



# DEFEATING TERRORISM

## STRATEGIC ISSUE ANALYSIS



### Coalition Partners: Pakistan

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#### Conclusions:

- Resuscitate and broaden contacts with the Pakistani military through a coordinated NATO engagement plan (with a major role for Turkey); renewed and expanded IMET for Pakistani officers and NCOs; establishment of Pakistani faculty liaison positions at the CGSC, USAWC, TRADOC, and branch schools; provide U.S. instructors at Pakistani PME schools; and explore a new form of engagement that leads to the rotational stationing of a Pakistani company or battalion at a U.S. Army base for training and professional development.
- Support Musharraf while quietly pressuring him to undertake the political and economic reforms necessary for long-term stability.
- In collaboration with the European Union and the United Nations, lead a major effort to find a solution to the Kashmir problem that satisfies that region's Muslim majority but does not do so at the expense of India's security.
- Continue debt forgiveness and increased access to the American market, particularly for textiles.
- Provide reconstruction assistance focused on the rebuilding of the educational system.
- Resist any urge to use Pakistani territory for military operations against Afghanistan.
- Broaden and deepen military engagement with India to assure that New Delhi does not see improved ties with Pakistan as a strategic "tilt."

Pakistan may be the most pivotal coalition partner during the initial phase of the war on terrorism since it has the longest border with and provides the best access to Afghanistan. In a broader sense, Pakistan is crucial because it is the world's second most populous Islamic state. Its cooperation helps prevent the war on terrorism from becoming a conflict between Islam and Christianity. Pakistan is also a Category II sanctuary for global terrorist movements.\* And Pakistan has an effective military and intelligence service and

thus could serve as an important ally for anti-terrorist operations.

The United States would like to see Pakistan emerge from the war on terrorism as a stable, developing state where religious-based extremists do not find support or recruits. As such, it could provide a model for other Islamic states and play a leading role in building regional stability and prosperity.

This positive outcome is certainly not preordained. Pakistan could disintegrate into a nightmare internal war of ethnic conflict,

\* Category I states support terrorist movements as official policy (e.g. Afghanistan and Iraq). Category II states turn a blind eye or allow terrorist movements to exist because of fear, weakness, or sympathy (e.g. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE). Category III states host terrorist activities because their systems of legal and civil rights and their large immigrant communities provide a form of protection (e.g. Germany and the United States).

sectarian violence, and humanitarian disaster. Under such conditions, religious extremists could ally with sympathetic military officers, seize political power, and thus control nuclear weapons.

The ultimate outcome for Pakistan depends on the sagacity of that nation's leaders and on the wisdom of American strategy.

## **Context.**

Pakistan faces severe constraints and problems that American strategists must consider. From its creation in 1947, Pakistan has had a weak sense of national identity. Composed of a multitude of ethnic groups with different cultures and languages, its only unifying feature was Islam. Pakistan has never decided whether it seeks to be an Iran-style nation ruled by religious leaders or a secular state along the lines of Turkey.

Punjabis, who constitute about 48 percent of Pakistanis, dominate the economy, government, and military. This has created deep resentment among the other ethnic groups. Ethnically Pashtun Pakistanis, who represent about 8 percent of the population, feel as much connection with their fellow Pashtuns in Afghanistan as with Islamabad. Thus the Taliban has deep reservoirs of support in western Pakistan and in the slums of other cities like Karachi.

Pakistan suffers from rigid class distinctions intermingled with religious considerations. Members of the upper class tend to identify with modernization and the West. Many have been educated in Europe or North America, and all speak English. While some are devoutly religious, most consider the religious extremism popular among the largely illiterate lower classes as a threat.

To avoid inflaming class war, the Pakistani elite has tolerated this extremism. The tendency of the extremists to blame external forces, particularly the United States and Israel, for Pakistan's problems was a

convenient way to deflect attention from the shortcomings of the nation's leaders and political structures.

Bad governance has been the norm in Pakistan. The first decade of independence established a pattern of political instability and corruption. In combination with rapid population growth, crushing poverty, and ethnic and sectarian conflict, this is incendiary.

Pakistan has experienced cycles of military dictatorship and weak, corrupt civilian governments. In October 1999 the Army deposed Prime Minister Muhammed Nawaz Sharif when he attempted to replace Chief of Army Staff Pervez Musharraf with a family crony. General Musharraf, while promising a return to civilian rule, has ruled since then, attempting with only modest success to root out corruption, forestall ethnic and regional conflict, control religious extremism, and resuscitate the nation's stagnant economy.

Pakistan's external debt burden is crushing with \$21 billion coming due in 2002-03. Defense spending consumes a significant portion of government expenditures. These economic problems contributed to a collapse of public education, the public health system, and the criminal justice and law enforcement systems. Foreign investment has nearly dried up. GDP growth during most of the 1990s was less than population growth, leading to a decline in living standards and widespread discontent.

Pakistan's primary foreign and security problem has been its conflict with India. In recent decades, this has centered on the status of Kashmir. While this state is overwhelmingly Muslim, its ruler at the time of independence was Hindu and thus sought to join India. Armed conflict ensued which led to India's occupation of the eastern part. In 1990 Kashmiri militants began an armed insurgency against Indian control. While Islamabad officially denies involvement, it is widely known that Pakistan supports the

insurgents. This has led India to label Pakistan a supporter of terrorism. The fact that both India and Pakistan are nuclear states makes their conflict one of the most dangerous on earth.

While grappling with these problems, Pakistan developed close ties with the Taliban government in neighboring Afghanistan. The military and intelligence services trained and equipped the *mujahedin* who fought against the Soviets. Out of the concern that the civil war and disorder in Afghanistan that followed the Soviet withdrawal would spill over, the Pakistani military and security services helped form and support the Taliban, most of whom emerged from the refugee camps and radical religious schools (*madrassahs*) in Pakistan. (These schools, which are the only source of education for many poor Pakistanis, remain a breeding ground for violent extremism).

Support for the Taliban remains high, particularly in the heavily Pashtun areas like Quetta and Peshawar, among the urban poor in large cities like Karachi, and among the more radically religious segments of the professional classes, including the military and intelligence services.

## **Pakistan's Strategy.**

The United States' declaration of war on terrorism forced General Musharraf to abandon his attempts to tolerate or mollify extremism. In effect, he had to choose between alternative futures for his country, one based on an improved relationship with the West and integration into the global economy, the other leading toward the "Talibanization" of Pakistan.

Musharraf has several interlinked objectives:

- Improving ties with the West in order to gain the removal of sanctions imposed after the 1998 nuclear tests and the 1999 military coup, deflecting pressure caused by the slowness of the return to civilian rule,

attracting economic assistance and investment, and providing a diplomatic counterweight to India, particularly on the Kashmir issue;

- Diminishing the threat from the extremist movements inside Pakistan;

- Avoiding the disintegration of Afghanistan which would create serious refugee problems for Pakistan and potentially engulf the western section of the country; and,

- Preventing the emergence in Kabul of a successor government hostile to Pakistan (on this point, Musharraf supports a coalition government dominated by Pashtuns, who form a majority in Afghanistan).

In September Musharraf pledged "unstinted cooperation in the fight against terrorism," but out of concern with the backlash among Pakistan's lower classes and other Taliban sympathizers, stipulated that there be no U.S. forces in Pakistan and that the Pakistani military not be used outside the nation's borders. He made several attempts to broker a deal with the Taliban leading to the turnover of Osama bin Laden, but all failed.

Musharraf's government has controlled the anti-American demonstrations that exploded once military operations began and shown a willingness to use force if necessary. He has consolidated his grip on power. The most important step in this was an October 7 purge of senior military officers and intelligence officials thought to be sympathetic to the Taliban and other extremists. In general, then, he has attempted to go as far as he can in support of the United States and the Afghanistan operation without sparking outright rebellion within Pakistan.

## **Prognosis.**

In the short term, Musharraf appears firmly in control of Pakistan and likely to continue cooperation with the United States. The level of professionalism among the officer

corps is high; its senior leaders appear solidly behind Musharraf's approach. He has expressed his confidence that Pakistan's nuclear weapons are fully under control and cannot be seized by radicals. This is all very important for the United States: if Musharraf should be removed from power, any successor would be less likely to cooperate in the war on terrorism and might be overtly hostile.

Three things could help solidify Musharraf's position and support. One is if the Afghanistan phase of the war on terrorism is short, leads to minimum civilian casualties and refugee flows, and paves the way for a coalition government and the reconstruction of that battered country. Second is some immediate economic payoff. It is not yet clear whether this will happen. On one hand, the United States, the European Union, and Japan have all taken steps to provide debt relief and other means of economic support. In late September the IMF, with U.S. approval, authorized the final tranche of Pakistan's \$596 million standby loan. On the other hand, the turmoil in South and Central Asia have further deterred investment and increased shipping insurance for goods to and from Pakistan. Third is international involvement leading toward a solution of the Kashmir problem in a way satisfactory to the Muslim majority there.

Musharraf's position and support could be weakened by several things:

- A protracted military operation in Afghanistan leading to refugee flows and widespread civilian casualties;
- An outright takeover of Afghanistan by the Northern Alliance;
- Anti-terrorist attacks by the United States on other Muslim countries such as Iraq or Libya;
- A significant crackdown on the Muslim insurgents in Kashmir by India;
- Failure on the part of the United States and Europe to produce tangible economic

benefits in exchange for Pakistan's cooperation; and

- The coalescence of opposition from within the Pakistani military.

## **Conclusion.**

Without cooperation from Pakistan, the United States would have a very difficult time completing the first phase of the war on terrorism. But the United States has been burned many times by placing its trust in friendly dictators unwilling or unable to undertake serious political reform. This is the dilemma with Pakistan: the United States may not be able to succeed without Musharraf, but to be associated with him could be risky over the long term if he becomes just another corrupt, repressive military dictator.



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