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A Turbulent Pakistan: India's Choices in Response

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The fate and future of Pakistan has been an issue of considerable concern and anxiety not only inside Pakistan but in the world at large and South Asia in particular. The Fund for Peace project on the ranking of failed and failing states has been placing Pakistan in the top category of 'critical alert' year after year. According to this ranking Pakistan was 13th in 2012. It was 12th in 2011 and 10th in 2010 and 2009.² In an analysis of Pakistan for the 2012 listing, Robert D Kaplan, who organises these rankings, said: "Perversity characterises Pakistan". Several academic institutions and scholars have come forward to explore the fate of Pakistani state and society.³ The Brookings Institution undertook such a project in 2010 with the support of US Institute of Peace and the Norwegian Peace Foundation, and the results of the study have since been published. The coordinator of this project and an acknowledged American scholar on Pakistan Stephen P Cohen wrote after completing the project: "With its declining social indicators, crumbling infrastructure and the military's misplaced priorities, Pakistan is a deeply troubled state and, were it not for the large number of talented Pakistanis, one would be tempted to judge it to be in terminal decline".⁴

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² The results of the project are published in *Foreign Policy* magazine of the Carnegie Endowment for Peace, Washington. For the global ranking of 2012 see http://www.foreignpolicy.com/failed_states_index_2012_interactive. (Accessed on 15 September 2012).

³ A review of these studies can be found as 'Appendix' to Stephen P Cohen, "Pakistan Future: The Bellagio Papers", Brookings Institution Press, Washington DC, 2011.

⁴ Stephen P Cohen, "The Future of Pakistan", Brookings, February 23, 2011. <brookings.edu/.../01_pakistan_cohen.as> (Accessed on 17 October 2012)

The listing of the failed and failing states is done on an elaborate 12-point index that includes variables ranging from demographic pressures to uneven development, economic decline, factionalised elites and external intervention. This concept is highly debatable as it is heavily culture-biased.⁵ Mostly countries that are considered to be source of threat to the West, besides being anarchic in their governance, are referred to as failed or failing states. The basic thrust of the concept is that a state that cannot provide basic public goods should be treated as failed or failing. This assumption is based on the concept of a democratic and welfare state which is not a necessary reality in most of the developing countries of Asia and Africa. The character of the state is defined by the character of the people that control the state and from where the state draws its support and sustenance, which at times could only be a section of people and not the entire populace. Historically, monarchical, colonial, racial and autocratic states had no commitment or obligation to provide ‘public goods and services’ to the people governed; but they were not considered failed states and were in firm control of the people they ruled over. Many states that do not have even adequate resources for one reason or another also get lumped together in this category. States also undergo turbulence and transformation for a variety of factors; and to term them during the period of their transition as failed or failing states would be misleading.

The Crisis in Pakistan

Notwithstanding the degree of relevance of the concept of failed and failing states to Pakistan, there is an acceptable consensus even among the Pakistani analysts and policy makers and the international strategic community that the country is passing through a serious crisis; and one is not sure what shape or size it will be in, in the coming decade. The areas of concern from where this sense of Pakistan’s crisis emanates have been defined and articulated in various ways by scholars and policy makers. They may be seen as falling within five broad categories; namely:

1. Unresolved National Identity
2. Religious and Sectarian Extremism
3. Divided Polity
4. Economic and Developmental Dilemma
5. Isolation from Allies

The unresolved national identity question is rooted in the original concept of Pakistan at its birth when leaders like Mohammad Ali Jinnah struggled to create an independent sovereign and secular state for the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent. However, soon after the death of leaders like Jinnah who fought for the creation of Pakistan, his vision of building a ‘State for the Muslims’ came in confrontation with the idea of a ‘State of the Muslims’ or

⁵ Sonali Huria, “Failing and Failed States: the Global Discourse”, IPCS Issue Brief, No. 75, July 2008.

‘Muslim/Islamic State’. The seeds of this confrontation were sowed by the adoption of the “Objectives Resolution” in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on 12 March 1949. This resolution was moved by the then Prime Minister of Pakistan and Jinnah’s trusted colleague Liaquat Ali, possibly with the intent of making Pakistani democracy different from that of the European model (then adopted by India), as the “Objectives Resolution” vested sovereignty of Pakistan in *Allah* (God), not in the Pakistani people. Other developments like the cultural conflict between East and West Pakistan on the question of Bengali language in 1952, and sectarian conflict on the question of Ahmedi sect of Muslims in 1953-54 on a good or real Muslim, nursed the divide between ‘State *for* the Muslims’ and the ‘Muslim/Islamic State’. The rise of a ‘Muslim/Islamic state’ also had a greater compatibility with the Western (mainly British) strategic thrust in the then evolving Cold War which saw Islam as a powerful bulwark against the spread of communism in Asia. The ‘Islamic State’ idea got a tremendous boost and precedence during General Zia-ul-Haq’s military regime (1977-88) which also saw the rise of Mujahedeen groups backed by the US and western forces in countering the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.⁶ Cultural and ethnic fault-lines of Pakistan have also for long been vitiating the search for a viable national identity in Pakistan. The Bengali-speaking and inherently secular Muslims of the then East Pakistan separated from the mainland in 1971 to become the sovereign independent Bangladesh. The remaining ethnic cleavages separating Sindhis, Baluchis, Pushtoons and the Punjabis from each other remain to be resolved creatively. Some of these cleavages have precipitated internal turmoil and strife in Pakistan, like in Baluchistan, and pose a serious challenge to its unity, integrity and survival as a nation.⁷

It is the unresolved question of identity which has given rise to religious and sectarian extremism that is further tearing the Pakistani society and the state apart.⁸ The roots of these forces go back to the anti-Soviet war of liberation in Afghanistan during the 1980s, but since the rise of Taliban in Afghanistan and the global ‘war on terror’ following the 9/11 attacks, the Jihadi terrorism has taken its most destructive form. The Frankenstein creation of Jihadi terrorism that Pakistan initially cultivated as a powerful strategic instrument against its neighbours like India and Afghanistan has become an ally of Al Qaeda, not only to emerge as the global security menace but also a challenge to the very existence of the state of Pakistan which patronised it. Jihadi terrorism that sprang from the frontier region of Pakistan and Afghanistan borders has spread extensively to cover the heartlands of Punjab and Sindh. The

⁶ For a discussion of Islamic factor in Zia-ul-Haq’s military regime see, Hasan-Askari Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan*, New York, St. Martin’s, 2000.

⁷ For a discussion of some of these issues, see Stephen P Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington, 2004. Farzana Shaikh, *Making Sense of Pakistan*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2009. Saroop Ijaz, “So What is our Pakistani Identity”, *The Express Tribune*, July 05, 2011. Adeel Khan, “Ethnicity, Islam and National identity in Pakistan”, *South Asia (A Journal of South Asian Studies)*, Vol. 22, No.1, 1999, pp. 167-182. Fahd Ali, “A New voice for a New Pakistan”, *Daily Times*, July 28, 2010.

⁸ Husain Haqqani, “The Ideologies of South Asian Jihadi Groups”, *Current trends in Islamic Ideology, No.1*, 2005. Also see, Mohammad Waseem, “Political Sources of Islamic militancy in Pakistan” in Ian Talbot (ed.) *The deadly Embrace: Religion, Violence and politics in India and Pakistan; 1947-2002*, Oxford University Press, Karachi 2007. Muhammad Qasim Zaman, “Sectarianism in Pakistan: The radicalisation of Shi’i and Sunni Identities”, *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 32, no.3, 1998.

Pakistani state woke up to this challenge only after 2007, but as yet, it has not been able to distance itself fully from the Jihadi terrorism as an instrument of state policy.⁹ While facing the fire from a section of the Jihadi groups such as the Tehrik-e-Taliban of Pakistan, it continues to patronise another set of such groups, like Lashkar-e-Taiba, Harkat-ul-Mujahedeen and the frontier-based Haqqani group, in pursuing its strategic policy goals in Afghanistan and India.¹⁰ A well-known US expert on Pakistan, Bruce Riedel, wrote recently:

But Al Qaeda is not alone. Allies in Pakistan like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the group that attacked Mumbai in 2008, or the Afghan and the Pakistani Taliban are under little or no pressure. LeT and the Afghan Taliban, focused as they are on non-Pakistani targets, still enjoy Pakistani intelligence patronage, even as the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) fights the Pakistan Taliban.

The capacity of some of these groups, especially LeT, to cause global mischief, even provoke a war in South Asia between India and Pakistan is undiminished. Three of the five most wanted on America's terrorist list, Zawahiri, LeT's founder Hafeez Saeed and Taliban leader Mullah Omar are in Pakistan. Zawahiri is in hiding but the other two enjoy the ISI's backing. Zawahiri too, likely has powerful protectors.¹¹

In addition to the de-stabilising presence of the extremist and terrorist forces, Pakistan's internal peace and stability has also been adversely afflicted by sectarian violence involving the dominant sect of Sunni Muslims and the religious/sectarian minorities such as Shia and Ahmedi Muslims, Hindus and Christians. Militarisation and spread of Shia-Sunni conflict has been particularly unmanageable. There is organised militancy led by the Sunni organisation Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and the reactive Shia group Sipah-e-Mohammad Pakistan. Analysts suspect external involvement of other Muslims countries like Saudi Arabia (Sunni) and Iran (Shia) on the side of the warring groups, and there are accusations that Pakistan's military intelligence establishment, ISI, is using Sunni militancy for the 'genocide' of the minority Shias.¹²

Pakistan's inability to cope with its internal conflicts arises largely from its divisive and fragmented polity. The fundamental internal political contradiction is between the army and the civilian regime. Ever since it first took over power in Pakistan in 1958, the army has not

⁹ Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Clifford D May (Ed.), *The Afghanistan-Pakistan Theater, Militant Islam, Security and Stability*, Foundation for Defence of Democracies, Washington DC, 2010.

¹⁰ There is considerable literature on Jihadi terrorist groups in Pakistan and the threat that they pose to regional and international security as well as to the survival of Pakistan. For instance, see Ahmed Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos*, Allen Lane, Penguin Group, London, New York, 2008; Imtiaz Gul, *The Al Qaeda Connection: The Taliban and Terror in Pakistan's Tribal Areas*, Viking, Penguin Group, New Delhi 2009.

¹¹ *The Straits Times* (Singapore), October 24, 2012.

¹² Considerable literature is available on Pakistan's sectarian conflicts. See, for instance, Khaled Ahmed, *Sectarian War: Pakistan's Sunni-Shia Violence and its links to the Middle-East*, Oxford University Press, Karachi 2011. Abdul Nishapuri, "ISI-sponsored Shia genocide or Sunni-Shia sectarian violence", in the website "Let Us Build Pakistan", March 31, 2012, <http://criticalppp.com/archives/74987> (Accessed on 24 October 2012). Zofeen Ebrahim, "If this is not Shia genocide, What is?", *Dawn* (Karachi), August 12, 2012.

allowed any credible civilian regime to come to power and function effectively. It has maintained its dominance not only by staging coup(s) to take over power but also to keep the political parties divided, and by manipulating elections to ensure victory of pliant and more amenable candidates and political parties. In a recent case, related to the election of 1990 which Benazir Bhutto of the Pakistan People's Party lost and brought Nawaz Sharif, then of *Islami Jamhoori Ittehad*, to power, the ISI's role in manipulating elections through use of money was exposed, and the court verdict strongly indicted the generals for interfering in politics.¹³ There is a persisting fear in Pakistani civil society that the army can take over power any time it wants, but it is not capable of ensuring stability and development of the country. At present, however, caught in its own internal weaknesses and loss of credibility as also international pressures, the military may maintain a visible distance from active Pakistani politics.¹⁴ It has developed strong economic stakes and would not like to see real democracy evolve in Pakistan, though Pakistan's problems cannot be solved without a popular government and trust of the people.¹⁵

Many analysts and close observers of Pakistani situation see its political and religious turbulence being precipitated and intensified by poor performance on the economic front. The Director of 'Global Economic Attitudes, Pew Research Centre' Bruce Stokes wrote:

The news out of Pakistan is unrelentingly bad. Terrorist bombings have become a regular occurrence. Friction is mounting between the military, judiciary and the civilian government. Recent confrontations with India on the Line of Control in Kashmir have ratcheted up tensions...

These headline-grabbing events obscure a more insidious problem: the profound economic challenges facing Pakistani society. These conditions both nurture and aggravate the country's security, political and social troubles. And this economic malaise is worsening...¹⁶

Pakistan's economic difficulties have been compounded by 'sluggish growth, high inflation, extreme corruption, and lack of jobs for young Pakistanis'. The budget deficit in 2012

¹³ "1990 Election was rigged, rules SC", Dawn.com October 19, 2012, <http://dawn.com/2012/10/19/asghar-khan-case-sc-resumes-hearing-3/> (Accessed on 22 October 2012).

¹⁴ Shamila N Chaudhary, "Is Pakistan military out of politics for good?" *Foreign Policy*, 'THE AFPAC CHANNEL', March 12, 2013, http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/03/07/is_pakistans_military_out_of_politics... Accessed on 8 March 2013.

¹⁵ On army's economic stakes in Pakistan see Ayesha Sidiqqa, *The Military Inc: Inside Pakistan's Military Economics*, Pluto Press, London, 2007.

¹⁶ Bruce Stokes, "Seeds of Unrest in Pakistan's Economy", Pew Research: Global Attitudes Project, February 07, 2013. <http://www.pewglobal.org/2013/02/07/seeds-of-unrest-in-pakistans-economy/>. Accessed on 18 March -2013. For an analysis of the linkages between Pakistan's political difficulties and economic decline, see Shahid Javed Burki, "Which Way is Pakistan Heading: The Sick Man of South Asia" and also by him, "Which Way is Pakistan Heading? Politics of an Economy on the Brink", Working Papers No. 154 and 155, 21 August 2012, *Institute of South Asian Studies, Singapore*.

reached an unsustainable level of 8.5 per cent of the gross domestic product, according to the International Monetary Fund. There are also growing trade deficit, galloping inflation, increasing levels of poverty, power outages, water shortages, and food insecurity.¹⁷ Pakistan spends nearly 25 per cent of its total governmental expenditure on defence, and both its domestic and foreign investments have severely declined creating difficulties for the coming years as well.¹⁸ While the official explanations for this economic situation rest on global recession, declining inflow of foreign assistance and terrorism and sectarian conflicts, objective analysts blame poor management of economy, high corruption, poor governance and huge ‘leaks and poking holes’ in revenue collection. According to officially admitted facts, Pakistan has only 768,000 tax payers, a meagre 0.9 per cent of the entire population. As such, its total tax revenue accounted only for 9.1 per cent of GDP in 2011-2012, one of the lowest in the world. Pakistan has failed to carry out seriously needed reforms in the fields of tax collection and infrastructure, despite being cautioned by the World Bank and the IMF. There are no signs of Pakistan’s economy taking a positive turn in the near future, and without economic revival, social and political difficulties cannot be addressed.

While facing challenges on the political and socio-economic fronts at home, Pakistan has also suffered in its international standing and image. Pakistan is increasingly seen as the hub of international terrorism where sections of its state connive at and patronise terrorist groups and extremist organisations. Pakistan’s tardy and often-below expectation performance in the US-led ‘global war on terror’ has precipitated serious ‘trust deficit’ between the two long-standing allies. The roots of this ‘trust deficit’ can be traced to the mid-sixties when the then President and army chief General (later Field Marshal) Muhammad Ayub Khan had warned his American allies that they were “Friends; Not Masters”.¹⁹ The signs of the latest phase of ‘trust deficit’ started emerging in 2002, soon after the launching of the war on terror; and they assumed serious dimensions following the killing of the Al Qaeda founder and chief Osama bin Laden in his Pakistani hide-out in Abbottabad in May 2011. In May 2012, then Pakistan Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani publicly admitted that “There is a trust deficit between both the countries, between both the governments ... That is the reason we are wanting to work for new terms of engagement and cooperation with the United States”.²⁰ He admitted that Washington and Islamabad differed on how to fight terrorism and that Pakistani electorates were increasingly hostile to the US. He said: “I am not an army dictator; I am a public figure. If public opinion is against you (i.e. US and its allies) then I cannot resist it to stand with you. I have to go with public opinion”.²¹ President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari

¹⁷ Muhammad Nawaz Khan, “Reasons and Cures for the Economic Situation of Pakistan”, Islamabad Policy Research Institute, Islamabad, 2012.

¹⁸ Victor Mallet and Farhan Bokhari, “Dark prospects haunt Pakistan”, *Financial Times*, December 26, 2012. <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/ccd68074-48db-11e2-b94d-00144feab49a.html>. Accessed on 20 March 2013.

¹⁹ This was the title of Gen. Ayub Khan’s political autobiography published in 1967 by Oxford University Press. He expressed his unhappiness with the way the US was treating Pakistan as an ally.

²⁰ This was stated in an interview with the CNN on May 09, 2012. http://articles.cnn.com/2012-05-09/asia/world_asia_pakistan_gilani-1_drone-strike Accessed on 15 February 2012.

²¹ See Gilani’s interview in TIME magazine on May 12, 2011; soon after the US raid on Osama hide-out.

had also echoed these sentiments and asked for bridging the US-Pakistan ‘trust deficit’.²² On the popular front, the percentage of the Pakistanis considering the US as an enemy has been consistently increasing. According to public opinion surveys conducted by the Pew Research Centre, this percentage was 64 in 2009; 69 in 2011 and 74 in 2012.²³ This extent of dislike in Pakistan has led some analysts to argue that it may not be difficult to break the US-Pakistan alliance. The former Pakistani Ambassador in Washington Husain Haqqani wrote recently:

Americans see Pakistan as the ungrateful recipient of almost [US] \$40 billion in economic and military assistance since 1947, \$23 billion of it for fighting terrorism over the last decade alone. In their view, Pakistan has taken American dollars with a smile, even as it covertly developed nuclear weapons in the 1980s, passed nuclear secrets to others in 1990s, and supported Islamist militant groups more recently. No matter what Washington does, according to a growing cadre of US senators, members of Congress and editorial writers, it can’t count on Pakistan as a reliable ally.²⁴

Alienation from the US has seriously affected Pakistan’s image and standing in Europe, and elsewhere including with the western-dominated financial and monetary institutions. Iran factor has also affected the US-Pakistan equation and tensions periodically arise in Pakistan’s relations with Saudi Arabia as a result of alienation between Pakistan and the US, especially on the question of Islamic extremism. However, the US and its strategic allies will continue to depend upon Pakistan so long as they have their men and material trapped in Afghanistan. It is anybody’s guess as to how the closing down of the US-led ‘global war on terror’ in Afghanistan in 2014 will affect the US-Pakistan alliance. Pakistan’s relations with India and Afghanistan have always remained mired in mutual conflict and distrust. Afghan officials have been publicly blaming Pakistan for taking money in under-hand dealings to release Taliban prisoners under its custody.²⁵ China remains Pakistan’s “all-weather friend” and a reliable supporter, but there also, on the question of Islamic extremism and Jihadi terrorism that affect China’s Xinjiang region directly, there are signs of mutual unease in bilateral relations.²⁶ There are reports that at the trilateral discussions between China, India and Russia on the unfolding Afghanistan situation, China did not seem concerned about Pakistan’s interests and stakes.²⁷

²² *The News*, June 13, 2012.

²³ “PEW Report: Anti-American sentiment rife in Pakistan”, *The Express Tribune*, June 28, 2012.

²⁴ Husain Haqqani, “Breaking Up Is Not Hard to Do: Why the U.S.–Pakistani Alliance Isn’t Worth the Trouble”, *Foreign Affairs* March/April 2013.

²⁵ “Ex-Spy Chief: Pakistan Sees Afghanistan As ‘Sub-Nation’”, *Radio Free Europe*, March 13, 2013. <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/24927930.html>. Accessed on 16 March 2013.

²⁶ See Isaac B. Kardon, “China and Pakistan: Emerging Strains in Entente Cordiale”, The Project 2049 Institute, Arlington Virginia, March 25, 2011. Peter Lee, “Taliban Force a China Switch”, *Asia Times Online* March 06, 2009. Charles Horner and Eric Brown, “Beijing’s Islamic Complex”, *The Wall Street Journal*, June 02, 2010.

²⁷ Manoj Joshi, “The great American betrayal”, *The Hindu*, March 12, 2013.

Prospects

Analysts of Pakistan's present predicament have projected many scenarios of how Pakistan will come out of its crises. All these scenarios fall broadly into three categories namely: a complete collapse of the state; emergence of a strong, stable, modern and moderate Islamic state; and a muddling through i.e. a state continuously adrift.²⁸ We do not subscribe to the theory of failed and failing states and do not see any prospects of the Pakistani state withering away under its present many-fold crises. This is also the broad consensus of the studies prepared on the theme of Pakistan's crisis. According to these studies, the state of Pakistan will not collapse nor would it be just taken over by the Islamic extremist and Jihadi forces. The rise of Taliban in Afghanistan after the projected complete draw-down of American and allied forces in July 2014, as also the continuing uncertainty and political malaise in Pakistan, may give a boost to extremism, but not to the extent that such forces take control of the state. There is also no possibility of Pakistan's further breakup and territorial erosion either in the form of separation of turbulent areas like that of Baluchistan or redrawing of the boundaries of its frontier region with Afghanistan as a result of territorial and ethnic polarisation in post-2014 Afghanistan. Such a drastic development would need a massive external intervention which is most unlikely. There are clearly three forces that will strongly resist any collapse of the Pakistani state. One is its most powerful army; which even after losing some of its credibility and shine, continues to be a strong force for unity and stability of Pakistan. There is a visible impact of Islamist forces in army's lower cadres but the institution as a whole would resist relapse of the state into an extremist theocracy. Then there is Pakistan's growing civil society and the inherent resilience of the Pakistani society. The extremist forces may be strong in street power and gun control, but their social legitimacy and support is still fragile. The strength of the civil society is evident in its free press. It could also be seen during the lawyers agitation against the then President Gen. Musharraf to reinstate Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry and restore the independence of judiciary.²⁹ The second robust indication of the strength of civil society was evident in the successful campaign launched by Tahir-ul Qadri to ensure elections under an independent authority.³⁰ Lastly, the international community, including its two harassed neighbours Afghanistan and India, seem fully cognisant of the adverse implications of Pakistan's collapse. They have stakes in peace, order and stability of Pakistan and would do their best to ensure that Pakistan comes out of its present crisis.

²⁸ For a discussion of these scenarios, see Bellagio Papers, *op.cit.* n.2. An Interactive "Crisis Guide: Pakistan" prepared by the Council on Foreign Relations, Washington DC, <http://www.cfr.org/interactives/CG-Pakistan/index.html?cid=otc-marketinguse-p>. Accessed on 13 November 2012. Also see Pakistan on the Edge, Pakistan Project Report 2012, *Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses*, December 2012, New Delhi.

²⁹ James Traub, 'The Lawyers Crusade', *New York Times*, June 01, 2008. Ehsan Zaffar, "Amid a Turbulent Year; a Rare Sign of Hope in Pakistan" *Huffington Post*, 'The BLOG' May 01, 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ehsan-zaffar/education-activism-and-po_b_801752. Accessed on 10 March 2013.

³⁰ Kazi Anwarul Masud, "Pakistan in Crisis Again", South Asia Analysis Group, Jan 20, 2013. <http://saag.org/node/11427>. Accessed on 11 March 2013.

The second scenario of a strong and modern Pakistan with a moderate Islamic identity emerging out of the present mess also looks unlikely. It is true that for the second time in Pakistan's past more than 60 years of turbulent political evolution, an elected civilian regime under President Zardari's Pakistan People's Party has completed its full five-year term. First time also it was done under Z A Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party regime during 1972-77. The elections that are scheduled for May 2013 will hopefully produce another coalition civilian regime. However, despite the unlikely prospects of the army stepping in to assume direct governance, the new civilian regime will have to work under the army's shadow, and it may not be strong enough to lead Pakistan out of its present worries. Pakistan's judiciary has of late become active and assertive as an independent source of authority, but many of its judgments are seen as politically motivated and unduly intrusive for smooth functioning of the executive.³¹ For Pakistan to move in the direction of a strong, stable and moderate Islamic state, there are four essential conditions: (i) strong and entrenched democratic governance, completely free from army's political interference; (ii) firm control over terrorist and extremist forces as well as on sectarian strife; (iii) forward-looking economic dynamism and (iv) firm international support including peaceful and cooperative relations with immediate neighbours like India and Afghanistan. There are no indications that any of these conditions will come into operation in foreseeable future.

Pakistan will most likely follow the third course of being a state adrift; muddling through with more of the same situation continuing. This means that sectarian conflict and religious extremism/terrorism will remain unrestrained, perhaps growing incrementally; economy will continue to struggle to come out of debt, deficit and depression; an elected but weak civilian regime will make its efforts to cope with the challenges of governance under tense civil-military relations amid signs of the judiciary asserting itself as an alternate pole of authority. In case of any serious deterioration in the internal situation, or failure of the election to throw up a viable coalition, the possibility of a take-over by the army, though less likely, may not be ruled out. Pakistan's relations with the international community may also not witness any major improvement. Engagement with the US has been restored to a normal level of functioning essentially because both the US and Pakistan need each other to navigate the transition through to the date of withdrawal of US-led coalition forces in July 2014. The future of these relations will considerably depend upon the situation unfolding in Afghanistan and the role that Pakistan plays in it. Any major improvement in Pakistan's relations with its immediate neighbours, India and Afghanistan, also looks unlikely.

³¹ Chaudhry Faisal Hussain, "Outcome of Judicial Activism", *Dawn* (Karachi), January 02, 2013. Farrukh Khan Pitafi, "Perils of judicial Activism", *The Express Tribune*, December 29, 2012. Also see Syeda Saima Shabbir, "Judicial Activism Shaping the Future of Pakistan", Social Science Research Network, January 30, 2013. [http://papers.ssrn.com/so13/\[papers.cfm?abstract_id=2209067](http://papers.ssrn.com/so13/[papers.cfm?abstract_id=2209067). Accessed on 3 March 2013.

India's Response

What should be India's response to a Pakistan precariously perched on a precipice? The strategic community in India is divided along three approaches to be pursued in relation to Pakistan. One group shares Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's vision of an integrated and cooperative subcontinent where one can have breakfast in Amritsar, lunch in Lahore and dinner in Kabul. Addressing a Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) gathering in January 2007, Dr Singh said in relation to Pakistan:

I dream of a day, while retaining our respective national identities, one can have a breakfast in Amritsar, lunch in Lahore and dinner in Kabul. That is how my forefathers lived. That is how I want our grandchildren to live... I earnestly hope that relations between our two countries become so friendly and that we generate such an atmosphere of trust between each other that the two nations would be able to agree on a Treaty of Peace, Security and Friendship.³²

Among the votaries of this approach are a number of civil society groups and newspapers. *The Times of India* from the Indian side has joined hands with a Pakistani-language (Urdu) newspaper group *The Jung* to launch a movement called 'Aman Ki Asha' (Hope of Peace) to build better relations between India and Pakistan. Moves in the direction of institutionalising "comprehensive dialogue" to resolve bilateral issues, normalising trade and economic cooperation and improving people-to-people exchanges are part of this approach. This approach, however, faces a big challenge from Pakistan's inability to restrain and control its officially-patronised non-state actors from their cross-border acts of terrorism against India. The violations of ceasefire on the Line of Control can also vitiate cooperative engagement. Pakistan also uses every possible opportunity to interfere in India's sensitive internal affairs. The adoption of a resolution by Pakistan National Assembly even under a civilian regime on 13 March 2013 condemning the hanging of a Kashmiri militant leader Afzal Guru for his role in the attack on Parliament House in New Delhi in 2001 is the latest example of such interference.

The second approach is that of exploiting Pakistan's present predicament and crippling its capabilities to an extent that Pakistan is unable to pose any security challenge to India. This approach gives legitimacy to the Pakistani allegations that India is supporting insurgency in Baluchistan. India's "Operation *Parakram*", initiated in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on Indian Parliament in December 2001, wherein India massed troops on its western borders to take retaliatory action if any such cross-border terrorist attack was to be repeated from Pakistani side, was also a manifestation of this approach.³³ This approach has not yielded any positive results for India. It must also be understood that neither has India the mindset or capabilities to hasten Pakistan's internal disintegration nor would the international

³² *Indian Express*, January 08, 2007.

³³ Brig. Gurmeet Kanwal, "Lost opportunities in Operation Parakram", *Indian Defence Review*, December 13, 2011.

community at the present juncture let India proceed in that direction. Moreover, chaos, turbulence and disintegration within Pakistan are not in India's immediate or long-term enlightened interests. And the third approach is to leave Pakistan on its own, ignoring it and isolating it: let Pakistan come to terms with itself, put its own house in order; and India should be prepared to engage it when Pakistan is prepared to deal with India constructively. The difficulty here is that even by completely ignoring and disengaging with Pakistan, India cannot ensure that it will not receive the adversarial spill-over of Pakistan's internal difficulties.

While none of the three approaches identified earlier may on a stand-alone basis serve India's interest, any credible Indian policy towards an internally beleaguered Pakistan should have the creative elements of all these three approaches. Accordingly, India should leave Pakistan's internal challenges for Pakistan to handle: neither exploit them nor offer any support to help Pakistan come out of them. But at the same time, India must be prepared to fend itself from any undesirable impact on its vital interests from Pakistan's distortions. India should also demonstrate a credible deterrence against any Pakistani initiative to harm India either through cross-border terrorism or any other similar action. Pakistan has to be convinced, through firm actions, that the costs of such actions would be unbearable. While guarding its vital interests, India should be forthcoming to constructively engage Pakistan, if the latter is willing and prepared, in any area of mutual benefit and India should accordingly help Pakistan brave its multi-faceted challenges.

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