. Sugar cane is another water-intensive crop that is grown all the year round. The average water requirement of sugar cane is more than the combined average water requirement of wheat, maize and cotton.³² In times to come, with static water supply but growing demand, Pakistan will have to find alternative crops for export that are not water-intensive.

(iv) As noted by the Economic Survey, Pakistan’s crop productivity per unit of water is very low at 0.13 kilograms per cubic metre. What this means, according to Simi Kamal, is that ‘Pakistan is using 97 per cent of its allocated water resources to support one of the lowest productivities in the world per unit of water.’³³ For example, the fact that Pakistani Punjab’s wheat yields are approximately half those of Indian Punjab (in both absolute terms and per unit of water used) attests to the inefficiency of the Pakistani Punjab’s agriculture – and yet the Punjab represents the breadbasket of Pakistan.³⁴ This was confirmed by the minister of planning who told a conference that Pakistan’s productivity per unit of water and per unit of land was one of the lowest in the world. Likewise, the return to GDP on one cubic metre of water is also the lowest in the world. Against the world average of \$8.6, Pakistan’s one cubic metre of water contributes only 34 cents to its GDP.³⁵

(v) Salinity remains a major problem, with some aspects partially controlled but others – including the fate of the approximately 15–20 million tonnes of salt, which are accumulating in the Indus basin every year³⁶ and the ingress of saline water into overpumped freshwater aquifers – remain only a dimly understood threat. About 80 per cent of cultivated land in Pakistan is irrigated, of which about 33 per cent is affected by waterlogging and soil salinity, leading to significant declines (an estimated 25 per cent) in crop yields, especially downstream. These issues will remain problematic until more sustainable

irrigation practices are put in place.

(vi) Sedimentation is also adding to the existing problem. According to a *Dawn* report on Pakistan's irrigation problems, Tarbela dam has lost nearly 30 per cent of its storage capacity since the late 1970s, and now retains so little water that irrigation supplies are threatened.³⁷ The three water reservoirs in Pakistan, i.e., the Tarbela, Mangla and Chashma, when constructed, had a total live storage of 15.73 MAF. However, due to silting, their capacity had reduced to 11.47 MAF in 2010 and is estimated to further reduce to 10.70 MAF in 2020. The Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) predicts that by 2025, the storage capacity of Tarbela dam will decline by 42 per cent, of Mangla dam by 21 per cent and that of Chashma dam by 52 per cent. In all, storage capacity of around 8.37 MAF will be lost to increasing silt levels, resulting in a 37 per cent storage loss by 2025.³⁸

What this could lead to has been described by the *Dawn* report cited earlier. According to it,

The Tarbela Dam, which used to serve the agricultural needs up to mid-June, when the next filling cycle starts, now regularly hits dead level by early or mid-March. Silt eats up its storage by 100,000 acre feet – 10 days' irrigation supplies. By that calculation, it would start hitting the dead level by the end of January in next five years, leaving the country without second and third irrigation supplies for wheat and sowing needs of cotton – threatening both food security and nearly 60 per cent exports in one go.³⁹

(vii) There is record water theft in Pakistan, especially across Punjab. Findings of a recent investigation report compiled by the Punjab irrigation department indicated that farmers at the tail-end of irrigation system were being deprived of 60 to 65 per cent of their due share of water owing to water theft by big landlords. This was being done in connivance with the corrupt officials of the water department and representatives from farmers' organizations. While 28,390 out of total 58,000 water outlets were reported tampered, the total number of water theft cases in Punjab stood at 77,970; of these 25,877 cases involved installation of illegal pipes at the canals.⁴⁰

Another kind of water theft is when members of the ruling elite, top military and civil officials as well as law enforcement agencies, do not pay their water bills. It was reported that the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) was owed as much as Rs 40 million for the water tanker service such 'influentials' had availed of in 2012–13. Among these, the Pakistan Rangers topped the list with an outstanding of Rs 15 million in unpaid bills.⁴¹

The army, of course, has indulged in such massive water theft that even the Punjab government had to admit in the provincial assembly that a major part of land allotted to the army for exercises in the Cholistan area was being used for agricultural purposes by stealing water from the Abbasia canal. The army had sublet the land to army officers and contractors at the rate of Rs 40,000 to Rs 50,000 per acre. 'They are stealing water from Abbasia Canal by making cuts into it, and the Punjab government is helpless before these outlaws,' a parliamentary secretary for irrigation department, Khalid Mehmood Jajja, told the Punjab assembly. As a result of such theft of water, tail-enders were facing shortage of water. Army officers had used excavators to dig small canals, called minors, from the main Abbasia canal without permission from the irrigation department. Despite the matter being brought to the notice of higher ranks of the Pakistan Army the situation had remained unchanged for years, he added.⁴²

(viii) The fact that the government was aware of the water crisis was borne out by the warning of

Federal Minister for Water and Power Khwaja Asif in March 2015 that Pakistan will face acute water shortages in the coming years.⁴³ Despite this, two examples show how unconcerned the government really is about this critical issue. First, the government has stopped research funding of the Pakistan Council for Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) for water development projects for 2015–16, which could find some solutions to this problem. Second, the federal government, instead of increasing the allocation for water projects has actually reduced it by a whopping 27 per cent in the Public Sector Development Plan 2015–16. It also seems unconcerned about the timely completion of major water projects.⁴⁴ Pakistan has spent 0.25 per cent of GDP on water development. In comparison, it spends forty-seven times more on defence.⁴⁵ This then is the actual reality of the government's seriousness to tackle such a critical issue.

Or take the case of Punjab, the breadbasket of Pakistan. The financial allocation for the water sector in 2014–15 was around 5 per cent of total annual development plan of the provincial government. Of the Rs 250 million so allocated, only Rs 61 million was actually released with the rest of the funds lapsing/being diverted to other areas. Worse, 33 per cent of the total number of water-related schemes were dysfunctional in the province.⁴⁶

(ix) There is a lot of scientific uncertainty about the nature and effect of climate change especially on issues like glacial melt, rainfall and resultant water availability in Pakistan. And there is a raging debate on how fast the Himalayan glaciers are retreating and to what extent it will affect Pakistan. According to a 2010 Dutch study, 60 per cent of the Indus waters are made up of Himalayan melts (glacial and snow) and there is likely to be an 8.4 per cent decrease on upstream water flows in the Indus due to climate change by 2050.⁴⁷ The impact, however, is already visible in terms of frequent flooding and spells of very high temperature. Since the river flows are heavily dependent on Himalayan glacial melt, any impact of global warming on these mountains will have a double whammy impact – first flooding due to accelerated melting and thereafter decrease in river flows. According to the World Bank, it could aggravate the 'already serious problems' of flooding and poor drainage in the Indus basin over the next fifty years, followed by up to a 'terrifying' 30–40 per cent drop in river flows in 100 years' time.⁴⁸

The Global Climate Risk Index (CRI) 2016 released by a German think tank German Watch ranked Pakistan eighth on its list of most affected countries during 1995–2014. It also listed Pakistan fifth among the countries most affected by climate change in 2014.⁴⁹



The conflict between Pakistan's provinces regarding water, especially between Sindh and Punjab, dates back to the 1870s, when Punjab started constructing irrigation infrastructure on Indus river.⁵⁰ Several commissions were appointed during British rule and subsequently, and several reports have been issued on this complex issue. The latest has been the Water Apportionment Accord (WAA) signed by the chief ministers of all four provinces of Pakistan on 16 March 1991.⁵¹ This accord replaced previous agreements to distribute the Indus waters among the provinces and command areas. The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) was created as the regulatory authority for monitoring and distribution of the water resources of the Indus in accordance with the WAA.

The total amount of water available for distribution in the Indus river system as per the WAA of 1991 was 104 MAF. An extra 10 MAF was added as anticipated flows after building additional storages. The accord thus divides a total of 114 MAF but currently 114 MAF is not available, and this has led to the

dispute between the provinces. Punjab has argued that allocations should be made according to average percentages of historical use. On the other hand, Sindh argues that divisions must be made according to the same percentages as the accord allocations, with all provinces sharing an equal percentage of the shortfall.

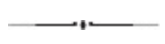
But that is not all. Punjab has periodically been constructing waterbodies despite objections from Sindh. For example, the Thal canal provides an additional 1.86 MAF of water from the Tarbela dam (Punjab has sole rights to the Mangla dam water, whereas Sindh is expected to share the water stored in the Tarbela with Punjab as well as the other provinces) to the Bhakker, Layyah, Jang, Khushab and Muzafargarh districts of Punjab where senior military officials of the Pakistan Army have been allotted land at throwaway prices when these lands were not irrigated.

Despite the water accord, disputes between Sindh and Punjab have continued. For example, in 2014, following severe shortage of water that badly affected the Kharif crop in Sindh and an acute scarcity of water for drinking purpose in far-flung areas of the province, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) members of the National Assembly blamed the Federal and Punjab governments for not implementing the 1991 water accord and accused Punjab of not merely stealing water but committing a robbery of Sindh's water share.⁵²

However, it is not only Sindh that has a problem. Recently, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) government claimed from the Centre Rs 120 billion as compensation for use of its share of water for two decades (1992–93 to 2012–13) by Punjab and Sindh because of lack of infrastructure. Not to be left out, Balochistan has also complained that it has been using only 3.05 MAF out of its water share of 3.87 MAF since 1992 due to infrastructure constraints and, therefore, it should be immediately paid a compensation of Rs 2 billion to complete rehabilitation and improvement of its existing canals and drainage system.⁵³

In fact, Balochistan's case is especially ominous. A recent report submitted to the Senate by the Ministry of Water and Power has confirmed that Balochistan is facing a groundwater shortage of potentially catastrophic proportions. It identifies excessive groundwater utilization in ten out of nineteen sub-basins while groundwater usage exceeds recharge by 22 per cent.⁵⁴

The inter-provincial discord over water is best represented by the controversy over the construction of the Kalabagh dam. While Punjab wants the dam, the other three provinces have serious reservations about its impact on them. In fact, the three provincial assemblies have passed resolutions opposing its construction. Several leaders from these provinces have even warned that moves to construct the dam will lead to the break-up of Pakistan. Little wonder that Musharraf had to give up the idea even though he tried, unsuccessfully, very hard to convince the smaller provinces about the necessity of the dam. Ultimately, it boils down to the lack of trust that the smaller provinces have in Punjab and based on past experience, fear that Punjab would trample on their rights.



One of the most devastating consequences of the inefficiency of water usage has been the destruction of the Indus Delta. 'With the reduction of the historical flow of water into the delta region to barely 0.50–0.70 MAF per year, the sixth biggest mangrove forest in the world has been reduced from 0.6 million to 0.25 million acres.'⁵⁵ In addition, the drying up of the Indus Delta has led to sea intrusion up to 225 kilometres. The two tehsils of district Thatta, i.e., Kharo Chan and Keti Bander, have almost been

eliminated from Pakistan in the past three decades and now only a few thousand fishermen reside along the coastal belt of Keti Bander and Kharo Chan.⁵⁶ Likewise, hundreds of villages in Badin district have been deserted and around 3.5 lakh people have been forced to migrate to some other areas in search of livelihood. As of 2012, apart from traditionally at-risk districts of Thatta and Badin, even districts like Sanghar, Umerkot, Mirpurkhas, Nawabshah and Naushehro Feroz, parts of Hyderabad in Sindh have also been classified as being at risk of increasing soil infertility as a result of salinity due to sea water intrusion. This is the accumulated 'environmental debt' (a term used by the World Bank) that Pakistan's future generations will have to pay.

Rapid urbanization in Pakistan is likely to create additional problems when it comes to the availability of water as the example of Karachi shows. The present supply of water to Karachi from Indus and Hub sources is approximately 650 million gallons per day (MGD) while the demand for the twenty million population is estimated to be 1,080 MGD (54 gallons per capita per day) making a shortfall of 430 MGD. By 2020, the population of Karachi is expected to be around twenty-three million and the demand of water would be 1,242 MGD taking the short fall to 600 MGD.⁵⁷ With about 40 per cent of water being lost through leakages and theft and at current population growth rates, Karachi will need massive schemes every year but there are no additional sources of water available.

While, massive shortages are one issue, the other is that of contamination. A study by the Institute of Environmental Studies of Karachi University showed high levels of fecal contamination and rare presence of chlorine in the piped water being supplied to Orangi town, in Karachi. Only nine samples out of forty-six were found fit for human consumption.⁵⁸ The other issue is untreated water being released into the sea. 'Rivers flowing through the city contain lead, chromium and cyanide, and more metals have been found in Karachi's harbour than in any other major world harbour. Karachi's own mayor has judged that 400 million gallons of sewage pour into the sea, untreated, every day.'⁵⁹ The impact of this manifests in statistics like at least 30,000 Karachi-ites (of whom 20,000 are children) perishing each year from drinking unsafe water. In fact, it has been estimated that more people in Karachi die each month from contaminated water than have been killed by India's army since 1947. According to a report of Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), the mortality rate of children under five due to contaminated water is 101 per 1,000 children.⁶⁰

On several occasions Pakistan has blamed India for its water woes, accusing it of 'water terrorism' and pointing out that 'under international law, India has a positive obligation not to inflict unreasonable harm on the lower riparian state and this obligation does restrict their sovereignty over its water'. While such statements could be dismissed as purely rhetorical and for domestic consumption, it is notable that former Pakistan president Asif Ali Zardari voiced similar concerns in a *Washington Post* op-ed in January 2009. 'The water crisis in Pakistan is directly linked to relations with India,' he declared. Failure to resolve the water imbroglio 'could fuel the fires of discontent that lead to extremism and terrorism'.⁶¹

While it is easy to blame India as the upper riparian state and the Indus Waters Treaty for its water woes, what is often forgotten is that under the treaty, of the total average annual volume of water in the Indus system of 170 MAF India got only 30 MAF from the eastern rivers of Ravi, Beas and Sutlej. Pakistan got 140 MAF or over 80 per cent of the water.⁶² In addition, India paid \$162 million for the construction of dams in Pakistan. Today almost 85 per cent of hydroelectricity and 95 per cent of water

storage in Pakistan is because of the storage built as a consequence of the Treaty and World Bank's commitment.⁶³ If anything, it is India that should have a grouse over the treaty. Despite this, frequent calls are made in Pakistan to either scrap or 'revisit' the treaty. For example, the Pakistan Senate passed a resolution on 7 March 2016 asking the government to 'revisit' the Indus Waters Treaty with India, something that *Dawn* called 'bizzare'.⁶⁴

Fortunately, the matter has been set at rest by none other than the chairman of the Indus River System Authority (IRSA), who, while briefing the Senate Standing Committee on Water and Power on 9 July 2015, said that India was using less than its allocated share under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) signed between the two countries. As reported in *The Express Tribune*, 'Turning away from what usually becomes a back-and-forth blame game, Pakistan's water regulator has come out defending India, saying the neighbours are not responsible for water shortage on this side of the border.' He dismissed all media reports about India building dams on Pakistani rivers as 'propaganda' clarifying: 'Reports in media about India getting more water is a propaganda. India is using water only to produce electricity.' He also said that the neighbours are getting less compared to their allocated share of water.⁶⁵

To conclude, per capita water availability in Pakistan has drastically reduced due to a combination of imprudent agricultural practices, a poorly maintained infrastructure, cultivation of water-intensive crops, widespread corruption in the water sector, over-abstraction, lack of adequate storage capacities, etc. The net result is that Pakistan is literally running itself dry. The IMF has warned that since water is a key input in agriculture, water shortages and variability can lead to food insecurity, raise production costs and constrain productivity growth.⁶⁶

On the supply side, two crucial facts do not seem to have sunk into policymakers. One, Pakistan does not have any other additional water source that can supplement the water that it now uses. Second, Pakistan is totally dependent on a single river system and does not have the flexibility that other countries have of numerous river basins.

On the demand side, what is often forgotten is that the water that Pakistan has today for its 194.5 million people is roughly the same it had in 1951 for its 32.5 million people, less the water being used by India after the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960. Thus, while the absolute quantity of water has remained the same, the per capita water availability has decreased due to a rapidly increasing population coupled with intensive, yet inefficient agriculture. Pakistan's population of 32.5 million in 1951 increased to 152.4 million in 2004–05, to 191.7 million in 2015 and 194.5 million in 2016. It could increase to 220 million by 2025. To feed this population at the current level of production, '... Pakistan could have a food grains shortfall of 16 million tonnes by 2020, increasing to 28 million tonnes by 2025. This would necessitate a 31 per cent increase in water availability to meet requirements of the population in 2025,'⁶⁷ an availability that is just not possible.

Despite the near-critical condition of water supply, very little seems to have been done about it. Why? The basic reason is that Pakistan's policymakers have yet to start viewing the water crisis in security terms. Pakistan's decision makers, especially the army, are not directly affected by water insecurities and have little incentive to change the system or make water management reform a priority. Due to availability of bottled water and home filtration systems, the decision makers have clean water and an abundance of it. Those who do not are not in a position to influence the policymakers.

While Pakistan's water crisis may not threaten the viability of Pakistan as a state at present, essential components like agriculture, the health of the population and, above all, political and economic stability, do lie very much in the balance. Deteriorating water security would be catastrophic for Pakistan where irrigated agriculture plays such a dominant part in the economy, on which 60 per cent of the population is dependent and any decrease in crop yields will affect both livelihoods and food security.

In fact, declining water availability has to be seen as one of the foremost security challenges that confront Pakistan, on par with terrorism and religious extremism. In reality, water scarcity has the potential to demolish all aspects of national security. According to a recent independent report commissioned by members of the G7, the mounting pressures on available water for Pakistan could translate into political instability and security risk. Pakistan's leaders would need to heed such warnings because with terrorism, sectarianism and economic vulnerabilities already plaguing the country, water stress has the potential of being the tipping point and accelerating Pakistan's trajectory towards the abyss.

11

Education: An Emergency

Pakistan ranks 113th out of 120 countries in UNESCO's Education for All Education Development Index. Pakistan's literacy rate (57 per cent) lags well behind the country's neighbours.' This proportion also includes those who could only write their names. Literacy rate in rural areas of Pakistan is even lower at 50 per cent. Pakistan has low net enrolment ratios at all three levels – primary, secondary and tertiary – with a much lower female enrolment rate as compared to males. When we move from primary to secondary and tertiary levels, enrolment ratios decrease sharply. Pakistan has the world's second highest out-of-school population of children. Public sector expenditure on education is barely 2 per cent of GDP. This is compounded by insufficient trained teachers and their absenteeism, and weak governance resulting in the poor quality of public schooling.¹

—Pakistan Vision 2025

The greatest threat to Pakistan may be its abysmal education system. Pakistani schools – and not just madrasas – are churning out fiery zealots, fuelled with a passion for jihad and martyrdom.²

—Pervez Hoodbhoy

IN 2011, sixty-four years after the creation of Pakistan, the Pakistan Education Task Force 2011 described the situation as an 'Education Emergency'³ primarily because the country's education system was the least effective in the world. The report estimated that one in ten of the world's not-in-school children in the primary age group lived in Pakistan (globally placing it second worst in out-of-school children rankings). It also indicated that nearly 30 per cent of the country's population lived in extreme educational poverty, i.e., less than two years of education in their lifetime. Furthermore, those admitted to schools suffered from massive dropout rates before they reached class five (63 per cent boys, 77 per cent girls in 2011).

In April 2010, Article 25A of the Constitution of Pakistan was amended by the eighteenth amendment to state, 'The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law.'⁴ Despite the passage of six years since the amendment, twenty-five million children within this age bracket, or almost half, are out of school. While Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) has simply failed to introduce the necessary legislation,⁵ other provincial governments have not yet initiated its implementation.

Pakistan's education sector is a combination of three parallel streams – public or government-run

schools, private schools and madrasas. (The schools run by the military are in a class of their own.) Each of these three streams has its own curriculum and examination processes. The National Internal Security Policy 2014–18 has summed up the impact of such stratification of education as: ‘Serious cleavages have appeared in the society as a result of these systems, and continued existence in parallel spheres compounds the possibilities of violence among divided youth.’⁶

A brief look at facts and figures regarding the education sector in Pakistan reveals the dismal situation. The school-age population (5–19 years old) in Pakistan was estimated to be around 52.91 million in 2015.⁷ It is expected to rise to 90 million in 2035. There are 146,185 formal primary, 42,147 middle level (lower secondary), 29,874 secondary schools, 2,318 colleges and 141 universities; 75 per cent are public sector schools; 10 per cent private sector schools and the remaining almost equally divided between non-formal basic education schools and ‘Deeni Madrasas’.⁸ Of the total number of students going to primary schools (classes one to five), 73 per cent go to public or government schools, 26 per cent to private schools, and less than 1 per cent to madrasas, according to the Karachi-based policy research institute Social Policy and Development Centre.

Pakistan ranks 113 out of 120 countries in the Education Development Index and has the world’s second position in out-of-school children. The gross primary school enrolment rate in 2010–11 was 92 per cent, while the net primary school enrolment rate in the same year was only 56 per cent, indicating a high dropout rate. In 2012–13, it was 91 per cent and 57 per cent and in 2013-14 it was 90 per cent and 57 per cent respectively.⁹

The situation for secondary school education, which is crucial for vocational and higher education, is of equal concern. The net secondary school enrolment is 20 per cent overall. The achievement of a 100 per cent enrolment rate in secondary education is thus a distant dream, let alone the quality of education. The ‘Education Statistics 2014-15’ report, which was launched by the federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training in February 2016 revealed a decline of 18 per cent in the total enrolment at the postgraduate level in universities compared to 2013-14.¹⁰

High dropout figures present one major challenge. The other is the ratio of out-of-school children. According to the NGO Alif Ailaan, out of 52.91 million school-going children, only 27.89 million attend an educational institute (government or private), leaving 25.02 million children or nearly 50 per cent, out of school. Of these, 5.1 million (other estimates, including of Ministry of Education’s ‘Education for All’ is about 6.7 million) are at the primary level (44 per cent boys, 56 per cent girls).¹¹ However, a series of research studies titled ‘Population of Pakistan: An Analysis of National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) 2010-11’ carried out by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) in collaboration with UNICEF has revealed that the number of out-of-school children of primary school age has reached 12.3 million or 58.88 per cent of all primary-school-age children. Only 41.1 per cent of primary-school-age children are attending school in Pakistan.¹²

The proportion of out-of-school children increases with the rise in the level of education. Thus the corresponding figures for middle school (age group of 10–12 years) is 6.6 million or 52.1 per cent; high school (age group of 13–14 years) 5.6 million or 66.7 per cent and higher secondary (age group 15–16 years) 7.5 million or 84.8 per cent.¹³ What is unfortunate is that according to official records this figure

has remained mostly unchanged since 2005.¹⁴

The Education Statistics Report, which is based on the data of the federal government's National Institute of Policy Studies (NIPS), says that it has been estimated that Punjab needs at least 15,000 more schools to accommodate its out-of-school children while Sindh needs around 20,000 more schools. The country needs at least 100,000 new primary teachers for 50,000 new schools.¹⁵

In absolute terms, half of the country's out-of-school children – about 52 per cent – live in Punjab, 25 per cent in Sindh, 10 per cent in KPK, 7 per cent in Balochistan, and six per cent in other parts. In terms of proportion, Balochistan and Sindh are home to the highest proportion of out-of-school children. As many as 66 per cent of children in Balochistan and 51 per cent in Sindh are out of school, followed by Punjab and KPK with 47 per cent and 34 per cent out-of-school children respectively.¹⁶ Speaking in Quetta recently, the adviser to the Balochistan chief minister Sardar Raza Barrech said that 1.6 million children were out of school in the province, two-thirds of whom were girls.¹⁷

Karachi has less than 9 per cent children enrolled in government primary educational institutions, according to the findings of a survey by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP). From a peak of 30 per cent in 1998, enrolment in government schools at the primary level declined to 26 per cent in 2002–03, to 24 per cent in 2005–06 and to 9 per cent in 2016. Nobody appears to have the slightest idea how or why. It is also doubtful if the remaining 91 per cent are in the private sector primary schools. Most likely, they are 'out of school'.¹⁸

There is also a wide disparity within provinces. In Punjab, for example, two districts, Lahore and Faisalabad, get 9 per cent of the total education budget while eight of the poorest performing districts get 8 per cent of the total budget. In all provinces, district budgets are generally lowest where the proportion of out-of-school children is the highest and thus where needs are greatest.¹⁹

Apart from serious provincial disparities, there are also distortions in regional histories that are taught. For example, the International Crisis Group (ICG) quotes from an interview it conducted in Karachi in April 2004 of one Mahtab Rashti saying 'there is no mention of the role of Sindh in the Pakistan movement, no examination of the role of revered Sindhi figures like G.M. Syed. Or, when they are mentioned, they are demonized. So the impact on the Sindhi student is: "What place do I have in this country?"'²⁰ Echoing these sentiments an educator in KPK said: 'Our local heroes like Badshah Khan [Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan] are either ignored or denigrated. Malakand's place in the Independence Movement is never taught.'²¹ In Balochistan, a senior official of the provincial education department said: 'Balochistan has the oldest and richest history of any province in Pakistan. Unfortunately our students are never told about it.'²²

According to the Economic Survey 2015-16, the national literacy rate was 58 per cent – 74 per cent in urban areas (81 per cent male and 66 per cent female) and 49 per cent in rural areas. However, there was significant disparity between the provinces. While literacy rate for Punjab was 61 per cent, it was 56 per cent for Sindh, 53 per cent for KPK and 43 per cent for Balochistan. The overall literacy rate in Pakistan has actually declined from 60 per cent in 2012–13 to 58 per cent in 2013–14.²³

Comparatively speaking, in 1950 the total literacy rate of India was 20 per cent and Pakistan's was 14 per cent. However, in 2012, the literacy rate of India had reached 75 per cent while in Pakistan it was only 58 per cent. In 1950, Iran had a lower literacy rate than Pakistan but now 90 per cent of its adults are

literate.²⁴

According to UNESCO's EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002, 5 per cent of the world's total adult illiterate population of 862 million in 2000 was in Pakistan. Its projected share of the total adult illiterate population of 799 million in 2015 was 7 per cent.²⁵ Currently, there are an estimated fifty-two million adult (over sixteen years) illiterates, of which 62 per cent are females. This is the key challenge for sustainable development in the country as an illiterate and unskilled workforce can hardly contribute towards effective social and economic progress.²⁶

Gender disparity is another major issue. Nationally, in 2015, 15.9 million boys, between the ages of five and sixteen, were enrolled, compared to just 11.9 million girls. As a result, 13.7 million girls and 11.4 million boys were out of school. Of the total number of girls aged 5–16, 53 per cent are out of school, compared to 42 per cent of boys in the same age group. Of the total number of out-of-school children, the majority are girls, comprising 55 per cent of the total.²⁷ Pakistan still seems to be following what Syed Ahmad Khan had said in 1873: 'No satisfactory education can be provided for Mohammedan females until a large number of Mohammedan males receive a sound education.'²⁸ What might have been relevant in the nineteenth century, is clearly not relevant for the twenty-first.

Compounding gender disparities, the 'Education Statistics 2014-15' report of the Pakistan Ministry of Education and Professional Training, launched in February 2016, also showed a significant decline in the number of female students. The 2013–14 report had stated that the ratio of male to female students in the universities was 50:50. However, the 2014–15 report put the number of male students at 54 per cent and that of female students at 46 per cent.²⁹

Pakistan has a long-standing target of spending 4 per cent of the GDP on education. This target was set in 1992 and every government has repeated the pledge since, including the current government, with the aim of achieving it by 2018 as stated by Prime Minister Sharif at the Oslo Education Summit.³⁰ However, increasing educational spending to 4 per cent of GDP would be next to impossible for the PML-N government to achieve since it would mean adding a massive Rs 485 billion to the current allocation of Rs 790 billion representing 2.83 per cent of GDP.³¹

Moreover, during the past decade, Pakistan's expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP has varied between 1.5 per cent and 2.1 per cent.³² Of this meagre allotment, only 7.5 per cent is spent on primary education.³³ According to a 2001 study, the government spent 3.3 per cent of GDP more on defence than other countries of its income level and that the overspending on defence was roughly equal to the sum of the underspending on health and education as a percentage of the GDP.³⁴ In 2016, given the increased amount spent on defence, the difference between the expenditure on military and education would be even greater.

Tragically, 20–25 per cent of even this remains unused. For example, between 2010–11 and 2013–14, 9–13 per cent of Punjab's education budget remained unspent. This money could support 1.1–1.5 million primary-school children. In Sindh nearly a quarter of the education budget remained unspent in 2013–14, equivalent to \$310 million. This amount could support 2.7 million children in primary schools. Spending in the smaller provinces – Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan – appears to be better, with the former spending more than its budgetary allocations in some years.³⁵

Moreover, on an average, at the national level, 89 per cent of education expenditures comprises

administrative expenses like salaries of teachers. Only 11 per cent comprises development expenditures, which is not sufficient to raise the quality of education. Across provinces too an overwhelming proportion of actual education expenditures are spent on administrative heads, mainly teachers' salaries, leaving a very small proportion for development expenditures. For 2012–13, except in KPK where development expenditures were 22 per cent of the actual expenditures, these ranged between 5 per cent (in Punjab), 6 per cent (in Sindh); and 9 per cent (in Balochistan).³⁶

Given the current spending patterns, Pakistan faces enormous financing challenges. To meet post-2015 education goals by 2030, the country will have to increase its current per student expenditure ten times at the pre-primary level, by six times at the primary level, and by four times at the lower secondary level. Pakistan is among a minority of lower-middle-income countries which will need to roughly double the spending on basic education to achieve goals by 2030, and will have to increase the proportion of GDP allocations to basic education by almost three times.³⁷

The National Plan of Action (2013) requires additional resources to the tune of Rs 189 billion in the next three years for effective implementation of its components. For this to happen the provinces will have to increase budgetary allocations for education and assistance from international development partners would have to be forthcoming.³⁸

As of 31 December 2015, Pakistan missed each one of its education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to achieve universal primary school access, improve retention in schools and increase adult literacy. Currently, the literacy rate in Pakistan is 58 per cent, while the target was to increase it to 88 per cent; the retention rate of enrolled children from classes one to five was to be 100 per cent but the rate is currently only 67 per cent. Similarly, the net primary enrolment is 58 per cent in Pakistan and the target of 100 per cent remains a distant dream.³⁹



The most controversial and crucial aspect of education is, of course, the curriculum or what is actually taught in schools since this provides the road map for future generations. In Pakistan's case this is all the more so since from the time of Ayub Khan only officially published textbooks are allowed to be used from class one to college level, in order to enable the governments to set the curriculum as per their own predilections. Under the eighteenth amendment, education has been devolved to the provinces, but very few changes, if any, have been made in the curriculum as yet.

A report titled 'The Subtle Subversion: The State of Curricula and Textbooks in Pakistan', edited by A.H. Nayyar and Ahmad Salim (2004) and published by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), an Islamabad-based think tank, has identified several issues in the curricula and textbooks that included factual inaccuracies and omissions which distorted the nature and significance of actual events; incitement to militancy and violence that included encouragement of jihad and shahadat, a glorification of war and the use of force; encouragement of prejudice, bigotry and discrimination towards fellow citizens, especially women and religious minorities, and other nations.

Its findings were: 'Madrassas are not the only institutions breeding hate, intolerance, a distorted worldview, etc. The educational material in the government-run schools does much more than madrassas. The textbooks tell lies, create hatred, inculcate militancy, and much more ... the curriculum encourages ideas that are incompatible with the ideals of Pakistan as a forward-looking, modern state committed to

equal rights and equitable treatment for its citizens.’

More specifically, it identified four themes that constituted the bulk of the curricula and textbooks of the three compulsory subjects of social studies /Pakistan studies, Urdu and English: that Pakistan was for Muslims alone; that Islamic teachings were to be included in all the subjects, hence to be forcibly taught to all the students, whatever their faith; that Ideology of Pakistan was to be internalized as faith and that hate be created against Hindus and India; and students were to be urged to take the path of jihad and shahadat.⁴⁰

The situation hasn't changed much in the last fifteen years. The National Commission for Justice and Peace (NCJP), and the Pakistan Institute of Labour and Research, conducted a seminar in Karachi on 30 March 2016 at which a report on the curricula in all four provinces was discussed. After analysing some seventy textbooks, including Urdu, Islamiyat and optional subjects, the NCJP found that there were still too many examples of content that could be considered divisive and of portions amounting to hate speech. For example, Hindus were portrayed as ‘enemies’, while Christians were portrayed as ‘agents’ of the West. The most telling fact, however, was that the report carried only 25 per cent of the NCJP's findings, for, as the project coordinator pointed out, ‘sharing the remaining portion may just anger some people so much that they may want to eliminate us’.⁴¹ Given such a state of affairs, there is very little hope that the curriculum will ever undergo a change.

Clearly, unless there is a basic change in curricula and textbooks, education would continue to result in bigotry, violence and hatred and there should be no surprise that with such a curriculum the society has such extremist tendencies. The real fight against terrorism and to reclaim moderate space in Pakistan will have to begin here.

A major reason for the curriculum being distorted in Pakistani schools is the repeated efforts to Islamize education. Though Ayub Khan had introduced ‘Islamiyat’ in the curriculum and prescribed a centralized mechanism for the curricula, it was under Zia-ul-Haq that Islam systematically permeated the educational system. He stated: ‘The highest priority would be given to the revision of the curricula with a view to reorganizing the entire content around Islamic thought and giving education an ideological orientation so that Islamic ideology permeates the thinking of the younger generation and helps them with the necessary conviction and ability to refashion society according to Islamic tenets.’⁴²

As a result, political Islam became part and parcel of the curriculum up to university level. There was an increasing emphasis on anti-Hindu and anti-India distortions as well as the glory of jihad under the influence of the Jamaat. A new subject, ‘Pakistan Studies’, was made compulsory for all students. In 1981 the University Grants Commission (UGC) issued a directive to prospective textbook authors ‘... to demonstrate that the basis of Pakistan is not to be founded in racial, linguistic, or geographical factors, but, rather, in the shared experience of a common religion; To get students to know and appreciate the Ideology of Pakistan and to popularize it with slogans; To guide students towards the ultimate goal of Pakistan—the creation of a completely Islamicized State’.⁴³ India and Hindus were converted into caricatures with two outstanding features – cowardice and deviousness.

As a result, during Zia's time, ‘Islam was used to support the state's own militaristic policies in a way that it appeared to the readers of these textbooks that Pakistan, the Pakistan Movement, Pakistan's wars with India and the Kashmir issue were all connected not only with Pakistani nationalism but with Islam itself.’⁴⁴

While the curriculum is distorted enough, a study found that upwards of 80 per cent of the public school teachers viewed non-Muslims as ‘enemies of Islam’ in some form or other.⁴⁵ And such values have been transmitted repeatedly to successive generations of students over the last three decades.

While Pakistan does face an education emergency, especially of out-of-school children and curriculum, an equally huge challenge is the quality of education. A low-quality education negates any gains that the overall education system may show. The Economic Survey of Pakistan, 2014–15, highlights the fact that there has been a marked deterioration since the previous year in all three competencies, i.e., language Urdu/Sindhi/Pashto, English and arithmetic. For example, quoting the Annual Survey of Education (ASER) 2014, it notes that while 50 per cent of class five students could read a class two Urdu/Sindhi/Pashto story in 2013, only 46 per cent could do so in 2014. For English in 2014, 42 per cent of class five students could read class two level English sentences as compared to 43 per cent in 2013. Similarly, 40 per cent of class five students were able to do two-digit division sums in 2014 compared to 43 per cent in 2013.⁴⁶

Provincial comparisons showed that Balochistan and Sindh were the least satisfactory regions amongst all when compared for the assessment results for class five children. Only 24 per cent of class five children in Balochistan were able to accomplish class three level tasks (two-digit division) in arithmetic and 33 per cent of class two level tasks for language (Urdu, reading story). While in Sindh, only 24 per cent of class five children were able to read sentences in English.⁴⁷

What has been the impact of such a pattern of education? Cohen sums it up well:

A significant product of Pakistan’s educational system is generation after generation of ill-trained and barely literate young men who head to the towns and cities where they find an expanding and tempting popular culture but no jobs; just as significant are the millions of young girls who do not receive any serious education, and who consequently tend to have many more children and are excluded from the formal workforce.⁴⁸

In real terms, the impact was graphically elaborated by nuclear scientist Dr Samar Mubarakmand while delivering the keynote address at the ninth convocation of the Government College University (GCU) in December 2010, when he stated that there was a need of thousands of mathematicians, chemical analysts, engineers and other experts. However, he regretted that Pakistan had a very small number of educational institutions of higher education that were producing quality manpower.’⁴⁹

His lament was borne out by the Times Higher Education world university rankings for 2016 that did not have any Pakistani university in a list of 500 educational institutions across the world. The only two universities to even feature on the Times Higher Education website were Quaid-i-Azam University at a ranking of 501–600 and the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) ranked an abysmal 601-800.⁵⁰ In fact, no Pakistani university even figured in the top 100 Asian universities. India and China were placed at a much better position, with nine Indian and twenty Chinese universities making the cut.⁵¹

Likewise, a British university ranking agency, Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), has placed Pakistan at the

very bottom of a fifty-country list comparing their higher education systems. While the US and the UK took the two top positions, China and India made it to the eighth and twenty-fourth positions, respectively.⁵²

The Education for All Global Monitoring Report (October 2012) assessed the long-term effect of neglecting children's education as follows:

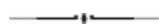
- There is a huge skills deficit among young Pakistanis now facing the world of work;
- Over one in three young people in Pakistan have not completed primary school and, as a result, do not have the basic skills they need for work;
- Equivalent to a total of twelve million 15–24-year-olds lack basic skills, which is the second highest number in developing countries;
- While over 70 per cent of the richest young men and women have completed lower secondary school, only 16 per cent of the poorest young men and fewer than 5 per cent of the poorest young women have done so;
- Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are least likely to have skills for decent jobs.⁵³

According to the United Nations Global Education Monitoring Report 2016, the cumulative impact of a lack of sustained focus on education has resulted in Pakistan being more than fifty to sixty years behind in its primary and secondary education targets.⁵⁴

Given the state of education in Pakistan, especially scientific education, it is hardly surprisingly that Pakistan is among the least innovative countries in the world. According to the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2016, co-published by Cornell University, INSEAD and the World Intellectual Property Organisation, Pakistan ranked 119 of 128 countries surveyed. The current allocation on research was only 0.29 per cent of GDP, far below the world average as most developed countries spend between 2 and 4 per cent of their GDP on research.⁵⁵

The net impact, therefore, is that with such huge numbers being illiterate and semi-literate, the type of jobs they can do are at best low-end. This would adversely impact the economic development of the country in the twenty-first century. However, retarding economic development is only one aspect. With such low skills set, the one attractive avenue open is to join the jihadi ranks. Cumulatively, this will act as a deadweight on Pakistan emerging as a moderate and democratic state.

Pervez Hoodbhoy sums up the end result of such an education system aptly: 'Most university students have little curiosity about their subject, no feeling of excitement, and no desire to explore. Most have never read a serious book in their entire life, other than a textbook or a religious book. Campus discussions of philosophical, social, or intellectual issues are rare.'⁵⁶



The current 'educational emergency' in Pakistan is the result of decades of neglect of the education sector and it will take decades to be overcome, provided a determined start is made immediately. For Pakistan's leaders to continue to ignore the challenges in education is suicidal since more than half the population is below nineteen years of age.

In fact, as early as 2001, an analysis had noted that, 'twenty-four percentage points of Pakistan's

population [was] illiterate than is normal for a country of its income level'.⁵⁷ In other words, the low level of literacy in Pakistan was indicative of the indifference of the rulers to implement policies that would educate the people. It also indicated the low-level skills required for the country to stay afloat where high and broad-based achievement was not a priority. By implication, products of such an education system also could not challenge the existing feudal set-up in Pakistan. The priorities can be gauged from the fact that 'even in the cultural capital [Lahore], where a large percentage of the population is educated, we have five polo grounds, and five golf courses, but close to no public libraries.'⁵⁸

But the problem is far deeper. In all societies, the primary purpose of education is to educate the young mind, to develop a spirit of inquiry and understanding of the world around and to prepare them for taking up responsibilities in society. In Pakistan, however, education seems to have been hijacked to achieve ideological and political goals in line with the thinking of the elites, especially the military. Such thinking has narrowed down the purpose of education into trying to create a Pakistani identity that has at its core religion, militarism and a hatred of India. These facets have permeated the entire education system and curriculum, and the resultant products are not imbued with a spirit of inquiry but with hatred. Since the 1970s, several generations have been through the system cumulatively creating millions of individuals with narrow thinking.

The education crisis, like the water crisis, has taken on proportions that would progressively make it extremely difficult for any government to tackle. With the population continuing to grow at an alarming 1.9 per cent and a huge youth bulge, millions of children are entering the education market year after year. The colossal challenge for Pakistan is clearly educating all these millions to reap the demographic dividend before the window of opportunity closes. However, finding schools for them will be a Herculean task given the lack of adequate investment in education, while even the existing schools will not equip the majority to take up responsible jobs in the society.

Changes in Pakistan's education system will come about only when the army changes its mindset and looks upon the education emergency in Pakistan as a security problem. Since the Pakistan Army understands only threat scenarios, both the issues of water and education would have to be couched in a security language for the army to take note and do something about it.

Those who talk about 'Jinnah's Pakistan' ad nauseam would do well to heed his prophetic words: 'The importance of education and the right type of education cannot be over-emphasized. ... There is no doubt that the future of our state will depend upon the type of education and the way in which we bring up our children as the future servants of Pakistan.'⁵⁹

Poor education in Pakistan today has similarities with the Muslims failing to take to Western education in post-1857 era. It required Lord Mayo and the Hunter Report on the one hand and the efforts of Sir Syed Ahmad on the other to pull the Muslims out of their gloom. What Pakistan needs today is another Mayo/Hunter and another Syed Ahmad. The misfortune of Pakistan is that no one seems to be on the horizon who can pull Pakistan back from its brisk march towards the abyss.

12

Economy: Structural Weaknesses

The question we may now ask is whether or not Pakistan, as it completes the first fifty years of its existence, has the political resources, social maturity, institutional capability, and availability of economic expertise to institute major economic changes? Will it be able to fashion a set of policies that would help it deal with the present economic crisis and to chart a course for the future that would free the economy from the sort of turbulence it has experienced in its fiftieth year? It is clear that without stabilizing the economy, Pakistan's dream of moving into the ranks of middle-income countries will remain just that – a dream.¹

—Shahid Javed Burki

BY ALMOST all parameters listed by Burki, the answer would have to be in the negative. A similar set of questions could well be posed in 2017, on Pakistan's seventieth anniversary, and in all likelihood, the answer will be the same. Pakistan's economic growth since the 1950s has been marked by a persistence of periodic crises and bailouts, and by high volatility in growth rates due to a 'stop-go' growth model. Not surprisingly, economic crises seem to have become the norm for Pakistan.

Pakistan Vision 2025, a document prepared by the Planning Commission of the Government of Pakistan in May 2014 explains the situation succinctly:

Pakistan is currently facing serious challenges on various fronts. These include the combination of low growth and high inflation, which is one of the major factors leading to the perpetuation of poverty and unemployment. Energy shortages have posed great problems to the citizens as well as businesses and agriculture. Social indicators reflect serious deficiencies in education, health and population, gender equity and social services. The law and order situation in the country poses a critical threat to security as well as the economy. The decade-long struggle against terrorism and extremism continues to impose immense social, economic, and human costs.²

Given this, it is not surprising that the growth of the economy from US \$50 billion to US \$275 billion in the last fifteen years, and increase in the per capita income from \$490 to \$1,370, has not been translated into the well-being of the population. Instead it has widened disparities between the rich and the poor.³

The basic reason for the inconsistent performance of the economy is the structural weaknesses that

have not been rectified over the decades and will not be rectified by ad hoc, Band-Aid type of solutions. The key among these are poor governance; the high dependence upon external factors like foreign assistance, exports and workers' remittances instead of internal drivers of growth; high burden of debt repayment; inadequate measures to raise the rate of savings and investment; low investment as a percentage of GDP in the social sectors such as health and education; a very high defence burden; a skewed land policy; revenue shortages and so on. The result of these structural flaws have been low rates of growth, poor infrastructure, unscientific agricultural practices, lack of industrialization, a widening trade gap, high incidence of poverty, low social development indicators, a low standard of living, a low literacy rate and an unskilled workforce.

One major reason for the persisting structural weaknesses, apart from the propensity of governments not to tackle economic problems head-on, is the change in the nature of Pakistan. During its first three decades, Pakistan was a 'development state', wherein the state agenda pursued by all governments – civilian and military – was economic development. This period was marked by large-scale asset creation (dams, irrigation systems, highways, power plants, industrial complexes, factories, etc.). The 'security state' replaced the 'development state' in 1977 as a result of which economic development ceased to be the primary agenda of the state. The period was marked by a failure to invest in additional capital formation as well as lack of replacement investment in economic assets created earlier. Brief attempts to revive the 'development state' in 1990s proved futile.⁴

This is proved statistically by the fact that during the 1970s, the real rate of growth of development expenditure was 21 per cent per annum and the rate of growth of defence expenditure was 2 per cent. During the 1980s, the rate of growth of development expenditure crashed sevenfold to 3 per cent and the rate of growth of defence expenditure escalated almost fivefold to 9 per cent. As a percentage of GDP, development expenditure has been falling from 9 per cent in the 1970s to 7.3 per cent in the 1980s to 4.7 per cent in the 1990s and to 3.5 per cent in the first decade of the millennium.⁵ Currently it is 3.2 per cent.

The aberrations of the 'security state' syndrome can be evidenced from just one example of the FY 2007–08. Against the total tax revenues of Rs 1,000 billion, current (non-development) expenditures on just three heads – debt servicing, defence and civil administration – was Rs 1,160 billion, i.e, an outlay of Rs 160 billion more than what the government had collected in direct and indirect taxes. Clearly, no tax rupees were available for development of infrastructure or social services. Kaiser Bengali sums it up brilliantly: 'Cutting development expenditure rather than current (non-development) expenditure to cut budget deficits is akin to an industrialist dealing with his cash flow problems by laying off the (wealth-producing) factory labour and retaining the (wealth-consuming) array of domestic servants in the household (khansamas, ayahs, malis, chowkidars, drivers, etc.).'⁶

Coming to the present, the PML-N government has had to consistently cut the development budget for three consecutive years in order to meet the budget deficit target assigned by the IMF at 4.3 per cent of GDP. Thus, in 2015–16, of the Rs 700 billion allocated to the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP), an amount of Rs 628.8 billion was disbursed recording a cut of Rs 71.2 billion, or 10.2 per cent less than the allocation. Allocations of two crucial road projects of the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) – the Thakot–Havelian and Multan–Sukkar – had their funds slashed massively.⁷

Average annual GDP growth rates were 6.8 per cent in the 1960s, 4.8 per cent in the 1970s, 6.5 per cent in the 1980s, 4.6 per cent in the 1990s and 4.9 per cent in the first decade the current century – although the average growth rate during the last five years slowed to just 3.2 per cent.⁸ According to the Economic Survey of Pakistan 2014–15 and 2015–16, the economy had a growth rate of 4.2 per cent in 2014–15 and 4.7 per cent in 2015–16, missing the ambitious target of 5.1 per cent and 5.5 per cent respectively it had set for itself. Despite this, the PML-N government has set an ambitious target of 7 per cent GDP growth by the end of its tenure in 2018. Interestingly, the government’s figure of 4.7 per cent GDP growth has been contested, for example, by noted economist Dr Hafiz Pasha who held that the real GDP growth was nearer to 3.1 per cent.⁹

With the present rate of growth, the Pakistan economy generates employment for less than a million persons per year. The challenge for Pakistan is to accelerate growth to 7–8 per cent if it is to generate employment for the more than three million people who are entering the labour market annually. The crucial question to ask is: What will it take to realize a 7–8 per cent GDP growth rate to absorb Pakistan’s growing population? This would depend to a large extent on improvements in the investment environment that is an essential driver of growth and sustained macroeconomic stability.

To generate a growth rate of 7–8 per cent on a sustained basis, the country would have to raise the level of investment from the current rate of 15.21 per cent (against target of 17.7 per cent) of GDP (public and private sector)¹⁰ to about 25 per cent of GDP with special attention on human and social development. This level of investment is impossible to achieve without a simultaneous increase in the rate of national savings. According to the Economic Survey 2015–16 national savings were 14.6 per cent of GDP in 2015–16 compared to 14.5 per cent in 2014–15 and 13.7 per cent in 2013–14. Domestic savings were at 8.3 per cent in 2015–16 as compared with 8.4 per cent of GDP in 2014–15 and 8 per cent of GDP in 2013–14. The domestic rate of saving would have to be increased to about 20 per cent of GDP on a sustained basis. This will be possible only with policies that encourage savings and discourage consumption.

Historically, Pakistan has been largely dependent on foreign bailouts to keep the economy afloat. In fact, there is a direct correlation between higher GDP growth and large foreign capital inflows and conversely, slowing down of growth when there was a reduction in foreign assistance. Thus, the martial law periods of Generals Ayub Khan, Zia-ul-Haq and Musharraf in 1958–69, 1978–88 and 2001–08 respectively, when Pakistan was in alliance with the US, saw growth rates accelerating due to large amounts of foreign aid. It reached 6 per cent under Ayub Khan, 6.6 per cent under Zia and 6.3 per cent under Musharraf. Conversely, when foreign inflows slowed, like under Z.A. Bhutto (1972–77), the democratic period (1988–98) and post Musharraf (2007 onwards) GDP growth fell to 4.9 per cent, 4 per cent and 2.6 per cent respectively.¹¹

Foreign assistance apart, remittances and exports keep the Pakistan economy afloat. While remittances are discussed in the chapter on population, suffice it to say here that heavy dependence on remittances makes Pakistan vulnerable to the economic and geopolitical developments in countries from where these inflows occur. Exports show a declining trend from a peak of \$25.3 billion in 2011 to \$22 billion in 2015. This is partly on account of decrease in global trade in 2015 but in Pakistan’s case, the looming external debt position of Pakistan makes the impact of the decline ever more daunting. Exports from

Pakistan are not only heavily concentrated in primary products and low value-added goods but are also limited to products that contribute negligibly to the global trade. Thus, the top ten export products cumulatively account for approximately one-third of the exports from Pakistan but only 0.5 per cent of the global trade flow.¹²

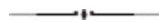
Thus, it is obvious that its alliance with the US, and leveraging its geographical position, helped Pakistan improve its growth rates. As Stephen Cohen puts it,

Pakistan now barely survives on its own income and most social services are paid for by foreign countries. Were aid to cease, as it has in the past, the government would again be faced with financial failure. That happened in 2001, and it was only US intervention after 9/11 that came to the rescue of the fiscally bankrupt state. Both Pakistan's leaders and foreign donors know that given its current tax structure and weak export capability, Pakistan will remain dependent on foreign assistance indefinitely.¹³

Pakistan's tax-to-GDP ratio for the last five years has averaged around 9.8 per cent, one of the lowest in the region. Year-to-year fluctuations have varied from 9 to 11 per cent in the last ten years; it was 10.5 per cent in 2013–14 and slumped to 8.4 per cent (against a target of 12.5 per cent) in 2015–16. Thus, three years into the PML-N government's tenure, tax-to-GDP ratio has actually declined instead of improving. There are several reasons for this. For one, less than 1 per cent of the population of 194.5 million pays income tax. Consequently, about 65 per cent of the total tax revenue is derived from indirect taxes that are regressive in their impact and have a direct bearing on the rate of inflation. Second, 65 per cent of the members of parliament and more than half of the federal cabinet do not pay income tax.¹⁴ Third, none of Pakistan's top 100 frequent international flyers pay any tax and only five among them file a tax return, with none of them claiming to fall within the bracket of taxable income.¹⁵

Fourth, there is lack of accountability in the corporate sector with only 23,000 out of 65,000 registered companies filing tax returns. Out of these, 11,000 declared zero profit.¹⁶ Fifth, actual tax collection is believed to be almost half of what is due. If media accounts are to be believed, the Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR) spends more money on collection of taxes than it actually collects in over two-thirds of its total field formations.¹⁷ Finally, lack of documentation has ensured that a large chunk of the economy remains beyond the pale of the government, retarding the efforts to provide services.

An interesting World Values Survey held that tax-to-GDP ratio in those countries was healthy where people trusted the government, bureaucracy and judiciary. Anything below 50 per cent showed poor levels of confidence. In Pakistan's case only 35.8 per cent expressed confidence in the government, 37.3 per cent in the bureaucracy and 45.8 per cent in the judiciary, indicating poor levels of confidence. According to the Survey, people could be convinced to pay taxes provided better governance restored confidence level in institutions.¹⁸



Over the decades, the sectoral breakup of the GDP has been changing from the initial mainstay of agriculture (declined from 46 per cent in the 1950s to 19.8 per cent of GDP in 2015–16 as compared to 21.4 per cent in 2014–15) to the current services sector (increased from 38 per cent in 1960 to 59.16 of

GDP in 2015–16 as compared to 58.8 per cent in 2014–15). The share of manufacturing has remained relatively constant. Despite employing nearly 43 per cent of the country's labour force with strong backward and forward linkages, in 2015–16 agriculture recorded a negative growth of 0.19 per cent compared with growth of 2.53 per cent in 2014–15 and a targeted growth of 3.9 per cent. This was mainly due to the drastic decline of cotton production by 27.8 per cent. Over the long term, the share of agriculture in the GDP has been dropping largely due to inefficient practices, low productivity, skewed landowning patterns and declining water availability. With a growing population and declining water availability, food security can become a major issue in Pakistan in the days to come.

Declining agriculture has a direct and immediate impact on the population. According to a report, sixty-one million Pakistanis are already food-insecure.¹⁹ The National Economic Council in its annual report for the financial year 2013–14, recently presented before the national assembly by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar has admitted that 'one in every three Pakistanis still does not have regular and assured access to sufficient nutritious food'.²⁰

The industrial sector contributed 21.02 per cent to GDP in 2015–16 as compared with 20.30 per cent in 2014–15, of which 64.71 per cent share was of manufacturing compared with 65.4 per cent in 2014–15. Manufacturing output has been affected due to acute energy shortages, lack of skilled workers and a narrow production base focused on textiles. It is the services sector that has really provided the impetus to growth, especially in transport, storage and communication, wholesale and retail trade and social services. Not surprisingly, it has replaced agriculture as the dominant sector of the economy.

Energy is an area of critical shortages with swathes of the country suffering up to twelve hours of power cuts. The energy deficit has reduced production – including in the vital textile sector – curtailed economic growth and discouraged foreign investment. According to an estimate, due to power shortages a large number of factories (including more than 500 in the industrial city of Faisalabad alone) have been forced to close. Some Western companies, citing electricity deficits, have suspended operations in Pakistan. In January 2015, the Moody's warned that energy shortages will damage Pakistan's creditworthiness. It has been estimated that power shortages have cost the country up to 4 per cent of gross domestic product in recent years.²¹

In 1947, Pakistan's total power generation capacity was 60 MW. In 2015 installed electricity capacity was about 23,000 MW – though actual production was just half of this at 12,000 MW. Peak demand estimated at 20,800 MW currently is expected to rise to nearly 32,000 MW by 2019. In effect, according to Kugelman, in just a few years, the demand could outstrip installed capacity by nearly 10,000 MW, though, the gap is even larger if the actual production is factored in. Thus, Pakistan may well have to instal as much electrical capacity in the current decade as it did over the last sixty years.'²²

However, power generation is only half the problem. According to the State Bank of Pakistan's Annual Report 2014, the more binding bottleneck in the energy sector was not generation (most generation units were working well below capacity), but distribution. Apart from theft and leakages estimated at about 20 per cent, 'the prevailing transmission and distribution (T&D) system can reliably handle loads of only 11,500–12,500 MW during a given period. Any load beyond this increases the likelihood of a breakdown in the distribution network, which is becoming more common.' In effect, even if generating units were geared up to increase capacity utilization or additional generation capacity was created, the country

simply did not have the capacity to distribute this power to where it was needed (i.e., from the main grid to actual users). ‘Thus, the existing T&D network was a more binding constraint than generation capacity. Without upgrading the existing distribution network, any addition to generation capacity (and even the settlement of the circular debt) could not ease load management on a sustainable basis. Unfortunately, despite this hard constraint, policy has mostly focused on generation.’²³

Despite the massive energy crisis in Pakistan, the reality is that power project loans worth \$16 billion that had been approved by international donors for energy projects in the country have been unutilized. The \$16 billion amount represents 85 per cent of the \$18.8 billion loans approved for Pakistan’s energy sector by multilateral donors, and includes projects for power generation as well as improving the transmission and distribution grids. Islamabad’s failure to utilize these loans has cost the taxpayers \$21 million a year in commitment fees for the loans, including \$15 million in fees to China alone. All told, at least thirty-four projects have yet to get off the ground despite having foreign funding available.²⁴

Another example of poor governance is the Gadani Energy Park in Balochistan. In August 2013, the Gadani Energy Park – ten coal-based power plants with a total capacity of 6,600 MW – was announced with much fanfare. The Chinese were supposed to provide financial as well as technical assistance. However, on 4 February 2015 the Ministry of Water and Power, in a testimony before the national assembly’s Standing Committee on Planning and Development, disclosed that the Gadani Energy Park had been ‘put on the back burner’. By March, it had become clear that the entire project had been shelved because the government failed to provide guarantees for a profit to Chinese investors and also because the Chinese investors wanted to take up the project on their own terms without following the prescribed public procurement rules. The way the project has been handled has serious implications for the much-touted China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). As Farrukh Saleem cautions, ‘In the absence of wholesale power sector reforms, the proposed Chinese investment of \$34 billion (in the energy sector as part of the CPEC announced with much fanfare in April 2015) shall remain a political statement.’²⁵

An interesting sidelight of the energy situation is the fact that till around 1990, industrial power consumption exceeded domestic power consumption; thenceforth, the situation has reversed. For the last two-and-a-half decades, domestic power consumption has been rising faster than industrial power consumption. This reflects the basic feature of the economy – consumption rather than production.²⁶



The deficit as a percentage of GDP doubled from an average of 3.6 per cent during 1992–2002 to 7.6 per cent during 2003–10. This has occurred on account of the growing import intensity of the economy as can be seen from the fact that imports were, on average, 27 per cent higher than exports during 1992–2002 and 65 per cent higher during 2003–10.²⁷ Trade apart, there is also an ever-widening gap between resources and spending at the federal level. According to various reports of the Ministry of Finance and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), tax collection for fiscal year 2005–06 was Rs 704 billion, whereas the total current expenditure stood at Rs 826 billion. The difference between the two was Rs 122 billion (roughly 17 per cent). In fiscal year 2014–15 tax collection was Rs 2.3 trillion against total current expenditure of Rs 4.5 trillion, almost double. Thus, the gap between federal spending and revenues rose between fiscal 2005 and fiscal 2014 from Rs 122 billion to Rs 2.2 trillion.²⁸

One reason for such financial chaos is the lack of governance demonstrated by frequent ‘loan waivers’.

For example, an estimated Rs 20 billion in loans were waived off by more than thirty banks between 2012 and 2014 to facilitate about 2,000 privileged customers among the previous and incumbent governments, causing a massive loss to the public exchequer. This came on top of Rs 403 billion that were written off by various governments between 1997 and 2009.²⁹ The PML-N government of Nawaz Shairf has, however, broken all records in loan waivers. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar in a written reply to the Senate revealed that the present PML-N government had written off over Rs 280 billion in bank loans over a three-year period. Of this, Rs 270 billion was waived off in 2015, Rs 4.4 billion in 2014 and Rs 6 billion in 2013.³⁰ With such irresponsibility, it is little wonder that the economy is in such dire straits.

To hide the dire situation, every government has resorted to ‘data manipulation’. However, according to a former finance minister, ‘fiscal data manipulation has been taken to a new “art” form by the current PML-N government which has engaged in “accounting engineering” much more aggressively in preparing and presenting the budgetary statistics to make them look better on paper’. For example, the budget deficit for FY13 – the last year of the PPP-led government – was inflated to 8.2 per cent of GDP by including the payments of circular debt. However, in FY14, the same circular debt was kept out of the budget, and together with some other manipulations, the budget deficit was projected to have declined to 5.5 per cent of GDP. In FY15 the deficit is much worse but has been again been manipulated to meet IMF benchmarks.³¹

This has been confirmed by the State Bank of Pakistan, which revealed in its annual report issued in December 2014 that the government had artificially managed to bring down the fiscal deficit to 5.5 per cent as it did not pay the amount due in FY14.³² The bank noted that the government did not settle the circular debt of about Rs 235 billion in FY14. It treated a one-off grant of Rs 157 billion as a statistical discrepancy which reduced the overall deficit by the same amount. ‘In effect, just these two factors account for a 1.5 percentage point reduction in the fiscal deficit. If we add to this the recovery of Rs 56 billion from public sector enterprises (as mark-up on loans extended earlier) following the settlement of circular debt in July 2013, and the one-off utilization of Rs 67.7 billion from the Universal Service Fund (USF), the fiscal gap increases to 7.5 pc [sic] of GDP.’³³

Given the growing fiscal deficit, it is hardly surprising that Pakistan is sinking deeper into debt. The galloping burden of debt servicing has created fiscal imbalances. Much of the repayments have been based upon increased borrowing, suggesting that a substantial proportion of new loans are not deployed for national development but used instead to retire old debt. At Rs 13 trillion (\$124 billion), 77 per cent of the budget has been allocated for loan repayments in 2015–16.³⁴

The Fiscal Responsibility and Debt Limitation (FRDL) Act of 2005 binds the government to keep public debt below 60 per cent of the total size of national economy and that the revenues should be sufficient to finance at least current expenditures. Both these conditions have been repeatedly violated. The public-debt-to-GDP ratio by June 2015 was recorded at 63.5 per cent, 3.5 per cent higher than the FRDL limit. Neither could revenues be increased nor were receipts sufficient to finance even the current expenditures. The revenue deficit stood at Rs 471 billion or 1.7 per cent of GDP in 2014–15. The total public debt was recorded at Rs 18.2 trillion at the end of September 2015, registering an increase of Rs 1.8 trillion or 11 per cent over September 2014.³⁵ According to the State Bank of Pakistan, the federal government borrowed an unprecedented Rs 2.1 trillion in the last fiscal year that comes to about Rs 5.7 billion per day on average. This is the highest-ever amount added to the debt pile of the country in a

single year by any government. Resultantly, the country's debt increased from Rs 16.96 trillion in 2014–15 to Rs 19.1 trillion by the end of the 2015–16 fiscal year showing a growth of 12.2 per cent. The amount is exclusive of liabilities and debts obtained by public sector enterprises on their books.³⁶

In its latest report, the IMF has projected that by the end of fiscal year 2015–16, Pakistan's total external debt will surge to \$70.2 billion – for the first time in history. Earlier, it had projected external debt at about \$68 billion. It has also stated that the debt-to-GDP ratio will remain at 63.2 per cent against its earlier projection of almost 1 per cent decline in the ratio.³⁷

A recent report by Research and Advocacy for the Advancement of Allied Reforms (Raftaar), on Pakistan's taxation and public expenditure has posed the question: 'Is Pakistan on the brink of a financial crisis like Greece?' It has called the public debt situation an 'existential crisis' for the Pakistani state. It highlights the fact that the government has been using commercial loans, donor loans and aid to cover the budget deficit instead of creating the correct tax collection mechanisms.

It further notes that Pakistan's public debt that stood at Rs 6.3 trillion in 2008 had reached Rs 17 trillion in 2015 – a threefold increase in the last eight years. One-third of this debt is foreign while the rest is raised domestically. Five years ago, this ratio was almost equal. Apart from squeezing domestic bank lending to private enterprises, foreign debt is at least five times cheaper than domestic debt but is hard for Pakistan to access. Each year, Pakistan pays Rs 1.3 trillion to creditors, with 92 per cent of it going to domestic creditors and 8 per cent going to international lenders. This means that in case of a debt repayment crisis, the Pakistani state is likely to take down the domestic banking industry with it. The situation is so dire that interest payments take up around 44 per cent of the tax revenue.³⁸

The size of investment by banks in government securities is more than double the size of SBP's reserve/liquidity requirements. Banks have invested 57 per cent in government securities against the 24 per cent requirement (Cash Reserve Requirement [CRR] 5 per cent and Statutory Liquid Requirement [SLR] 19 per cent). This is an extremely dangerous proposition given the precarious nature of the economy's fundamentals.³⁹

Ominously, both the PPP and PML-N governments have taken the softer and short-term option of borrowing instead of the hard and long-term option of structural reforms. The net result has been that these governments have borrowed – in a period of five years ending in FY14 – more than the total borrowing by all governments since Pakistan's creation.⁴⁰



The net impact of Pakistan's economic development over the decades has been the rise in the incidence of poverty from 18 per cent in 1988–89 to 33 per cent at present.⁴¹ The World Bank's poverty estimates yield a poverty reduction of 0.8 per cent over the period 1998–99 to 2004–05.⁴²

One can conclude, therefore, that there has been no significant poverty reduction during the period 1998–99 to 2004–05. For the Musharraf period as a whole (1998–99 to 2007–08), the incidence of poverty increased from 30 per cent to 33.8 per cent, with an additional sixteen million people entering the category of poor over the period. Data on incidence of poverty from 1998–99 to 2011–12 are presented in the table below:

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Incidence of poverty 1998–99 to 2011–12

1998–99	40.35 million
2004–05	45.48 million
2006–07	48.12 million
2011–12	79.08 million

The economic strategy of the Musharraf regime did achieve high rates of GDP growth. However, the pro-rich nature of the GDP together with high food inflation rates resulted in increased poverty, inequality and unemployment.⁴³ During his regime, 45 per cent of the population fell into the middle-class category. But by 2014, it had declined to 35 per cent. About three million people were falling into the poverty trap every year.⁴⁴

On the current situation, there have been several studies about poverty levels. Three are as follows. According to a study by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), as many as 58.7 million people in Pakistan (almost one-third of the population calculated at 180 million) were multidimensionally poor⁴⁵ with 46 per cent of rural population and 18 per cent of urban households falling below the poverty line. Of these multidimensionally poor, 21 per cent of the households fell in the category of extreme poverty. The proportion of extreme poor households was much higher in rural than urban areas; one-third of the rural households fell in the category of extreme poor as compared to only 8 per cent of urban households.⁴⁶

Applying a multidimensional poverty index (combination of the levels of education, health and standard of living), the Oxford Department of International Development showed that in 2012–13, 44.2 per cent of the Pakistanis were poor, 23.7 per cent were in severe poverty and 15.1 per cent were vulnerable to poverty. Among the provinces, 70.6 per cent of the population in Balochistan was poor compared to 53.2 per cent in Sindh, 50.1 per cent in KPK and 36.6 per cent in Punjab. In terms of income criterion, 50.7 per cent of the population was below the \$2 a day benchmark and 12.7 per cent below the \$1.25 a day benchmark.⁴⁷

According to the Economic Survey of Pakistan 2015–16, a new poverty line has been estimated using Cost of Basic Needs (CBN) approach (instead of the Food Energy Intake [FEI] model, in use since 2001) by taking patterns of consumption of reference group. This comes to Rs 3,030 per adult equivalent per month using the latest available Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) 2013–14 data. According to CBN methodology, 29.5 per cent of the population (about 60 million) is estimated to live below the poverty line during FY2014. However, there are severe disparities with poverty in urban areas being 9.3 per cent as compared to 54.6 per cent in rural areas. Disparities also exist across the provinces. Using Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) data, the headcount of multidimensional poverty in FY2015 was 38.8 per cent, with an intensity of deprivation of 51.0 per cent.⁴⁸

To conclude, a review of Pakistan's economic development indicates fundamental structural problems on the one hand and poor governance on the other. Pakistan's economic growth has not translated into appropriate improvements in human and social indicators that, in turn, has acted as a drag on future economic growth. While economic indicators situate the country among lower-middle-income economies,

the social indicators are comparable to those of least developed countries.

Pakistan has been avoiding an economic collapse narrowly not because of any structural changes or policy initiatives of its own but because the international situation has allowed it to monetize its geographical position. Thrice in the last seventy years, Pakistan has been bailed out by the US just as it was going over the brink, all three times when the army was ruling. And all three times, the rulers have not used the opportunity provided by foreign bailouts to make the necessary structural changes to put Pakistan on the path of sustainable growth.

There may or may not be a fourth bailout but the crucial question is whether the leaders, civilian and military, have begun to recognize how deep-rooted the problem is and how the already yawning gap between Pakistan and the rest of the world, including its neighbours is widening? Leveraging its geographical position and loans from multilateral lending agencies again may help Pakistan to weather its current pressing economic difficulties, but only a major structural change and improvement in the savings and investment climate can bring about long-term growth.

Three factors will hinder Pakistan's economic growth, irrespective of policies adopted in the near to medium term: demographic trends, water scarcity and tackling the education emergency. The consequences of their neglect over the decades cannot be rectified in the immediate or medium term. However, the presence or absence of another set of factors will determine how deep Pakistan will sink, or whether it will be able to keep its head above water: continued foreign bailouts so long as Pakistan's strategic importance remains intact, reduction or increase in the defence budgets, and immediate and urgent investment in the education sector and the management of water resources.

Ultimately, the question boils down to whether or not the Pakistan leadership, especially the military, continues to see Pakistan's security purely in military terms. If it does, Pakistan will sink deeper into the abyss. Even if it changes its mindset and sees security in broader terms, it will take a Herculean effort to pull Pakistan from the brink of the abyss, but at least Pakistan will have a chance.

Answers to the questions posed by Burki at the beginning of this chapter are quite obvious. Pakistan has been as unable to demonstrate the political resources, social maturity, institutional capability or economic expertise in the first fifty years of its existence as it has been unable to do so thereafter. There are no visible signs that it has the capacity or capability or even the inclination to do so in the near or medium term either. The shape of the economy together with issues like water, education and population will ensure that Pakistan continues to hurtle towards the abyss.

Population: Reaping the Dividend

Demographic change shapes political power like water shapes rock. Up close the force looks trivial, but viewed from a distance of decades or centuries it moves mountains.¹

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS, especially age structures, are one of the key components of any country's future. Such trends have a long gestation period just as their impact is also long-term. If such trends are anticipated and planned for, rich economic dividends can be reaped as demonstrated by the East Asian economies. If the necessary measures are not taken early, the consequences will manifest themselves after decades by which time it may be too late to rectify the situation.

Experts believe that Pakistan is going through a demographic transition and is experiencing a 'once-in-a-lifetime' window of opportunity of a 'demographic dividend' as the working-age population bulges and the dependency ratio declines. The crux of a demographic transition is the nature of the age structure of a country's population based on the reality that while the young and the old tend to consume more than they produce, the working-age population tends to produce more than it consumes. Thus, countries that have a larger proportion of working-age population relative to the young and elderly dependents is said to be undergoing a demographic transition that creates the condition for a demographic dividend. However, a demographic dividend is a time-specific window of opportunity, and does not last indefinitely. Over time, the age structure changes again, as the large adult population starts ageing and becomes less productive.² Thus, the demographic dividend only creates the conditions for an economic spurt that has to be harnessed. If harnessed, it could lead to potentially greater economic activity. If it is not capitalized upon, it could lead to massive unemployment and its attendant consequences.

How does a demographic transition come about? It comes about by the decline in mortality followed by the decline in fertility, and it is the difference between the two that defines the natural increase in a population. Pakistan's crude death rate declined progressively from twenty-four deaths per thousand in 1950 to eight deaths per thousand in 2006, 6.80 deaths per thousand in 2015 (Economic Survey 2014–15) and 6.70 deaths in 2015–16 (Economic Survey 2015–16). Crude birth rate improved from 26.1 per thousand in 2014–15 to 25.6 per thousand in 2015–16. This, coupled with falling fertility rates,³ has meant that Pakistan is presently undergoing a 'demographic transition'.

The population of Pakistan was 32.5 million in 1951, at which time it was the fourteenth most populous country in the world. Its population has since increased approximately 5.5 times, reaching an estimated 191.71 million in 2013-14 according to the Economic Survey 2014–15 and an estimated 195.4 million in

2015–16 as per the Economic Survey 2015–16. Pakistan is now the sixth most populous country in the world. The population figures for the censuses carried out during 1951, 1961, 1972, 1981 and 1998 show that the population grew at an average rate of 2.42 per cent per year from 1951 to 1961, 3.69 per cent per year from 1961 to 1972, at 2.86 per cent per year during 1972–81 and at 2.69 per cent per year from 1981 to 1998. The growth rate of the population was estimated to be 1.92 in 2015 and 1.89 in 2016 as per the Economic Survey 2015–16.

The problem of articulating the demographic challenges in Pakistan begins with the fact that no census has been held since 1998 (which itself should have been held in 1991). This has been largely due to lack of trust between provinces and within provinces about its fairness.⁴ In March 2015, the Council of Common Interests (CCI) decided to hold the long-delayed census in March 2016. However, within a few months, the government seemed to be having second thoughts. For one thing, no funds were released to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), the official body tasked with carrying out the exercise. A meeting of the CCI in March 2016 (held after a year) again postponed the census for an indefinite period on grounds of security.⁵

Since the census is already eight years late and with the last census having been held eighteen years ago, the inability to hold the crucial exercise calls into question the competence of this and previous governments to carry out routine functions of governance. The importance of the census in policymaking can hardly be overstated. Simply put, without knowing how many people there are and what is their distribution, no government can plan and frame policies that would cater to their needs. From constituency delineation that would factor in urban migration lessening the hold of the rural constituencies to the National Finance Commission Award, from ethnicity-based quotas to development schemes, all are dependent on census data. As a result, figures of population are, at best, estimates and projections and there are huge variations between different estimates.

These projections, however, vary greatly due to assumptions about fertility levels and have been termed as ‘High’, ‘Median’ and ‘Low’ variants. The extent of the variation can be seen from one set of figures according to which, based on the 1998 numbers, the population in 2050 may reach as high as 395 million if current fertility levels remain constant, and as low as 266 million if fertility decline is more rapid due to strengthening of Pakistan’s family planning programme. On the other hand, if family planning efforts are weak, fertility could be half a birth higher and the population of Pakistan could reach 342 million in 2050. Thus, the difference between a weak and a strong family planning programme scenario is approximately 76 million people by 2050, and 129 million between a strong programme and the absence thereof.⁶ According to the United Nations’ ‘median variant’, Pakistan’s population will reach 335 million by the year 2050.⁷

Such huge variations make any kind of planning and development unrealistic. The consensus, however, is that the population, even though down from the 3 per cent growth of the 1980s, is growing very fast at almost 2 per cent, which will give Pakistan the dubious distinction of being the fastest-growing population in South Asia for some time to come.

The age structure of the population has been calculated as shown in the following table:⁸

Population of Pakistan by Broad Age Groups – in Millions/ Percentage			
	0–19	20–64 ⁹	65+
2010	80.8/47 per cent	85.3/49 per cent	7.5/4 per cent
2030*	91.9/38 per cent	136.8/56 per cent	14.5/6 per cent
2050*	89.9/30 per cent	178.5/60 per cent	29.5/10 per cent

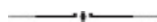
* These are projected figures.

An important impact of a growing population is urbanization. According to the Economic Survey 2014–15,

Pakistan is one of the fastest urbanizing countries in South Asia and the share of urban population is increasing significantly. The population in rural areas decreased from 61.4 per cent in 2014 to 60.8 per cent in 2015 and to 60.1 per cent in 2016 whereas the population in urban areas increased from 38.5 per cent in 2014 to 39.2 per cent in 2015 and 40 per cent in 2016.

Others¹⁰ have estimated that by the 2020s almost 50 per cent of the Pakistani population – 113 million people – will reside in cities.

Pakistan Vision 2025 concurs with this view stating that if current trends of rural to urban migration continue, the share of urbanization will exceed 50 per cent in 2025. The Pakistan Vision 2025, however, warns that in the case of Pakistan, this trend (of urbanization) has additional complexity. ‘The inability of the cities to absorb, comfortably accommodate, and meaningfully employ rural-to-urban migrants exacerbates social/ethnic tensions between “native” and “migrant” populations.’¹¹ The challenge for Pakistan will be to address the existing problems of the large urban centers while planning ahead for the continued migration towards cities.



How does the demographic dividend work in Pakistan? Pakistan’s median age in 2006 was twenty years. By 2050, it is projected to be thirty-three years. Pakistan’s working-age population of 15–64 years reached 52 per cent in the late 1980s and early 1990s, 59 per cent in 2006 and is estimated by the Economic Survey 2015–16 to be 60.4 per cent of the population, creating the possibility of a demographic dividend. This current share of 60 per cent of the working-age population is expected to peak at 68 per cent around 2045 by when it will start declining again as the population begins to age and moves out of the working-age group. By 2050, the current 4 per cent share of the old-age population would increase to almost 10 per cent. Thus, the once-in-a-lifetime window for Pakistan for a demographic dividend is roughly between 1990 and 2045. Of these fifty-five years, twenty-five years have already passed.¹²

In order to actualize the demographic dividend, the basic question to be asked is whether those entering the labour market can be absorbed productively against the backdrop of an increasingly globalized and technologically advanced world.

Pakistan has the tenth largest labour force in the world. According to the Labour Force Survey 2013–

14, the total labour force in the country was 60.09 million, increasing to 61.04 million in 2014–15. (This low figure compared to the total population is due to low female employment rates). According to one estimate, by 2030, there are likely to be 175 million potential workers of which ninety million will be males and eighty-five million females. This is likely to increase to 221 million individuals in working ages by 2050. Given the low female employment rates, conservative estimates are a total of roughly 105 million in the labour force by 2030, increasing to 140 million by 2050.¹³ According to another projection, the working-age population will rise from eighty-five million in 2010 to 178 million in 2050.¹⁴

The number of employed increased from 56.01 million in 2012–13 to 56.52 million in 2013–14 and to 57.42 million in 2014–15. The change stemmed more from urban (0.57 million) than rural areas (–0.06 million). Increases were registered in the case of Punjab (1.02 million) and Balochistan (0.26 million), while a decrease was observed in KPK (0.23 million), and Sindh (0.56 million). Out of the total labour force of 60.09 million, 3.58 million people were unemployed.¹⁵ Unemployment rate decreased from 6.0 per cent in 2013–14 to 5.9 per cent in 2014–15.

However, under the overall employment figures there are significant variations. In the case of Punjab, the Labour Force Survey 2014–15 revealed that the unemployment rate was 6.3 per cent, i.e., above the national average of 5.9 per cent. Despite various schemes like concessional and interest-free loans, laptop schemes and youth melas, the highest rates of unemployment were among the youth. The age group of 15–19 years suffered double-digit unemployment rate of 12.4 per cent, followed closely by the age group of 20–24 years with an unemployment rate of 11.02 per cent. The corresponding figures for Sindh were 5.48 per cent and 8.66 per cent, respectively.¹⁶

Punjab's 'Economic Growth Strategy 2014–18' targets creating one million quality jobs annually and training two million skilled graduates. However, the high unemployment rates suggest a huge gap between what is being professed and what is actually happening. According to Ayesha Ghaus-Pasha, the finance minister of Punjab, to absorb the over one million workers entering the labour market yearly in Punjab, it has to grow at 7–8 per cent. However, according to her, even though the province was growing at a higher pace than Pakistan as a whole, the required growth rate has not been achieved yet. She added, 'Creating one million jobs is essential to eliminate extremism and terrorism'.¹⁷

The Institute for Policy Reform (IPR), quoting the government's Labour Force Survey 2014–15, says that unemployment rate in Pakistan under the present government is the highest in the last thirteen years. Ominously, it added that over one million males aged between fifteen and twenty-nine years were neither undergoing education nor searching for a job and thus were perhaps more vulnerable to crime and militancy. It added, 'An extremely worrying feature of the current unemployment situation is that the rate among literate workers is more than twice that among illiterate workers. In fact, the highest rate of unemployment, three times above the national average, is observed in the case of highly educated workers with either degree or postgraduate qualifications.'¹⁸

The Planning Commission has mentioned growing unemployment as the topmost challenge for the government. Its chief economist, Nadeem Javaid, while briefing the cabinet, said that at the existing rate of growth, the country could not absorb bulk of the youth and that unemployment might increase to 7.93 per cent by June 2018 when the current government's term would end. There would be 5.4 million unemployed youth by then.¹⁹

For generating massive employment, there has to be sustained high economic growth. According to the

Planning Commission's (2011) Framework for Economic Growth in Pakistan between 1972 and 2010, Pakistan's economy grew at an average annual rate of 4.9 per cent, but that this growth was sporadic and showed a declining trend.²⁰ A GDP growth of 5 per cent has been generating employment for less than one million persons per year. Based on population projections, 3.1 million persons are expected to enter the labour force every year over the next four decades. Thus what Pakistan needs is a sustained GDP growth of over 7 per cent to generate employment to absorb these numbers. It would have to grow even faster if the current unemployment rate of 6 per cent is to be reduced.²¹ In late 2010, Nadeem-ul-Haque, the deputy chairman of Pakistan's Planning Commission, had stated that GDP growth stood at 2.5 per cent while Pakistan would have to grow at 9 per cent to employ Pakistan's 80–90 million people under the age of twenty.²² However, the GDP growth during 2012–13 and 2013–14 has been 4.03 per cent and 4.24 per cent respectively as per the Economic Survey 2014–15 and 4.7 per cent as per the Economic Survey 2015–16.

As noted in [Chapter 12](#), given its structural problems there are few signs of optimism in the key economic indicators. In fact, poor economic performance has led to a decline in employment and also in the ratio of employment to the working-age population from 56 per cent in 1973 to 48 per cent in 2002. The share of industry in employment has remained flat (at around 20 per cent) post-1980, implying that the higher-productivity sector of the economy has not generated sufficient number of new jobs to raise overall employment. The share of manufacturing has also stagnated at around 12 per cent.²³

This is borne out by the Economic Survey 2014–15 according to which, barring the transport and trade sectors, the share of employment in all other important sectors showed a declining trend. For example, the share of employment in the agriculture sector decreased to 43.5 per cent in 2013–14 as compared to 43.7 per cent in 2012–13; the share of employment in mining and manufacturing declined to 14.16 per cent as compared to 14.20 per cent in 2012–13; the share of employment in construction declined in 2013–14 to 7.33 per cent as compared to 7.44 per cent in 2012–13; the share of employment in electricity and gas distribution declined to 0.48 per cent in 2013–14 as compared to 0.53 per cent in 2012–13. Only the transport and trade sectors saw increases to 5.4 per cent and 14.58 per cent respectively in 2013–14 as compared to 4.98 per cent and 14.39 per cent in 2012–13.

With the female half of the population not able to fully participate in the labour market due to a variety of reasons, it is debatable whether the age structure itself can be called a window of opportunity. Not surprisingly, Pakistan ranks 123rd in the world on the Gender Development Index, even lower than its Human Development Index ranking, indicating that access to opportunities, resources and benefits between men and women are skewed. According to the Economic Survey 2015–16, female labour force participation rate increased from 15.6 per cent in 2012–13 to 15.8 per cent in 2014–15 and remained at 15.8 in 2015–16. Significantly, the Survey noted that female participation in the rural areas was 19.3 per cent in 2012–13, 20 per cent in 2013–14 and 20.2 per cent in 2014–15, showing only marginal increases. However, in the urban areas the figures for the same years were 8.2, 7.7 and 7.5 per cent respectively. The declining trend of female participation in the urban areas should be a worrying factor. It is fairly clear that advantages of a demographic dividend cannot be secured without wholesome participation of half of the population.

The second issue is of education and an educated workforce. A major factor inhibiting Pakistan's economic prospects is the low level of education and technical skills of the workforce. As noted earlier,

Pakistan's education system is both quantitatively and qualitatively poor. According to calculations made by Rashid Amjad, the following is the distribution of labour force by level of education.²⁴

Year	Illiterate	Primary	Middle	Matric	Intermediate	BA
1990–91	53.0	22.7	10.9	9.6	3.0	1.7
2001–02	36.7	25.7	15.9	14.6	4.7	2.3
2010–11	35.3	26.0	16.4	13.8	5.3	3.3

With one-third of the youth labour force being illiterate and the rest possessing very low levels of technical education in 2010–11, not surprisingly, Pakistan, it has been argued, is stuck in a 'low-level skills equilibrium trap' which severely restricts its move into higher value-added sectors essential for raising productivity and increasing economic growth.²⁵ This is the snowballing effect of insufficient investment in the education sector over the decades, which has manifested itself at a time when the need for an educated work force is the most in order to reap the demographic dividend. Moreover, these consequences will last for years if not decades to come, even if Pakistan were to launch a crash investment programme today.

In addition, women's education is woefully neglected. This has had a double whammy – not only are more women uneducated even if they were allowed to participate in the workforce but, as shown the world over, women's fertility is lower with higher levels of educational attainment. The massive increase in Pakistan's population is in a large measure due to not focusing on women's education. The declining trend in women's education noted earlier, is also a worrying factor.

The one positive feature of the otherwise gloomy demographic scenario is the outward migration of Pakistani labour. Presently, Pakistan has a huge and diverse diaspora sprinkled all over the world. Pakistan is one of the largest labour-exporting countries in the region and huge remittances from the overseas workforce is one major source of income not only for their families but also for the development of Pakistan.

During the period, 1971–2015, around 8.77 million Pakistanis proceeded abroad for employment through the Bureau of Emigration. The main concentration of overseas Pakistanis was in the Middle East (49 per cent), Europe (28.2 per cent) and the United States of America (16 per cent). Manpower export continues to show an upward trend from 0.622 million in 2013 to 0.752 million in 2014 and 0.946 million in 2015. However, around half of the migrant workers are illiterate and unskilled workers and only 1.76 per cent workers are doing white-collar jobs. Among the skilled workers, drivers are in the highest number, followed by masons, carpenters and tailors.²⁶

Remittances sent by workers are the second largest source of foreign exchange, after exports, and finance 45 per cent of the country's import bill. These amounted to \$18.4 billion in 2014–15, which translated into a year-on-year increase of 16.5 per cent. Between July 2015 and January 2016 remittances amounted to \$11.2 billion which translates into a year-on-year increase of 5.98 per cent, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).²⁷

The manpower export from Punjab is higher as compared to other provinces. During 2015, 478,646 workers from Punjab went abroad for employment, followed by 220,993 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), 116,935 from Sindh and 7,686 from Balochistan.

However, a growing concern is that the fall in global oil prices could slow down infrastructure spending in the Gulf countries. If that happens, it could lead to a chain reaction of triggering massive layoffs of Pakistani workers there. This, in turn, would impact remittances with adverse consequences for Pakistan's fragile economy.²⁸

What happens if the demographic dividend is not realized? The flip side of an unrealized demographic dividend is that the massive 'youth bulge' could pose a serious threat to law and order including, in Pakistan's case, the threat of terrorism. As noted in an earlier chapter, the failure of the government school system to absorb new entrants has led to greater popularity of the madrasas. According to the interior minister of Pakistan, about 10 per cent of the madrasas are involved in terrorism-related activities, while the others give a narrow, sectarian vision to its students (see [Chapter 8](#) on madrasas). The danger for Pakistan, then, is that without sustained economic growth and without investment in education the demographic dividend would degenerate into a 'demographic horde' with all its attendant consequences of frustration, alienation and violence.

The other problem with an unrealized demographic dividend is that an unproductive population would pose huge pressures on resources like food, water and energy. A country that was near to being self-sufficient in food in the early 1980s has a food security issue today largely due to increased population. As noted earlier, agriculture accounts for about 20 per cent of Pakistan's GDP and employs 60 per cent of its labour while 70 per cent of export revenue stems from agriculture. A decline in water availability would impact on food production at a time when the population is increasing, creating multiple crises. And the availability of water is declining and is below the 1,000 m³/year per capita benchmark.

One sign of an unrealized demographic dividend is already visible. According to the 'National Nutrition Survey, approximately 60 per cent of the country's population is facing food insecurity and nearly 50 per cent of the women and children are malnourished. It warned: 'The growing population in Pakistan poses a significant threat to food security, Pakistan's development and social indicators and stability.'²⁹ The Planning Commission of Pakistan and the World Food Programme in a report titled 'Minimum cost of diet in Pakistan', put the figure of lack of access to proper, recommended nutrition at 67.6 per cent of the households across the country. This was particularly prevalent in the rural areas of Balochistan, where as many as 83.4 per cent households were unable to pay for an adequate nourishment, closely followed by that in Sindh (70.8 per cent), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (67.4 per cent) and Punjab (65.6 per cent).³⁰

Apart from these statistics, the trend showed a marked deterioration. Thus, according to the survey, 43.7 per cent children under age five had stunted growth in 2011 compared to 41.6 per cent in 2001. Similarly, 15.1 per cent children were in the wasting category (low weight for height) in 2011 compared to 14.3 per cent in 2001. Furthermore, an estimated 35 per cent of child deaths (under age five) in the country were linked to malnutrition, while the World Health Organization labels a national average of 15 per cent or above as an 'emergency'.³¹

A more widespread risk of not operationalizing the demographic dividend is the radicalization of youth – the threat of millions of young, impoverished and unemployed Pakistanis succumbing to extremism. As the Pakistan Vision 2025 puts it, 'A large set of Pakistani youth is dissatisfied, frustrated and in a state of

disarray due to low education levels and large-scale unemployment. This has led to serious social problems including drug abuse, crime, mental disorder, terrorism and religious fanaticism.’³² Moeed Yusuf identifies ‘supply-side’ and ‘pull’ factors that could impel young Pakistanis towards extremism. The supply-side factors are the three independent streams of education noted in the chapter on education where alumni from the three streams are isolated from each other but are taught an Islam-and-Pakistan-under-siege mentality. The second is the growing socio-economic inequalities that figures in militant rhetoric.³³ Burki, for example, estimates that the richest 18,000 in Pakistan have an average income of US \$72,700 per capita compared to the overall per capita income of US \$1,050.³⁴

The pull factor is the great demand for extremists based on the ‘state’s self-defined strategic need to use extremism as a tool of foreign policy’, whether in Afghanistan or in Kashmir. Such penetration, irreversible in the short run according to Yusuf, has allowed Pakistani terrorist groups to recruit on their own, even as they challenged the Pakistani state for following the US agenda in Afghanistan.

Yusuf, however, insists that the point of no return has not been crossed since the young militants only account for a small percentage of the total population but concedes that every terrorist attack in Pakistan after 9/11 have been by those under the age of thirty. Quite clearly, massive changes in the mindset of the Pakistani leadership, especially the army, are essential to reverse the trend towards youth radicalization.

Finally, it is worth noting that after the period of demographic dividend, there would be rapid population ageing. Given the anticipated rapid fertility decline in the future, the size of the population aged over sixty-five will rise from 7.5 million in 2010 to thirty million in 2050, representing 10 per cent of the country’s population at the latter year. While in the South Asian context, older parents are looked after by the grown-up children, yet a rapidly ageing population will pose societal challenges including those of health and care for the elderly. Pakistan then could be caught between a large uneducated and unskilled young population and a significant older population, which would place an extraordinary burden on Pakistan’s economy.

Durr-e-Nayab warns: ‘Aging of population is the inevitable end of demographic transition, and Pakistan, albeit slowly, is moving towards it. In the absence of any state planned old age security system and the existing low saving rates in the country, the demographic dividend can turn into a demographic nightmare for majority of the elderly.’³⁵

To conclude, Pakistan stands at a pivotal moment in its history. Twenty-five years of the once-in-a-lifetime demographic-dividend window of opportunity have already passed Pakistan by without any visible signs of an economic upsurge. As of now, there does not appear to be any urgency on the part of the Pakistani leadership, civilian or military, to make the necessary investments for a vastly improved human capital and to boost economic growth and development to productively employ its youthful population. No thinking seems to have gone into understanding the needs of a changing age structure. The lack of investment in the education sector for decades is showing results today in terms of the quantity and quality of education, literacy rates and, especially, the poor statistics for female education. The latter is perhaps one of the most important factors that has hampered Pakistan’s development.

The policies that Pakistan adopts or does not adopt today, the investment that it makes or does not make today will determine the kind of country that Pakistan will be in the next three decades. With such a huge focus and investment on defence and other priorities, tackling the demographic challenge is indeed

difficult, especially because results are barely visible during the relatively short attention span of a politician or a general. Not surprisingly, experts have lamented that there is no sustained attention on the demographics of Pakistan.³⁶

Time clearly is not on Pakistan's side. The demographic transition Pakistan is undergoing can have explosive social and political consequences due to past failure to make timely investments in education, health and a developmental economy. Inability to generate the required number of jobs through sustained, high GDP growth, will result in the streets being crowded with young men and women seeking jobs, justice, education, and medical care for themselves and their families, leaving them vulnerable. This could pose a serious threat to the country's stability.³⁷

In this context, Pakistan would do well to heed the warning: 'If, in 10 or 20 years, Pakistan still has a large number of unemployed or underemployed people, including tens of millions of young people, the country may face crises that dwarf those it has experienced to date.'³⁸ The Centre for International and Strategic Studies has an even more dire warning: 'Many nations in North Africa, the Middle East, South and East Asia, and the former Soviet bloc – including China, Russia, Iran, and Pakistan – are now experiencing a rapid or extreme demographic transition that could push them toward civil collapse, or (in reaction) toward "neo-authoritarianism".'³⁹

There are no short cuts here. Pakistan will have to make heavy investments not merely to realize the demographic dividend but to ensure that the demographic dividend does not become a demographic nightmare; that Pakistan's population structure, instead of becoming a 'once-in-a-lifetime' opportunity, does turn into a 'ticking time bomb',⁴⁰ hastening the country's slide towards the abyss.

VI

Windows to the World

THE SIXTH section looks at Pakistan's relations with the four countries that have played a vital role in shaping its destiny – India, Afghanistan, China and the US.* Of these, it has been India that has played the central role around which Pakistan has fashioned its responses to the world. Jinnah's quest for parity between Hindus and Muslims in the run-up to Partition was transformed into the quest for parity with India. All of Pakistan's actions, especially seeking 'borrowed power' to counterbalance the superior strength of India, can be seen with reference to this single-minded pursuit of parity.

Pakistan has come to treat Afghanistan as its backyard, seeking 'strategic depth' and determined not to allow any government to establish itself in Kabul that is not beholden to it. This serves the twin objective of limiting Indian influence in Afghanistan and ensuring that no government in Kabul would be in a position to challenge the validity of the Durand Line.

Pakistan and China share a mutuality of interests vis-à-vis India. For China, bolstering up Pakistan is a low-cost option to keep India bogged down in South Asia and for Pakistan, China provides the military hardware, including nuclear weapons that allows it to seek military parity with India. The new component in the relationship is the much-touted China–Pakistan Economic Corridor. Will it work?

The US has taken over the role played by Britain in Pakistan's creation by sustaining it over the decades. Pakistan has leveraged its geographical position to become an ally of the US thrice in the last seven decades. In the process it has become dependent on external support for its very survival.

Will Pakistan ever give up its quest for parity with India? Will it allow Afghanistan to develop as a sovereign country? Will such external support from the US be forthcoming in the future? Or is it that Pakistan's shelf life may well be coming to an end, if not already over for the US? Can and, more importantly, will China step into the void?

* The Islamic world, especially Saudi Arabia, Iran and the UAE have also played an important role. But for the sake of brevity, they have been left out of the discussion.

India: The Quest for Parity

*The essence of the paradox of Pakistan lies in this very basic fact: born out of a partition chosen by itself, it appears to have found in independence neither the peace, nor the security, nor the freedom of spirit that would enable it either to live in harmony with India, or to ignore it. It seems impossible for Pakistan to forget India and to get along with it.*¹

—Jean-Luc Racine

PAKISTAN'S ATTITUDE and policy towards India hinge on one factor above all else: the desire for parity – military, political and regional parity. It is this obsessive and fixated yet elusive search for parity with India that accounts for the trajectory of its defence, security and foreign policies. It also explains the various stratagems that Pakistan has adopted over the decades and continues to adopt unmindful of the consequences for its own survival. The compulsive need for parity harks back to the history of the subcontinent and to the Pakistan movement itself. Believing itself to be the inheritors of a millennia of Islamic rule over the Indian subcontinent, especially of the Mughals, Pakistan feels that its inheritance demands that it be treated as at least equal, if not superior, to India.

It was this quest that led to the demand for a separate Muslim homeland in the first place and to Jinnah's articulation that Muslims must have parity in representation in legislatures despite being a numerical minority. As he told the Muslim League session at Lucknow in October 1937:

Honourable settlement can only be achieved between equals and unless the two parties learn to respect and fear each other, there is no solid ground for settlement. Offers of peace by the weaker party always means confession of weakness and invitation to aggression. Politics means power and not relying only on cries of justice or fair-play or goodwill.²

Two examples of how this was translated into action are very revealing. First, in the run-up to the May 1950 visit of Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan to the US, Finance Minister Ghulam Mohammad met George McGhee, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern, South Asian and African affairs. During the meeting Ghulam Mohammad told McGhee that the US had to appear to treat Pakistan on par with India: it was 'of utmost importance'. McGhee related later that Liaquat was accorded a reception equal to what Jawaharlal Nehru received.³ Second, in 1954 the then prime minister of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Bogra, reflected the Pakistani view when he said that the reason Pakistan was not able to resolve the Kashmir conflict favourably was 'because India has greater military strength and Nehru is not interested in a fair

settlement. When there is more equality of military strength, then I am sure that there will be a greater chance of settlement.’⁴

Six decades later, the tune of parity has not changed. Following US president Obama’s visit to India in January 2015, the Pakistan Foreign Office lamented that an India–US partnership would alter South Asia’s ‘balance of power’ and create a ‘regional imbalance’. This argument was taken forward during the US–Pakistan talks on security, strategic stability and non-proliferation in Washington in June 2015. Prior to the talks, Pakistan foreign secretary stated that the US nuclear deal with India had affected the strategic stability that existed in South Asia before the deal.⁵

As noted by Husain Haqqani,

In reality, the Pakistani reaction (to President Obama’s visit to India in January 2015) reflects the Pakistani security establishment clinging to the notion of parity with India. For years, Pakistan has ignored changes in the global environment and accepted the heavy price of internal weakness to project itself as India’s equal ... For a country to base its foreign policy for over 60 years on the same assumptions is unusual. As the world around us changes, so must a nation’s foreign policy. But Pakistan has yet to embrace pragmatism as the basis of its foreign and national security policies.⁶

The legacy of the Pakistan movement apart, the desire for parity was also based on the assumption that India had not accepted the Partition of the subcontinent in 1947 and was out to undo Pakistan. This necessitated physical defence of the country for protection and survival. As Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan wrote to Jawaharlal Nehru on 30 December 1947: ‘India has never wholeheartedly accepted the partition scheme ... India is out to destroy the state of Pakistan which her leaders persistently continue to regard as part of India itself.’⁷ Ayub Khan was to reiterate such sentiments in his autobiography: ‘India ... wanted to browbeat us into subservience. All we wanted was to live as equal and honourable neighbours, but to that India would never agree.’⁸ Such a view was reinforced by the vivisection of the country in 1971.

In the initial years, Pakistan may have had cause for concern about Indian intentions given the statements made by some Indian leaders, but despite Indian acceptance of the permanence of Partition subsequently, the attitudes of the Pakistani leadership seem to have frozen in 1947. This, of course, had the advantage of justifying continued privileges of those who have benefited from such a posture. Nehru in a speech at Aligarh Muslim University in January 1948 probably summed up the situation best: ‘It is to India’s advantage that Pakistan should be a secure and prosperous state with which we can develop close and friendly relations. If today, by any chance, I were offered the reunion of India and Pakistan, I would decline it for obvious reasons. I do not want to carry the burden of Pakistan’s great problems. I have enough of my own.’⁹

Subsequently too Indian leaders have tried to reassure Pakistan. In February 1999, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in his banquet speech at Lahore described his visit as a categorical affirmation of India’s commitment to the sovereignty, unity and stability of Pakistan. According to India’s former foreign secretary and later national security adviser J.N. Dixit, no Indian leader had visited the Minar-e-Pakistan. Vajyapee implied that his visit should remove all doubts as to India not having accepted Partition or wanting to reabsorb Pakistan.¹⁰ On 9 June 2009, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh stated in the Lok Sabha,

'I sincerely believe it is in our vital interest therefore to try again to make peace with Pakistan ... If the leaders of Pakistan have the courage, the determination and the statesmanship to take this road to peace, I wish to assure them that we will meet them more than half way.'¹¹

In 1983 a French historian noted that 'an overwhelming majority of Indians have accepted Partition and have no desire to conquer or reabsorb Pakistan. But few Pakistanis are willing to believe this. They seem to believe that an attitude of constant belligerence is the only way they can affirm their separate existence and specific identity.'¹² The problem, however, is not merely of Pakistan not wanting to believe Indian assurances but far more deep-rooted than that. As noted earlier, being anti-India has come to define the Pakistani identity. Thus, 'Hindu India' has to be constantly portrayed as a threat.

The projection of India wanting to undo Partition is amplified by the projection of the larger Indian military establishment, its capabilities and actions. As Ayub Khan put it: 'In matters of defence, countries do not formulate their policies on the basis of the intentions of others; it is their capability which must be taken into account. If a big country like India has the capability to attack Pakistan, the intention can always change ...'¹³ Many decades later another army chief, Gen. Parvez Kayani, echoing Ayub stated in October 2011: 'We cannot base our strategies on any good intentions, no matter how noble they may be, as intentions can change overnight. Our strategy has to be based on India's capability.'¹⁴ This argument that the army has to match India's capabilities or Pakistan would be overwhelmed does not, deliberately or otherwise, factor in India's defence needs against China. India using the same argument of its defence posture citing Chinese capabilities is, of course, rejected out of hand.

Complicating matters for Pakistan was not merely the self-imposed quest for parity with India but the fact that since 1947 it was a revanchist state. For Pakistan, Kashmir was and is the 'unfinished agenda' of Partition. It was the 'K' in the acronym Pakistan. As Bhutto wrote: 'If a Muslim majority [region] can remain a part of India, then the *raison d'être* of Pakistan collapses ... Pakistan is incomplete without Jammu and Kashmir both territorially and ideologically.'¹⁵

Kashmir acquired greater salience after Bangladesh broke away from Pakistan. Issues of revenge against India apart, the creation of Bangladesh effectively buried the two-nation theory and the use of Islam to weld a national identity. Even though rationalizations were made about Islam not being effectively used by a secularized elite, the fact was that Pakistan needed another crutch and that became the Ideology of Pakistan of which Kashmir was an integral part. Kashmir thus became a 'rallying ground'... and 'No Pakistani leader, present or future, was allowed to ignore the significance of the Himalayan territory, and especially its connection to Pakistan. ... All of Pakistan was made hostage to the Kashmir conundrum.'¹⁶

Pakistan has spent the last almost seven decades in revanchist schemes like the 'raiders' in 1947, 'infiltrators' in 1965, and 'freedom fighter in 1999'. Despite serious reverses in each venture and failure to achieve the objective of incorporating Kashmir, Pakistan has still not accepted the reality that seeking to wrest Kashmir from India, a much larger power, requires not merely parity but additional strength to force a change in the status quo. The process of seeking parity-plus is what has led Pakistan to its present position of hovering near the abyss. Notwithstanding this, Pakistan's objective has not changed, though strategy has. Instead of trying to force a change militarily, it now seeks to generate enough violence in India, especially Kashmir, to force India to come to the negotiating table in a weakened position.

A telling example of the importance of Kashmir was seen in the justification given by Musharraf for accepting US demands after 9/11. In his address to the nation on 19 September 2001, Musharraf claimed to have saved Pakistan's Kashmir policy from US interference. He reiterated this in an interview to PTV (Pakistan Television): 'We were on the borderline of being or not being declared a terrorist state – in that situation, what would have happened to the Kashmir cause?'¹⁷ In other words, support to the US in the war on terror was based on the calculation of denying India any advantage rather than on the merits of the cause.

The US had realized the futility of such a policy being pursued by Pakistan as early as 13 October 1965 when it informed its ambassadors in New Delhi, Karachi, London and in the UN of the fact that the Pakistan government had refused to admit, even after the stalemate of the 1965 round:

Pakistan's policy of attempting to force a Kashmir settlement has failed. Its only hope of getting one lies in reversing its present course and seeking a reconciliation with India, which will simultaneously assure Pakistan's long run security vis-à-vis India. It is a simple fact that no Kashmir settlement is possible when both sides are becoming more antagonistic and more frozen in their positions than the reverse.¹⁸

This assessment remains as valid today as it did in 1965.

Ayub Khan acknowledged as much when he told a Canadian diplomat during the 1965 war: 'We want Kashmir but we know we can't win it by military action. If only some of you people would show some guts we would have it.'¹⁹ More recently, Tariq Fatemi (currently special assistant to the prime minister of Pakistan on foreign affairs) wrote that Pakistan has to recognize that the long conflict with India has achieved nothing beyond creating a militarized security state that uses force as its first resort. 'Attempts to resolve the Kashmir dispute militarily have bled the country and left it dependent on foreign aid. First, the nation must begin to redefine the army's role so that it is limited to defending the country's frontiers.'²⁰

Pakistan's quest for parity suffered a big blow with the creation of Bangladesh in 1971. Not only did it lose half its territory but the psychological impact was even more fundamental. Writing about the Indian victory in Bangladesh, Ayub Khan wrote in his diary:

Thursday December 16, 1971. The separation of Bengal, though painful, was inevitable and unavoidable ... I wish our rulers had the sense to realize this in time and let the Bengalis go in a peaceful manner instead of India bringing this about by a surgical operation ... I suppose the Hindu morale is now very high. It is the first victory they have had over the Muslims for centuries. It would take us a long time to live this down.²¹

Similar sentiments were expressed by a Lahore-based Urdu paper: '... *today* the entire nation weeps tears of blood. Today the Indian Army has entered Dacca. Today for the first time in 1000 years Hindus have won a victory over Muslims...Today we are prostrate with dejection'²² The defeat, instead of provoking introspection reinforced the conclusion that in order to show 'Hindu India' its place, the only way out was military parity.

The hunt for parity has led Pakistan to adopt a strategy that has several strands: the use of terrorists or non-state actors to inflict ‘a thousand cuts’, in order to ‘soften’ India for talks; development of nuclear weapons; use of borrowed power, relatively large expenditure on defence, both conventional and nuclear (see [Chapter 5](#)).

In an earlier chapter, it has been mentioned how Jinnah suggested to Iskander Mirza to start a jihad against the British in the tribal areas to accelerate the achievement of Pakistan. Though the plan was not executed then, it came in handy in October 1947. According to Humayun Mirza, Iskander Mirza’s son, Abdul Qayyum Khan, the chief minister of NWFP who was of Kashmiri origin, encouraged the Pathan tribesmen without the knowledge of Governor Sir George Cunningham. When the latter learned of the 22 October 1947 invasion, he wanted to resign, but was persuaded by Iskander Mirza to stay on. Iskander Mirza met Cunningham on 25 October and briefed him in detail about what was happening in Kashmir. He conveyed Liaquat Ali’s apologies for not letting Cunningham know about the developments earlier due to ill health. Apparently, Jinnah was aware of what was going on two weeks earlier, but said, ‘Don’t tell me anything about it. My conscience must be clear.’ According to Iskander Mirza, Hari Singh (the Maharajah of Kashmir) meant to join India within three months. ‘It was decided apparently about a month ago that the Poonchis should revolt and should be helped. British officers were kept out simply not to embarrass them.’²³ Cunningham blamed the government for the tribal invasion. He resigned in March 1948.

Likewise, the war of 1965 was deliberately orchestrated with ‘infiltrators’ being sent into Kashmir (Operation Gibraltar and the accompanying Operation Grand Slam) on the presumption that the Indian Kashmiris would rise in support of the infiltrators, that in retaliation, Indian forces would not cross the international border, and that the international community, especially the US, would pressurize India to resolve the Kashmir issue. None of these presumptions fructified. As Ziring notes, ‘India’s inability to effectively counter the Chinese thrust into its territory in 1962 was examined in considerable detail by the Pakistan High Command. Pak intelligence described the Indian PM Shastri as weak, colorless, ineffectual and with little stomach for war.’²⁴ Ayub Khan, in fact, referred to Indians as ‘a diseased people’ and to the Indian prime minister as ‘that little man Shastri’.²⁵ The Rann of Kutch encounter made the Pakistan Army sense a weakness in the Indian armed forces that it could exploit in Kashmir, which would finally give Pakistan the victory it had sought.²⁶

While using non-state actors as a matter of policy against India goes back to 1947, it got a boost after Pakistan’s defeat in the 1971 war. Realizing that they could not match India in conventional warfare, Pakistan resorted to asymmetrical warfare in a much more focused manner. In this, they were highly encouraged by the events in Afghanistan where a ragtag band of mujahideen had managed to defeat a super power. (Of course, the massive assistance provided by the US and Saudi Arabia is conveniently forgotten in such narratives.) Coupled with the kind of perception of the ‘Hindu’ and hence Indian, Pakistani leaders felt that India could be cut to size through irregular warfare on the Afghan pattern.

Starting from the late 1970s, Pakistan first fanned the Khalistan movement in Indian Punjab and from 1989 onwards, taking advantage of the outburst of protests in Kashmir, transformed a political movement into a military one. Kargil in 1999 was a similar attack on India by Pakistan, this time using regular soldiers of the Pakistan Army disguised as Kashmiris. Post-Kargil, the Pakistan Army has realized that a military conquest of Kashmir is beyond their capability given Indian determination to defend it, whatever

the odds. However, instead of seeking political accommodation, Pakistan has resorted to a policy of 'bleeding India' by using non-state actors under a nuclear overhang to force it to the negotiating table in a weakened position.

Over the years, the concept of asymmetrical war has been modified to include not only offensive operations but also to develop a defensive component to tackle any Indian retaliation. Thus, in 2001, Musharraf had threatened an unconventional war on India if it crossed the LOC saying there were 150,000 retired military personnel in Pakistani Kashmir who would have surrounded the Indian troops. This strategy encompassed settling ex-servicemen and jihadist groups in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) and marrying local girls. In the event of a war with India they would carry out dozens of fidayeen operations simultaneously.²⁷

The use of non-state actors has not been without its consequences. In May 1992, the US threatened to designate Pakistan a state sponsor of terrorism on the grounds that the organs of the Pakistani government controlled by the president, the prime minister and the chief of the army staff were sponsoring terrorism. As a state sponsor of terrorism, the scope of the sanctions would include the shutdown of funding from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and other international financial institutions as well as bar bilateral trade and the stoppage of Export-Import Bank financing for projects in Pakistan. The Pakistan response to such a threat is really instructive. In a high-level meeting, Lt Gen. Javed Nasir, the director general of the ISI, claimed that the jihad in Kashmir was at a critical stage and could not be disrupted, adding, 'We have been covering our tracks so far and will cover them even better in the future'. His conclusion was: 'These are empty threats. The United States will not declare Pakistan a terrorist state. All we need to do is to buy more time and improve our diplomatic effort. The focus should be on Indian atrocities in Kashmir, not on our support for the Kashmiri resistance.' In response to Foreign Secretary Shahryar Khan who stressed on diplomatic efforts, Nasir echoing Ayub decades ago, said: '... the Hindus do not understand any language other than force'. Nawaz Sharif, the then prime minister, concurred with Gen. Nasir's assessment, which became the consensus of the meeting. Nawaz added, 'We have a problem only with the American media and the Congress ... This problem can be resolved by a stronger lobbying effort.' That is what Pakistan did then and in response, the US did not carry out its threat to list Pakistan as a state sponsor of terrorism.²⁸

The US has tried to modify Pakistan's use of non-state actors by providing it huge financial incentives. But these have not worked. As former US ambassador to Pakistan, Anne Patterson, wrote in a 2009 cable that was subsequently WikiLeaked: 'There is no chance that Pakistan will view enhanced assistance levels in any field as sufficient compensation for abandoning support for these groups, which it sees as an important part of its national security apparatus against India.'²⁹

With such a history of support of the jihadis, it is hardly surprising that the army continues to shield the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and its leadership. It will continue to do so. This is despite the assertions by the current political and military leadership that even-handed action is being taken against all terrorist groups.

Nuclear weapons were seen as the magic wand that would make Pakistan India's equal, guarantee territorial integrity even without the support of allies and also give Pakistan respectability in the Muslim world as the first Muslim country with nuclear weapons. The primary goal of Pakistan's nuclear weapons

programme being military parity with India, nuclear weapons were seen as a method of balancing the asymmetric conventional relationship between India and Pakistan.

One example would illustrate the lengths that Pakistan has gone to keep up its quest for parity with India irrespective of the consequences to itself. This example goes to the heart of the Indo-Pak relationship on the one hand and the Pak-US relationship on the other. Soon after the US imposed sanctions against Pakistan in keeping with the Pressler Amendment in 1990, the ISI prepared an assessment of the US resolve that concluded that the US wanted to pressure Pakistan over the nuclear issue but that this was a temporary threat to US–Pakistan relations resulting from ‘the political maneuvers of Indian and Zionist lobbies’ in the United States. The recommendation was for Pakistan to remain engaged with the United States without giving in to its demands and soon the United States would come to terms with Pakistan’s nuclear programme as a *fait accompli*. Hence, Pakistan continued with its nuclear quest successfully, unmindful of the US threat. Though the bilateral sanctions lasted for a bit, the US did not use its influence to choke off multilateral financial assistance from the IMF and the World Bank to Pakistan.³⁰

The consequences for Pakistan of being declared a state sponsor of terrorism, and a nuclear proliferator, would have been severe. But, given its obsession with parity with India, Pakistan chose to gamble and ignore the dangers inherent in pursuing such a path. Clearly, given such a track record and with such a mindset, Pakistan would go to any lengths to continue its elusive quest for parity.

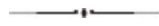
The third strand in Pakistan’s strategy to tackle India has been ‘borrowed power’: seek the support of allies, leveraging its geographical position, to compensate for its weakness against India – a concept initiated by Jinnah even before Partition. Jinnah sought substantial funding from the US for defence purposes within two months of Pakistan’s creation (see [Chapter 17](#)). This was even before the ‘raiders’ had entered Kashmir and border tensions with India were yet in the future.

What Pakistan wanted above all was security guarantees from the US against India, something that the US was unprepared to give since ‘it did not share Pakistan’s perception of India as an enemy,’ despite its periodic differences with India.³¹ While claiming to use US funds for fighting terrorism, Pakistan has used them for equipping itself against India. According to a 2009 Harvard study, ‘The Pakistani military did not use most of the funds for the agreed objective of fighting terror. Pakistan bought much conventional military equipment. Examples include F-16s, aircraft-mounted armaments, anti-ship and anti-missile defense systems, and an air defense radar system costing \$200 million, despite the fact that the terrorists in the FATA have no air attack capability. Over half of the total funds – 54.9 per cent – were spent on fighter aircraft and weapons, over a quarter – 26.62 per cent – on support and other aircraft, and 10 per cent on advanced weapons systems.’³² Clearly, the pattern of purchase reveals that they were not intended to fight terrorists but for beefing up its conventional military strength against India.

On its own, Pakistan would have been unable to pursue its elusive quest for parity with India. It was fortuitous circumstances that enabled Pakistan to leverage its geography to get huge bailouts, military and economic, from the US and, to a lesser degree, from China. This is what has bolstered its capability and confidence and allowed it to continue its pursuit of parity with India. Without such support, there was no way Pakistan could have indulged in the kind of dangerous brinkmanship that it has. By aiding Pakistan over the years – some \$40 billion since 1950, according to the Congressional Research Service – the US

has fed Pakistan's delusion of being India's regional military equal. As Haqqani notes, 'Seeking security against a much larger neighbor is a rational objective but seeking parity with it on a constant basis is not.'³³

In the changed international context, the US has started seeing India as a longer-term ally and partner. This is sending shivers down Pakistan's spine though it is doubtful if Pakistan would moderate its behaviour factoring in this development. On the contrary, Pakistan has pushed its relationship with China as a counter to the perceived distancing by the US. However, as will be noted later, China is unlikely to step into the US shoes and take on the responsibility of holding Pakistan aloft all on its own. With its own problems at home, economic and security, like in the case of the Uighurs, China will tread cautiously vis-à-vis Pakistan. While this does not augur well for Pakistan's continuing quest for parity with India, it is unlikely that Pakistan will stop trying, especially under the nuclear umbrella.



At various times, Pakistan has viewed India as a cowardly 'pushover' adversary because the 'Hindu has no stomach for a fight'.³⁴ Forceful and successful Indian reaction has invariably refuted such assumptions and surprised the Pakistanis. For example, led to believe that one Pakistani Muslim soldier was equal to ten Hindu Indian soldiers, the inability to take all of Kashmir in 1965 was a rude awakening for the Pakistani public. Notes British Brigadier Bidwell: '... the repulse of the Pakistanis by the Indians in 1965 was the first reversal of [the unbroken trend of Muslim victories in the subcontinent going back eight centuries] and a truly historic occasion.'³⁵

Since it is the army that calls the shots in Pakistan, it is, therefore, crucial to understand how the army perceives India. Two sets of documents help in understanding the thinking of the officer corps of the Pakistan Army. The first set comprises the various Green Books containing articles written by various army officers on subjects of interest. These have been referred to in [Chapter 5](#), on the army. The second is a study titled *India: A Study in Profile* (1990) written by Lt Col Javed Hassan for the army's Faculty of Research and Doctrinal Studies (FORAD) of the Command and Staff College, Quetta. According to Haqqani, it is distributed by the military book club, while Fair notes that it continues to be recommended reading at Pakistan's defence educational institutions, is widely cited by Pakistani military personnel and is one of the only four books on India included by the National Defence University on its 'Important Books to Read' list.³⁶

After an analysis of 2,000 years of Indian history, the conclusions in Javed Hassan's study were: (i) India has a poor track record at projection of power beyond its frontiers; (ii) It has a hopeless record in protecting its own freedom and sovereignty despite having larger armies; (iii) Dismal performance of the military is matched by the near-total absence of any popular resistance against foreign domination; (iv) The key traits of the Hindu are presumptuousness, persistence and deviousness; (v) India has been unable to exist as a single unified state; and (vi) India's northern and western states represented its Hindu core; Indian Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, the southern state of Tamil Nadu, and the six north-eastern tribal states were alienated from the Indian mainstream and with some encouragement could become centres of insurgencies that could weaken India, if not dismember it. The other states had regionalist impulses but inadequate momentum for secessionism.³⁷

Given his views on Hindus and thus on India, it is hardly surprising that Javed Hassan (by then a Lt

General) was one of the ‘infamous four’ who, together with Musharraf, chief of general staff Lt Gen. Mohammad Aziz, and X Corps commander Lt Gen. Mahmud Ahmad, planned a scheme like Kargil. The whole scheme was based on the assumption, underlined by Hassan, on how the ‘Hindu’ would cave in before a superior power. Such a massive miscalculation, based on half-baked knowledge and a priori assumptions, can have disastrous consequences in the future, given that both countries are nuclear-weapon powers. Such attitudes reflect the Pakistan Army’s civilizational hostility towards India. This is unlikely to change in the near or medium term.

A point frequently made by Pakistan has been that India did not accept its creation and has threatened to undo Partition right from 1947. Such a threat perception continues till date. This being so, it is natural to ask if a militarily weaker state, fearing dismemberment, would adopt an aggressive posture and launch not one but several wars on a stronger power and actually invite the scenario it feared? The answer has to be an emphatic no.

Look at the evidence in Pakistan’s case. In October 1947, Jinnah knew about what was happening fifteen days before the events but wanted to ‘keep his conscience clear’. Prime Minister Liaquat Ali was very much involved in planning the whole scheme. It is also clear that about a month before the 22 October invasion, it had been decided that the Poonchis should revolt and should be helped. In other words, the invasion was not a spontaneous one by the tribals incensed by the communal killings in Jammu but a deliberate, pre-planned attack by the newly created state of Pakistan to militarily take over Kashmir.

The moot point is that would a state feeling threatened by its larger neighbour, complaining about the Partition process being unfair and being denied its due share of military stores, launch a military operation against this same neighbour? It really strains the credulity to think so. Hence, the whole theory of being threatened by India, or India trying to undo Partition, needs to be taken with a large pinch of salt and requires a hard re-examination. As Venkataramani puts it: ‘Assuming that the threat of “Hindu imperialism” as adumbrated by Jinnah were real, Pakistan leaders should have taken the utmost care to avoid any provocation of India for an extended period required for Pakistan to make itself reasonably secure against aggression.’³⁸

In fact, it was not external dangers but internal ones that were a matter of concern. In early 1958, a few correspondents referred to political instability in Pakistan and asked Ayub Khan how he proposed to defend Pakistan under such conditions if some hostile neighbour attacked. He replied: ‘Do not worry about the defence of the country. That is my business. Attend to your leaders who are wrecking the country. Do not talk of external dangers. The real danger is within the country. Cannot you see it?’³⁹ Musharraf was to repeat something similar:

We are capable of meeting external danger. We have to safeguard ourselves against internal dangers. I have always been saying that internal strife is eating us like termite. Don’t forget that Pakistan is the citadel of Islam and if we want to serve Islam well we will first have to make Pakistan strong and powerful.⁴⁰

General Kayani’s stress on internal threats has already been noted in [Chapter 6](#). Clearly, the threat from India has been highly exaggerated since 1947 to serve the political ends of the Pakistani leadership, both civilian and especially the military.

The Indo-Pak dialogue since 1947 has been characterized by a roller coaster of expectations and disappointments. Whether it was the Nehru–Liaquat talks post-Partition, or the Swaran Singh–Bhutto talks of 1962–63, or the composite dialogue process of the 1990s and the next decade, the results have been the same: some positive movement on issues like connectivity (road and rail), trade, visas and so on. A major achievement was the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 that has withstood the test of time and war, and the ceasefire on the LOC in the first decade of the new century. But on issues like Kashmir and terror attacks against India, there has been no forward movement. Of late, a noticeable feature of the dialogue has been that whenever they are to begin, or have proceeded for a while, a terrorist incident takes place in India or on Indian interests in Afghanistan that vitiates the atmosphere for the continuation of the talks. Invariably, the footprints of the perpetrators can be traced back to Pakistan.

The latest, at the time of writing, was the attack by the JeM on the Indian Air Force base at Pathankot (2 January 2016), following the unprecedented visit of Prime Minister Modi to Lahore on 25 December 2015 and just before the two foreign secretaries were to meet. Resultantly, the talks were postponed. What was different, however, was that the talks were not called off, as in the past but postponed and the lines of communication between the NSAs (national security advisors) of the two countries were kept open. Registering of an FIR (first information report) in Pakistan and the visit of a Pakistani Joint Investigation Team to Pathankot were also unprecedented. Though minor in the larger scheme of things, these could have been encouraging signs if Pakistan had allowed an Indian investigative team to visit Pakistan.

In reality, however, the grooves of any talks between India and Pakistan on Kashmir and terrorism are deep and are difficult to change. For Pakistan, Kashmir has to be on top of the agenda. The blueprint for future engagement agreed to at Ufa⁴¹ failed precisely because Kashmir was not given the priority Pakistanis expected. No government of Pakistan can survive for long without projecting Kashmir as the ‘core’ issue.

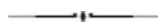
In any case, what do India and Pakistan talk on Kashmir? All Pakistan wants is to get, at the minimum, the Kashmir Valley. It knows that Jammu and Ladakh are pipe dreams. Its entire foreign and defence policies are geared towards that objective. That is why it keeps harping on the UN resolutions on the one hand and uses non-state actors on the other to promote violence. However, it must be noted that for Pakistan, an unresolved Kashmir issue also serves the useful purpose to whip up anti-India public opinion to divert attention from any divisive domestic issue. And keeping Kashmir on the boil also serves the Pakistan Army well, assuring it the pre-eminent place in Pakistan with the first claim on its resources.

For India, whose nationalism is territorial and not religious, this is just not going to happen. In fact, for India the only thing to talk about is the part of Jammu and Kashmir illegally occupied by Pakistan – the so-called ‘Azad’ Kashmir and Gilgit–Baltistan (GB) both of which jointly constitute Pakistan Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (POJK). Pakistan’s hold on both these regions is tenuous – GB’s status is opaque and ‘Azad Kashmir’ is hardly ‘Azad’ or independent. Neither can the LOC become an international boundary given the sentiments of the Indian people and the resolution of parliament. On the Pakistani side, it would be equally impossible to sell any such idea to the Punjabis, who have been fed on a daily diet of Kashmir being Pakistan’s ‘jugular vein’ for decades.

For India, terrorism fomented by Pakistan since the 1980s is the number one item on the agenda of talks with Pakistan. By dragging its feet on the investigation and trial of the LeT terrorists who planned the

2008 Mumbai attacks and, more recently, the Pathankot attack, Pakistan has clearly signalled its unwillingness to move ahead on these issues. Claiming to be the victim of terrorism, Pakistan is extremely reluctant to discuss terrorism that it directs against India. For the past few years, Pakistan has been trying desperately to find some evidence of Indian interference in Pakistan, especially in Balochistan and Karachi. By this it could claim equivalence with Indian assertions of Pakistan fomenting terrorism in its territory. It can then come to the negotiating table on terrorism as an equal, and not on the back foot. As part of this strategy, Pakistan has claimed to have presented ‘proof’ of Indian involvement in Balochistan, which it has presented to the US during the visit of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in October 2015. While details are not known, at the time of writing, Pakistan claims to have arrested an Indian naval officer in rather dubious circumstances and attributed a host of crimes to him without any evidence. A clumsily put together ‘confession’ of the officer has been circulated. Given Pakistan’s track record, it is highly unlikely that either India or the international community would begin to believe Pakistan’s charges.

As noted earlier, anti-Indianness is how Pakistan has chosen to define its identity. It is this relentless, almost immutable, ‘anti-Indianism’ in the very DNA of Pakistan that will prevent a sustained positive relationship with India. That being the case, Kashmir is only a symptom of the conflict. India ‘addressing’ the issue of Kashmir, whatever that may mean, is unlikely to satisfy Pakistan since it also wants India to treat Pakistan as an equal. Thus, while a dialogue is necessary with a neighbour, it will be highly optimistic that a dialogue with Pakistan can either be uninterrupted or unintermittible. If anything, the possibility of any real progress in Indo–Pak dialogue is bleak unless and until Pakistan re-examines its roots, stops seeking its identity in ‘anti-Indianness’ and stops its futile pursuit of parity with India.



The quest for parity with India, seen largely in military terms, has been the central reason for Pakistan being a security state and its inability to transform itself into a democratic nation with a strong development agenda. Had the quest for parity with India been across the board, Pakistan may well have been a different country. Parity in terms of democratic functioning, economic development, education, social sector advancements, etc., would have seen a fundamental shift in Pakistan’s priorities. As Haqqani notes, 94 per cent of India’s children between five and fifteen complete primary school compared with 54 per cent in Pakistan. Every year, 8,900 Indians get a PhD in the sciences compared with the 8,142 doctorates awarded by Pakistan’s universities since Independence. The total number of books published in any language on any subject in Pakistan in 2013, including religious titles and children’s books, stood at 2,581, against 90,000 in India.⁴²

In Pakistan, the quest for military parity and an imagined threat perception from India has come at a huge cost. As Faruqi notes, ‘Pakistan’s continuing preoccupation with seeking a military solution to its conflict with India is strategically myopic on three counts. First of all, it has not been militarily successful. Second, it has failed to achieve Pakistan’s stated political aims. Third, it has been costly, in terms of the benefit forgone by not spending enough on raising the people’s standard of living.’⁴³

In simple mathematical terms, with the Indian GDP growing at over 7 per cent, as compared with Pakistan’s GDP growth of around 4 per cent and given that India’s economy is nearly eight times the size of Pakistan’s, Pakistan has to expend considerably more resources and energy to maintain military parity with India, even if it is supplemented with use of non-state actors, nuclear weapons and ‘borrowed

power'. With the Pakistani economy consistently underperforming due to structural flaws, the expenditure on the army is unsustainable without outside support. By being fixated on an India-centric security template and the resultant use of resources, Pakistan is unable to take care of its internal needs. There will never be adequate resources to focus on the economy and vital sectors like water and education, and this at a time when the Indian economy is growing, making the gap between the two countries even wider.

However, it is unlikely that the Pakistani security establishment will relinquish the notion of military parity with India. If its track record is anything to go by, Pakistan will continue to pay a heavy price in terms of lack of internal development in its elusive quest for parity with India and hasten its trajectory towards the abyss.

Afghanistan: The Quest for Domination

No man who has read a page of Indian history will ever prophesy about the Frontier.

—Lord Curzon's warning in 1904¹

The problem is not about peace with the Taliban; the problem is peace between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

—Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in March 2015²

PAKISTAN IS the inheritor of the 'Great Game', a term made popular by Rudyard Kipling's famous book *Kim*. The term describes the moves made by Britain in the nineteenth century to protect its empire in India against the backdrop of Russia's rapid southwards advance. The key British gambit was to push its frontiers westwards that made Afghanistan, described famously as 'the graveyard of empires', the cherished prize for both empires. Ultimately, both countries accepted Afghanistan as a buffer and so avoided a direct military confrontation.

In the twentieth century, regional powers continued to be attracted to this landlocked country due to its geographical location between Central and South Asia. As has been well put: 'Afghanistan is one of the few countries of the world whose every frontier divides peoples speaking the same language and belonging to the same ethnic group or tribe.'³ It is this interplay of regional influence and its own internal dynamics that makes Afghanistan so important.

When Maharaja Ranjit Singh crossed the Indus and captured Peshawar, the Durrani winter capital, and its surroundings in 1823 from the Afghans, little did he realize that he was to change the course of history of the region forever. Very much like Caesar crossing the Rubicon, there was no turning back once the Sikhs established themselves on the west bank of the Indus. The British inherited Ranjit Singh's empire that included Peshawar and pushed it further westwards, demarcating their boundary with Afghanistan via the 1893 Durand Line. Pakistan, in turn, inherited the British possessions in 1947 and the stage was set for the events that had, and continue to have, a fundamental impact on Pakistan and the region.

Ayub Khan possibly best summed up Pakistan's disparaging attitude towards Afghanistan. Keen to project Pakistan as the best Muslim bastion against the spread of Soviet communism, in December 1959 he told visiting US president Eisenhower, 'The Afghans were not Muslims nearly as much as they were opportunists.'⁴ Commenting on this, Haqqani notes that this provided an insight into the emerging mindset in Pakistan. 'Afghans had been Muslim for longer than several ethnic groups in Pakistan. Pakistan had come into being only twelve years earlier, whereas Pakistan's military dictator felt he could dismiss his

country's northwestern neighbor as an opportunist and as insufficiently Muslim.'⁵

A broad sweep of the history of Pak-Afghan relations since 1947 reveals that at its core, Pakistan's policy is dictated by its insecurity vis-à-vis the Durand Line. Right from 1947, Pakistan was faced with a western border that was disputed by its neighbour just as, in its perceptions, India in the east too was seeking to undo Partition. Afghanistan was the only country that opposed Pakistan's membership to the United Nations on 30 September 1947 on the grounds that treaties with Britain lapsed when a new state, Pakistan, was created. As such, for Afghanistan, the Durand Line that demarcated the border between Afghanistan and British India after the Second Afghan War ceased to exist. In any case, the Afghans considered the 1878 Treaty of Gandamak and the Durand Agreement of 1893 as unjust agreements imposed on them by Britain, which they were forced to accept after a military defeat. Every Afghan government has hoped to re-annex the territories east of the border, extending up to the River Indus.⁶

The one opening that Afghanistan got was in 1947 itself when the Pakhtun leader Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan wanted a third option of Pakhtunistan in the referendum to decide between either India or Pakistan as per the Partition plan. This demand was supported by the Afghan government but rejected outright by the British for whom the north-west of India being part of Pakistan was crucial for their strategic plans. In the event, the nationalist Pakhtuns boycotted the referendum and the rest is history. However, successive Afghan governments have not given up the possibility of the independence of these areas if they could not be reincorporated into Afghanistan. In 1949, Afghanistan formally repudiated any formal status for the Durand Line in a Loya Jirga (grand national assembly). Thus, Afghanistan has not reconciled to the loss of what is today Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (earlier NWFP) and the northern part of Balochistan or almost 20–25 per cent of present-day Pakistan. However, Afghanistan has never received any international backing for its position. Being militarily weak and dependent on Pakistan for transit trade, there was very little that Afghanistan could do about it then or can do about it at present.

For its part, Pakistan treats the Durand Line as a settled fact, especially after King Amanullah Khan confirmed it in 1919 following his defeat by the British. However, Pakistan has always been insecure about the lack of its acceptance by Afghanistan. The insecurity is real given the common Pakhtun population straddling both sides of the Durand Line and about 20–25 per cent of Pakistan's territory being vulnerable to any Afghan revanchist designs. Pakistan's policies towards Afghanistan are, therefore, geared to get an Afghan government accept the sanctity of the Durand Line as the international border so that no ambiguity is left as far as its western borders are concerned.

According to the former Taliban ambassador to Pakistan Mullah Abdul Salam Zaif, Pakistan tried three times to formalize the border during the Taliban rule in Afghanistan but it repeatedly received a negative response. The first time was when Mullah Abdul Raziq was appointed as the interior minister; the second time during the visit of Pakistan's interior minister Moinuddin Haider to Kabul and Kandahar and the third time during the presidency of General Pervez Musharaf.⁷

The policy of securing the border has two objectives. One, a strong government in Afghanistan would be dangerous as it could try and recover Pakhtun territories lost to the Sikhs and inherited by Pakistan via the British. Therefore, Pakistan's policy had to ensure a weak government in Kabul that was dependent on Pakistan. This would be the best guarantee against any revanchist posture.

The second objective is based on Pakistan's perception about India. Pakistan views its relations with

Afghanistan not merely in a bilateral context but in a South Asian context too coupled with the perceived relationship that the US has with India and Pakistan. A nightmare scenario for Pakistan would be for India to encourage the revanchist claims of a strong and friendly (towards India) Afghanistan. This Indo-Afghan alliance would catch Pakistan in a vice-like grip with a hostile India on the east and a hostile Afghanistan on the west. For this reason, Pakistan has determined that India must not be allowed any space in Afghanistan. Only a proxy government in Kabul, or a weak and dependent Afghan government that toes Pakistan's line can ensure this.

The basic flaw in Pakistan's policy has been to underestimate the Afghans, a throwback to Ayub's description, mentioned above. As noted by Roedad Khan, 'The fatal error Zia and all his advisers made ... was to brand all Afghan leaders as Soviet stooges. We saw them first as communists and only second as Afghan nationalists. We did not realize that the Afghans are Afghans first and Afghans last.'⁸ Zia's successors have continued with this flawed perception, with the Soviets being replaced with Indians. This has led to the persistence of serious policy miscalculations.

For these complex and interrelated reasons, Pakistan has followed a forward policy in Afghanistan from Z.A. Bhutto's time. The forward policy has been operationalized by tactically leveraging its front-line status during superpower intervention in Afghanistan to obtain economic and, especially, military aid while pursuing its own agenda against India and Afghanistan.

A term frequently used in Pakistan is 'strategic depth' to describe the motivation of its policy towards Afghanistan. The concept, as noted in an earlier chapter, was based on the reality that several of Pakistan's population centres were close to the border with India. Coupled with a flat terrain it provided a scary scenario in military terms. Hence, geographical space or depth was sought in Afghanistan. Even before the creation of Pakistan, the Cabinet Mission Plan of 16 May 1946 had stated clearly: 'The two sections of the suggested Pakistan contain the two most vulnerable frontiers in India and for a successful defence in depth the area of Pakistan would be insufficient.'⁹

Ayub Khan was perhaps the first to articulate the lack of depth of Pakistan, though not necessarily seeking it in Afghanistan. While recalling a conversation that Mao Zedong had with his adviser Fida Hussain and recommending Pakistan to adopt guerilla tactics, Ayub wrote in his diary on 10 October 1968:

The Chinese keep talking to us in terms of guerilla warfare because that is their experience, besides they have the space for this. Unfortunately, we lack depth in our country and besides some of our centres of population, communication links, headworks and canals lie near the border so we have to be ready to defeat the enemy as soon as he enters our territory. This is what we did last time and we have every hope of success should he aggress again.¹⁰

The operationalization of the concept of strategic depth depended on a friendly, preferably dependent, anti-India government in Kabul. This has been an article of faith with the Pakistan security establishment. Additionally, a friendly Afghanistan would enable Pakistan to set up bases for training Kashmiri militants as they did in the 1990s and claim to the world that they were 'providing only moral, political and diplomatic support' to the Kashmiris. This assumed significance when the US threatened to declare Pakistan a state sponsor of terrorism.

The only time that Pakistan has felt relatively secure about its western border as also about its Pakhtun population was when the Taliban were in power in Kabul between 1996 and 2001. However, no Afghan government, not even the Pak-sponsored and backed Taliban government, has accepted the legality of the Durand Line though, of course, they did not raise any irredentist claims either.

Mohammed Daoud Khan, who overthrew the Afghan king Zahir Shah in a coup in July 1973 was a staunch supporter of the idea of an independent Pakhtunistan. His pronouncements and policies did try to rekindle the idea, much to Pakistan's discomfort. This set the stage of for the first of many Pakistan interventions in Afghanistan. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto started the process, which continues till today, of arming and supporting Afghan dissidents who were opposed to the regime in Afghanistan.

Thus, Pakistan's support of the Islamist insurgency in Afghanistan began in 1973–74, years before the Soviets intervened in Afghanistan in December 1979. Following Daoud's coup, an Afghan cell was created in the Foreign Office in July/August 1973 to give out policy guidelines. The Frontier Corps had the overall responsibility of the operation and worked in tandem with the ISI to conduct intelligence operations inside Afghanistan.¹¹ Afghan dissident leaders like Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Prof. Burhanuddin Rabbani who had escaped to Pakistan in 1974 after Daoud's coup, came into contact with Pakistani authorities during this period. Pakistan established training camps for them in North and South Waziristan agencies. They were to become the bases for the much larger effort in the 1980s with assistance from the US and Saudi Arabia.

The Afghan cell was revived after the April 1978 coup d'état led by Nur Mohammed Taraki that overthrew Daoud. The cell was tasked '... to analyze the available information and suggest policy options. The defense plans were updated as a destabilized Afghanistan had adversely affected the security of Pakistan.¹² However, according to Haqqani, '... the Afghan cell's primary functions were to coordinate the resistance to communist rule in Afghanistan as well as secure international backing for Pakistan and the resistance.'¹³

The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan on 24 December 1979. This was a godsend for Zia-ul-Haq. He had become an international pariah after hanging Bhutto, turning down international appeals for clemency and refusing to hold the promised elections. He saw in Afghanistan an opportunity to turn the tables on his opponents by appearing, like his predecessors, to be halting the march of communism and so becoming a champion in Western eyes. Zia knew the US would have no option but to provide massive assistance to Pakistan to bleed their cold war rival. The deal was straightforward: in return for US economic and military aid Pakistan would expand its existing covert operations using the Afghan resistance, against the Soviets in Afghanistan. Pakistan, thus, willingly became the base camp for the US/Saudi-backed operations against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan.

For Zia, defeat of the Soviet Union was the tactical, immediate objective. His strategic objective was to instal a regime in Kabul that would finally put an end to Afghan revanchist claims forever. In fact, Zia told Selig Harrison,

We have earned the right to have [in Kabul] a power which is very friendly towards us. We have taken risks as a frontline state, and we will not permit a return to the pre-war situation, marked by a large Indian and Soviet influence and Afghan claims on our own territory. The new power will be really Islamic, a part of the Islamic renaissance which, you will see, will

someday extend itself to the Soviet Muslims.¹⁴

The turning point in the jihad came with the US supplying Stinger missiles to the mujahideen in 1986 that neutralized the advantage of Soviet air power. By 1988, the Soviets were ready to quit Afghanistan. The US had achieved its objectives, short-term as it proved in hindsight. Pakistan had a deep sense of betrayal when after the Soviet withdrawal, the US not only turned its back on Afghanistan, leaving Pakistan holding the baby, but imposed sanctions for its nuclear weapons programme. It was a rather large baby that Pakistan was left holding and included 3.5 million Afghan refugees and in their wake, drug trafficking, smuggling, and a region flush with weapons and thousands of mujahideen of various nationalities who had been specially recruited for the jihad.

Pakistan could still have managed if the mujahideen – the Peshawar seven – had come to an amicable power-sharing agreement. They could not and the result was civil war, with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the favourite of Pakistan, unable to win militarily. Pakistan's Afghan policy was in ruins; they had to accept a power-sharing arrangement between the various groups even though Hekmatyar was not able to enter Kabul. The civil war had devastating consequences for the Afghans. In such a scenario, a group of religious students – the Taliban (plural for talib, an Islamic student) – arose from Kandahar in 1994 during Benazir Bhutto's second term as prime minister. It was certainly a local phenomenon borne out of the frustration of the civil war. It is debatable if any Pakistani element was actually involved in the formation of the Taliban but the fact remains that Pakistan's subsequent support transformed what was essentially a Kandahar-based group into a fighting force that captured Kabul in 1996. Benazir Bhutto and her interior minister Naseerullah Babar initially provided this support but later the operation was appropriated by the ISI.

During the Taliban regime (1996–2001) Pakistan came to view Afghanistan as its backyard and felt a sense of security about its Pakhtun population. For Pakistan, support to the Taliban became an integral part of its national interest. In May 2000, Musharraf publicly attested to this support: 'Afghanistan's majority ethnic Pakhtuns have to be on our side. This is our national interest. ... The Taliban cannot be alienated by Pakistan. We have a national security interest there.'¹⁵ Pakistan also made it clear that it would not allow the Taliban regime to be destabilized. For example, Ahmed Rashid quotes Maj. Gen. Ghulam Ahmed Khan, principal staff officer to Musharraf, saying, 'We are trying to stop the US from undermining the Taliban regime. They cannot do it without Pakistan's help, because they have no assets there, but we will not allow it to happen,'¹⁶

However, knowingly or unknowingly, Pakistan's support to the Taliban ended up bolstering al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. It was not only logistic support that the Pakistani jihadi groups were providing but also manpower that was used by both the Taliban and al-Qaeda.¹⁷

While Pakistan's proxies, the Taliban, were well ensconced in Afghanistan, 9/11 changed the course of history. Pakistan had to face a stark choice: as President Bush put it, 'Either you are with us or you are against us.' That didn't leave Musharraf much of a choice and he had to bite the bullet and turn against Pakistan's protégés. With the Taliban refusing to hand over Osama bin Laden, the US launched air attacks on Taliban strongholds and by the end of 2001, the Taliban government had collapsed. The al-Qaeda and Taliban leadership found refuge in Pakistan's tribal areas (FATA) while their rank and file went back to their homes in Afghanistan. As a result, FATA became a base camp for the al-Qaeda and the Taliban from

where they recruited, trained and launched terrorist attacks on US forces in Afghanistan.

The collapse of the Taliban was bad enough for Pakistan, worse was to follow. It felt its interests were ignored in the Bonn Agreement¹⁸ and that 'it was essentially an elite pact between members of the Northern Alliance and international actors, which left out parts of the Pakhtun south and the concerns of Pakistan'.¹⁹ The refrain of the Pakhtuns being ignored was to be a constant theme of Pakistan, projecting itself as champions of the Pakhtuns. It also found resonance, as for example, in the report of an Afghanistan–Pakistan Task Force, which concurred that it was imperative to address 'long-standing issues surrounding the status of Pakhtuns in both Afghanistan, where they are the largest ethnic group, and Pakistan, where twice as many live as a minority'.²⁰

The Bonn Agreement made Hamid Karzai the president, who went on to win the next two presidential elections too. His relationship with Pakistan was rocky. His links with India and his determination to pursue his own independent foreign policy rather than toe Pakistan's line was largely responsible for this. What made matters worse for Pakistan was that with Karzai as president, India re-established its diplomatic presence and launched sizeable reconstruction projects totalling around \$2 billion. The growing Indian footprint outraged Pakistan because it perceived its worst nightmares coming true.

Faced with receding prospects of Afghanistan becoming dependent on it, Pakistan has pursued a policy of trying to get the Taliban back in power in Kabul, either militarily, after the US left, or politically, via the back door. From as early as 2002-03, al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters started attacking US bases inside Afghanistan and then withdrawing to FATA.²¹ By 2004, active involvement of the Pakistan Army was noted when its trucks dropped and retrieved Taliban fighters at the Afghan border. By 2005 NATO troops in Afghanistan were faced with serious attacks from the Taliban who had the full backing of Pakistan.²² Bruce Riedel cites a secret NATO study, leaked in 2012, based on the interrogations of 4,000 captured Taliban, al-Qaeda and other fighters in Afghanistan in over 27,000 interrogations, which held that 'ISI support was critical to the survival and revival of the Taliban after 2001. It provides sanctuary, training camps, expertise, and help with fund raising.' The report concluded that '...the ISI is thoroughly aware of Taliban activities and the whereabouts of all senior Taliban personnel.'²³

During the Taliban regime, Pakistan was able to secure its objectives as far as India was concerned. India was forced to shut its embassy and the four consulates. In addition, demonstrating how 'strategic depth' worked in practice, Pakistan relocated training camps of the anti-Indian jihadis to Afghanistan.

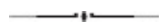
After the regime change, sustaining links with the Taliban was considered vital for Pakistan to maintain its influence in Afghanistan after the American withdrawal. Pakistan did not want the vacuum to be filled up by any other country in the region (especially India).²⁴ This fear was articulated clearly by former army chief Gen. Kayani who stated, 'Strategically, we cannot have an Afghan army on our western border which has an Indian mindset and capabilities to take on Pakistan.'²⁵

The substantial economic reconstruction programme undertaken by India in Afghanistan has been anathema for Pakistan. Unable or unwilling to match Indian efforts, Pakistan has resorted to violence to apply brakes on it. For this purpose it has mobilized the Taliban, the Haqqani network and the LeT to target Indian interests. Attacks on the Indian consulate in Jalalabad in 2003 and 2007, on the embassy in Kabul in 2008 and 2009, on a hotel used by Indians in 2010 and on the consulate in Herat in May 2014 just as the new Indian government was going to be sworn in, are part of this strategy. These attacks,

however, have not deterred India in helping Afghanistan rebuild its economy.

Another component of the Pakistani narrative about the alleged adverse consequences of the Indian presence in Afghanistan is that India's consulates are being used for subversive purposes. The allegations have ranged from India printing false Pakistani currency to employing Afghans to carry out acts of sabotage and terrorism on Pakistani territory. It has accused India of setting up networks of 'terrorist training camps' inside Afghanistan, 'including at the Afghan military base of Qushila Jadid, north of Kabul; near Gereshk, in southern Helmand province; in the Panjshir Valley, north-east of Kabul; and at Kahak and Hassan Killies in western Nimruz province.' None of the charges could, however, be proved.²⁶

The then Balochistan chief minister, Jam Muhammad Yusuf, alleged on 13 August 2004 that Indian secret services were maintaining forty terrorist camps all over Baloch territory.²⁷ Likewise, at the beginning of July 2006 Senator Mushahid Hussain, chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, stated that 'RAW [Research and Analysis Wing] [is] training 600 Baluchis in Afghanistan' insisting that 'India [is] propping up the Baloch war'²⁸. Several politicians, journalists and army leaders have repeated this allegation since then. However, to quote Darlymple, 'US intelligence agencies have followed up all the leads provided by the Pakistanis on this matter and have not found any evidence that India is actively aiding Baluchi separatists in the way Pakistan alleges.'²⁹



Pakistan's deep involvement in Afghanistan has intermittently given it a seat on the high table for a while, and as a front-line state brought it financial assistance. Has it brought it more security? In reality, the blowback from Afghanistan has had major adverse consequences for Pakistan.

First, Pakistan had to cater to almost 3–3.5 million Afghan refugees who sought shelter in Pakistan, many of whom have still not returned. While the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) paid for them, several issues were to have long-term consequences for the stability of Pakistan. Pakistan sought to recruit the young male refugees for undertaking jihad in Afghanistan. For this purpose, a host of madrasas were set up with the help of Saudi and Gulf money, not only for the Afghan refugees but also for the Pakistani population.

In his enthusiasm for the cause, Zia-ul-Haq encouraged Islamic volunteers from all over the world to train alongside the Afghan mujahideen. These global jihadis were funded by Saudi charities like Rabitat al-Alam al-Islami. One such who responded to the call was Osama bin Laden. Many of these 'foreign fighters' were to stay back after the jihad was over and settle down in FATA, marrying locals and setting the stage for the next episode of jihad in Afghanistan.

Second, according to the UNHCR, as of December 2014, there were 1.5 million registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan (and another 1.5 million internally displaced persons [IDPs] displaced due to Pakistan Army operations in FATA) making a total of over three million people of concern. According to it, 'The operating environment for humanitarian actors in Pakistan remains volatile, with fragile security, as well as access, social and economic challenges likely to affect humanitarian operations.'³⁰

Third, not only do the Afghan refugees provide cheap labour in Pakistani cities, but they are also the main source for providing recruits to the Pakistan-supported Taliban in Afghanistan. So long as this vast reservoir has been available, Taliban have recouped their substantial losses in Afghanistan from among

the Afghan refugees. The quandary for Pakistan is that so long as the Taliban continue to recoup their losses and continue to fight, there will not be any sustainable refugee repatriation. The government of KPK has taken serious objection to the continued presence of Afghan refugees and has ascribed incidents of terrorism and crime to them, calling for their time-bound repatriation.³¹ This has also led to the rise of anti-Pakistan sentiment among the Afghan Pakhtuns due to the brutal treatment meted out to refugees and their forced eviction by various provincial actors.

Interestingly, even Pakistani Pakhtuns were facing problems by being considered as Afghans. As the Pakhtun leader in Balochistan Mehmood Khan Achakzai told the National Assembly nearly 100,000 Pakhtuns had their identity cards blocked because they were thought to be Afghans. He added, 'From Sialkot to Islamabad and from Quetta to Peshawar, anyone who has a beard or anyone who wears a turban is [considered] a terrorist.'³² Such discrimination and ethnic profiling does not bode well for inter-provincial harmony.

Fourth, drug smuggling, a by-product of the jihad, not only fed organized crime and corruption in Pakistan, it also had a debilitating effect on consumers. The number of users steadily increased from 50,000 in 1980 to 8.1 million in 2011. Every year at least 50,000 more people get addicted to various kinds of drugs. The quantity of opium consumed in Pakistan had gone up to 80 million tonnes.³³

According to the 2015 World Drug Report prepared by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) about 43 per cent of narcotics, heroin and opium produced in Afghanistan transits through Pakistan, with Karachi being the main outlet. The report has warned that unless Pakistan takes steps to curb transit of drugs through its territory, it risks turning into a narcotics-consuming country.³⁴

Fifth, since 2001, according to Pakistan official figures conveyed to the Supreme Court in March 2013, over 49,000 Pakistanis have died in terrorist attacks, while the armed forces have suffered 15,681 casualties in the tribal areas since 2008.³⁵

Sixth, the Economic Survey 2015–16 estimates that during the last fourteen years since 9/11, the direct and indirect cost incurred by Pakistan due to the impact of the war in Afghanistan amounted to \$118.31 billion (Rs 9.86 trillion). It notes that the increase in violent extremism and terrorism in Pakistan was a fallout of instability in Afghanistan, causing serious damage to the economy and responsible for widespread human suffering.³⁶ According to a report prepared by the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry, quoting a World Bank document, smuggling in Afghan transit trade alone caused \$35 billion revenue loss in the period between 2001 and 2009.³⁷ While the figures of the economic cost can be disputed, the social cost in terms of drugs, weaponization of society, deterioration in law and order, radicalization of society, growth of a jihadi culture, etc., is incalculable.

Seventh, being a base camp for the jihad meant that Pakistan became flush with massive quantities of weapons of all types. Pakistan became a market for Afghan arms. The free weapon trade enabled local miscreants to equip themselves with sophisticated hardware. This gave birth to the 'Kalashnikov culture' in the country. Steve Coll estimates that by 1992 Afghanistan had more personal weapons per head than India and Pakistan combined; the Soviet Union pumped in military equipment worth between \$36 billion and \$48 billion, while the US, Saudis and Chinese supplied between \$6 billion and \$12 billion worth of aid.³⁸ A large portion of these weapons found their way into Pakistan and especially into Karachi where the law and order situation deteriorated sharply in the 1990s.

It is estimated that there are twenty million or so arms held by the Pakistani public, of which only

seven million are licensed. In other words, eleven out of every 100 persons in Pakistan is in possession of a gun of some kind, whether acquired legally or illegally.³⁹ Not surprisingly, violence has become endemic.

Eighth, the entire effort was handled by the ISI that massively expanded its operations and manpower to cope with the demands being made on it. The CIA helped increase its technological capabilities, making it an extremely powerful institution in Pakistan. Resultantly, the role and importance of the ISI grew exponentially in Pakistan. This would have adverse consequences for the fledgling democracy in Pakistan.⁴⁰

Finally, many perceptive analysts have warned about the future. For example, Eqbal Ahmad wrote that the Taliban victory was likely to augment Pakistan's political and strategic predicament instead of improving it because it was an illusion that a Taliban-dominated government in Kabul would be permanently friendly towards Pakistan. He predicted that if the Taliban remained in power, they would turn on Pakistan, linking their brand of 'Islamism' with a revived movement for Pakhtunistan. He cautioned, 'I have met some of them and found ethnic nationalism lurking just below their "Islamic" skin. ... The convergence of ethnic nationalism and religion can mobilize people decisively. However inadvertently, Islamabad is setting the stage for the emergence in the next decade of a powerful Pakhtunistan movement.'⁴¹ In fact, the backlash from Afghanistan is leading to the Talibanization of Pakistan with 'strategic depth' working in the reverse direction.

Such a blowback has been the high cost to pay for trying to pursue the chimera of 'strategic depth' and for tactical advantage. Many in Pakistan agree but so long as the army determines the security policy, things are unlikely to change.



Since the establishment of a new government led by President Ashraf Ghani in Kabul in 2014, the prospects had brightened for better Pak-Afghan relations than they had been when Hamid Karzai was at the helm in Afghanistan. During his joint press conference with Nawaz Sharif in Islamabad on 15 November 2014, President Ghani declared that the 'enormous steps' taken in the 'last three days had overcome the obstacles' in ties of the 'past thirteen years'. Ghani's visit marked a renewal of military, intelligence and economic cooperation as also set out a plan for future partnership. This was followed up by an information-sharing deal in May 2015 between Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and the Afghan National Directorate of Security (NDS). That was hailed as a game changer.⁴²

However, the honeymoon did not last very long. By August 2015, Ghani was forced to vent his frustration by saying, 'We hoped for peace but we are receiving messages of war from Pakistan'.⁴³ He added:

Since I took office, Afghans have been waiting for Pakistan to show their tangible commitment [to peace]. But attacks in the past two months and now in Kabul have shown us that it is still the same as the past. ... The sanctuaries of the suicide attackers are still in Pakistan. ... The safety of our people and the interests of Afghanistan are the only criterion of our relationship with Pakistan. If our people are dying and getting killed, then the relationship makes no sense.⁴⁴

Ghani's overtures to Pakistan were rooted in the belief that a resolution of Afghanistan's security problems lay with that country and he staked a lot of domestic capital on this overture. What Ghani wanted was for Pakistan to deliver on its promises of bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table. Instead of doing that, Ghani found that the Taliban launched massive attacks at the commencement of their spring offensive in 2015 and 2016 including in areas in northern Afghanistan like Kunduz, Badakhshan and Sari Pol apart from Kabul. This led to former Northern Alliance commanders like Vice-President Rasheed Dostam and Governor Ustad Ata to galvanize their forces.

To avoid a complete break, Pakistan succeeded in bringing some sections of the Taliban to the negotiating table where the first round of talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government were held on 7 July 2015 with the US and China as observers. Several commentators saw the participation of the Taliban in the talks and their agreement to continue the process as a major change in their attitude. A second round was scheduled for 31 July 2015, but was postponed due to the announcement of the death of Mullah Omar. In the ensuing leadership tussle, the new leader Mullah Akhtar Mansoor carried out a series of devastating attacks in Afghanistan in August to prove his credentials. The attacks led to the cancellation of the peace negotiations as President Ashraf Ghani announced he would not ask for Pakistan's role in the future for the dialogue with the Taliban.

The tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan escalated to such an extent that cross-border skirmishes took place between the forces of the two sides in mid-June 2016 at Torkham. Resultantly, several personnel were killed on both sides, including a Pakistani major.

Afghanistan has also not bought Pakistan's claim about the success of Zarb-e-Azb. In response to the Pakistan prime minister's advisor on foreign affairs Sartaj Aziz's assertion that the Haqqani network was no longer operational in Pakistan and that they had shifted to Afghanistan, the Afghan presidential palace in a statement in early September 2015 insisted that documents and evidence showed that the network's leadership, command and control, supportive infrastructure and sanctuaries were still operational in Pakistan. So long as Pakistan did not frontally take on the Haqqani network, its efforts against the TTP and nudging the Afghan Taliban to talk peace with Kabul will not get much traction with the international community.

After a six-month hiatus some forward movement on talks has become visible largely due to the participation of the US and China, together with Afghanistan and Pakistan in a Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) format. Following several meetings, the QCG succeeded in adopting a road map for direct Afghan government-Taliban talks, stipulating the stages and steps in the process. The first round of peace talks between Kabul and the Taliban was supposed to have been held in the first week of March 2016 but could not take place after Taliban refused to attend and reiterated their demand for the exit of foreign troops, lifting of curbs on their leaders and release of detained militants. The killing of the Taliban Amir Akhtar Mansoor in a US drone strike on 21 May 2016 put paid to any hope of an immediate revival of the peace talks.

Pakistan's role in the QCG was clearly to use its influence over the Taliban and bring them to the negotiating table. Sartaj Aziz confirmed such a role on 1 March 2016 at Washington's Council on Foreign Relations, when he admitted to the presence of the top leadership of Afghan Taliban in safe havens in Pakistan for the last many decades. He also confirmed that Islamabad had pressured Afghan Taliban leaders to participate in the first-ever direct talks with the Afghan government on 7 July 2015. After years

of denial (which no one believed anyway), Pakistan had finally admitted its complicity in sustaining the Taliban in pursuit of its policy of strategic depth. Sartaj Aziz further compounded matter by telling Reuters, 'There are risks involved of how far we can go and in what sequence we should go and in what scale we should go.'⁴⁵ This put paid to the assertions of both Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and army chief Gen. Raheel Sharif at the commencement of Operation Zarb-e-Azb in June 2014 that the Afghan Taliban would also not be spared during this operation. Aziz's assertion makes it evident that Pakistan continues to regard the Afghan Taliban as its strategic asset and confirms suspicions that they were merely relocated during the operation.

The reasons for Aziz's confessions are debatable but it provides the Afghan government with enough reasons to doubt Pakistan's intentions for peace and reinforces Pakistan's dubious record. It also makes Pakistan responsible for the actions of the Taliban, a responsibility it would find hard to fulfil given the Taliban offensive all over Afghanistan. Given the current state of play within the Taliban, with several groups vying for leadership and using violence to establish their credentials, it would be extremely difficult to bring them or even a majority of them to the negotiating table. Moreover, even if the talks take place, groups not party to the negotiations are likely to pursue their own agendas regardless of what is agreed in Islamabad.

It is indeed ironical that Pakistan, which itself is a revanchist state vis-à-vis India as far as Kashmir is concerned, is faced by a bigger revanchist challenge from Afghanistan. The difference is that in the case of Kashmir, Pakistan seeks additional territory as the 'unfinished agenda of Partition' while in the case of Afghanistan it would lose a substantial chunk of its territory if the Durand Line is challenged. As a result, Pakistan has had to juggle between this conundrum – arguing for a change in the status quo in the east and being a defender of the status quo in the west.

Both after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979 and the US intervention in October 2001, Pakistan perceived an opportunity for itself to settle the issue of the Durand Line and bring a closure to the uncertain status of its western borders. Unfortunately, such an opportunity was seen in tactical rather than strategic terms. On both occasions, Pakistan did not see through the opportunity and calculate the long-term effects. Consequently, it ended up doing far more damage to itself than in trying to achieve any strategic goals.

The grievous miscalculation that Pakistan is making is to envision that a Taliban-controlled Afghanistan will toe its line. If there has been one lesson from Afghan history, it is that no outsider has been able to dominate it for long. This is what the British learnt in the nineteenth century, the Soviets in the twentieth and the US in the twenty-first. Pakistan is no different but it will not stop trying due to its obsessive desire to control and instal a weak and dependent government in Kabul. In the process, given the cost that it has borne for its Afghan policy, Pakistan is fast becoming the next victim of this 'graveyard of empires'. Tactically, a weak and dependent Afghanistan may help temporarily to calm the insecurities of Pakistan's military. However, over the long-term, it has brought in its wake refugees, drugs, 'Kalashnikov culture', and heightened the religious identity of the Pakhtuns even as the concept of 'strategic depth' itself has become redundant given the fact that both India and Pakistan are nuclear weapon states.

Pakistan also needs to give up its patronizing attitude towards Afghanistan and see its relations in a bilateral context rather than in a larger South Asian context. A sample of such an attitude is visible even in

the writings of noted commentator Najam Sethi who wrote editorially in *The Friday Times*:

Given the burden of geography and history, there can be no peace, security and stability in Afghanistan without the active support of neighbour Pakistan ... President Ashraf Ghani knows that foreign relations are all about quid pro quos. If he wants to reset ties with Pakistan to his advantage, he has to start by making sure that Afghanistan's ties with India will no longer be to Pakistan's disadvantage.⁴⁶

If this continues to be the attitude, it is hardly surprising that the moves towards rapprochement have stalled. Clearly, from the Pakistan side, it was not a genuine change of heart and policy, and they had little intention to match words with actions on the ground. It is only when the army accepts Afghanistan as a sovereign country entitled to have its own policies that best serves its own interests, and realizes that the Afghans are first and foremost Afghans, that a dent will be made in Pak-Afghan relations. Till then, the blowback from Afghanistan will continue to push Pakistan towards the abyss.

China: The Quest for Succour

[A]s neighbours, it is difficult not to have some differences or disputes from time to time. ... We should look at the differences or disputes from a long perspective, seeking a just and reasonable settlement through consultations and negotiations while bearing in mind the larger picture. If certain issues cannot be resolved for the time being, they may be shelved temporarily so that they will not affect the normal state-to-state relations.

—Chinese President Jiang Zemin to the Pakistan parliament in December 1996

THE ‘ALL weather’ friendship between Pakistan and China has been variously described by the leadership of the two countries as ‘higher than the mountains’, ‘deeper than the oceans’, ‘sweeter than honey’ and ‘stronger than steel’. The new epithet is ‘Iron brothers’. In March 1969, Chinese president Liu Shao-chi used the term *mujahidana dosti* (friendship between fellow fighters in a jihad) when he visited Pakistan,¹ though that moniker has not been used now for quite some time for obvious reasons. It is indeed a unique relationship between a communist giant and an Islamic country, between a godless one and God-fearing one.

Continued commonality of interests has bridged differences in language, culture, history and ideology. For China, Pakistan continues to be the hub of its South Asia policy; for Pakistan, China is the Pole Star in its national security strategy. Irrespective of the nature of the government in Pakistan – civilian or military – and irrespective of the party – PPP or PML-N – there is a basic understanding that the relationship with China is sacrosanct.

Till recently, China’s interest in Pakistan was not bilateral per se but a combination of three interrelated stakes that had more to do with its regional interests. The first was the mutuality of interests with Pakistan vis-à-vis India. The second was the spillover of terrorism and Islamic radicalization from Pakistan and Afghanistan into Xinjiang, adversely impacting the eight million ethnic Uighurs. Third, China’s growing economic stakes in Afghanistan, including the \$3.5 billion copper-mining contract at Mes Aynak near Kabul. Pakistan’s motivation has been to use ‘borrowed power’ from China to balance its inferiority with India. To this end, it has seen in China a friend that would bail it out politically and militarily. The new bilateral economic element in the relationship is the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that has been billed as a game changer.

The Pakistan-China relationship dates back to the 1950s when Pakistan was one of the first states to recognize the People’s Republic of China and the first Muslim one to do so. However, it was only in the

1960s, especially after the 1962 Indo-China war, that the relationship started taking off. The first sign of this was the two countries resolving their boundary issue in Kashmir. A high point of the budding Pak-China relationship (as also of the Pak-US relationship) was Pakistan facilitating the secret visit of US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to China in July 1971.

An editorial in the *Dawn* rationalized Islamic Pakistan's alliance with communist China as follows:

For the preservation of our Islamic state and to minimize the risk of Hindu Bharat's aggression against it, we must now turn to China, and this we can do with no risk to our Islamic ideology. In Hindu Bharat, Islam is hated because it is Islam and Muslims are periodically butchered in large numbers because they are Muslims. In Red China religion as such may be decried, but of all religions only one, namely Islam, is not singled out for denigration, and of all communities only one, namely the Muslims are not singled out for violent persecution.²

In the China–Pakistan Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation and Good Neighbourly Relations signed in April 2005, both countries agreed that ‘neither party will join any alliance or bloc which infringes upon the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity’ of either country, while simultaneously positing that both parties ‘would not conclude treaties of this nature with any third party’. Further, neither shall allow its territory to be used by a third country to jeopardize the state sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the other and each country will prohibit, on its own soil, the establishment of organizations or institutions which infringe upon the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the other.³ In July 2013, with the signing of ‘Common Vision for Deepening China–Pakistan Strategic Cooperative Partnership in the New Era’, the relationship was further strengthened.⁴

There are a host of examples where China has served as a key ally for Pakistan. Some of these include providing diplomatic support to Pakistan's position on Kashmir in the United Nations; vetoing proposals in the UN that were harmful to Pakistan, and lobbying against bringing a proposal to the UN Security Council (UNSC) that would hurt Pakistan's interests. For years China vetoed or held up UNSC resolutions banning jihadi groups like the Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), dropping its resistance only after the terror attacks in Mumbai in November 2008. More recently, in response to the US raid that killed Osama bin Laden, Chinese prime minister Wen Jiabao issued a statement in support of Pakistan; China vetoed India's complaint in the UN about Zakiur-Rehman Lakhvi, the mastermind behind the Mumbai attacks, and the banning of Masood Azhar, the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) chief, in March 2016. Earlier, China had even vetoed Bangladesh's entry into the UN since it regarded it to be a rebellious province of Pakistan.

On its part, Pakistan has refrained from taking up the issue of the persecution of Muslim Uighurs in China, though it has been very vociferous about the status of Muslims in other areas like the Rohingyas and the Kashmiris. Equally, it has ensured that the issue was not taken up during the OIC (Organizations of Islamic Countries) meetings, which was acknowledged by China too.⁵

China's importance to Pakistan can also be gauged from the fact that the first visit prime minister–elect Nawaz Sharif made after winning the 2013 elections was to China, and not to Saudi Arabia that had given him sanctuary while Musharraf had exiled him from Pakistan. Pakistan has also gone out of its way to secure Chinese interests in Pakistan. The attack on the Lal Masjid in 2007 was in part meant to assuage Chinese concerns since some Chinese nationals had been held hostage there. It is believed that the brutal crackdown in Balochistan and the ‘kill and dump’ policy adopted there is meant to protect Chinese

interests in Balochistan.⁶

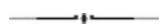
However, the all-weather friendship has not been without its hiccups. The address of Chinese president Jiang Zemin to the Pakistan parliament in December 1996 has been noted at the beginning of the chapter.⁷ The implication of the speech was that foreign relations should not be held hostage to disputes with neighbours and unresolved issues should be set aside for the sake of longer-term stability. Almost two decades later, another Chinese president, Xi Jinping, was to reiterate similar sentiments. During his address to parliament on 21 April 2015, Xi underscored internal security as the prerequisite for stability and development by highlighting philosophy of China's peaceful development and achieving national renewal. More interestingly, he skipped issues such as Kashmir, thereby indirectly advising Pakistan to review their Kashmir policy in order to remove a major sticking point in relations with India.⁸

Even more than the political, the key element of the Pak-China relationship has been, and is, defence cooperation – conventional weapon supplies and nuclear cooperation (civil and military). For China, militarily equipping Pakistan has been a low-cost option to keep India bogged down and threatened with a potential two-front war.

By 2013, Pakistan had emerged as the largest recipient of Chinese arms export, indicating a drawing down of reliance of the Pakistan military solely on Western sources, despite quality issues with some Chinese systems. Among the defence equipment supplied recently have been the Chinese JF-17 Thunder fighter aircraft; J-10 medium-role combat aircraft, F-22P frigates with helicopters, K-8 jet trainers, T-85 tanks, F-7 aircraft, small arms and ammunition. China has also helped Pakistan build its heavy mechanical complex, aeronautical complex, and several defense production units.⁹ Moreover, unlike the US, China has never cut off supplies of weapons, or imposed sanctions on Pakistan. An example of the close defence cooperation is the general impression that the Chinese engineers were allowed to examine the wreckage of the US stealth helicopter that had crashed in Abbottabad during the raid to kill Osama bin Laden.¹⁰

However, the key element in the relationship has been nuclear cooperation. As Andrew Small puts it; '... if the military relationship lies at the heart of China–Pakistan ties, nuclear weapons lie at the heart of the military relationship.'¹¹ There is fairly well documented evidence that transfer of Chinese technology and expertise to Pakistan in the 1980s and 1990s helped operationalize Pakistan's nuclear weapon and missile programme. This included supplies of low-enriched uranium, nuclear warhead design from its 1966 nuclear test and 5,000 ring magnets for use in gas centrifuges to enrich uranium.¹² On missiles, China is reported to have supplied Pakistan with thirty-four short-range ballistic M-11 missiles, built a turnkey ballistic missile manufacturing facility near Rawalpindi, and helped Pakistan develop the 750-km-range solid-fuelled Shaheen-1 ballistic missile.¹³

On the civil side, China helped Pakistan build two nuclear reactors at Chasma in 1990s, before joining the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). It signed a deal in 2009 to build two more under the 'grandfather' clause – namely, that these two new reactors were part of the earlier deal (for Chashma 1 and 2) which China had already declared as part of its commitments when it joined the NSG.¹⁴



Pakistan and China have set up several 'Framework Agreements' and mechanisms to foster bilateral trade. Despite these, the trade target of \$15 billion by 2010 (extended to 2015) could not be achieved. Bilateral trade that stood at \$7 billion in 2006, rose to \$12.35 billion by 2014, with Pakistani exports

increasing by 48 per cent (2011–12). In contrast, China's trade with India has increased from around \$5 billion in 2002 to more than \$60 billion in 2010, and the two have pledged to boost it over the next five years to \$100 billion annually.

Currently, Pakistan has an enormous trade deficit with China. Out of the total trade of around \$12.35 billion between the two countries in 2014, only around \$2.76 billion were exports from Pakistan. According to Urumqi Customs, the total trade between Xinjiang and Pakistan in the year 2014 was worth only \$319 million, which is about 2.6 per cent of the total trade between the two countries. Thus, upgrading the road linkages between Xinjiang and Pakistan may not by itself result in improving the balance of trade between the two countries as has been claimed.

The primary reason for trade between Pakistan and China being at a low ebb is that Pakistan's exports to China are basically low-value raw material and commodities since it is not in a position to export high-tech goods. This, together with minimal people-to-people contacts, detracts from the high-sounding epithets of the political and military relationship. China is also uncomfortable with Pakistan seeking large bailouts from it and has invariably pushed it towards multilateral institutions like the IMF as it did, for example, in 2008 when President Zardari came seeking a bailout. The attempt was unsuccessful.¹⁵ For Beijing, the risk of Pakistan's default was simply too high. China did not want to be the only country shoring up Pakistan financially.

Will the recent developments regarding the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) take the economic and strategic relationship between the two countries to a new level? President Xi Jinping's two-day visit to Pakistan in April 2015 marked the formal launch of the CPEC that is part of the president's pet project of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Twenty-first-Century Maritime Silk Road (also referred to as One Belt One Road – OBOR).

China's interest in an economic corridor from Gwadar to Kashgar in Xinjiang is understandable. With about 80 per cent of Chinese oil imports arriving via sea routes from the Middle East and Africa, any alternative route to the 'choke-point' of the Straits of Malacca would be appealing. Rerouting part of the supplies to Xinjiang from the Persian Gulf via Gwadar shortens the distance by over 7,500 km. In terms of time, China would gain over ten days in transport time for goods and energy. Currently, it takes twelve days to ship goods and fuel from the Middle East, whereas the corridor would cut this down to thirty-six hours.¹⁶ The corridor would also open up Xinjiang since the distance between the province and Gwadar is 2,500 km compared to 4,500 from China's eastern seaboard.

However, there is considerable scepticism about the economic viability of the corridor given the uneconomic costs for China of using Gwadar as a transit point for even part of its crude oil supplies. It has been estimated that while transporting a barrel of oil through the Malacca Straits is US \$10 per cubic metre, transshipping it via Gwadar and thence to Kashgar would cost US \$70. This being so, quite clearly for the Chinese the significance of the CPEC has to be more strategic than economic.¹⁷

Be that as it may, for Pakistan, what the CPEC signifies is a huge Chinese commitment and an expansion and upgradation of the relationship from the political and military to the economic sphere. The crucial question, however, is whether Pakistan can keep up its end of the bargain.

The economic corridor will link Kashgar in Xinjiang to Gwadar in Balochistan. China will provide an investment-cum-loan package of \$45.65 billion over the next 10–15 years for Pakistan's energy and infrastructure. This would involve about \$34 billion in private sector investment by Chinese companies,

insurers and banks. The remaining \$11 billion will be in the shape of ‘very concessional loans’ and some grants, according to Planning and Development Minister Ahsan Iqbal.¹⁸

The biggest chunk of the investment of about \$35 billion will be for energy projects including coal-fired power plants, a dam, a solar power park, and a gas pipeline to Iran. Together, these projects are expected to create about 17,000 megawatts (MW) of power. The Nawaz Sharif government has proposed twenty-nine industrial parks and twenty-one mineral-processing zones in all four provinces.¹⁹ Theoretically, if all the envisaged projects materialize, Pakistan would get a network of roads, railways and energy pipelines linking Gwadar to Kashgar. All this potentially would be a shot in the arm for Pakistan’s faltering economy and consolidate a decades-old strategic partnership.

The euphoria and anticipation in Pakistan was best expressed by Planning and Development Minister Ahsan Iqbal: ‘This is going to be a game changer. If we are unable to take full advantage of this, it will be a historic national failure and we are unlikely to get another chance like this in decades and perhaps centuries.’²⁰ More realistically, commentator Ayaz Amir wrote in his inimitable style: ‘The way Pakistan is talking about the CPEC gives the impression as if our destiny is all set to change. The keys to paradise will fall in our hands.’²¹ In reality, the CPEC is a huge opportunity for Pakistan but like in the case of the demographic dividend, it is an opportunity that has to be seized and realized. By itself it will not pull Pakistan out of the morass it is in now. It is Pakistan who will have to pull up its socks to take advantage of the potential that the CPEC can provide.

At the centre of the project is the port of Gwadar located near the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz as the corridor’s gateway that opens up access for China to the Middle East and Africa. China had financed the construction of the Gwadar port in the early years of the twenty-first century. It was inaugurated in 2008 and for several years operated by a Singaporean company PSA International. In February 2013, the operation of the port was taken over by the state-run Chinese Overseas Port Holdings Company (COPHC). The port can also function as a ‘listening post’ to monitor US naval activity in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf. Many analysts describe Gwadar as one of China’s ‘string of pearls’, i.e., Chinese naval bases or facilities ringing India.

To provide security to the 3,000-kilometre-long CPEC, the Pakistan Army is creating a Special Security Division (SSD) consisting of nine composite infantry battalions (9,000 personnel) and six wings of civilian armed forces (6,000 personnel) to be headed by a serving major general of the army. On a visit to the SSD on 19 February 2016, Gen. Raheel Sharif stated, ‘The military is ready to pay any price to turn this ambitious project into reality.’²²

The original route linked Gwadar with Kashgar via Balochistan and KPK. The plan has now been changed and media reports suggest that there will be three routes, one the original, the second through central Pakistan and the third through Sindh and Punjab. Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) governments have accused the federal government and Punjab of changing the route to suit the interests of Punjab even though this route will be 300 kilometres longer than the original one.²³

The Balochistan government has prepared a report titled ‘China–Pakistan Economic Corridor: The Route Controversy’, which has examined the viability of the three routes. Its conclusion is ‘... by preferring a route that passes through Punjab and Sindh rather than Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, the federal government is artificially inflating the cost of the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor, to the point where it may become economically unviable.’ It warned that, ‘By selecting the eastern route, the

government was trading off today's security risks with provincial discord and political instability in the future.'²⁴

One of the objectives that China is trying to achieve through the CPEC is to provide development for the backward region of western China. For Pakistan too, the real long-term benefit from CPEC would be to develop new areas and cities bringing progress to them. However, instead of following the Chinese model, the PML-N government seems keen to focus on the route that passes through already developed central Punjab areas. This will only increase provincial disparities and fuel alienation that is at dangerous levels.

Even though Nawaz Sharif has himself assured that the original western route will be developed expeditiously, the fact of the matter is that the executing agency of the CPEC, the National Highway Authority (NHA), informed the Senate Committee on Communication that the allocation for the western route was Rs 20 billion compared to Rs 110 billion for the eastern alignment. 'This allocation pattern confirms that the priority will be given to the eastern route that passes through Punjab and that the assurances of the prime minister were just an eyewash,' writes Dr Pervez Tahir.²⁵ The chief minister of KPK, Pervez Khattak, has been the most vocal critic of the route change and has threatened mass agitations and a halt to land acquisitions under way for the project in the province in case the demands of the province are not met.

In fact, the western route is a bit of the mystery. According to the KPK chief minister, the Chinese ambassador in a meeting had denied the presence of the western route.²⁶ According to the Balochistan government, they have not received any directives from the federal government regarding the land acquisition for the western route.²⁷ Moreover, the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) that has the final authority on CPEC matters had approved the routes and details long before the Chinese president visited Pakistan. No reservation by any political party of Pakistan or province was presented or discussed by the JCC. In other words, the All Parties Conference (APC) called by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the opening ceremony for the western route were nothing but a bad joke.²⁸

One shameful result of the wrangling and discord over the CPEC route is the unprecedented intervention and admonition by the Chinese embassy in Islamabad on 9 January 2016:

We hope that relevant parties could strengthen communication and coordination, solve differences properly, so as to create favourable conditions for the CPEC. We are ready to work with Pakistani side to actively promote construction of the CPEC projects, and bring tangible benefits to the peoples of the two countries.²⁹

The unsavoury route controversy demonstrates the lack of a long-term vision and planning among Pakistan's ruling elite. It also highlights that instead of a national good, politicians are looking upon this project in provincial and constituency terms. At the heart of the route controversy is what Ayaz Amir calls 'the Raiwind approach to the CPEC that has fanned the flames of inter-provincial discord.'³⁰ This harks back to the historical exploitation of the smaller provinces by Punjab. As a result, the smaller provinces see the CPEC as another example of the Sharif brothers leveraging the project for the benefit of Punjab only.

Apart from the route controversy, there are several issues with the CPEC project. For one, transparency and accountability have been sacrificed because details of the projects have not been shared,

there is no public bidding or even announcement. Clearly, the intention is that the major proportion of these loans will be channelled back to China to benefit only Chinese companies. Worse, since there is no transparency, issues such as cost efficiency, economic feasibility and viability, environmental concerns are likely to be ignored that could lead to serious economic and environmental issues later on. Recently, the federal minister for planning and development, Ahsan Iqbal, has laid to rest the debate about transparency by telling the Senate that the CPEC agreement is sensitive and cannot be disclosed.³¹

As a result of lack of transparency, reports about large-scale corruption have started emerging almost immediately after the project got off the ground. For example, two of the four highway projects of the 'Western route of the CPEC' in Balochistan, inaugurated by the prime minister in December 2015 with much fanfare, were awarded to the second lowest bidders instead of the lowest ones, causing a loss of over Rs 650 million. The reasoning for rejecting the lowest bidder has been unsatisfactory.³² There are also reports about CPEC projects being billed at much higher costs than originally planned due to Chinese companies not following competitive bidding processes.

Much worse, it has later emerged that the whole inauguration drama was another example of the deception being carried out by the federal government. In reality, the two projects inaugurated were actually funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as per an agreement signed in May 2015 and not through the CPEC funds. Thus Balochistan was again short-changed by using ADB funds in supposedly CPEC projects thus depriving the province of its due share in CPEC funds for infrastructure development. Such sleights of the hand can only fuel provincial discord and reinforce suspicions of the federal government's intentions.

Second, as important as the provincial concerns are the issues of finances, especially because there is no clarity about them. So much so that even the governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, Ashraf Mahmood Wathra, the main financial regulator of the country, was constrained to say in an interview to Reuters that he did not know how much was going to be financed by debt and how much by equity. He openly called for the CPEC to be more transparent.³³ The governor must be a worried man because the \$46 billion CPEC is three times the reserves held by the State Bank and repayments would become a huge issue. Given Pakistan's loan repayment situation as discussed in [Chapter 12](#) on the economy, the last thing it needs is further accumulation of unspecified debt. Even the World Bank, in its latest report titled *Global Economic Prospects 2016*, released in January 2016, has cautioned that 'Sovereign guarantees associated with CPEC could pose substantial fiscal risks over the medium term.' Former finance minister Hafiz Pasha has projected that loans contracted under CPEC will push the country's total external debt to \$90 billion³⁴ from the current about \$70 billion.

Third, Pakistan is only now waking up to the kind of strings that will come attached to the massive Chinese investment. For example, some of the Chinese demands include granting tax exemptions to interest income earned by Chinese banks that lend to projects in Pakistan; special protection from exposure to the circular debt in the power sector through a revolving facility funded by the government; exemption of insurance income from tax; settlement of payments in dollars; exemption from taxes on machinery imports for infrastructure and other projects; purchase of equipment only from Chinese suppliers and their installation by Chinese labour. Negotiations on these and other issues have been inconclusive so far. Decisions on such issues will determine where the real costs and benefits of the investments lie. If they are not negotiated properly, *Dawn* warns, the country can be left saddled with

payment obligations that will become known only when it is too late.³⁵

Fourth, as noted earlier, the main issue in the energy sector is not generation but productivity, distribution, line losses and poor governance. Further investment in generation will not solve the long-term issues plaguing the energy sector though they may give the impression of doing so in the immediate term. To operationalize the investment, Pakistan will have to make crucial reforms in the energy sector.

Fifth, for Pakistan to truly benefit from such a massive investment, it will have to upgrade its own absorption capacity by bringing the education sector up to scratch so that skilled and semi-skilled workforce can be employed in these projects. However, as noted in [Chapter 11](#) on education, such investments are sorely lacking.

Sixth, the emphasis in the energy sector is on thermal power projects based on both Thar coal and imported coal, and LNG. It is universally accepted that thermal power is far more expensive than hydropower. The emphasis, therefore, should have been on the latter. Considering that twenty textile mills have already closed down recently due to exchange appreciation, with 100 more believed to be vulnerable to power viability issues, will the industry survive a potential hike in power price? ‘No’, says All Pakistan Textile Manufacturers Association (APTMA) chairman S.M. Tanveer.³⁶

Seventh, the economic corridor will be viable if it is used. The Lahore–Islamabad motorway is a case in point. Though it has been in existence for the last twenty years there is very little industrial development along its route and neither has there been any value addition to agriculture. If anything, it has only benefited the elite, enabling them to travel between Lahore and Islamabad quickly. Will the highways under CPEC meet the same fate?

Eighth, not all previous announcements of Chinese largesse have materialized in Pakistan and this will not be the first occasion that megabuck deals have been announced by China. During the visit of Prime Minister Wen Jiabao of China to Pakistan in 2010, the news was that he had brought along a 200-strong business delegation to sign MOUs worth US \$35 billion with the public and private sector of Pakistan. However, most of the MOUs were not worth the paper they were written on. Ultimately, neither did China make any significant foreign investments in Pakistan, nor did it hand out free money. In fact, over the past fifty years, China’s foreign direct investment in Pakistan has averaged around \$100 million a year. If history is any guide, Pakistan will take around 450 years to absorb the new MOUs being valued at \$45 billion.³⁷

Ninth, previous experience with Chinese funding of projects in Pakistan has not been very encouraging. Between 2001 and 2011, according to Moeed Yusuf, only 6 per cent of aid pledged by China was actually delivered in terms of projects on the ground. In the majority of cases, it was lack of seriousness, capacity or resources on the Pakistani side that dissuaded Chinese counterparts from following through.³⁸ A specific case is of the shelving of the Gadani Energy Park as noted in [Chapter 12](#) on the economy.

For the Sharifs there is an urgency to complete the ‘early harvest’ projects before the next elections due in 2018. Not surprisingly, bulk of these projects are planned in Punjab and Sindh. Out of \$28.6 billion early-harvest projects, Punjab has the lion’s share of \$13 billion, Sindh \$4.6 billion, KPK \$1.8 billion, Islamabad \$1.5 billion, and Balochistan \$920 million. However, less than two years after the April 2015 launch of CPEC, several of these early-harvest projects are facing delays or are in danger of being closed. These include the \$1.8 billion, 870-MW Suki–Kinari hydroelectric power project;³⁹ the \$590 million, 330 MW coal-based power project in Punjab;⁴⁰ a coal mining project in Thar; and four power

plants listed to generate 4,620 MW of power;⁴¹ and also the \$2.1 billion, 878-km-long Matiari–Lahore transmission line listed to supply 4,000 MW of electricity produced from coal in Sindh to cities in Punjab.⁴²

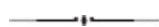
The delays and possible closure of the above projects indicate that not much thought and planning have gone into the projects. It is almost as if the federal and Punjab governments want to ram home the projects so that they can show some achievement before the next elections. In the process, there is a grave danger that the mistrust that the smaller provinces have with Punjab and their insecurities vis-à-vis the federation will get aggravated as a result of the CPEC. Unless the smaller provinces, especially Balochistan and KPK, are given a sense of ownership, the CPEC may actually damage Pakistan rather than be the game changer it is billed to be. An ominous warning has been sounded: ‘It would do us well to remember that investment in East Pakistan was also considered unsafe for security reasons. What are the planners of today driving the smaller provinces to?’⁴³

The delays have not gone unnoticed by the Chinese. The admonition by the Chinese embassy in January 2016 has already been noted. In addition, reading between the lines of media reports, it would appear that the Chinese are getting increasingly frustrated with the failure of the political leadership to provide inter-ministerial and inter-provincial coordination. It has been suggested in the media that the Chinese have even suggested that the government formally rope in the Pakistan Army to ensure the management and smooth execution of CPEC.⁴⁴

Reflective of Chinese frustration is the meeting that the Chinese ambassador to Pakistan had with Gen. Raheel Sharif on 7 June 2016 where the CPEC was discussed. Pakistan president Mamnoon Hussain held a meeting with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) meeting in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on 23 June 2016 where ‘the timely realization of all projects under CPEC’ was discussed. Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan also met visiting Chinese minister for state security, Geng Huichang, on 14 July 2016 wherein the two agreed that top priority would be given to timely implementation of CPEC.⁴⁵ The repeated focus on ‘timely implementation’ is a clear indication of the Chinese unhappiness at the progress of the projects.

Thus, while CPEC could enormously benefit the Pak economy, expectations need to be tempered with realism, especially where financial issues are concerned. Anecdotal evidence suggests that at least some Pakistanis are beginning to realize this. For example, at a seminar held in December 2015, an adviser to the Balochistan government asked if Pakistanis will basically be fixing punctures on Chinese trucks. The reply reportedly given by the commander of Southern Command of the Pakistan Army was that Chinese companies ought to be asked to explain how Pakistan will benefit from the larger vision of the CPEC.⁴⁶

For the implementation of the project, the nature and quality of the Pakistani leadership will be crucial. Gen. Raheel Sharif has stated on several occasions that the army is committed to the success of the CPEC. Will the implementation of CPEC, perhaps under Chinese prompting, become another contentious issues in civil–military relations? Will the army seek to move in and control all aspects of CPEC instead of just security? This is something that will have to be watched out for.



The friendship between Pakistan and China has stood the test of time since the 1960s to a large extent because of the mutual hostility towards India. Chinese support of Pakistan, especially military support,

has been a low-cost option of diverting Indian attention from China and making sure it remains bogged down in squabbles with Pakistan. China's overt support to Pakistan peaked during the 1965 Indo-Pak war when Chinese premier Zhou Enlai reportedly assured the Pakistanis that China was prepared to put pressure on India in the Himalayas 'for as long as necessary'.⁴⁷ China continued its support for Pakistan during the 1971 war but did not intervene. During Z.A. Bhutto's visit to Beijing in November 1971 'there was never any question of active military involvement and such an eventuality was not even discussed'.⁴⁸ However, Bhutto and Yahya Khan created an impression in Pakistan that China would intervene. In 1972, during Bhutto's trip to China, a joint communiqué strongly condemned India's 'naked aggression' and 'occupation of Pakistan's territory'.⁴⁹

According to Small, it was not military disarray or fear of war with the Russians that prevented China from intervening in 1971. 'Rather, it was political judgement that would foreshadow many other crucial episodes in the relationship between the two countries over the decades to come: China would not pull Pakistan out of the holes it insisted on digging for itself.'⁵⁰

Since then, China has modulated its stance on Indo-Pak friction to the discomfort of Pakistan. The shift in China's policy towards India hit home in the 1996 speech of President Jiang Zemin quoted earlier. The change in Chinese attitude became even more pronounced in the 1999 Kargil conflict, when the then prime minister Nawaz Sharif went to Beijing and unsuccessfully sought China's support against India. 'Beijing privately supported US calls for Pakistan to withdraw its forces to defuse the crisis, and apparently communicated this stance to Pakistani leaders.'⁵¹ Analysts contend that Beijing no longer considers it in China's best interest to get entangled in a conflict with two nuclear-armed neighbours.

While Chinese hostility towards India still holds good, there have been changes, primarily because of Chinese apprehensions, and growing Sino-Indian relations. Given the giant strides that China has made economically and militarily, China's priority is security in its neighbourhood in order to consolidate its economic gains. China's ambitions of becoming a superpower would in a large measure depend on regional peace and stability and in promoting economic relations with the US. Beijing has signalled that it favoured bilateral Indo-Pak negotiations to resolve their differences.

This, however, does not mean that China would easily settle its boundary disputes with India or will not pressurize India on the Line of Actual Control (LoAC). For China, while economic development is crucial, its territorial claims are even more vital. It is also unlikely that the burgeoning Indo-China trade would impact on the all-weather Pakistan-China relationship, especially its military component. Small sums it up well when he states: '... for Beijing, whatever the ebbs and flows in its bilateral ties with New Delhi, Pakistan's utility as a balancer, potential spoiler, and standing counterpoint to India's ambitions has never gone away.' This was recently demonstrated by the Chinese opposition to India's membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and opposition to Masood Azhar, the JeM chief, being declared an international terrorist.⁵²



In the last decade and a half the Pak-China relationship has come under some strains, the high sounding adjectives notwithstanding. The main issues have been terrorism in Xinjiang linked to jihadi training camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan and the issue of safety of Chinese workers in Pakistan.

Xinjiang, bordering Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Central Asian Republics, constitutes 17 per cent of

China's land mass and produces roughly 40 per cent of its oil, coal and gas. The Uighur (Muslims of Turkic origin in Xinjiang) separatist movement in the province is an ethnic conflict against the attempts of the Chinese authorities to dilute their identity by encouraging the migration of Han Chinese into the region. In 1949, when the People's Republic of China was founded, Han Chinese accounted for about 6 per cent of Xinjiang's population; today that figure is more than 40 per cent. Many Uighurs say they feel like outsiders in their own home. The situation has become aggravated due to the fact that Uighur separatism is not only an ethnic movement but also has an Islamic dimension to it.

Strong measures taken by the authorities to suppress ethnic sentiments had resulted in many Uighurs becoming radicalized, and a jihadist movement has made inroads inside the Muslim communities. These Muslim Uighurs have been receiving sanctuary and terrorist training in Pakistan after which they have returned to Xinjiang and caused terrorist incidents. Thus there is an overlap between the Uighur terror campaign in China and the ethnic Uighur struggle for liberation or separation.

To an extent China too is facing a blowback from the anti-Soviet jihad of the 1980s. China had supplied Soviet-made arms to Pakistan that were used by the mujahideen fighters. Significant numbers of Uighurs ended up in training camps and madrasas in Pakistan and many Uighurs also participated in the jihad. It is believed that those who returned to China after the Soviet retreat took to arms against the policies of the government. This has been partly responsible for the heightened levels of violence in Xinjiang.

Incidents of ethnic violence in the capital Urumqi and other parts of the province have been occurring with increasing frequency since around 2005 including a few spectacular ones like the one in Xinjiang in late July 2011 that killed twenty people. While Pakistan has cracked down on Uighurs located on its territory, even handing over some periodically to China, its failure to completely stop Uighurs from getting trained and returning to Xinjiang is a source of growing unease in the relationship with Islamabad. Such incidents have even provoked rare Chinese criticism of Pakistan. It was acknowledged in Pakistan that other such attacks could have adverse implications for Pak-China ties.⁵³

Chinese concern about the role of Islamic militancy in Pakistan and its spread to China's Xinjiang province is clear from the fact that China withdrew its objections over the banning of the Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) – a front organization of the Lashkar-e-Taiba – in 2008. Likewise, according to one Chinese academic, China has developed a more neutral position on the Indo-Pakistani dispute over Kashmir over the past decade in part because China believes that the dispute could have implications for ethnic-religious unrest in China, especially in Tibet or Xinjiang.⁵⁴

The second issue is about the safety and protection of about 10,000 Chinese workers in infrastructure and energy projects all over Pakistan and the increasing number that would start working on the CPEC. There have been several attacks on them in the past by Baloch separatists as well as jihadis in Gwadar, Peshawar and Islamabad. The Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, a splinter group of the TTP, has warned Beijing against persecuting Muslim population in Xinjiang; otherwise 'the centres of Chinese economic interests' would be targeted in ways beyond the imagination of the Chinese government.⁵⁵ According to Andrew Small, senior Chinese leaders such as former president Hu Jintao had asked Pakistani leaders to increase protection of Chinese workers. China had even threatened to cut funding from projects and withdraw its workers from the country.⁵⁶ That Pakistan is aware of this is obvious from its commitment to create a 'special security division' of 12,000 specially trained personnel mentioned earlier.⁵⁷ While this should

address some Chinese concerns, the fact remains that the security of the CPEC's network of pipelines, highways and railway lines will require almost constant attention. Given Pakistan's track record of protecting its own Sui gas pipelines, the jury is out whether such protection will be foolproof.

A third issue, as yet not very significant but with the potential to grow in importance, is the divergence between the two on Afghanistan. The initial Chinese interest in Afghanistan was economic. In 2008, Chinese Metallurgical Group and Jiangxi Copper Co. obtained a thirty-year lease on the site of Mes Aynak in Logar for \$3 billion, which they estimated to be the largest copper deposit in the world. But after Taliban attacks, the mine remained dormant, and Beijing started to view Afghanistan more as a security problem than an economic opportunity. This has led to changes in the Chinese approach to Afghanistan.

In this context, a victory of the Taliban in Afghanistan would not be in China's interest since increase of any jihadi influence and activities in Afghanistan and/or Pakistan could encourage similar activities in Xinjiang. For the present, Chinese strategy seems to be focused on getting Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Taliban to desist from training the Uighurs and to discourage attacks on Chinese interests. Before 9/11, for example, the Chinese reached agreements with the Taliban to prevent Uighur separatists from using Afghanistan as a training ground for militant activities.⁵⁸ China even joined hands with the US, Pakistan and Afghanistan in a Quadrilateral Coordination Group mechanism to encourage the Afghan government and the Taliban to negotiate peace.

Pakistan's objective in Afghanistan, on the other hand, is to instal a dependent, Pak-friendly government that would reduce Indian influence and not rake up the issue of the Durand Line. The only 'Pak-friendly' government in Kabul in the past has been the Taliban government that has had links with the Uighurs. Hence, the objectives of the two countries vary for the end game in Afghanistan.



Pakistan has frequently projected China as an alternative partner to the US. At times the US too appears to be apprehensive that if it pressurizes Pakistan too hard on various issues China may come to Pakistan's aid. This is potentially true but only in so far as the political and defence relationship is concerned. Economically, China is unlikely to replace the US any time soon. As noted earlier, the economic relationship is weak and China has shied away from bailing out Pakistan economically even in times of need. Another factor to be considered is that China, like the US, is getting increasingly concerned about Pakistan's stability and the growth of jihadi terror. For these reasons, China is unlikely to accept the responsibility of propping up Pakistan all by itself. Pakistan too would be wary of actually trying to replace the US with China. It knows which side its bread is buttered. For, along with the US come the multilateral financial institutions like the IMF and the World Bank and also the European Union, without whose assistance Pakistan would be a basket case.⁵⁹

Thus far, the primary Chinese interest in Pakistan has been regional rather than purely bilateral, and security-driven rather than economic. China has used Pakistan as a cat's paw against India. For this purpose, China has given Pakistan not merely conventional military supplies but ready-made nuclear and missile capabilities to keep India focused on the threat from Pakistan rather than on the emergence of China. These defence and political bonds are likely to remain the cornerstone of the relationship.

However, the burgeoning trade between India and China on the one hand and scepticism regarding Pakistan's use of jihadis under a nuclear umbrella has led China to counsel Pakistan to improve relations with India and lessen bilateral tensions without compromising its stance on the territorial dispute with India.

Since the initial years, the economic content of the relationship has not been prominent. The CPEC has the potential to be a game changer through greater connectivity and greater Chinese investment in infrastructure projects. Whether it will be so or not, however, remains to be seen. But it has a chance of success not so much because of Pakistan's efforts but owing to Chinese push, especially under President Xi Jinping.

Three blips on the radar may gain in importance as the years go by. These are the connections that the Uighurs have developed with jihadi groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the security and safety of Chinese workers in Pakistan and divergence about the end game in Afghanistan. As China's footprint grows in Pakistan, its personnel would be exposed to greater risks especially if instability also grows in Pakistan.

For Pakistan to really benefit from the opportunity that has come its way, it will have to realize that China would be as concerned about jihadi terrorism emanating from Pakistan as is the US. If Pakistan remains in the old groove of using non-state actors as instruments of state policy, and does not focus on its own economic development, it faces the risk of alienating the Chinese as seriously as it has alienated the US. In all probability, Pakistan would find the Chinese far harder task masters than the US, especially since they share a common border. Thus, Pakistan would need to do some serious introspection about the costs of exporting terror as also the economic costs of the CPEC.

The United States: The Quest for Dependence

*Pakistan ... is one of the most anti-American countries in the world, and a covert sponsor of terrorism. Politically and economically, it verges on being a failed state. ... And if the measure of our aid is Pakistan's internal security, the program has fallen short in that respect as well. ... If the measure of our aid is the gratitude of the Pakistani people and the loyalty of their government, then it has clearly been a failure. Last year, a Pew Research Center survey found that half of Pakistanis believe that the US gives little or no assistance at all.*¹

—Lawrence Wright

THESE WORDS sum up the tragic story of Pakistan–US relations. According to Wright, the US invested billions of dollars into Pakistan with the objective of creating ‘a reliable ally with strong institutions and a modern, vigorous democracy’. However, he laments that American military aid has been wasted, misused, and turned against the US. His touching conclusion: ‘India has become the state that we tried to create in Pakistan. It is a rising economic star, militarily powerful and democratic, and it shares American interests.’²

Relations with the US have been and are the key element in Pakistan’s foreign policy since its creation in 1947. However, the fatal flaw in the Pakistan–US relationship has been its transactional nature compounded by differing perceptions on both sides: the US seeing Pakistan in a larger, regional rather than in a bilateral context; Pakistan seeking to use the ‘borrowed strength’ of the US against India in its quest for parity.

As mentioned earlier, one of the key consideration for the British when they partitioned the subcontinent was strategic – the role that Pakistan rather than a united India under Nehru could play in the furtherance of its imperial objectives. With the British power on the wane in the aftermath of WWII, Pakistan sought to ally itself with the US even prior to its creation. During a meeting with Lord Ismay, Jinnah had examined the possibility of Pakistan after the British left and determined, according to Ismay, that ‘Pakistan could not stand alone’.³ Ayub Khan was to reiterate similar sentiments when he said that one of the imperatives of Pakistan’s defence and security problems ‘... was to have a strong and effective friend, whose interests should be to see that Pakistan remained a free country and was not subjugated by another country’.⁴

Jinnah made the first pitch for US support using the same argument that had kept Britain motivated to play the ‘Great Game’ – the fear of a Russian advance. Post-WWII, an ‘iron curtain’ had dropped over

Europe and both the US and Britain were worried about Soviet advances towards the oil fields of the Middle East. During his 1 May 1947 meeting with two US diplomats at his Bombay residence, Jinnah stressed that ‘the emergence of an independent, sovereign Pakistan would be in consonance with American interests since Pakistan would be a Muslim country and Muslim countries would stand together against Russian aggression’. In that endeavour they would look to the United States for assistance, he added. Jinnah coupled the danger of Russian aggression with another menace that Muslim nations might confront. That was Hindu imperialism. The establishment of Pakistan was essential to prevent Hindu imperialism into the Middle East, he emphasized.⁵

A few months later, Jinnah expanded on his theme of leveraging Pakistan’s location in an alliance with the US in an interview with American journalist Margaret Bourke-White. In response to her question whether American technical or financial assistance would be enlisted, Jinnah answered, ‘America needs Pakistan more than Pakistan needs America. Pakistan is pivot of the world as we are placed ... [on] the frontier on which the future position of the world revolves.’ He also added: ‘If Russia walks in here the whole world is menaced ...’, Bourke-White wrote later in her book *Halfway to Freedom* that when she asked Pakistani officials ‘if there were any signs of Russian infiltration, they would reply almost sadly, as though sorry not to be able to make more of the argument, “No, Russia has shown no signs of being interested in Pakistan.”’⁶ Pakistan would have to wait three decades for that to happen.

We have earlier noted a very perceptive Bourke-White identifying a key attribute of Pakistan as being the ‘bankruptcy of ideas in the new Muslim state – a nation drawing its spurious warmth from the embers of an antique fanaticism, fanned into a new blaze’. Her second perceptive observation was:

Jinnah’s most frequently used technique in the struggle for his new nation has been playing opponent against opponent. Evidently, this technique was now to be extended into foreign policy. Not only the tension between the great powers but the Palestine situation as well held opportunities for profiting from the disputes of others.⁷

Within two months of its creation, in October 1947, Laik Ali, on Jinnah’s behest, presented a memorandum to the US State Department asking for financial assistance of \$2 billion over a five-year period to acquire a wide range of weapons including \$170 million for the army, \$75 million for the air force and \$60 million for the navy. The memo stated: ‘Primarily defence and secondly, economic developments are the two vitally essential features of Pakistan’s life and for both of these she has to look firstly to the USA and then to Great Britain for assistance ... what is needed is finance and more than that, a regular source of finance.’⁸ By asking for substantial funding from the US, Jinnah had made clear his priorities in the relationship with the US. Positioning Pakistan as a Muslim bulwark against the Soviet Union, Jinnah’s priorities were defence-related. However, at that time Pakistan was not perceived to be a factor of significance for US interests. According to Christine Fair, ‘the CIA never mentioned India or Pakistan by name or even referenced the region generally in the 1947 and 1948 editions of its annual “Review of the World Situation as it Relates to the Security of the United States”’.⁹

Despite this, Jinnah’s successors were to continue to assiduously cultivate the US. In the colourful language of Tariq Ali, Pakistan ‘... decided to accept the offer of a permanent nurse. It was assumed that the only route to survival was to become a Cold War patient under the permanent supervision of Western imperialism’.¹⁰ After initial hesitation, the US was to turn to Pakistan even as India turned to non-

alignment.

In 1954, Pakistan joined the South-East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and subsequently the Baghdad Pact and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). In 1959, Pakistan made available a listening post near Peshawar. In the early 1960s, after the U-2 incident and the Indo-China war of 1962, the US–Pakistan alliance went through its first turbulence with Pakistan objecting to the US supply of weapons to India unless it was linked to the settlement of the Kashmir issue while the US looked askance at Pakistan developing a relationship with China and even entering into a border demarcation treaty with it on Kashmir.

In 1965, the US imposed sanctions on both India and Pakistan for the 1965 war. The sanctions hurt Pakistan more because it was more dependent on US supplies than India. For a brief while in 1971 the relations were back on track after Pakistan facilitated the secret US opening to China. The US reciprocated by looking the other way during the Pakistan Army's genocide in Bangladesh¹¹ with President Nixon recording on the memo from Kissinger on 28 April 1971 suggesting policy options: 'To All Hands, Don't squeeze Yahya at this time.'¹² The US even encouraged China to threaten India apart from sending its Seventh Fleet into the Indian Ocean during the Indo-Pak war in December 1971.¹³ Military and civilian assistance was revived in 1975, but only to be discontinued under the Symington Amendment in 1979, which expressed concern over Pakistan's clandestine nuclear weapons programme. Relations were to plummet after Zia's 1977 coup, the hanging of Z.A. Bhutto in 1979 and burning of the US Embassy in Islamabad in the same year.

With the Soviets choosing just this time (December 1979) to march into Afghanistan, Pakistan was converted from a pariah to a front-line state. The US was obliged to take a 180-degree turn, shelving its concerns regarding Pakistan's nuclear programme and democracy. The growth of Islamic radicalism was then just a blip and in any case, they were the ones fighting the Soviets. After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, nuclear concerns kicked in again as did the provisions of the Pressler Amendment. The 1990s were mostly spent in bickering over the F-16s. US assistance to Pakistan ceased between 1991 and 2001 and the sanctions became harsher after the 1998 nuclear explosion by Pakistan and Musharraf's coup against the Nawaz government in 1999.

Once again, just as the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan had changed the dynamics of Pakistan–US relations in the 1980s, 9/11 too transformed bilateral relations early in the new century. It led to a third Pakistan–US alliance and the triple-layered sanctions were set aside. Pakistan once again became a front-line state and a strategic partner. In a *déjà vu*, Bush was to do a Jimmy Carter/Nixon – lift sanctions, provide massive assistance – and Musharraf would do a Zia – allow Pakistan to become a base for the war in Afghanistan and in the hunt for Osama bin Laden. With Musharraf on board, the US not only restored economic and military aid for Pakistan but also announced a five-year bilateral aid package of \$3.2 billion in June 2003 and waived off US \$1 billion of Pak debt.

According to the Congressional Research Service, the US aid disbursed to Pakistan since 9/11 totalled over \$33 billion.¹⁴ Only Israel has got more aid than Pakistan in the last decade. Under the Kerry–Lugar Act 2007, the US announced \$1.5 billion each for military and economic assistance per annum for five years.

This brief review reveals that, at its core, Pakistan–US relations have been sporadic, transactional and based on leveraging Pakistan's geographical position. The last bears out the British foresightedness about

the role Pakistan could play, as it turns out not for their imperial strategy but for the strategy of their erstwhile colony, the US. In a sense, as inheritors of the British Empire, the US too saw Pakistan as fitting into their global strategic calculations, first during the cold war and later during the war against terror. For Pakistan, US interest in them was exactly what they were looking for – borrowed power that Jinnah and Ayub had identified as being necessary for Pakistan in its contest with India.

Behind the erratic nature of the relationship were, of course, the differing objectives and takeaways that the two brought into the relationship. Pakistan pursued an alliance with the US in the 1950s and the '60s to obtain military supplies against India in return for helping the US contain communism. Pakistan did provide intelligence gathering facilities but not the 'centrally positioned landing site' the US wanted. For its part, the US did not share Pakistan's apprehensions about Indian hegemony in South Asia or that India was a threat to Pakistan.

In the next phase of the relationship, according to Husain Haqqani,

Zia-ul-Haq's cooperation in bleeding the Soviets in Afghanistan came with Pakistan's plan to instal a client regime in Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal. The US never controlled Pakistan's ISI, or for that matter the mujahideen, even though it paid for the operation. Pakistan's role in the jihad against the Soviet Union also inspired the ISI to push Pakistani jihadis to expand jihad into Kashmir.¹⁵

Equally, despite promises to the contrary, Pakistan went ahead with its nuclear programme right under the nose of the US. Perhaps even more significantly for the long term, Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr told Pakistani officials that US reservations over Pakistan's nuclear programme 'need not become the centerpiece of the US–Pakistan relationship'.¹⁶ The new US administration appeared to have communicated tacitly that it 'could live with Pakistan's nuclear program as long as Islamabad did not explode a bomb'.¹⁷ A shrewd judge of how far he could push the Americans, Zia believed that as long as the war in Afghanistan continued – neither he nor the Americans expected an early end – the US government would find some way to avoid imposing sanctions, provided Pakistan did not explode a device.¹⁸

In the current and third phase of the relationship, there continues to be deeply divergent objectives: For the US while the al-Qaeda was the real enemy, the Taliban were accomplices. Both needed to be targeted because they represented violent extremist threats. For Pakistan, the Taliban were 'strategic assets' since they did Pakistan's bidding in Afghanistan; hence, the Pakistani military sought to protect them by giving them sanctuary and assistance with which to continue fighting against the US and NATO troops. In reality, from the outset, Pakistan was never fully committed to the US's war on terror.

Apart from differing objectives, endless illusions bedevilled both sides, notes Ashley Tellis. While the US thought it could get Pakistan to jettison its jihadi proxies using financial and military assistance coupled with the promise of a strategic partnership, they could not assuage Pakistan's paranoia about India. Pakistan, for its part, 'imagined that the strategy of hunting with the American hounds while running with the jihadi hares was sustainable indefinitely – even after 9/11 irrevocably changed the rules of the game'. Such illusions undermined prospects for sturdy bilateral ties. 'They also confirm that the real surprise is not the meltdown in the US–Pakistan relations, but the fact that it took so long to materialize.'¹⁹

Evidence of Pak duplicity in helping the Taliban while claiming to be part of the US-led war on terror has been overwhelming. A few examples will suffice. As early as February 2003, the two senior members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee – Senator Lugar and Senator Biden – expressed ‘deep concern’ that ‘elements of Pakistan’s powerful Inter-Services Intelligence agency might be helping members of the Taliban and al-Qaeda operate along the border and infiltrate into Afghanistan’.²⁰

Mike McConnell, director of National Intelligence in the Bush administration, in his first briefing of president-elect Barack Obama said: ‘Pakistan is a dishonest partner of USA in Afghan war ... In exchange for \$2 billion a year from US, Pakistan’s powerful military and its spy agency (ISI) helped the US, while giving clandestine aid, weapons and money to the Afghan Taliban. They had an “office of hedging your bets”.’²¹

Lt Gen. Karl Eikenberry, who commanded the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)–NATO and US forces in Afghanistan, warned the US Congress on 13 February 2007 that NATO could not win in Afghanistan without addressing the sanctuaries the Taliban enjoyed in Pakistan.

The most damning was the 2011 testimony, to the Senate Armed Services Committee, of Admiral Mullen who had made twenty-six trips to Pakistan and considered army chief Gen. Kayani a friend. The main points he made were: the Haqqani network acted as a veritable arm of Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence agency; there was ample evidence that the Haqqanis were behind several blasts in Kabul; support for extremist groups, including the Haqqani network and anti-Indian terror organization Lashkar-e-Taiba was part of the Pakistan government’s policy and served Islamabad’s interests; and support of terrorism is part of Pakistan’s national strategy.²²

Musharraf’s successors, Parvez Kayani and Raheel Sharif, continued his duplicitous policy. Kayani, for example, was overheard – presumably on telephone intercepts – referring to Jalaluddin Haqqani as a ‘strategic asset’.²³ NSA also picked up intercepts as Pak units that were getting ready to hit a madrasa called up the tribal areas in advance, to warn them what was coming.²⁴ While Raheel Sharif has undertaken operations against the TTP in North Waziristan, the Haqqanis have been left out as have the other ‘India-centric’ terrorist outfits like the LeT and the JeM in other parts of Pakistan.

Why has the US failed, despite spending billions of dollars, to make Pakistan behave like a normal state, at peace with itself and its neighbours? In fact, the true scale of the failure is that despite the US, Pakistan leaders from Ayub Khan to the present ones have pretty much done what they perceived their national interest to be. Ayub provoked a war with India in 1965 with US weapons despite specific assurances to the contrary; Bhutto initiated Pakistan’s nuclear programme despite US pressure; Zia weaponized Pakistan’s nuclear programme despite warnings; both Benazir and Nawaz continued with the nuclear programme and support to Kashmir terrorists despite the threat of being declared a terrorist state; Musharraf followed a duplicitous policy of seemingly supporting the US war on terror while providing sanctuary and support to ‘strategic assets’ like the Taliban and the Haqqani network. His successors Kayani and Raheel Sharif have followed suit.

Among the key reasons for the failure is that US has not seen and dealt with Pakistan bilaterally but through the prism of a supposedly ‘larger’ and immediate objective. To fulfil that ‘larger objective’ the US needed to leverage Pakistan’s strategic location and so neglected and compromised its own crucial long-term goals. This ‘larger objective’ in the 1950s and 1960s was to make Pakistan a part of the anti-

communist 'northern tier' against the Soviet Union; in the early 1970s it was the opening to China; in the 1980s, it was to bleed the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and in the first decade of the new millennium to use Pakistan in the conduct of the war on terror and to hunt bin Laden; and currently it is to bring the Afghan Taliban into the peace talks with the Afghan government.

In the pursuit of 'larger objectives', the US has invariably lost sight of its own long-term goals of tackling the danger emanating from Pakistan that over the years has cumulatively grown. Precisely for this reason, the US has been unable to develop a policy focusing exclusively on Pakistan's waywardness, instead of paying 'rentals' or hire charges for using Pakistan's location. Such a quid pro quo approach in dealing with Pakistan may have tackled the immediate issue (though the jury is out on this) but has invariably added to the growing problem of and in Pakistan, especially its growing nuclear arsenal and support to diverse jihadi groups.

In an interview published by the French weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 15–21 January 1998, Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's national security adviser, when asked if he regretted having supported Islamic fundamentalism, having given arms and advice to future terrorists said, 'What is most important to the history of the world? The Taliban or collapse of the Soviet Empire? A few crazed Muslims or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the Cold war?'²⁵ No one could have put the US perspective of focusing on an immediate objective but ignoring its consequences, in a better fashion.

US goals in and for Pakistan are extremely serious in themselves: to prevent Pakistan's nuclear weapons and materials from falling into the hands of Islamic extremists; to ensure that Afghanistan does not again become a sanctuary for terrorists to launch attacks against the US and its allies and friends; to avoid a war between India and Pakistan that could escalate to the nuclear level; and to prevent the Taliban and its radical collaborators from gaining control of Pakistan. Therefore, seeing Pakistan from the prism of some other objectives has been dangerous and has compounded problems. For example, the US has been well aware of Pakistan's perfidy in rehabilitating the Taliban but hasn't done much about it. It has continued to supply weaponry to Pakistan that is either for dual use or cannot be justified for counter-terrorism, like a Perry-class missile frigate and dozens of nuclear capable F-16s that can only be used against India and not against terrorists inside Pakistan. Such a policy has only emboldened Pakistan, as supply of weaponry had emboldened Ayub Khan in the past. And the US has not been able to persuade Pakistan to give up on what it considered to be 'good' terrorists, like the LeT and the Haqqani network, whose presence and activities add to the growing number of terrorists that infest the country.

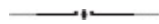
A second major reason for the US failure to achieve its objectives in Pakistan is the policy of appeasement adopted by successive administrations. Examples abound of the US bending over backwards to accommodate Pakistan. Take the case of Osama bin Laden. After an eleven-year manhunt, bin Laden, the world's most wanted terrorist, was found in a house next to the Pakistan Military Academy in Abbottabad and yet the US did not, at least publicly, hold Pakistan accountable. How about A.Q. Khan? It has to be a very gullible person to believe that Khan could requisition military aircraft to ferry nuclear equipment on his own without the knowledge and permission of the government. As David Sanger puts it, in both cases the US avoided pushing too hard hoping to win Pakistan's cooperation. 'It proved a bad bet in the case of Khan and there is little evidence that, in the aftermath of the bin Laden case, it will turn out any better.'²⁶ How about the multiple waivers that the US has given Pakistan and the many times it bent its own laws to accommodate Pakistan? An exception is understandable but waiver after waiver has

convinced Pakistan that they could get away with pretty much anything so long as the US has a 'larger' objective. Having got the hang of the US mindset, Pakistan will make sure that there always is a 'larger' objective to keep the US engaged in the region.

Take the case of Gen. Kayani. Early in the Obama administration, Kayani made clear a condition for improved relations. As the head of the ISI from 2004 to 2007, he did not want a 'reckoning with the past', said a US Embassy cable in 2009, later Wikileaks, introducing him to the new administration. 'Kayani will want to hear that the United States has turned the page on past ISI operations,' it said.²⁷ In short, all of Pakistan's past shenanigans were wiped clean and a new page was opened. This confirmed the Pakistani belief that they could get away with anything if they just hung in long enough for a new administration to take office.

The third reason for the US failure is its inability to grasp the essential underpinnings of Islam in Pakistan since the time of the Pakistan movement and the opportunistic use of it by successive Pakistani rulers. The US experience in defeating the Soviet Union in the 1980s in Afghanistan by using jihadis further masked the danger that they could pose. Even though the danger to the US was made manifest after 9/11, the US policy was hinged on the Pakistan Army, first on Musharraf and then on his successor Kayani and now Raheel Sharif, to make a difference as far as the jihadis were concerned. Quite apart from the fact that neither was willing or even capable of doing so, US support has proved to be a double whammy. On the one hand, by strengthening the army, the secular and moderate civil society in Pakistan has remained weak and unable to make a push against the increasing radicalization of Pakistan. On the other, fixated as it was with using jihadis for foreign policy objectives, the army used American generosity to further strengthen jihadi network while fooling the US that it was actually fighting the jihadis and was the only bulwark against them.

Finally, at its core, the failure of the US to mould Pakistan's policies has been due to divergent perceptions about what is in Pakistan's best interests, especially where India is concerned. As the then secretary of state Dean Rusk wrote after his May 1963 South Asia trip, 'fear, distrust, and hatred of India' mean 'we cannot rely on Pakistan to act rationally and in what we think would be in its own interests'.²⁸ This assessment is as true today as it was in 1963. Pakistan would rather lose American assistance than compromise on what it perceived to be its interests vis-à-vis India.



Given Pakistan's perfidy, why does the US deliberately dupe itself by continuing the same policy of underwriting Pakistan, of rewarding a country that the US knew right from 2003 was hand in glove with the very enemy that was killing American soldiers? As David Sanger puts it, 'Everyone knew it; the Pakistanis were not fooling; Washington was fooling itself.'²⁹

There are several reasons for this. The first is the 'There Is No Alternative (TINA)' factor. As Ashley Tellis puts it, the reason was 'because few alternatives offered a better chance of success'. The United States was dependent on Pakistan for logistic support for its forces inside Afghanistan and for operations against al-Qaeda. Thus, the US persisted with bribing Pakistan in the hope that the army's policies would change.³⁰ Resultantly, the only superpower in the world was taken for a ride and whose helplessness at such perfidy resulted in the death of thousands of US/NATO soldiers.

The second reason is the belief that Pakistan is 'too dangerous to fail'. The West has internalized the

Pakistani narrative that goes something like this: it would collapse without bilateral and multilateral bailouts; if it does collapse, Islamist terrorists (who incidentally have been created by the Pakistani state in the first place) would come into possession of nuclear materials, if not weapons, and use them against the West; it is only the Pakistan Army that stands between the terrorists and nuclear weapons and, therefore, it must be supported financially and with weaponry. What the West, especially the US, has not realized is that such scenarios are deliberately created by Pakistan to scare the West and to garner even more aid to keep Pakistan afloat.

For example, even prior to 9/11 Musharraf had raised the stakes by pointing out the dangers of rising Islamic fundamentalism in Pakistan and how he was the only bulwark against it. Musharraf knew that Pakistan could not be ignored so long as it was perceived to be dangerous. Post-9/11, Musharraf's fear was that the US would abandon it as soon as its objectives in Afghanistan were met which would have calamitous impact on Pakistan. Therefore, he devised a strategy that would keep the US engaged with Pakistan by escalating the levels of danger that Pakistan posed. Cohen puts it well, 'Pakistan now negotiates with its allies and friends by pointing a gun to its own head.'³¹

The third reason is the possibility of Pakistan's tactical nuclear weapons, or nuclear materials, falling into the hands of the jihadis. This is one of the worst nightmares of the US. 'For all the public talk about democracy and development, about the need to foster moderation in Pakistani society, in the end it is the security of that (nuclear) arsenal that captivates Washington's attention.'³² Given the proliferation by the Khan network and the presence of the TTP terrorists in Swat in 2009, close to Islamabad and Kahuta, a fear has grown in the minds of US policymakers that nuclear material may get diverted to the jihadis by an estranged Pakistan. A WikiLeaked cable from the US ambassador in Pakistan, Anne Patterson, in February 2009 heightened such concerns. The cable stated that the worry was not the theft of an entire nuclear weapon but of diversion of some highly enriched uranium or weapon-grade plutonium from Pakistan's stockpiles.³³

Such concerns have prompted appeasement of Pakistan. Appeasement as a policy has never paid dividends. In fact, it has only emboldened Pakistan. To an extent, of course, the US has itself to blame for Pakistan's nuclear programme by winking at it to serve a 'larger' objective in the 1980s. Zbigniew Brzezinski told President Carter, 'Our security policy cannot be dictated by our non-proliferation policy.'³⁴ In its defence it can be said that US aid to Pakistan was premised on the solemn assurances that Pakistan would not advance its nuclear weapons programme. Thus the US that had more grounds to feel betrayed since Zia and his successors did not stop the nuclear programme. However, to continue to believe Pakistan's solemn assurances is to exhibit a degree of naivety, given Pakistan's perfidy since Ayub Khan's time.

For the future, with the war in Afghanistan winding down, though real peace is far away, Pakistan knows that its usefulness to the US is also winding down. Anticipating a repeat of what happened after the Soviets left Afghanistan at the end of the 1980s, Pakistan is making preparations to keep the US engaged. There are several options: to project the arrival of the Islamic State in Afghanistan and Pakistan or of the AQIS as a real threat to peace; midwifing the Afghan peace talks; accelerating the tactical nuclear weapons programme; and if all else fails, the old strategy of creating another Indo-Pak crisis is always available.

As Pakistan's main external supporter, is the US in a position to reverse Pakistan's trajectory towards the abyss by becoming a responsible and stable state? Or will Pakistan, despite the US support, continue to hurtle towards disaster? Will the US continue to shore up Pakistan despite its duplicity, or will the US lessen the engagement? There are no easy answers to these questions because more than the US, it is up to Pakistan to help itself especially as far as serious domestic issues are concerned.

Beyond a point, however, Pakistan cannot afford to alienate the West and the US because the cards are clearly stacked against Pakistan. For one thing, without funding from the US and multilateral agencies like the IMF and the World Bank, Pakistan's economy would be seriously affected. As noted in [Chapter 12](#), foreign assistance is an integral part of Pakistan's budget. As *The Nation* put it eloquently: 'Without aid injections, we risk continued deficits, low reserves, devaluation of the rupee, inflation, etc. Chinese investment, though a grand \$40 billion, is for the next 10 to 15 years. It is not a lump sum injection that can keep us afloat.'³⁵ Second, almost 40 per cent of Pakistan's exports are directed to the West just as most of the foreign assistance and investment comes from these countries. Third, even though China has become the main supplier of weapons, the Pakistan military continues to be heavily dependent on the US for weapons and spares. China has also demonstrated that it will not bail out Pakistan economically with large financial assistance. As a consequence, the army would face a resource crunch that may well force it to cut back significantly.

But Pakistan also knows that beyond a point, the US will not push it either. Pakistan is well aware of the US dilemma that cutting off all US aid to Pakistan could imperil US interests in the region. However, it is equally aware that for the US to continue with the current policy of underwriting a country increasingly defiant towards it also makes little sense.³⁶ It is a catch-22 situation and hinges on who blinks first. In the past it is the US that has done so.

Since there will be a new US president in January 2017, the views of the leading contenders on Pakistan would be an important indicator of what is possibly in store. The views of Democratic nominee for the presidency, Hillary Clinton, on Pakistan were well encapsulated in her comments about keeping 'snakes in your backyard'. The Democratic Party's platform (election manifesto) does not list Pakistan among friends or allies. Pakistan gets mentioned only in the context of the party's reaffirmation to strengthen counter-terrorism measures: 'Democrats will continue to push for an Afghan-led peace process and press Pakistan to deny all terrorists sanctuary on its soil.'³⁷

The views of the Republican nominee, Donald Trump, are even stronger on Pakistan. He told CNN, 'Pakistan is a very, very vital problem and really vital country for us because they have a thing called nuclear weapons. They have to get a hold of their situation.' Last year, Trump had called Pakistan the most dangerous country in the world. In an interview, he had indicated that Pakistan needed to be denuclearized.³⁸ The Republican Party's platform states with reference to Pakistan, 'Our working relationship is necessary, though sometimes difficult, benefit to both, and we look towards the strengthening of historic ties that have frayed under the weight of international conflict. ... This process cannot progress as long as any citizen of Pakistan can be punished for helping the war on terror. Pakistanis, Afghans and Americans have a common interest in ridding the region of the Taliban and securing Pakistan's nuclear arsenal.'³⁹

Will Pakistan's duplicity finally catch up with it? A few recent developments could be indicative of what

is in store. First, under a law passed in 2014, Washington must withhold some of the Coalition Support Funds (CSF) if Pakistan did not take adequate steps to disrupt the Haqqani network. With the US defence secretary not certifying that Pakistan had taken action against the Haqqani network, the Pentagon has withheld \$300 million in CSF for the fiscal year ending 30 September 2016.⁴⁰ This is, perhaps, for the first time that Pakistan is being penalized financially for its double game.

Moreover, CSF itself, under which Pakistan received \$3.1 billion since 2013, and \$13 billion since 2001⁴¹ expires in October 2016, as it was associated with the specific US mission in Afghanistan, which has formally ended. It is likely to be replaced by another fund that focuses specifically on Pakistan's own security needs instead of tying it to Afghanistan.

Second, the Kerry–Lugar Act (KLA) lapsed in October 2014, but only about half of the \$7.5 billion outlay has been disbursed so far. The US state department has clarified that no funds have been issued to Pakistan under the KLA since 2013.⁴²

Third, US commerce secretary Penny Pritzker stated in Islamabad in March 2015 that the Obama administration was not in a position to get legislative approval for any trade agreements with Pakistan, and hence was focusing on getting more US businesses to invest in Pakistan. Pritzker urged Pakistan to fix its bureaucracy and address what she described as an 'inconsistent and unfair' tax regime, cautioning that if the government did not remove such impediments to American businesses, US companies may move to other places.⁴³ These remarks certainly carry implications for bilateral economic relations.

Fourth, the issue of terrorist sanctuaries inside Pakistan has been raised by the US innumerable times without getting much satisfaction from Pakistan. The latest in this regard has been Gen. John Nicholson, the newly appointed US commander in Afghanistan, who told the Senate Armed Services Committee that it was difficult to defeat the enemy when he enjoys a sanctuary in Pakistan. 'I view it as a serious problem. And this has been one of the principal challenges. It's a sanctuary that our enemies, in particular the Haqqani Network, have enjoyed inside Pakistan.' He added, 'We've not been satisfied that there's adequate pressure put on the Haqqanis.'⁴⁴ Such remarks were repeated by Secretary of State John Kerry during the sixth US–Pakistan strategic dialogue when he asked Pakistan to stand up to groups like the Haqqani network, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad, which were literally stealing sovereignty of the nation.

Fifth, the US think tanks have started to demand retribution for the costs in men and material that the US has had to incur due to Pakistan's double-dealing. For example, in a hard-hitting article, Christine Fair, calling Pakistan a hostile state dedicated to undercutting US interests in the region and beyond, wrote: 'It should outrage Americans that the Taliban enjoy ongoing support from Pakistan, a country that claims to be fighting this war *with* the United States and its allies rather than against it.' Accusing Pakistan of continuously undermining the war efforts of the US in Afghanistan, she added: 'The United States and its international and Afghan partners have paid a heavy price in blood and treasure battling the Taliban and their allies, such as the Haqqani Network and even Lashkar-e-Taiba.'⁴⁵

Sixth, even though the US government had notified the Congress about the sale of eight F-16s to Pakistan and the Senate had approved the sale, the final deal did not go through. The Congress rejected the financial proposal under which the US would finance \$430 million out of the \$700 million deal from Foreign Military Financing (FMF) funds. As a result Pakistan would have to pay the entire amount of \$700 million. Pakistan declined to do so and by not providing the Letter of Acceptance by the 24 May

2016 deadline, the deal expired.

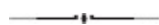
Seventh, two statements of President Obama succinctly sum up where the US thinks the relationship is going. In his last State of the Union address, President Obama stated:

For even without ISIL, even without al-Qaeda, instability will continue for decades in many parts of the world – in the Middle East, in Afghanistan, parts of Pakistan, in parts of Central America, in Africa and Asia. Some of these places may become safe havens for new terrorist networks. Others will just fall victim to ethnic conflict, or famine, feeding the next wave of refugees.⁴⁶

Further, the April 2016 issue of the magazine *The Atlantic* carried a long article by Jeffrey Goldberg based on interviews with President Obama. The fleeting reference to Pakistan was extremely critical. Goldberg writes: ‘He questioned why the US should avoid sending its forces to Pakistan to kill al-Qaeda leaders, and he privately questions why Pakistan, which he believes is a disastrously dysfunctional country, should be considered an ally at all.’⁴⁷

Finally, at a US Congressional hearing on 12 July 2016, titled ‘Pakistan: Friend or Foe in the Fight against Terrorism’, Pakistan came in for severe criticism, the like of which has seldom been witnessed, according to observers. More than once Pakistan was called manipulative and accused of ‘making chumps’ out of the US. Some lawmakers even suggested declaring Pakistan a state sponsor of terrorism and imposing economic sanctions if it continued to allow Afghan Taliban to use its territory.⁴⁸

Pakistan would have to factor in these few examples, as yet straws in the wind, while it considers its future relationship with the US. What these developments show, above all, is that Pakistan’s double-dealing is finally catching up with it and, from being an ally, it is now going to find increasingly shrinking space in the US corridors of power. While aid – both military and economic – would continue for a while, the trajectory of that aid will also be shrinking. Were this to be accompanied by tightening of conditionalities (under US prompting) by international institutions like the IMF and World Bank, etc., Pakistan’s economy and military would come under a lot of strain.



The Pakistan–US relationship has been a complex one, indeed a tragic one. Tragic for the US in the sense that despite massive funding, the United States and the international community have failed to modify Pakistani behaviour. Its massive assistance has failed to change Pakistan’s jihadi policies of fomenting terrorism among its neighbours, and its nuclear weapons programme. Meaningful coercion by Washington has never been tried because of seeing Pakistan through the prism of a larger objective than the purely bilateral relationship. It has, as a result, only reinforced the Pakistani belief that it can ignore American threats with impunity.

The relationship has been even more tragic for Pakistan because it has used American generosity to beef up its military prowess in its elusive quest for military parity with India, instead of investing in the real sinews of power – in the people of Pakistan. The army’s domination of Pakistan has meant that its pernicious world view, centred only on military security, has frittered away massive foreign assistance. Unfortunately, the domination is unlikely to change without a dramatic makeover of the Pakistani state

itself – something that is not in sight right now. Even bribery by the United States in the form of generous military and civilian assistance has made no difference, because the Pakistani military has calculated that it can pursue its current subversive policies without fear of retaliation because Pakistan is too important to be punished or to be allowed to fail.

Haqqani sums up the American dilemma brilliantly:

Three American Presidents – Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson – have asked the question: What do we get from aiding Pakistan? Five – Jimmy Carter, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama – have wondered aloud whether Pakistan's leaders can be trusted to keep their word. Meanwhile, in Pakistan, successive governments have spent a lot of time trying to figure out how to maintain Pakistan's freedom of action while depending on US aid.⁴⁹

That is, indeed, Pakistan's tragedy.

VII

Looking Inwards

Looking Inwards

THIS FINAL chapter is a selection of laments of Pakistanis whose writings reflect the pain and anguish at the state of affairs in Pakistan and the trajectory of its future. While it is encouraging that many in Pakistan are extremely worried about where the country is headed and have identified its problems, the tragedy is that despite knowing the problems, nothing is being done to rectify them.

Articles written by many Pakistanis reflect their perception of the abyss towards which the country is hurtling. From Ayaz Amir's, 'If we had to come to this, why did we go through the trouble of Partition' to Mira Sethi's, 'What will I tell my children about the kind of Pakistan I grew up in'; from Khalid Muhammad's 'The world may like to call us Pakistanis, but there are few within the borders of this country that identify themselves by that moniker' to Roedad Khan's, 'The Federation is united only by a "rope of sand"... Today failure is the most often heard expression in Pakistan. Some say we are at the last quarter of an hour...'; from Shahzad Chaudhry's 'Pakistani society stands at its weakest point in history. Below this, it must simply implode...' to Saif Samejo's, 'Is it compulsory to hate India, America and Israel, in order to love Pakistan?'; from Mama Qadir's, 'I ask for our children back. I ask for a solution to the dumped bodies' to Banari Mengal's, 'What have we received from the people of Pakistan except neglect and torment?'; from Babar Sattar's, 'While pygmies running this country traffic half-baked inane ideas of saviour-hood, one can feel sand slipping through the fingers', to Pervez Hoodbhoy's 'Surely, it is time to reflect on what makes so many Pakistanis disposed towards celebrating murder, lawlessness and intolerance', the chapter tries to glean how ordinary Pakistanis see themselves and their future.

Whither Pakistan?

- 'It would thus appear that in some respects, the dawn of our freedom has been only a shade less dismal than the long night of slavery. Dark, overhanging clouds – whether they ... have risen like evil vapors from the bogs and marshes, which we have so far failed to drain – still cast an ugly shadow across our fair land. What then is our future?¹
- 'If we had to come to this why did we go through the trouble of Partition? I have wanted to ask this question for years but never could bring up the courage to frame it thus. After all, how can one question the basis of one's existence?

'But as we continue to invent ever more elaborate forms of extremism and violence – killing in the name of our higher faith and exulting no end when the wages of barbarism are impressive – this question returns to haunt me. ...[I]f after 65 years of independent existence the mess that we have

created is the best that we can do, any fool will be tempted to ask whether we have proven ourselves fit for nationhood.’²

- ‘... lately, I have been asking myself a question: what will I tell my children about the kind of Pakistan I grew up in? My childhood was a buoyant, sunny time. Now I live in a country maddened by terror.’³
- ‘The very existence of Pakistan is threatened because our past follies are catching up with us.’⁴
- ‘Born at midnight as a sovereign, independent, democratic country, today it is neither sovereign, nor independent, nor even democratic. Today it is not just a “rentier state”, not just a client state. It is a slave state, ill-led, ill-governed by a power-hungry junta and a puppet government set up by Washington.

‘If you want to know how a people can survive despite their government, well, visit Pakistan. Today Pakistan is dangerously at war with itself once again. The Federation is united only by a “rope of sand”. ... This is an eerie period, the heart of the nation appears to stop beating, while its body remains suspended in a void. ... Today failure is the most often heard expression in Pakistan. Some say we are at the last quarter of an hour.’⁵

- ‘Pakistani society stands at its weakest point in history. Below this, it must simply implode.’⁶
- ‘I love Pakistan, but why that isn’t enough? Is it compulsory to hate India, America and Israel, in order to love Pakistan?’⁷

Army

- ‘There is perhaps no other political–military elite in the world whose aspirations for great-power regional status, whose desire to overextend and outmatch itself with meager resources, so outstrips reality as that of Pakistan.

‘This is a country that sadly appears on every failing-state list and still wants to increase its arsenal from around sixty atomic weapons to well over 100 by buying two new nuclear reactors from China.’⁸

- ‘Pakistan acquired a unique distinction. Whereas elsewhere on the planet the word “defence” conjured up a vision of cannon, tanks and earthworks thrown up against threatening armies, in its case defence came to symbolize real estate. That unknown wag deserves a prize who first said that F-16 was a corner plot.

‘No other military, anywhere, has gone about the real-estate business in such an organized manner. ... The higher conduct of war by our general staff may leave something to be desired – as the history of our wars testifies – but no military comes close to ours in the matter of defence housing colonies.’⁹

Balochistan

- ‘I ask for our children back. I ask for a solution to the dumped bodies.’¹⁰
- ‘The Baloch people have been at the receiving end since March 27, 1948 and have been beaten with different traitor, separatist, foreign agent, anti-progress sticks. ... Even if thousands are killed, the problem is not going to go away.’¹¹
- ‘What concerns me most is a word. It is a simple word that is not heard on the lips of people in most parts of the world ... Whenever I do hear this word, or say it myself, it stirs emotions that I cannot

explain.

‘That word is Balochistan.

‘What have we received from the people of Pakistan except neglect and torment?’¹²

Education

- ‘... it was not possible to control his emotions when Kewalram learnt that the books in his public library in Pakistan Chowk had been thrown out because the premises were needed to house a police station. This was an early indication that the custodians of power in Pakistan put more value on a policeman’s baton as a means of building a great nation than on equipping the youth with knowledge.
‘There is no record of the way scores of libraries in the cities and towns of Pakistan, such as the one at Karachi’s Khaliqdina Hall, were ravaged. ... Books kept losing out to a variety of substitutes. For instance, a house of books in Lahore became a house of kebabs.
‘Then we saw the most mind-boggling attacks on knowledge during the Zia-ul-Haq regime when students were told to avoid reading several classics and J.S. Mills’ *On Liberty* was prominent among the books set alight at Lahore’s Punjab University. The Faisalabad University of Agriculture went a step further and prohibited any reference to Newton, Darwin, Marx, Freud and Einstein on the campus.’¹³
- ‘In fact, few subjects have suffered greater distortion in Pakistan as Islam and Muslim history. Here, Islam and its history have been invoked for more than four decades. Yet, throughout these years neither religion nor history have been accorded serious attention by the state or society. I know of not a single noteworthy work on these subjects to have been published in Pakistan. The curriculum of Islamiyat, a compulsory subject in our schools and colleges, is almost entirely devoid of a sense of piety (taqwa), spiritualism (roohaniyat), or mysticism (tassawuf). At best it is cast in terms of ritualistic formalism. At worst, it reduces Islam to a penal code, and its history to a series of violent episodes.’¹⁴
- ‘We might castigate the Pakistan Studies curricula all we want, but if anti-Hindu material is taken out of these books, the curriculum designers and the narrators of Pakistan’s version of Indo–Pak history would find it really hard to justify the creation of Pakistan.’¹⁵

Foundations of Pakistan

- ‘[I]n a textbook example of the law of unintended consequences, the Pakistani state and nation have now become as Islamic as is possible for a non-Arab common law country in the 21st century. Indeed, the 21st amendment to the Constitution passed earlier this year to curb terrorism “using the name of religion or a sect” represents a point of saturation and token acknowledgment of the flaws in the Lahore Resolution....However, whether we now have the constructive vision that was lacking in 1940 is still not clear.’¹⁶
- ‘Sixty-four years after the partition of British India, key questions stand unresolved. Are Pakistanis Arabs or South Asians? Is there a Pakistani culture? Should the country be run according to Islamic law? Can Hindus, Christians and “Qadianis” be proper Pakistanis? What will be the next generation’s answers?’¹⁷

- ‘We, the pigeons with eyes wide shut, are riding a vehicle that is heading towards the edge of a cliff. Rather than opening our eyes, seeing the obvious and asking the right questions, we are too fearful to even look at the monster we face. Maybe, just maybe, now is the time to consider that there is something fundamentally wrong with our foundation. Maybe it is time to consider that a nation state that claims religion to be its reason for creation is bound to turn exclusionist. Consider this: we started with Hindu versus Muslim. Then it became Ahmedi versus Muslim. Beyond that, now comes the question of Shia versus Sunni. Next up, and the contours of it are very visible already, will be the question of Barelvi versus Deobandi versus Salafi. A state married to religion will always play into the hands of people who have a monopoly over interpreting it and will always lead to a divisive and polarized society fuelled by different religious interpreters.’¹⁸

Government

- ‘In public and in privacy, inside homes and out in the marketplace, the speech of the people is sick with disgust and frustration, streaked with impotent anger. There are many reasons for this, but there is one basic cause which enters into them all and this basic cause is the complete exclusion of the people from the power which should have devolved on them with the coming of independence, the power which has been rightfully theirs ever since this day ten years ago, but has been withheld from them by a succession of self-appointed coteries.’¹⁹
- ‘While pygmies running this country traffic half-baked inane ideas of saviour-hood, one can feel sand slipping through the fingers.
‘A false narrative has been sold to Punjab-dominated Pakistan that a strongman with a big hammer and the will to use it indiscriminately can transform this blighted land into heaven. The approach to statecraft that cultivated violent (political and religious) non-state entities as assets and state institutions as a means of coercion as opposed to service delivery is still in play.
‘If the citizen isn’t sure whether the state is the protector or the perpetrator, who is to blame, the citizen or the state?’²⁰

Human Rights

- ‘In a country of unfettered extremism, every attempt to stem the slide into obscurantism is met with resistance, every voice raised in defence of moderation, plurality and intellectual curiosity is silenced, often at the point of a gun. Parween Rahman, Rashid Rehman, Sabeen Mahmud — these are but a few among the many voices of reason that we could not afford to lose. Instead of protecting those that are Pakistan’s best hope of clawing back the space ceded to right-wing forces, the state remains shamelessly in retreat.’²¹
- ‘In our endeavor to protect the “sanctity” and “integrity” of our religion and the State, we have systematically stamped out all voices of dissent that challenged the prevalent narrative, and had the potential of infusing tolerance into our democratic dispensation.’²²

India

- ‘Let’s stop worrying about India. In its wildest dreams India could not do to us what we have managed to inflict on ourselves. RAW, with input from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, could have tried for a hundred years and not been able to invent the lashkars and jaishes and tehriks that we have produced in such abundance. What’s more, to scare no one so much as ourselves. Our jihadis used to dream of planting the green flag on the Delhi Red Fort or creating fanciful emirates in Central Asia. Those proving arduous undertakings, they have embarked upon a new jihad – conquering Pakistan from within.’²³
- ‘I grew up at a time when India and Pakistan were hyphenated in social and political discourse (remember “Indo–Pak”?) I argued with my Indian friends over the superiority of our cricket team, our national icons, even our GDP. These days analysts find “Af–Pak,” and its geo-strategic resonances, more useful ... The rivalry of my Indian friends first gave way to pity, and now articulates itself as sympathy. I suppose that’s comforting.’²⁴
- ‘... we have lost track of the original purpose of the creation of the country. More Muslims live in fear in Pakistan than in India and thousands more Muslims have been killed in Pakistan on religious and sectarian grounds than in India since independence.’²⁵

Karachi

- ‘A friend recently visited Karachi and on finding it more peaceful than before, commended it. However, I told him that this apparent peace was transitory and that there would be an even more dangerous and vicious Karachi. For that matter, every place would become even more dangerous and vicious because the harsh and cruel measures being employed neither address nor change the conditions responsible for the deep rot that continues to eat away at the very innards of society, which has now forsaken itself and continues to slide deeper and deeper into the morass of chaos, violence, intolerance, crime, corruption, hate and apathy.’²⁶
- ‘The finding of bullet-ridden bodies of suspected terrorists, allegedly in staged “encounters”, is now almost a daily occurrence as Karachi limps towards normality. There has been marked decline in targeted killings and no more do strikes bring the city to a halt.
 ‘Yet the suspicion that these gains are being achieved through a rise in extra-judicial executions, allegedly by law enforcement agencies, is disturbing for that would mean one kind of violence being replaced by another form of terror. This can hardly bring long-term peace and stability. The lessons of the past must not be forgotten in the glare of temporary success. The use of state violence as a part of the counterterrorism policy has its own long-term consequences. Have we not been there before?’²⁷

Minorities

- ‘... the significance of hating Hindus for Pakistanis is a lot more than just biased historical narratives or pumping up bigotry under the garb of patriotism ... what needs to be understood and underscored here is that an Indian Hindu manifesting communal bigotry contradicts the ‘idea’ of India, while a Pakistani Muslim by doing so conforms to the ‘idea’ of Pakistan. Opposition to Hindus, and antagonism between Hindus and Muslims, form the founding principle of Pakistan ... how can you

expect Hindu–Muslim harmony in a state that was created through fanning the embers of Hindu–Muslim disharmony? ... Refusing to acknowledge the commonalities between Hindus and Muslims of the Indian subcontinent is a part of the legacy of our founding fathers, and the reason why Pakistan was created in the first place ... For Pakistan to achieve religious harmony and existential stability it would inevitably have to question its founding ideology. That’s the paradox staring the country in the face right now.’²⁸

Religious Extremism

- ‘Surely, it is time to reflect on what makes so many Pakistanis disposed towards celebrating murder, lawlessness and intolerance. To understand the kind of psychological conditioning that has turned us into nasty brutes, cruel both to ourselves and to others, I suggest that the readers sample some of the Friday Khutbas [sermons] delivered across the country’s estimated 250,000 mosques ... often using abusive language, by the mullah.’²⁹
- ‘The dilemma of the vocal citizen opposed to violence of all sorts is that he or she doesn’t know who to fear more: the state or non-state actors. It is open hunting [sic] season in Pakistan for this endangered species. If you’re against religiously inspired savagery, the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan or one of its cousins can kill you. If you’re against sectarian violence, the Lashkar-i-Jhangvi or one of its cousins can kill you.

‘If you contest the state’s version of “patriotism”, chances are you are also opposed to the TTPs, LJs, obscurantism and state oppression. In such case anyone can kill you.’³⁰

- ‘Violence, it seems, is the Pakistani way. ... On TV, one heard two bearded gentlemen debating which particular transgressions would render a person liable to be murdered. My goodness! Such a preoccupation with killing ... revenge ... violence. One would think that men who claim scholarship in the Word of God would speak to us about His Mercy, His Benedictions and His Infinite Love.

‘Where does one begin to grieve? The daily toll of the dead and the missing in Balochistan? In Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa? The unending bloodletting of my fellow Karachiites? More than 80,000 men, women and children murdered all over Pakistan by terrorism? Where will the grieving end? This is a nation born in violence and it continues to remain in a state of violence.

‘Where then is the fatal flaw that has created such a sulphurous cauldron of violence? The flaw is a failure of leadership.’³¹

Sectarianism

- ‘It was clear that our collective humanity is dying, suffocating slowly under the rubble of conspiracy theories, fear, apathy, and sheer number of dead bodies. ... It is a tragedy for a country whose founding father had Shia family history, the first law minister was a Hindu, and the first foreign minister was an Ahmadi. A country which at birth was home to so many sects, that by their sheer volume we were compelled to be a tolerant society. ... over time that pluralistic quality has eroded so completely that the generation born into the new millennium doesn’t even recall a tolerant Pakistan.’³²
- ‘A wise man once said, “I am not sure if Pakistan was created in the name of religion but it sure is

being destroyed in the name of religion.” Whether the victims are the Hazaras of Quetta, Christians of Youhanabad in Lahore, Bohras offering Friday prayers in Karachi, or the children targeted in the Army Public School attack in Peshawar, the root cause is the same. It is the belief that one has a right to judge others based on their faith and if they are determined religiously deviant (as in the case of other sects or religions) or religiously wanting (as in the case of the majority sect), then they are fair game.’³³

- ‘Branding each other “Kaafir” is a new cool apparently among the religious chauvinists. Facebook pages are chock-full of disgusting content pertaining to different schools of thoughts.’³⁴

Terrorism

- ‘Oxford and Cambridge, misguided spirits, may boast of their colleges. Thanks to a history of jihadi warfare, and thanks to other countries, fortresses of piety, meddling in our affairs, we can take pride in the largest collection of religious schools or seminaries anywhere in the world. Can the outstanding scientists produced elsewhere match the stream of outstanding bigots pouring out from our founts of learning?’³⁵
- ‘The realization is dawning slowly and inexorably: the horror that was December 16, 2014 was no turning point. The curtain has not been brought down on extremist elements; not only do they remain free to propagate hatred and intolerance, those in their cross hairs still have no recourse but to fend for themselves. ... this is the same country where banned organizations have been taking out processions even after December 16 and threatening law-abiding citizens. Cosmetic measures, even at this point where nothing less than a single-minded cleaning of the Augean stables is required, will take us even further into the abyss.’³⁶
- ‘An indication of Pakistan’s challenges and Gen. Gul’s powerful legacy came at his funeral. It was attended among other militant leaders (presumably all “good” Taliban) by Hafiz Saeed, Maulana Fazlur Rehman Khalil and Syed Salahuddin. Also in attendance was the COAS Gen. Raheel Sharif.’³⁷

Conclusion

IN SCHOOL, I read a short story in Hindi by noted author Yashpal titled ‘Purdah’¹ (veil or curtain) about Chaudhary Pir Buksh, the uneducated grandson of a minor government functionary. After marriage he is forced to rent a small house in a working-class neighbourhood where he lives with his wife, five children and mother. He barely makes enough to feed his family. However, having inherited middle-class pretensions, his pride is the purdah on the front entrance of the house. Over the years, the doors of the house wither away but the purdah keeps his pride intact by hiding the true situation of his family. He is forced to take a small loan from ‘Punjabi Khan’ to meet his expenses. When he is unable to repay the loan, Punjabi Khan comes to his house demanding repayment in cash or kind. When Pir Buksh expresses his inability for either, Punjabi Khan in a fit of rage yanks off the purdah. Khan and the neighbours are shocked to see the state of poverty in Pir Buksh’s house, with the women barely able to cover their bodies with rags. In pity and disgust, Punjabi Khan and the neighbours walk away and Pir Buksh no longer has the heart to put up the purdah again because all has been revealed and his false pride shattered forever.

Juxtapose this story to Pakistan and it is amazing how closely it fits the situation that Pakistan finds itself in today. Pir Buksh’s lack of education compares with the education emergency in Pakistan; his large family with the growth of population and the potentially unrealized demographic dividend; his lack of earning capacity with the state of the economy; his debt with the debt Pakistan is mired in, the purdah with the spit and polish of the army; Punjabi Khan with Pakistan’s creditors, especially the IMF. Unfortunately, there is no international benefactor like the US, Saudi Arabia or China to bail out Pir Buksh.

Behind the purdah or the facade of the eighth largest army in the world lies the reality of Pakistan – a mass of illiterate and poorly educated people whose needs will increasingly not be met; a growing debt necessitating more loans to repay older debt. Yet, the purdah of the army and its nuclear weapons gives the illusion of things being in order. So long as the purdah holds, the reality of Pakistan will remain concealed. But can the purdah hold out indefinitely? Like the withered doors of Pir Buksh’s house, the state is withering from inside. Soon there will be nothing left to hang the purdah on, just as the army will find that soon enough Pakistan will barely be a country where it can strut about.

The tragedy of Pakistan is that such a sorry state of affairs need not have been its fate. Having forged a country – ‘moth-eaten’ as it was – the leaders imagined that the achievement of Pakistan per se was the journey’s end; that having achieved Pakistan, rest would follow; that the force of religion would bind all the disparate communities; and that the force of Jinnah’s leadership would resolve all issues. Jinnah unfortunately died in just over a year of its creation, and ever since Pakistan has been struggling to find ‘Jinnah’s Pakistan’ even as religion that has pervaded the state and society has become a divisive force rather than a unifying one.

Pakistan's geographical location has, over the decades, attracted great powers like the US and China and have given it access to massive economic and military resources. However, given the military's mindset, such resources have been squandered on narrowly defined security rather than on strengthening Pakistan's economic and social sectors – the real sinews of power. This is proving disastrous in an increasingly technological and globalized world.

Decades of underinvestment in education, and institutionalizing a limited ideological bias in the curriculum has manifested itself in abysmally poor-quality education resulting in a narrow and bigoted world view and low learning skills. This is quite apart from dismal statistics regarding enrolment at all levels of schooling and literacy (not to mention the even more dismal statistics for female education). For this reason, Pakistan is on track to miss the opportunity provided by the demographic transition and instead of reaping a demographic dividend, it may well land up having to deal with a demographic nightmare.

A neglect of the water infrastructure has transformed Pakistan from a water-abundant country in 1947 to a water-scarce country in less than seven decades. This will have disastrous consequences for food security as well as rural employment, further adding to the growing number of the unemployed at a time when the population is fast increasing.

While it is debatable whether Pakistan is, in fact, more secure today than earlier even with its nuclear weapons, the fact is that the state has not given any kind of priority to human development. Simultaneously, the military-dominated security mindset has eroded the space required for democratic institutions to flourish. Thus, even in periods of supposedly civilian rule, there is, in fact, a hybrid system where the civilian government is constantly looking over its shoulder and is effectively debarred from some of the most vital areas of statecraft, i.e., foreign policy, defence and security issues, to say nothing of the nuclear assets. The new terminology, of course, is that of a 'soft coup'.

For the Pakistan Army, getting a seat on the international high table intermittently has resulted in an exaggerated sense of its own importance. This has led to ruinous consequences as far as domestic policy is concerned. Basking in the attention as a front-line state by leveraging its geographical position in the 1980s and most of this century till now, Pakistan has not had to face the uncomfortable questions of where Pakistan's key indicators were going. Kept artificially afloat, Pakistan has not had to take the tough decisions on how to live within its means, on how to ameliorate the living conditions of its citizens and how to build the strength of its people.

Worse, Pakistan has come to internalize its own propaganda about jihad – that it can continue to promote terrorism in neighbouring countries with impunity and that the US will ultimately come around and bail it out. Unfortunately, it is now reaping the whirlwind of jihad inside its own territory by its own proxies, who have learnt the lessons taught to them only too well. This is one crisis where the outside world cannot bail them out.

For the US and China, the added danger now is that the trajectory that Pakistan has adopted – making a distinction between 'good' and 'bad' terrorists will only lead to greater, not lesser, terrorism. There is the ever-present possibility that a jihadi group will carry out another Mumbai-style attack on India or a successful attack on the US like the one attempted by Faisal Shehzad in Times Square, New York. Will either of the two governments be able to resist public pressure to punish Pakistan?

To get out of the jihadi grip, Pakistanis will have to jettison the collective escapist fallacy they have

been living under. According to this, terrorist acts targeting civilians, especially women, children and religious places, are so heinous that Muslims could not have carried them out. This is the constant refrain in the media, especially the TV talk shows. Pakistanis will have to accept that foreigners are not committing heinous acts in Pakistan but Pakistanis are; that Hindus, Jews or Christians are not doing so but Muslims are.

Such developments clearly show the trajectory in which Pakistan is hurtling. Whether or not Pakistan will continue to travel towards the abyss will depend on its comprehension of the multiple crises facing the country and its willingness to take resolute action to tackle each of the problems. Given the hydra-headed problems faced by Pakistan, a mere tinkering with issues will only make matters worse. Pakistani leadership will have to revisit the entire gamut of its development since 1947.

While the past cannot be changed, fundamental questions will have to be asked about basic issues like the validity of continuing to use religion to forge a common identity, the state's role in Islamization and aggravating sectarian divisions in society. Questions will have to be asked about the role of the army and the intelligence services in manipulating and dominating the polity and about reorganizing such a role to adapt to civilian supremacy, strengthening democracy and the federal principles. Answers will also have to be found about the kind of negative identity it has sought to impose, the kind of insecurities it has fostered about its neighbours and the policies it has adopted to tackle such insecurities. Consensual answers will have to be found for such fundamental issues.

Rethinking such fundamentals will only be the first step. A more fundamental and important step would be for the leadership, civil and military, and the people of Pakistan to develop a vision of themselves and an identity that is not negative, which does not hinge on hatred of others, is not based on conspiracies. Without such a major transformation it is unlikely that Pakistan will ever be at peace with itself and with others.

What would the parameters of such a transformation be? Some of the key areas that the state would have to focus on will have to be: (i) the economy – whether or not expenditure priorities are modified to match the lofty goals enunciated in its own Vision 2025 document, like increasing expenditure on education to 4 per cent of GDP; (ii) genuine reduction in the defence budget and not merely tricks like parking defence expenditure under civil heads as done from Musharraf's time; (iii) learning to live within its own means by widening the tax base and tax-to-GDP ratio, increasing domestic savings, and other similar measure instead of depending on domestic and foreign borrowings; (iv) reordering the relationship with India from one of inveterate hostility and seeking parity to a realistic relationship based on geographical realities of being neighbours; (v) stopping interference in Afghanistan and respecting its independence and sovereignty; (vi) establishing the writ of the state and monopoly over instruments of violence by distancing itself from *all* jihadi groups without making a distinction between those that are anti-India who are allowed to continue and those that are anti-Pakistan who are targeted; (vii) taking serious measures to rein in madrasas spreading sectarian hatred, glorifying violence and making the curriculum meaningful for today's world; (viii) reforming the curriculum of government schools to delete all chapters promoting hatred and distorting history of Pakistan; (ix) the army realizing that it exists because there is a Pakistan and not the other way around; and (x) Pakistanis of all Islamic hues understanding that they are not the only Islamic country in the world and do not have an exclusive contract on Islam.

What would make Pakistan undergo such a transformation? It is not financial inducements since the US has pumped in enough over the decades to little avail. Neither is it the potentially huge investments that China had promised in 2010 and now again in 2015. It is not threats of sanctions that Pakistan has dealt with in the past. Neither is it the threat of being declared a terrorist state unless it is implemented (and Pakistan has had good reason to believe that such a threat would not be implemented). Neither is the threat of being declared a rogue nuclear state effective, because once again those making such threats are unlikely to implement it, as they did not in the case of A.Q. Khan.

Domestically, the leadership seems to have immunity from bad governance because irrespective of dragging the country down to the bottom of almost every international list, it is a similar set of politicians that have returned to power, election after election. Thus, the fear of not being elected or being punished for their misdemeanors is not an incentive for good governance or responsibility and accountability as it is in other democracies.

One possibility of a voluntary transformation is if Pakistan's 'wish list' is satisfied. Over the years, Pakistan's 'wish list', as articulated by various leaders, civil and military, includes the following:

- (i) India is compelled to hand over, at a minimum, the Kashmir Valley;
- (ii) India withdraws from Siachen;
- (iii) India agrees to Pak formulation on Sir Creek;
- (iv) India agrees not to build even run-of-the river projects on the western tributaries of the Indus as permitted by the Indus Waters Treaty;
- (v) India stops all projects in Afghanistan;
- (vi) India closes all its consulates in Afghanistan;
- (vii) Afghanistan is handed over to the Taliban, or at least a facade of power sharing is entered into with them;
- (viii) Other ethnic groups in Afghanistan accept the supremacy of the Taliban variety of Pakhtuns;
- (ix) Afghanistan recognizes the finality of the Durand Line and does not try and reduce the flow of the Kabul river even for its own use;
- (x) The US enters into a civil nuclear deal with Pakistan like it has with India and facilitates its entry into the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG);
- (xi) India is barred from becoming a member of the UN Security Council unless Pakistan is also simultaneously made a member;
- (xii) The US and international financial institutions continue to provide liberal financial bailout packages to Pakistan indefinitely;
- (xiii) India and the international community recognize Pakistan's parity with India;
- (xiv) Pakistan be allowed to continue in its financially irresponsible ways and is not held accountable for mismanaging its economy; and
- (xv) Pakistan is not asked to 'do more' against terrorists it has created and nurtured over the years.

The absurdity of each item in such a wish list is obvious. Allowing the fulfilment of any of these 'wishes' would only be appeasement of the worst kind – rewarding irresponsible behaviour because

‘Pakistan is too important to fail’ and to continue to leverage its geographical position.

There are, however, two other options to make Pakistan modify its behaviour without acquiescing to its irrational wishes. The first is forcing Pakistan to behave, not through appeasement and inducements but through forceful non-military action, such as reducing, if not stopping, multilateral and bilateral financial assistance. This would adversely impact the Pakistan economy and force it to reduce the size of its army and live within its means. This, however, is unlikely to be tried out for fear of adversely impacting the population and because as a nuclear-armed country, Pakistan’s problems are a global concern and state failure is not an option.

The second option is to wait for Pakistan to collapse under its own weight. An economy like Pakistan’s cannot bear the massive cost of debt repayment and the defence budget coupled with sustaining the Taliban, supporting India-centric terrorists and fighting the home-grown terrorists, whether in FATA or in Pakistan’s hinterland, to say nothing of any kind of developmental activity. These costs together with the demographic pressures, water scarcity and millions of unemployed youth will cripple Pakistan without a shot being fired. However, this option too is not advisable for the simple reason that the international community would find the cost of rehabilitating thousands if not millions of radicalized, unemployed youth unacceptable.

Therefore, to make Pakistan behave like a normal state living within its parameters, accepting responsibility for its own actions, there has to be a combination of these two options. The disbursement of foreign assistance – bilateral and multilateral – has to be coordinated and made dependent on specific action taken by the leadership on the menu of transformative actions provided above. Without such specific action, aid must be withheld irrespective of what ‘larger’ objectives Pakistan may be serving at that point in time. No ‘waivers’ should be permitted for slippages. It is only when the cost of its misdemeanours become unbearable to the leadership, especially the military, will Pakistan give up illusions of grandeur and behave responsibly.

How much time does Pakistan have to get its act together? Not more than a decade at the most, if it does not change the trajectory of its slide by taking at least some, if not all, of the transformative actions mentioned above. A combination of demographic pressures, an uneducated horde of young people, lack of jobs, increasingly diminishing water supplies, an economy on the drip and an increasingly radicalized population will lead to unacceptable social chaos and anarchy that the army too will not be able to control or be immune from.

For precisely this reason, it is incumbent on the international community not to appease Pakistan any further. Pakistan has been digging itself into a hole frequently, chasing illusions of grandeur, secure in the knowledge that it will be bailed out by its benefactors. Those benefactors, for Pakistan’s own sake, will have to stop doing so and instead ‘encourage’ it to show the vision, determination and leadership to come out of the hole by itself, albeit with a helping hand. But the effort has to be Pakistan’s.

Rebuilding Pakistan will require perseverance, dedication and a long-term commitment from all the stakeholders working in a democratic framework to develop a consensus on the way forward. If the army were to obstruct civilian control or the politicians were to fail the country once again, Pakistan’s tryst with the abyss is assured.

Where does Pakistan go from here? That would depend, of course, a great deal on where it wants to go (as the caterpillar told Alice in *Alice in Wonderland*). As of now, the only road that Pakistan seems set on

in is towards the abyss. It appears that very little serious introspection is going on anywhere in Pakistan about the trajectory that it is on. There is, of course, a fair amount of thinking outside of Pakistan on this issue. But that is invariably dismissed as being motivated, especially when it comes from India. Ultimately, it is when Pakistanis, especially the military, understand the issues involved, understand that what is at stake is nothing less than the very survival of Pakistan as a state that perhaps the first tentative step would be taken in reversing its tragic trajectory. It is then that the leaders will start asking the right questions about what real security entails and what it means to be a Pakistani, and realize the benefits that would accrue from being at peace with itself and its neighbours.

Pakistan's leaders would do well to recall Iqbal's famous couplet with 'Pakistan' being substituted for 'Hindustan' in the original.

*Na samjhoge to mit jaoge ai Pakistan vaalo
Tumhari daastan tak bhi na hoge dastaanon mein.*

If you do not fathom, you will be destroyed, O people of Pakistan
Even your story will not endure in the stories of the world.

—Muhammed Iqbal, 'Tasvir-e-Dard'

Notes

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About the Book

Pakistan expert and commentator Tilak Devasher trains a clear and objective gaze on the deeper malaise that affects the nation, beyond the current crises and the sensationalist headlines.

Building on several years of study and work on the region, he examines the looming water crisis, the perilous state of education, the economic meltdown and the danger of an unrealized ‘demographic dividend’ that have been eating into the innards of Pakistan since its creation. He also dwells at length on the Pakistan movement, where the seeds of many current problems were sown – the opportunistic use of religion being the most lethal of these.

With data-driven precision, Devasher takes apart the flawed prescriptions and responses of successive governments, especially during military rule, to the many critical challenges the country has encountered over the years. These, as much as the particular trajectory of its creation and growth, he contends, have brought Pakistan to an abyss where it risks multi-organ failure – unless things change dramatically in the near future.

About the Author



Tilak Devasher has taken to writing after he retired from the cabinet secretariat, Government of India, as Special Secretary in 2014. During his professional career with the cabinet secretariat, he specialized in security issues pertaining to India's neighbourhood. Post retirement, he has continued to take a keen interest in India's neighbourhood with special focus on Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. He has written articles for *The Economic Times*, *The Indian Express*, Vivekananda International Foundation, Daily O and Catch News. He did his schooling from Mayo College, Ajmer and studied History at St Stephen's College, Delhi at the undergraduate level and at the University of Delhi at the post-graduate level.



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