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Pakistan's Domestic Political Developments

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Summary

Pakistan is a strategically important country and home to one of the world's largest Muslim populations. In October 1999, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff Gen. Pervez Musharraf replaced Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in a bloodless coup. Following the military overthrow of an elected government, Islamabad faced considerable international opprobrium and was subjected to automatic coup-related U.S. sanctions. The September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States and Musharraf's ensuing withdrawal of support for the Afghan Taliban regime, however, had the effect of greatly reducing Pakistan's international isolation. Congress temporarily removed restrictions, and large-scale U.S. aid to the country resumed, in late 2001. The United States views Pakistan as a vital ally in the international anti-terrorism coalition. The Bush Administration refrains from expressing any significant public criticisms of Pakistan's internal political practices, while still asserting that the strengthening of civilian political institutions in Islamabad is "a requirement for the development of a stable, moderate Islamic state."

While top-tier U.S. emphases in the region after September 2001 remain combating religious extremism and ending illicit weapons proliferation, the United States expresses a strong interest in the improvement of Pakistan's human rights situation, especially as regards the restoration and strengthening of democratic institutions. There is a debate among analysts over the exigency of this issue. Some observers urge patience, contending that a "true" democratic system will require time and that "military-guided" governance is required in an unstable setting and to deter extremist political influences. Others argue that Pakistan's underdeveloped democracy and rule of law are themselves a central cause of the country's instability.

October 2002 general elections nominally fulfilled President Musharraf's promise to restore the National Assembly that was dissolved after his extra-constitutional seizure of power. A pro-military alliance won a plurality of seats while a coalition of Islamist parties made a surprisingly strong showing. Yet subsequent developments — including an agreement between Musharraf and the Islamist opposition to bring controversial constitutional changes before Parliament, a broken promise from Musharraf to resign his military commission before 2005, and widespread accusations of rigging in August 2005 municipal elections — have fueled concerns that Pakistan's civilian democratic institutions are being weakened. National and provincial level elections are to take place in 2007.

The *9/11 Commission Report* called Musharraf's government the "best hope" for stability in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and recommended the provision of long-term and comprehensive support to Pakistan so long as its government remains committed to combating extremism and to a policy of "enlightened moderation." In passing the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-458), Congress broadly endorsed this recommendation and sought to encourage Pakistan's transition to full democracy. The act also extended the President's authority to waive coup-related sanctions on Pakistan through FY2006. See also CRS Issue Brief IB94041, *Pakistan-U.S. Relations* and CRS Report RL32259, *Terrorism in South Asia*. This report will be updated periodically.

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Pakistan's Domestic Political Developments

Most Recent Developments

In August 2005, Pakistan held two-phase municipal-level elections in 110 districts. Although the exercise ostensibly was a non-party affair, officials from the opposition Pakistan People's Party complained in July that President Musharraf was violating the code of conduct by urging voters to cast ballots for candidates favored by the ruling Pakistan Muslim League. Then, in a blow to the hopes of Islamist sympathizers, the Pakistan Supreme Court ruled that candidates with religious education were ineligible to run in municipal elections unless they have studied English, Pakistan studies, and Urdu. Islamist leaders criticized the ruling.¹ During the polling, tens of thousands of troops were deployed for security purposes, yet scores of Pakistanis were killed and as many as 1,000 were injured in poll-related violence around the country. Claims of widespread vote-rigging and women being barred from polling stations in the Frontier Province spurred Pakistan's major opposition parties — both secular and Islamist — to issue a joint call for a national strike to protest President Musharraf's "military takeover," "dictatorial behavior," and "blatant rigging." Ensuing protests were only moderate in scale (with Quetta being an exception) and Information Minister Rashid called the strike "a total failure."²

Candidates favored by Pakistan's ruling party appear to have fared quite well in all four provinces, and Muslim League gains were seen as a major boost for President Musharraf, who may have to rely on the ruling party to win the presidency in 2007. Musharraf expressed satisfaction with "a victory for the moderates" and "a defeat for the extremists." However, one Pakistani analyst opined that the outcome would be unlikely to yield political harmony and had only exacerbated the sense of bitterness and alienation felt among opposition parties. Others warn that apparent irregularities could in fact harm Musharraf's image; a former Pakistani ambassador called the process a "typically vice-regal electoral exercise." Still, many non-Pakistani observers, especially those from international aid organizations such as the Asian Development Bank, see the local governance system as a bright spot in otherwise faltering efforts at Pakistani democratization.³

¹ "PPPP Accuses President of Violating Code of Conduct," *News* (Karachi), Aug. 1, 2004; "Anger at Pakistan Election Ruling," BBC News, Aug. 17, 2005.

² Jo Johnson and Farhan Bokhari, "Pakistanis Vote Amid Claims of Election Rigging," *Financial Times* (London), Aug. 18, 2005; "Pakistan Polls Were Rigged, Says Opposition," Associated Press, Aug. 19, 2005; "Opposition Calls Strike Against Musharraf" *Daily Times* (Lahore), Sep. 6, 2005; "Opposition Strike Falls Flat," Agence France Presse, Sep. 9, 2005.

³ Salman Masood, "Pakistan's President Consolidates Power in Local Elections," *New York* (continued...)

In June 2005, the U.S. State Department's lead official for South Asia, Christina Rocca, reiterated for the House International Relations Committee the important role Pakistan continues to play in assisting U.S.-led efforts to defeat terrorism, stabilize neighboring Afghanistan, and end the transfer of nuclear weapons material and technologies. She noted that "Pakistan's government has taken steps necessary ... to set it on the path of becoming a modern, prosperous, and democratic state," but conceded "there's still a way to go" toward that goal. Calling democratization a "central focus" and one of the "top priorities" in U.S.-Pakistan relations, Secretary Rocca expressed a U.S. expectation that Pakistan's 2005 local and 2007 general elections "be free and fair throughout the entire process. ... [W]e believe that democracy, freedom, and rule of law are the best counters to hatred, extremism, and terrorism" (the State Department did not comment on ensuing reports of irregularities in the August 2005 elections). Some Members in attendance expressed skepticism about Pakistan's democratization under Musharraf, with one calling the country a "poster child for the President's forward strategy of freedom."⁴

On the political front, Pakistan's moderate, secular parties continued to face governmental repression. In April, in an effort to block a rally planned to welcome the return to Lahore of Asif Zardari, the husband of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, police arrested thousands of activists of the opposition Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and some senior party leaders, and blocked travel routes around the city. When Zardari arrived in Lahore, he was placed in "protective custody" by authorities (PPP members said he had been arrested). New York-based Human Rights Watch later appealed to the Pakistani government to release the "thousands" of opposition PPP supporters who had been arrested in nation-wide sweeps.⁵

Meanwhile, the Islamist political coalition saw thousands of their supporters arrested during large street protests and strikes against the Musharraf government; tens of thousands rallied in Karachi and Lahore in late March. Religious parties and others in Pakistan also were disturbed by a May story in *Newsweek* magazine report alleging that a copy of the Koran had been desecrated at the U.S. facility at Guantanamo Bay. The Islamabad government expressed "serious concern" to U.S. officials about the allegations and the U.S. State Department called any such desecration "deplorable and entirely inconsistent with American values of religious

³ (...continued)

Times, Sep. 1, 2005; "Extremists Defeated in Polls: Musharraf," *Daily Times* (Lahore), Aug. 27, 2005; Hasan-Askari Rizvi, "Beyond the Local Government Elections," *Daily Times* (Lahore), Aug. 29, 2005; Aamer Ahmed Khan, "Musharraf Under Fire After Local elections," BBC News, Aug. 30, 2005; Husain Haqqani, "Hit-and-Miss Democracy," *Indian Express* (Bombay), Sep. 1, 2005; David Rohde, "Local Politics in Pakistan Offers Hope for Democracy," *New York Times*, Aug. 23, 2005.

⁴ Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca, "Transcript: House International Relations Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific Holds Hearing on United States and South Asia," June 14, 2005.

⁵ "Pakistani Politician Taken Into Custody," *New York Times*, Apr. 16, 2005; "Pakistan: Release Opposition Party Members," Human Rights Watch Press Release, Apr. 18, 2005.

freedom and tolerance.” Pakistan’s National Assembly passed a resolution condemning the alleged desecration.⁶

U.S. Interests and Policy Discussion

U.S. Interests

U.S. Policy. Pakistan, a strategically important country that is home to one of the world’s largest Muslim populations, has been a key cooperating nation in U.S.-led counterterrorism efforts in South Asia.⁷ On October 12, 1999, Pakistan’s Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen. Pervez Musharraf replaced Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in a bloodless coup. In the wake of the military overthrow of the elected government, Islamabad faced considerable international opprobrium and was subjected to automatic coup-related U.S. sanctions under section 508 of the annual foreign assistance appropriations act. The September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States and Musharraf’s ensuing withdrawal of support for the Afghan Taliban regime, however, had the effect of greatly reducing Pakistan’s international isolation. Congress temporarily removed restrictions, and large-scale U.S. aid to the country resumed, in the final months of 2001 (coup-related sanctions are still in place; since March 2003 President Bush has exercised annually the one-year waiver authority on coup-related sanctions granted to him by Congress).

The State Department’s *Country Reports on Terrorism 2004* characterized Pakistan as one of the most important U.S. partners in the war on terrorism. While top-tier U.S. emphases in the region after September 2001 have remained combating religious extremism and ending illicit nuclear weapons proliferation, the United States expresses a strong interest in the improvement of Pakistan’s human rights situation, especially as regards the restoration and strengthening of the country’s civilian democratic institutions. There exists a debate among analysts over the exigency of this issue. Some observers urge patience, contending that a “true” democratic system will require time and that “military-guided” governance is required in an unstable setting and to deter extremist political influences. Others argue that Pakistan’s underdeveloped democracy and rule of law are themselves a central cause of the country’s instability. Some believe that Pakistan’s Islamist forces are manipulated by and at times in collusion with the military as it manages skewed civil-military relations wherein moderate political parties play a decreasing role. A number of top U.S. diplomats, along with many in Congress, have called for more and accelerated development of Pakistani democracy. Some sections of legislation passed by the 108th Congress addressed this concern and pending

⁶ “Anti-Musharraf Strike Jolts Key Pakistani Cities,” *Los Angeles Times*, Apr. 2, 2005; “Anti-U.S. Protests Spread to Pakistan,” *Washington Post*, May 13, 2005; “Pakistan Voices Concerns Over Alleged Misconduct at Guantanamo,” U.S. Department of State Washington File, May 10, 2005; Raja Asghar, “NA Assails Sacrilege, Demands US Probe,” *Dawn* (Karachi), May 13, 2005.

⁷ See also CRS Issue Brief IB94041, *Pakistan-U.S. Relations*, by K. Alan Kronstadt, and CRS Report RL32259, *Terrorism in South Asia*, by K. Alan Kronstadt and Bruce Vaughn.

legislation in the 109th Congress (S. 12) contains Pakistan-specific language regarding that country's governmental system.

The United States now considers Pakistan to be a vital ally in the international anti-terrorism coalition. The Bush Administration has refrained from expressing any strong public criticisms of Pakistan's internal political practices, while still asserting that the strengthening of civilian political institutions in Islamabad is "a requirement for the development of a stable, moderate Islamic state." The State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development have identified "democratic stability in South Asia's frontline states" of Pakistan and Afghanistan as one of eleven key democracy and human rights-related initiatives for the world in FY2006.⁸ According to U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Nancy Powell in August 2004,

America wants to see strong Pakistani democratic institutions and practices, including a National Assembly, Senate, and Provincial Assemblies that play a vigorous and positive role in governance and an independent judiciary that promotes the rule of law. We also would like to see Pakistan's civil society play an active role in governance.⁹

In March 2005, while unveiling the Bush Administration's "new strategy for South Asia," an unnamed senior State Department official said,

The goal, then, has to be a fully democratic, economically promising Pakistan that feels secure and is thus at peace with its neighbors, with the previously high tide of anti-Americanism and Islamist extremism gradually receding.¹⁰

Since becoming Secretary of State in early 2005, Condoleezza Rice has made several statements about Pakistan's governance system, offering that trends in Pakistan were moving that country "in the right direction," and insisting that the United States "will continue to press toward eventual elections and a full democratic process in Pakistan." During the lead-up to Pakistan's August 2005 municipal elections, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Rocca told an interviewer, "A level playing field for [Pakistan's] local body elections, as well as for the election in 2007, is critical for the elections to be free and fair" (the State Department did not comment on ensuing reports of irregularities in the August 2005 elections).¹¹

⁸ Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca, "Transcript: Hearing of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific of the House International Relations Committee," Mar. 20, 2003. (In July 2003, 16 Member of Congress signed a letter to President Bush informing him that they "will be looking for a quicker pace for democratic reform" in Pakistan.) U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development, "The Fiscal Year 2006 Joint Performance Plan," Feb. 2005.

⁹ "Ambassador Powell Outlines U.S. Policy Toward Pakistan," U.S. Department of State Washington File, Aug. 20, 2004.

¹⁰ "Background Briefing by Administration Officials on U.S.-South Asia Relations," U.S. Department of State, Mar. 25, 2005.

¹¹ "Remarks with European Union Officials," U.S. Department of State, Feb. 10, 2005; Farhan Bokhari, "F-16 Sale to Pakistan Highlights US Policy Contradiction," *Financial* (continued...)

The 9/11 Commission Report and Congressional Action. The *9/11 Commission Report* (released in July 2004) claims that — even after acknowledging problems in U.S.-Pakistan relations and President Musharraf’s role in them — “Musharraf’s government is the best hope for stability in Pakistan and Afghanistan.” In addition to identifying Pakistan as a principal transit country for the 9/11 hijackers and naming the western regions of the country as one of six “actual or potential terrorist sanctuaries” worldwide, the Commission offers a key recommendation for U.S. policy toward Pakistan:

If Musharraf stands for enlightened moderation in a fight for his life and for the life of his country, the United States should be willing to make hard choices too, and make the difficult long-term commitment to the future of Pakistan. Sustaining the current scale of aid to Pakistan, the United States should support Pakistan’s government in its struggle against extremists with a comprehensive effort that extends from military aid to support for better education, so long as Pakistan’s leaders remain willing to make difficult choices of their own.¹²

In passing the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-458), the 108th Congress broadly endorsed this recommendation by calling for long-term and comprehensive U.S. support for the government of Pakistan in an effort to ensure a “stable and secure future” for that country. The act expresses the “sense of Congress” that U.S. assistance should in particular encourage and enable Pakistan to make progress in eight specific areas, one of which is “becoming a more effective and participatory democracy.”

Congressional attention to Pakistan’s domestic political developments is ongoing. In June 2005 (S.Rept. 109-96), the Senate Appropriations Committee recommended approval of the Administration’s request for FY2006 aid to Pakistan while expressing concern with “the slow pace of the democratic development of Pakistan” and an expectation that the State Department and USAID “continue to make democracy and governance programs a priority.” Weeks later, the House passed the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, FY2006 and FY2007 (H.R. 2601), which includes a provision requiring the President to report to Congress on the extent to which a “fully functional democracy” has been restored in Pakistan. The Senate-passed version of the Foreign Operations FY2006 Appropriations bill (H.R. 3057) would require the Secretary of State report to Congress on steps taken by Pakistan to protect the rights and safety of Pakistani human rights lawyers and journalists. Pending legislation in the 109th Congress (the Targeting Terrorists More Effectively Act of 2005, S. 12) includes Pakistan-specific language regarding “a number of critical issues that threaten to disrupt” U.S.-Pakistan relations. Government institutions, democracy, and rule of law are among these.

“Enlightened Moderation”. The concept of “enlightened moderation,” as expounded by Musharraf himself, is a direct response to a growing world perception

¹¹ (...continued)
Times (London), Aug. 2, 2005.

¹² See Section 12.2, pp. 367-369, of *The 9/11 Commission Report*, available at [<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/911>].

that Islam is linked to fundamentalism, and thus to extremism, and thus to terrorism. It is a strategy meant to both shun the militancy that is rooted in “political injustice, denial, and deprivation,” and to bring “socioeconomic uplift” in the Muslim world. Musharraf has called upon Muslims to “adopt a path of moderation and a conciliatory approach to fight the common belief that Islam is a religion of militancy in conflict with modernization, democracy and secularism.” Pakistan’s prime minister, Shaukat Aziz, a close ally of Musharraf and his finance minister since 1999, took office in August 2004 vowing to pursue a policy of “enlightened moderation.”¹³ Many Pakistanis appear to welcome the approach and see religious extremists as the main obstacle. However, one maverick Islamabad politician takes the view that Musharraf’s tack was born of expediency, not conviction, and only serves to strengthen the perception that neither he nor the United States have a genuine interest in Pakistani democracy.¹⁴ The Bush Administration rejects criticism that it is overly focused on the person of Musharraf and has called the Pakistani president “the right man in the right place at the right time for the right job.”¹⁵

Policy Discussion

U.S. interest in Pakistani democratization exists in tandem (some would say in conflict) with the perceived need to have a stable and effectively-administered front-line ally in the international anti-terrorism coalition. While many observers believe that U.S. interests in combating terrorism and weapons proliferation in South Asia entail a “trade-off” with regard to other concerns, some contend that the human rights situation in Pakistan may itself be a crucial aspect of the incidence of terrorism and religious extremism.¹⁶ Congressional oversight of U.S.-Pakistan relations in a March 2003 hearing included Member expressions of concern about problems with Pakistani democratization and the danger of the United States “giving full recognition to a military takeover” through continuous waivers of coup-related aid restrictions.¹⁷ Pakistan’s military continues to dominate the country’s centralized decision-making process, and, while in office, Prime Minister Jamali referred to President Musharraf as being his “boss.”¹⁸

¹³ Pervez Musharraf, “A Plea for Enlightened Moderation,” *Washington Post*, June 1, 2004; “Text of Newly-Elected Pakistani Prime Minister’s Address to Parliament,” BBC Monitoring South Asia, Aug. 27, 2004.

¹⁴ “Enlightened Moderation: Not By Speeches Alone” (editorial), *News* (Karachi), Mar. 7, 2005; Imran Khan, “The Real Enlightened Moderation,” *News* (Karachi), Apr. 17, 2005.

¹⁵ Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, “U.S. Hails Pakistan’s Efforts to Fight Terror, Build Democracy,” U.S. Department of State Washington File, Oct. 1, 2004.

¹⁶ For example, a House panel received expert testimony indicating that Pakistan’s worsening religious freedom situation is “part of the larger problem of the suppression of democratic freedoms” there (“House International Relations Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights Holds Hearing on State Department Report on International Religious Freedom,” FDCH Transcripts, Feb. 10, 2004).

¹⁷ “Transcript: Hearing of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific of the House International Relations Committee,” Federal News Service, Mar. 20, 2003.

¹⁸ “Jamali: Musharraf Elected President for Five Years,” Pakistan Press International, Apr. (continued...)

The military appears to have increased its control over Pakistan; as articulated by a Pakistani authority on civil-military relations, “The corporate interests of the military have expanded so much under General Musharraf that the army is now overwhelming all the major sectors of the state, the economy, and the society.”¹⁹ Military agencies are blamed for abusing human rights and some critics have suggested that Musharraf’s “Faustian bargain” with Islamists serves to strengthen the very extremism that he publicly opposes.²⁰ One senior Western observer contends that “the generals cannot govern Pakistan, but they will not let anyone else govern it;” a Pakistani commentator sees the problem as “a military that wants to control things without being overtly seen to be doing so.”²¹ Although a civilian Parliament has been seated for three years, most of Islamabad’s policy making process is opaque; an absence of transparency may be most noticeable with Pakistan’s defense budget, which appears as a single line in the federal budget. Numerous opposition figures have complained that removing the details of military spending from public scrutiny is nondemocratic and allows the country’s intelligence services, in particular, to remain unaccountable to the people.²²

Although it is possible to argue that Pakistan is more democratic since October 2002 elections, many analysts note that the country’s democratic institutions and processes are inflexible and unaccommodating of dissent, and they see Pakistan’s political parties seriously weakened in recent years, with the military’s influence correspondingly more profound.²³ Moreover, numerous commentators reject the 9/11 Commission’s “best hope” label for Musharraf himself as myopic and repetitive of past U.S. reliance on Pakistani military regimes, especially in light of signs that Pakistan’s seemingly decreasing political stability is rooted in Musharraf’s policies and in his patronage by the United States.²⁴

¹⁸ (...continued)

18, 2003. In April 2005, President Musharraf told a Quetta audience that “the Army is in the barracks and has no role in politics.” An opposition party parliamentarian later disputed the claim, saying that 831 military officers were employed by federal and provincial government departments (“Deterrence Strategy in Place: Musharraf,” *Dawn* (Karachi), Apr. 3, 2005; “Musharraf’s Claim Disputed,” *Dawn* (Karachi), Apr. 4, 2005).

¹⁹ Hasan Askari-Rizvi quoted in “Kiss My Vardi,” *Herald* (Karachi), Oct. 2004.

²⁰ “Pakistan: Four Years After Coup, Rights Abuses Abound,” Human Rights Watch, Oct. 10, 2003; Paul Watson, “A Delicate Balance of Rule for Pakistan’s Musharraf,” *Los Angeles Times*, Mar. 5, 2004; “Pakistan,” *Amnesty International Report 2004*, May 2004.

²¹ Stephen P. Cohen, “The Jihadist Threat to Pakistan,” *Washington Quarterly*, Summer 2003; Ejaz Haider, “CMAG’s Decision Is Right,” *Friday Times* (Lahore), Oct. 3, 2003.

²² See, for example, Sherry Rehman, “Enigma of the Defense Budget,” *Dawn* (Karachi), June 16, 2005.

²³ Hasan-Askari Rizvi, “Sustainable Democracy,” *Daily Times* (Lahore), May 24, 2004; David Rohde and Salman Masood, “Many See Musharraf Keeping Army Post to Cement Power,” *New York Times*, Sep. 18, 2004.

²⁴ Sumit Ganguly, “The ‘Best Hope’ in South Asia,” *Hindu* (Madras), Aug. 13, 2004; Paula Newberg, “As U.S. Talks of Liberty, Musharraf Scorns It,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 4, 2004.

The perceived U.S. need for a stable and reliable regional ally in its ongoing counterterrorism efforts in South Asia have some analysts concluding that Musharraf remains in a position to take further domestic political advantage of current geopolitical dynamics. Yet, at a July 2004 hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, there appeared to be consensus among the panel of three veteran Pakistan watchers about the potential problems inherent in a real or perceived U.S. over-reliance on the individual of Musharraf at the potential cost of more positive development of Pakistan's democratic institutions and civil society. Many commentators believe such development is key to the long-term success of stated U.S. policy in the region. Calling Musharraf a "marginal satisfier" who will do only the minimum expected of him, one hearing witness recommended that, "The United States must alter the impression our support for Pakistan is essentially support for Musharraf."²⁵ This conception is echoed by a Pakistani analyst, who contends that all of Musharraf's major policy shifts after September 2001 have come through compulsion by external pressure or events and that, while the direction of Pakistan's policy change has been appropriate, "the momentum of change is too slow and awkward and unsure to constitute a critical and irreversible mass."²⁶ Many Pakistani and Western commentators insist that only by allowing the country's secular political parties fully into the system can the country realize stable and enduring democracy.²⁷

In June 2005 statements before a House panel, one senior U.S. scholar warned Congress about Pakistan's "dysfunctional social order, its dangerous sectarianism and its distorted political system," saying the country has achieved "sustainable failure." When asked by members of the House International Relations Committee about the country's governance system, this expert opined that Pakistan's military has sought to "prevent any of the mainstream parties from emerging as an alternative to the military." Yet he finds this strategy harmful to the military's own interests, viewing the army as demonstrably unable to effectively govern a progressively deteriorating Pakistani system. Thus, "it's in the army's own interest that it retreats from politics [and] allow moderate, centrist parties to fill the space." He called Sharif's and Bhutto's return from exile a requirement for truly free elections in 2007. However, the Musharraf government has indicated that the two former Prime Ministers would not be allowed to return to Pakistan before the 2007 elections.²⁸

Numerous American policymakers believe that U.S. interests are for the time being best served by the presence of a strong and secure Islamabad leadership. Thus,

²⁵ Statement of Professor Marvin Weinbaum, "Senate Foreign Relations Committee Holds Hearing on Pakistan and Counterterrorism," FDCH Transcripts, July 14, 2004. At the same hearing, former Ambassador Teresita Schaffer concurred, saying that the United States is attempting to deal with Pakistan through "policy triage and by focusing on the personal leadership of President Musharraf," both of which are "flawed concepts."

²⁶ Najam Sethi, "Happy Birthday Pakistan," *Friday Times* (Lahore), Aug. 13, 2004.

²⁷ Husain Haqqani, "Agenda for Pakistan's New Prime Minister," *Nation* (Lahore), Sep. 1, 2004; Najam Sethi, "What the Country Needs," *Friday Times* (Lahore), Sep. 12, 2003; Stephen Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (Brookings Institution, 2005).

²⁸ Stephen P. Cohen, "Transcript: House International Relations Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific Holds Hearing on United States and South Asia," June 14, 2005; "Musharraf Rules Out Return of Benazir, Nawaz," *Dawn* (Karachi), May 12, 2005.

while early optimism about Musharraf's potential as a reformer has waned considerably, there are those who still conclude that the existence of an unstable and possibly Islamicized or failed state between Afghanistan and India — a state in possession of nuclear weapons — is a far less desirable circumstance than the present one in which a powerful and secular military institution maintains a reasonable degree of order in Pakistan.²⁹ For some, this argument has become less persuasive as the country's law-and-order situation appeared to deteriorate in 2004–2005 and uncertainty about political succession in Islamabad causes trepidation in numerous world capitals. Pakistan's fragile democratic institutions are under continuous threat emanating from the authoritarian influences of the country's powerful military and quasi-feudal economic structures. Given a stated U.S. position that, "Democratic institutions are required if Pakistan is to thrive economically and to develop further into an enlightened and moderate Muslim state,"³⁰ Pakistan's domestic political developments likely will be closely monitored by the United States.

Political Setting

Background

The history of democracy in Pakistan is a troubled one marked by ongoing tripartite power struggles among presidents, prime ministers, and army chiefs. Military regimes have ruled Pakistan for more than half of the country's 57 years in existence, and most observers agree that Pakistan has no sustained history of effective constitutionalism or parliamentary democracy. The country has had five constitutions, the most recent being ratified in 1973 (and significantly modified several times since). From the earliest days of independence, the country's armed forces have thought of themselves as "saviors of the nation," a perception that has received significant, though limited, public support. The military, usually acting in tandem with the president, has engaged in three outright seizures of power from civilian-led governments: Gen. Ayub Khan in 1958, Gen. Zia-ul-Haq in 1977, and Gen. Musharraf in 1999.³¹ Since 1970, five successive governments have been voted

²⁹ A former U.S. Senator saw the Bush Administration's March 2005 decision to resume sales of F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan as an example of how "the Pentagon would often rather deal with dictatorships than democracies" (Larry Pressler, "Dissing Democracy in Asia," *New York Times*, Mar. 21, 2005; see also Daryl Kimball, "Arming Dictators, Rewarding Proliferators," *Arms Control Today*, Apr. 2005).

³⁰ "Ambassador Powell Outlines U.S. Policy Toward Pakistan," U.S. Department of State Washington File, Aug. 20, 2004.

³¹ In 1958, President Iskander Mizra, with the support of the army, abrogated the Constitution as "unworkable and full of dangerous compromises." Three weeks later Mizra was exiled and Army Chief Gen. Ayub Khan installed himself as President while declaring martial law and banning all political parties (thus formalizing the militarization of Pakistan's political system). His appointment of a senior civil servant as Deputy Martial Law Administrator gave some legitimating cast to the event and, four years later, Ayub Khan introduced a new Constitution that sought to legitimate his rule in the absence of martial law. In 1977, and in the midst of political turmoil involving Z.A. Bhutto and the Pakistan
(continued...)

into power, but not a single time has a government been voted out of power — all five were removed by the army through explicit or implicit presidential orders. Of Pakistan's three most prominent prime ministers, one (Z.A. Bhutto) was executed, another (Benazir Bhutto) exiled and her husband jailed on corruption charges, and the last (Nawaz Sharif) remains in exile under threat of life in prison for similar abuses should he return. Such long-standing turmoil in the governance system may partially explain why, in a 2004 public opinion survey, nearly two-thirds of Pakistanis were unable to provide a meaning for the term “democracy.”³²

Major Political Parties and Coalitions

Pakistan Muslim League. The Pakistan Muslim League (PML) is the country's oldest political party and was the only major party existing at the time of independence. Long associated with the Quaid-e-Azam (Father of the Nation) Muhammed Ali Jinnah and his lieutenant, Liaquat Ali Khan, the PML was weakened upon their premature deaths in 1948 and 1951 (Jinnah by natural causes, Khan by assassination). Not until the 1988 elections — when Nawaz Sharif, who had been Gen. Zia's finance minister, led a PML-Islamist coalition to a strong second-place showing and became Punjab chief minister — was the party again to be a player on the national scene. Sharif was elected prime minister in 1990 and, three years later, established the offshoot PML-Nawaz (PML-N), which went on to dominate the 1997 elections. In the lead up to the 2002 elections, most former (but still influential) Sharif loyalists joined the new PML-Quaid-e-Azam (PML-Q), a group seen to enjoy overt support from the military. In May 2004, five PML factions united and named Punjabi politician and industrialist Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain as their leader. Nawaz Sharif and most of his immediate family live in exile in Saudi Arabia. His family's legal status is unclear, but reports indicate that, shortly after the 1999 coup, the Sharif family and the Musharraf government concluded an “arrangement” that would bar any family member from returning to Pakistan for a period of ten years. The PML's electoral strength typically is found in the densely populated Punjab province.

Pakistan People's Party. The left-leaning Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was established in 1967 in reaction to the military dictatorship of Gen. Ayub Khan.³³ The party slogan was and remains “Islam is our Faith, Democracy is our Polity, Socialism is our Economy.” Under the leadership of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who had resigned his position as Khan's foreign minister, the PPP won a majority of West

³¹ (...continued)

National Alliance opposed to him, Army Chief Gen. Zia-ul-Haq, in apparent collusion with conservative Islamic groups, declared martial law, suspended the Constitution, dissolved the National Assembly, and took power in a bloodless coup. He vowed to hold national elections within 90 days, but soon rescinded that promise, and spent the next 11 years making changes to the Pakistani constitution and system of governance that would ensure his continued hold on power. Only two of the three coups d'état (Zia in 1977 and Musharraf in 1999) were entirely extra-constitutional in nature. See Robert Stern, *Democracy and Dictatorship in South Asia* (Praeger, 2001).

³² International Foundation for Election Systems, “National Public Opinion Survey Pakistan 2004,” available at [<http://www.plsc.org.pk/survey/index.htm>].

³³ See [<http://www.ppp.org.pk>].

Pakistan's assembly seats in 1970 elections and held power from 1971 until 1977, when Bhutto's government was overthrown by his army chief, Gen. Zia-ul-Haq. Bhutto, who oversaw the establishment of a parliamentary system with the 1973 Constitution and who launched Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, was executed by the military government in 1979. When Zia's ban on political parties was lifted in 1986, Bhutto's daughter Benazir emerged as the PPP leader and won the prime ministership in 1988 and again in 1993. Today, she lives in exile in London and Dubai under threat of imprisonment should she return to Pakistan (she has thrice been convicted of corruption in absentia). In an effort to skirt legal barriers to its electoral participation in 2002, the PPP formed a separate entity, the PPP Parliamentarians (PPPP), that pledged to uphold Bhutto's political philosophy. This group is headed by Makhdoom Amin Fahim. The PPP historically has done especially well in the southern Sind province.

Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (United Action Front). The Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA or United Action Forum) is a loose coalition of six Islamist parties formed for the 2002 elections.³⁴ Its largest constituent is the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), founded by Maulana Maududi in 1941 and considered to be Pakistan's best-organized religious party. JI chief Qazi Hussein Ahmed serves as MMA president. Another long-standing Islamist party is the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam faction led by Maulana Fazlur Rehman (JUI-F). The JUI is associated with religious schools that gave rise to the Afghan Taliban movement. In addition to promoting a central role for religion in Pakistani affairs, Islamists have been opposed to Westernization in both its capitalist and socialist forms. Although Pakistan's religious parties enjoy considerable "street" power and were strengthened by Zia's policies of the 1980s, their electoral showing has in the past been quite limited (they won only two parliamentary seats in the 1993 and 1997 elections).

| Notable Leaders of Pakistan | |
|---|-----------|
| Governor-General Mohammed Ali Jinnah | 1947-1948 |
| Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan | 1947-1951 |
| President Iskandar Ali Mirza | 1955-1958 |
| President-General Mohammed Ayub Khan | 1958-1969 |
| President-General Mohammed Yahya Khan | 1969-1971 |
| President-Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto | 1971-1977 |
| President-General Zia ul-Haq | 1978-1988 |
| Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto | 1988-1990 |
| Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif | 1990-1993 |
| Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto | 1993-1996 |
| Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif | 1997-1999 |
| President-General Pervez Musharraf | 1999- |

³⁴ Islamist parties are conservative advocates of a central role for Islam and *sharia* (Islamic law) in national governance. They also oppose Westernization in its socioeconomic and cultural forms.

Major Developments Under Musharraf

Military Rule and Assumption of the Presidency

On October 12, 1999, Army Chief Gen. Pervez Musharraf overthrew the elected government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, dismissed the National Assembly, and appointed himself “Chief Executive.” The proximate cause of Musharraf’s action appears to have been Sharif’s attempt to remove him from his Army leadership position and prevent his return from abroad, but widespread dissatisfaction with Sharif’s authoritarian and allegedly corrupt regime — both within the Pakistani military and among the general public — are believed to have been important broader factors. Under a “Provisional Constitution Order” (PCO), Musharraf declared a state of emergency, suspended the Constitution, and, by special decree, ensured that his actions could not be challenged by any court. He promised to end corruption and revive “genuine democracy.” In January 2000, members of Pakistan’s Supreme Court were required to take an oath promising to uphold the PCO; six jurists, including the Chief Justice, refused and stood retired. Five months later, the new Supreme Court issued a sweeping validation of Musharraf’s actions, including the PCO and the dissolution of the national and provincial assemblies, but it also ordered that elections to reseat these bodies be held no later than three years from the date of the coup (i.e., by October 12, 2002). These developments left Pakistan with a “seemingly benign, but nonetheless very real, military dictatorship.”³⁵

General Musharraf’s October 1999 seizure of power initially was met with widespread approval among the Pakistani people, many of whom considered the Sharif government to be incorrigibly corrupt. Even many of the country’s more liberal-minded opinion-makers acquiesced with the hope that Musharraf might succeed in improving Pakistan’s lot where civilian-led governments had failed, and/or because they believed that a military-led government was the only remaining alternative to a radical Islamic regime in Islamabad.³⁶ Yet Musharraf’s subsequent actions became widely interpreted as indicating his intention to impose a more or less permanent authoritarian rule over the country, and they thus alienated many of the early optimists. While maintaining his promise to hold national elections in October 2002, Musharraf spent ensuing years taking actions that bolstered his ruling position and that of the military. Proponents of Musharraf’s political choices since 1999 insist that the country is becoming more stable, and less corrupt and personality-centered through “military-guided” administration.³⁷

³⁵ Craig Baxter et al., *Government and Politics in South Asia*, 5th Ed. (Westview Press, 2002), p. 193. Among the explicitly extralegal aspects of Musharraf’s action was violation of Article 244 of the Pakistani Constitution, which requires all members of the armed forces to take an oath vowing no engagement “in any political activities whatsoever.”

³⁶ Pamela Constable, “Will Two and Two Equal Five?” in *On the Abyss: Pakistan After the Coup* (Harper Collins India, 2000), p. 135.

³⁷ Pakistani Ambassador to the United States Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, “Transition in Pakistan” (letter), *New York Times*, Jan. 19, 2004; Ahmed Qurashi, “Late Nation-Building,” *News* (Karachi), Aug. 31, 2004.

In June 2001, President Mohammad Rafiq Tarar was forced to resign under the PCO and was replaced by Gen. Musharraf. Musharraf later sought to legitimize his status as president with an April 2002 referendum. Islamabad reported resounding public approval for Musharraf's continued rule in the results of this exercise, with 98% of votes cast in favor. Yet opposition parties had boycotted the vote, and charges of widespread coercion and fraud marred the outcome. Musharraf later apologized for "irregularities" in the process.³⁸

Constitutional Changes

In August 2002, President Musharraf took unilateral action in announcing a "Legal Framework Order" (LFO) of constitutional changes. The most important of these provide greatly enhanced powers to the Pakistani President. Musharraf maintained that the amendments were necessary to bring "true" and stable democracy to the country. Critics contended that Musharraf (who retained his position as Army Chief) was seeking to legitimize the military's extra-constitutional role in governance, as well as ensure his own continued power in contravention of democratic principles. The key constitutional change was a provision allowing the President to dismiss the National Assembly.³⁹ Other controversial clauses called for presidential appointments of military chiefs and creation of a military-dominated National Security Council (NSC) authorized to oversee the country's security policies, as well as monitor the process of democracy and governance in the country.⁴⁰ Many saw the NSC providing Pakistan's armed forces with a permanent and unprecedented institutional role in the country's governance. Pakistan's major opposition parties decried Musharraf's action as illegal, claiming that only Parliament has the power to amend the constitution. For numerous critics, the proposed changes harked back to Zia-ul-Haq's continuous and years-long efforts to avoid any form of electoral or judicial challenge to his rule. In response to Musharraf's LFO announcement, the United States indicated that full U.S. support for the Pakistani President would continue, even if some of the changes "could make it more difficult to build strong, democratic institutions in Pakistan."⁴¹

³⁸ "Political Leaders, Lawyers Denounce Musharraf Presidency Move," Agence France Presse, June 20, 2001; Simon Denyer, "Pakistan's Musharraf Won't Start War, But Ready," Reuters, May 27, 2002.

³⁹ Pakistan's 1973 constitution envisaged a sovereign parliament where powers rested with the prime minister, but subsequent changes under the military-dominated regime of Gen. Zia-ul-Haq shifted power to the presidency. The very Parliament that provided Zia with these powers was itself dismissed by him in 1988. In 1997, PM Nawaz Sharif oversaw passage of the 13th Amendment to the constitution, repealing Zia's 8th Amendment (1985) right to dismiss the government and appoint military chiefs (and thus restoring powers to the Prime Minister's office).

⁴⁰ Zaffar Abbas, "Analysis: Musharraf Sidelines Parliament," BBC News, Aug. 21, 2002. A well-received and more clearly progressive change was the reservation of 60 assembly seats for women and non-Muslims.

⁴¹ State Department Spokesman Philip Reeker, "Musharraf's Constitutional Changes Concern U.S.," U.S. Department of State Washington File, Aug. 22, 2002.

The 2002 National Election

Following the October 1999 coup, the Pakistani Supreme Court ordered that national elections be held within a period of no more than three years, and President Musharraf set and held to a poll date of October 10, 2002. Given the country's poor historical record with democratic processes, many observers lauded Musharraf for the mere act of holding elections as promised. However, and despite the government's insistence that the exercise was free and fair, opposition parties and numerous independent observers called the election deeply flawed. Widely asserted was that the military regime's machinations substantively weakened the main *secular* opposition parties.⁴² Voter turnout was estimated by the Pakistan Election Commission to have been above 40%, but still lower than any previous Pakistani national election. Major parties offer even lower estimates, with most falling between 20% and 30%.

The PML-Q — also called the “king’s party” due to its perceived pro-military bent — won 118 of the total 342 parliamentary seats, almost all of them from Punjab, and the affiliated National Alliance won 16 more.⁴³ This number gave the pro-Musharraf parties a plurality in the National Assembly, but fell well short of the majority representation needed to control the body outright. The PPP won the largest number of votes overall, but Pakistan's electoral rules awarded it runner-up status only, with a total of 81 national seats. Perhaps the most surprising outcome of the elections was the strong third-place showing of the MMA Islamist coalition that now controls the provincial assembly of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and leads a coalition in that of Baluchistan, as well as seating 68 legislators in the National Assembly (up from two previously) — about 20% of the total.⁴⁴

⁴² Human Rights Watch, “Pakistan: Entire Election Process ‘Deeply Flawed,’” Oct. 9, 2002; Sumit Ganguly, “The Slide Continues,” *Foreign Affairs*, Apr. 2003. Both of his predecessors as national leaders — Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif — were, by Musharraf's own decree, excluded from candidacy regardless of the status of criminal charges against them. While the core membership of the PPP and the PML-N remained loyal to its leadership, it became clear that after 1999 neither could mobilize the levels of support enjoyed during the 1990s. This combined with evidence of a pervasive apathy among the Pakistani people with regard to national politics. Recognizing their weakened positions, the parties — one-time bitter rivals — agreed to cooperate in the 2002 elections, and coordinated regional candidacies in an attempt to maximize their final combined victories.

⁴³ Election figures come from the Associated Press of Pakistan, a government news service.

⁴⁴ The Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) is a Sindhi regional party mainly composed of the descendants of pre-partition immigrants (Muhajirs) from what is now India. Although it did well in Sind's provincial elections, the MQM collected only a small percentage of the national vote (winning 17 national seats). The nationalist and formerly powerful Awami National Party was shut out at the national level and did poorly in the NWFP, its traditional provincial stronghold. Small parties and independents accounted for the remaining 31 seats.

Coalition-Building and Deadlock

The new National Assembly sat in November 2002. The three leading national parties — the PML-Q, PPP, and MMA — had engaged in convoluted and ultimately failed coalition-building negotiations. Both the secular opposition PPP and the Islamist parties maintained a strident rejection of the Legal Framework Order changes to the Constitution. A PPP-Islamist alliance would have set the pro-military parties in opposition, a possibility that reportedly sent the Musharraf regime into “panic.”⁴⁵ Signals that a PML-Q-Islamist alliance was in the offing ended when President Musharraf refused to accept MMA demands that he resign his position as Army Chief. Some political analysts opined that an outcome in which no party secured a majority served President Musharraf’s interests by allowing him to retain preeminent power, and such an outcome may well have been his intent.⁴⁶

In an unexpected circumstance, the pro-Musharraf parties succeeded in forming a thin working coalition without the participation of either the PPP *or* the MMA, a development made possible by the defection of several PPP members, some of whom were rewarded with high-profile ministerships of their own. (This group of PPP “Patriots” has continued to be strongly pro-Musharraf.) In November 2002, PML-Q favorite and former Baluchistan Chief Minister Mir Zafarullah Jamali was elected to serve as Prime Minister.⁴⁷ Speculation abounded over whether or not the Pakistani President intended for the Islamist coalition to make as strong a showing as it did; Benazir Bhutto, for one, suggested that Musharraf “handed over the areas bordering Afghanistan to religious parties” in an effort to ensure continued U.S. support while simultaneously placating domestic opponents.⁴⁸ Although a full National Assembly was seated, the body remained stalled on procedural issues for more than one year; only a single piece of legislation (a budget) was passed in that time. In July 2003, more than 20 groups representing nearly all of Pakistan’s non-Islamist opposition parties issued a joint rejection of the LFO and called for Musharraf’s resignation. Shortly after, the MMA announced its “final” refusal to accept the LFO and Musharraf’s status as Army Chief.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Rana Jawad, “Musharraf Regime Panicked by Surprise Secular-Islamist Deal: Analysts,” *Agence France Presse*, Nov. 6, 2002.

⁴⁶ See, for example, Paula Newburg, “Musharraf’s Win, Pakistan’s Loss,” *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 20, 2002.

⁴⁷ With 172 votes, Jamali beat out top MMA official Maulana Fazlur Rehman (86 votes) and PPP contender Shah Mehmood Qureshi (70 votes) for the prime ministership. A constitutionally mandated December 2002 vote of confidence was narrowly won by Jamali. February 2003 Senate elections bolstered the position of the ruling coalition-leading PML-Q, which oversees a simple majority in the 100-seat body.

⁴⁸ “Benazir Seeks World Support for PPP,” *Dawn* (Karachi), Oct. 24, 2002.

⁴⁹ “Musharraf Says He’ll Only Quit When Pakistan Stops Needing Him,” *Agence France Presse*, June 9, 2003; Zaffar Abbas, “Musharraf Reforms Rejected,” *BBC News*, July 26, 2003; Mohammed Imran, “No More Talks, Says MMA,” *Daily Times* (Lahore), Sep. 20, 2003.

Musharraf-MMA Accommodation

The fractious 14-month-long dispute between President Musharraf's allies and opposition parties in the National Assembly came to an end with a surprise December 2003 deal between Musharraf and the Islamist MMA. Under the arrangement, Musharraf pledged to resign his military commission by the end of 2004. He also agreed to put a slightly altered version of the LFO before Parliament. It was passed and, on the final day of 2003, became the 17th Amendment to the Constitution.⁵⁰ Finally, Musharraf submitted to a vote of confidence by Pakistan's Electoral College (comprised of the membership of all national and provincial legislatures). On January 1, 2004, Musharraf's presidency through 2007 was legitimized when he won about 60% of the total vote.⁵¹ Officials in Islamabad contended that the developments augured well for Pakistani democracy and stability, but non-Islamist opposition parties unified under the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD) accused the MMA of betrayal and insisted that the new arrangement merely institutionalized military rule in Pakistan.⁵²

Creation of a National Security Council

When the 17th Amendment to the Constitution was passed in December 2003, one of the key changes to President Musharraf's original August 2002 LFO proposal was the removal of the National Security Council. In something of a concession, Musharraf and the military allowed the NSC to be created through a legislative rather than constitutional process, meaning that Parliament will have at least nominal power to alter or dissolve the body. Draft legislation was completed in January 2004. Secular and Islamist opposition parties vowed to oppose the bill, saying an NSC would curtail Parliament's powers, but their vehement protest failed to sway the ruling party and they boycotted voting when the bill passed in April. The first formal meeting of the NSC took place in June and focused on Pakistan's deteriorating law-and-order situation.⁵³ Notably absent was Maulana Fazlur Rehman, whose status as Leader of the Opposition provides an NSC seat. Musharraf reportedly was unhappy with the Islamist's boycotting of the inaugural session.⁵⁴ Musharraf and his supporters in Parliament insist that the NSC will reduce the

⁵⁰ Passage was possible only with the support of MMA members; secular opposition parties boycotted the vote. The most important change to the LFO was a requirement that the Supreme Court must approve of any presidential dissolution of Parliament within 15 days of such a move. The amendment also retroactively validated all legal actions taken by Musharraf after Oct. 12, 1999.

⁵¹ Only a single vote against was recorded. Musharraf received only minority support in the NWFP (24%) and Baluchistan (43%) (Bronwyn Curran, "Pakistan President Musharraf Sails Through Confidence Vote," Agence France Presse, Jan. 1, 2004).

⁵² "Deal Over Pakistan Power Struggle," BBC News, Dec. 29, 2003.

⁵³ The 13-member body is chaired by the President, and includes the Prime Minister, the Chairman of the Senate, the Speaker and Opposition Leader of the National Assembly, four provincial Chief Ministers, the Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the top officer from each of the three military branches.

⁵⁴ Musharraf even suggested that, by failing to sit at the NSC meeting, the MMA was
(continued...)

likelihood of future military coups by providing a “safety valve” — a forum in which the army can play a role short of dissolving the National Assembly. Opponents still contend that a military-dominated body headed by the President will only undercut the already tenuous power of Parliament.⁵⁵

Marginalization of the Non-Islamist Opposition

The Pakistani military and intelligence services have a long history of involving themselves in and even manipulating their country’s political system, oftentimes to the benefit of Islamist forces and at significant cost to more moderate, secular interests.⁵⁶ Pakistan’s non-Islamist parties unified under the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy consider themselves to be the country’s “true” opposition, given past MMA accommodation with the ruling party. People’s Party leaders and loyalists of Nawaz Sharif’s PML-N warn the United States that military dictators are not reliable over time and that Pakistan’s civilian political forces may soon become so marginalized as to become ineffective.⁵⁷ The October 2003 arrest of opposition political figure Makhdoom Javed Hashmi spurred some to identify renewed governmental repression. Hashmi, leader of the ARD, was jailed after he publicized a letter allegedly written by an army officer criticizing President Musharraf’s policies. In April 2004, Hashmi was sentenced 23 years in prison for sedition, mutiny, and forgery. The United States expressed regret at the “closed nature of the proceedings” against Hashmi and called on Pakistan to administer justice fairly and in a transparent manner in his case. Islamabad responded by accusing the United States of “unwarranted and misplaced” interference in its internal affairs.⁵⁸

In May 2004, Shabaz Sharif, a former Punjab Chief Minister and the brother of deposed PM Nawaz Sharif, attempted to return to Pakistan from exile, but was “dragged away by commandos” and deported to Saudi Arabia after less than two hours in Lahore in what some termed a “massive over-reaction” by authorities. Police arrested as many as 2,200 supporters from Sharif’s PML-N party who had gathered to welcome him. The events were widely viewed as indicating that the

⁵⁴ (...continued)

renegeing on an agreement, but MMA leaders have continued to boycott the body to date (“President Musharraf Chairs Inaugural Session of National Security Council,” Pakistan Press International, June 24, 2004; “President Chairs NSC Meeting,” *Daily Times* (Lahore), Sep. 9, 2005).

⁵⁵ Asim Yasin, “NSC to Help Flourish Democracy: Jamali,” *News* (Karachi), Apr. 2, 2004; “The NSC Albatross,” *Daily Times* (Lahore), Apr. 4, 2004; Roedad Khan, “NSC: Abdicating Sovereignty,” *Dawn* (Karachi), Apr. 12, 2004; “Pakistan Law Enshrines Army Role,” BBC News, Apr. 14, 2004.

⁵⁶ See, for example, Husain Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005).

⁵⁷ Author interviews with PPP and PML-N officials, Islamabad, Jan. 2004.

⁵⁸ M.B. Naqvi, “A Season of Repression?” *News* (Karachi), Nov. 5, 2003; “U.S. Calls for Judicial Fairness for Pakistan Opposition Figure,” U.S. Department of State Washington File, May 13, 2004; “Pakistan Tells US Jailing of Opposition Leader ‘an Internal Affair,’” Agence France Presse, Apr. 16, 2004.

military intends to maintain its hold on civil society.⁵⁹ Furthermore, the May elevation of Jamiat-Ulema-Islami chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman to the position of Leader of the Opposition in Parliament spurred commentary that the “mullah-military alliance” had become a “Musharraf-Maulana alliance,” further marginalizing Pakistan’s more secular opposition parties.⁶⁰ There also are reports of other more subtle forms of harassment and suppression of opposition political figures.⁶¹

Late 2004 saw reports that President Musharraf and the Pakistan Muslim League were preparing the ground for a reconciliation with the country’s non-Islamist opposition. In November 2004, Asif Zardari — the husband of former PM Benazir Bhutto and political figure in his own right who had been imprisoned for eight years without conviction — was released on bail after a Supreme Court ruling. Zardari, who still faces legal action in eight pending criminal cases, later received permission to leave the country to visit his wife. The developments fueled talk of a pending deal between Musharraf and the PPP. Information beyond rumor was sparse, but there have been reliable reports of ongoing communication between government officials and the top leadership of both the PPP and the PML-N, contacts that many believed were preliminary efforts at “deal-making.”⁶²

A major development came with the February 2005 meeting in Saudi Arabia of former Prime Ministers Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto. The two top opposition leaders, both living in exile, are longtime rivals, but appear to have set aside their differences in the interest of establishing a “minimum program for the restoration of democracy” in Pakistan. Both parties vowed to work together to achieve this “sacred goal.” Bhutto was accompanied to the meeting by her husband, Asif Zardari. Some analysts saw Zardari’s release from prison in November 2004 — and the apparently overdue December elevation of PPP Senator Raza Rabbani as Leader of the Opposition in parliament’s upper house — as part of an effort by Musharraf to seek reconciliation with Pakistan’s moderate political parties, perhaps to dilute international and domestic criticism of his decision to retain dual offices.⁶³ However, PPP leaders continue to flatly reject an accommodation with the Musharraf government.

⁵⁹ “Pakistan Deports Ex-PM’s Brother,” BBC News, May 11, 2004; Sajjad Shafiq Butt, “Lahore Under ‘Police Siege’ Before Shabaz Arrival,” *News* (Karachi), May 11, 2004; “Pakistan’s Military Shows No Intention of Letting Slip Its Grip on Power,” Agence France Presse, May 12, 2004.

⁶⁰ Najam Sethi, “His Majesty’s Loyal Opposition?” *Friday Times* (Lahore), May 28, 2004.

⁶¹ Matthew Pennington, “Pakistan Gives Opposition Tough Time,” Associated Press, May 10, 2004.

⁶² Gary Thomas, “Signs Emerge of Thaw Between Exiled Former Pakistani Leaders and Government,” VOA News, Mar. 3, 2005.

⁶³ Zeeshan Haider, “Pakistan’s Top Opposition Leaders Meet in Exile,” Reuters, Feb. 10, 2005; Zahid Hussain, “Musharraf Courts Some Foes,” *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 24, 2004; “A Move Towards Reconciliation,” *News* (Karachi), Jan. 12, 2005; Hasan-Askari Rizvi, “Re-Alignments and New Partnerships,” *News* (Karachi), Feb. 14, 2005.

“Shuffling” of Prime Ministers

At the time of this writing, Pakistan has its third prime minister since the October 2002 elections. There were in 2004 increasing indications that Musharraf was unhappy with Prime Minister Jamali’s perceived ineffectiveness and lack of enthusiasm on key issues such as the NSC and Musharraf’s possible continuation as Army Chief.⁶⁴ On June 26, 2004, Jamali announced his resignation at the request of President Musharraf. Opposition parties and independent analysts called Jamali’s “smooth sacking” further evidence of the military’s supreme power.⁶⁵ Jamali nominated PML president and Parliament Speaker Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain as his successor. However, Shujaat’s tenure was meant to be transitional only, as the person called “Musharraf’s favorite candidate,” Senator and Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz, was constitutionally obligated to win a seat in the National Assembly to be eligible for the prime ministership. After he did so, opposition parties nominated jailed political figure Javed Hashmi as their candidate for the position. However, the Assembly Speaker ruled that Hashmi could not attend the vote, and Aziz won 192 of 342 ballots, with the opposition boycotting the process as “sham democracy.”⁶⁶

The choice of Aziz appears to fit with the military’s preference for a “task-oriented technocrat” who approaches economic development and governance as a “mechanical process.”⁶⁷ Aziz’s elevation was seen as being less about the will of the electorate than about the will of President Musharraf, who is seen as seeking to secure his grip on the civilian components of his regime by installing a prime minister who will have little real power over most domestic and international political matters.⁶⁸

Musharraf’s Retention of Status as Army Chief

As was noted above, a central complaint of Pakistan’s opposition parties has been Musharraf’s concurrent standing as both President and Chief of Army Staff, a circumstance they believe violates the Constitution and perpetuates overt military

⁶⁴ David Rohde, “Pakistan Choreographs Vote for Chosen Premier,” *New York Times*, July 25, 2004; Rana Qaisar, “Jamali Wanted to Dilute NSC Role,” *Daily Times* (Lahore), Jan. 30, 2004; “Musharraf Will Keep Promise,” *Daily Times* (Lahore), Apr. 12, 2004.

⁶⁵ Qamar Jabbar, “Opposition Parties Say Jamali’s Removal a Setback to Democracy,” *Daily Times* (Lahore), June 27, 2004; “Jamali’s Resignation Shocks Qazi,” *Dawn* (Karachi), June 27, 2004; Husain Haqqani, “Changing Managers of Pakistan Inc.,” *Nation* (Lahore), June 30, 2004; Ejaz Haider, “Musharraf’s Unstable Stability,” *Friday Times* (Lahore), July 9, 2004.

⁶⁶ “Musharraf Ally Sworn in as New PM,” BBC News, Aug. 28, 2004.

⁶⁷ Hasan-Askari Rizvi, “The Making of a Prime Minister,” *Daily Times* (Lahore), July 12, 2004; “The Technocrats Take Over,” *Economist* (London), Aug. 28, 2004.

⁶⁸ David Rohde, “Pakistan Choreographs Vote for Chosen Premier,” *New York Times*, July 25, 2004; “Musharraf: New Cabinet, Old Agenda,” Stratfor.com, Sep. 1, 2004; Owais Tohid, “Musharraf’s Hand Stronger After Prime Minister Quits,” *Christian Science Monitor*, June 28, 2004; “Puppet Prime Minister?” *Economist Intelligence Unit*, Aug. 31, 2004.

rule. Despite apparent legal proscriptions set forth in the 17th Amendment,⁶⁹ and his own nationally televised promise to resign his commission before January 2005, there were in 2004 increasing signs that Musharraf would choose to retain dual offices in what often was described as the “national interest.” Musharraf’s lieutenants and party supporters spent months urging him to stay on so as to maintain “political stability” in Pakistan, and their outspokenness peaked in September 2004. Among independent observers, such a decision came to be expected and for some was viewed as an expression of Musharraf’s insecurity.⁷⁰ The United States responded by stating that it expected to see continuing progress toward the goal of “fully functioning democracy” in Pakistan and that it continued to view Musharraf’s planned military retirement as “progress in this general direction.”⁷¹ The British Commonwealth, which in May 2004 lifted a four-year suspension of Pakistan, had insisted that Musharraf stand by his pledge to resign from the military or risk further opprobrium.⁷²

In October 2004, the ruling PML-Q party — ostensibly acting to “bring stability and ensure a smooth continuation of democracy” — pushed through the National Assembly a bill that would allow President Musharraf to remain in uniform for the remainder of his tenure as president. The move brought waves of criticism from opposition parties that saw it as yet another undemocratic practice; they disrupted parliamentary proceedings in protest. The debate further widened the already considerable government-opposition rift.⁷³ The United States responded to the parliamentary act by again expressing the expectation that Pakistan continue transition to fully functioning democracy and repeating the opinion that Musharraf’s retirement from the army would be a “good thing,” but was a decision internal to Musharraf and Pakistan. When pressed to state whether or not retirement was a fundamental step toward democracy, a U.S. State Department spokesman would say only that “steps toward democracy are good and we will continue to urge them.” A top British Commonwealth diplomat said the move would be democratic if approved by Parliament, then “clarified” that it would not meet Commonwealth expectations.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ “Musharraf’s Staying as Army Chief Violates Constitution: Jurists,” Agence France Presse, Sep. 17, 2004.

⁷⁰ “Musharraf Urged Not to Quit Army,” BBC News, Apr. 9, 2004; Ashraf Mumtaz, “Shujaat Wants Musharraf to Stay in Uniform,” *Dawn* (Karachi), Sep. 6, 2004; “Key Pakistani Province Urges Musharraf Not to Quit as Army Chief,” Agence France Presse, Sep. 13, 2004; “Army Post for President Key to Stability: Aziz,” *Dawn* (Karachi), Sep. 17, 2004. On Musharraf’s insecurity, see Simon Cameron-Moore, “Pakistan’s Musharraf Keeps Khaki and Grip on Power,” Reuters, Sep. 9, 2004.

⁷¹ “Daily Press Briefing,” U.S. Department of State Washington File, Sep. 16, 2004.

⁷² “Commonwealth Lifts Pakistan Suspension,” *New York Times*, May 22, 2004.

⁷³ Daniel Cooney, “Pakistan’s Parliament Passes Bill Allowing President Musharraf to Stay as Army Chief,” Associated Press, Oct. 14, 2004; “Pakistani MPs Protest Over Ban on Debate,” *Financial Times* (London), Oct. 23, 2004; Hasan-Askari Rizvi, “Political Convergence and Confrontation,” *Daily Times* (Lahore), Oct. 18, 2004.

⁷⁴ “Daily Press Briefing,” U.S. Department of State Washington File, Oct. 14, 2004; “Commonwealth Supports Musharraf,” BBC News, Oct. 22, 2004; “Uniformed President

(continued...)

In November, the chairman of the Pakistani Senate signed the “dual role” bill into law as acting president while Musharraf was out of the country.

In December 2004, Musharraf announced his widely expected decision to retain his army post in what was described as being the interest of domestic political and economic stability. Opposition parties, which Musharraf called “a threat to democracy,” vowed to launch a national “agitation” in protest of Musharraf’s continued rule. Ensuing anti-Musharraf rallies were only modest in size (at least partly due to inclement weather) and the Pakistan People’s Party declined to enter into an alliance with the Islamists in the effort.⁷⁵ Both the Western and Pakistani press were generally critical of Musharraf’s decision, with some observers expressing new concerns that the United States is “giving a pass” to Musharraf on nuclear proliferation and human rights concerns in exchange for Pakistan’s continued cooperation with U.S.-led anti-terrorism efforts.⁷⁶

The Bush Administration, which earlier had called Musharraf’s planned retirement from the military a “good thing” in the context of movement toward democracy, declined to directly criticize Musharraf’s reversal, but reiterated a U.S. expectation that Pakistan continue to make progress toward the goal of a “fully functioning and stable democracy.”⁷⁷ When Musharraf paid a December visit to Washington, DC, President Bush expressed his support and lauded the Pakistani President for “very strong” cooperation with the United States and “focused efforts” to combat terrorism. The issues of Pakistani democracy and governance were not raised during a brief joint press conference held by the leaders, but an unnamed senior Bush Administration official later insisted that Pakistan’s democratic institutions were strong and that Musharraf was making them stronger. Musharraf told an American television interviewer that “democracy is fully restored” in Pakistan. Musharraf later averred that President Bush has never raised the uniform issue in discussions between the two leaders.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ (...continued)

Not What Commonwealth Expects,” *Daily Times* (Lahore), Oct. 24, 2004.

⁷⁵ “Pakistan’s Musharraf Reaffirms Commitment to Democracy” (transcript), BBC Monitoring South Asia, Dec. 30, 2004; Kamran Khan and John Lancaster, “Musharraf Vows to Remain Army Chief,” *Washington Post*, Dec. 19, 2004; Farhan Bokhari, “Musharraf Volte-Face Fuels Fears of Instability,” *Financial Times* (London), Dec. 30, 2004; “MMA Asks Musharraf to Resign From Both Offices,” *Dawn* (Karachi), Jan. 15, 2005.

⁷⁶ See, for example, “Another Pass for Pakistan,” *Washington Post*, Dec. 31, 2004; “Just Another General,” *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 7, 2005; “Another Broken Promise,” *Economist* (London), Jan. 1, 2005; “2004: A Bad Year for Democracy,” *Dawn* (Karachi), Jan. 1, 2005. See also CRS Report RL32745, *Pakistan’s Nuclear Proliferation Activities and the Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission: U.S. Policy Constraints and Options*, by Richard P. Cronin (Coordinator), K. Alan Kronstadt, and Sharon Squassoni.

⁷⁷ “Daily Press Briefing,” U.S. Department of State Washington File, Oct. 14, 2004, Dec. 20, 2004, and Feb. 11, 2005.

⁷⁸ “President and President Musharraf Discuss International Relations, Commerce,” White House Press Release, Dec. 4, 2004; “Senior Administration Official Holds a White House
(continued...)

The 2005 Municipal Elections

In August 2000, the Musharraf government announced a Local Government Plan to reinstate elected local governance bodies, with Musharraf saying “genuine democracy starts from the grassroots upward ...”⁷⁹ Previous Pakistani military rulers, beginning with Gen. Ayub Khan in 1958, had employed like efforts as part of their political reforms. According to one report, “Local governments have proved to be key instruments in the military’s manipulation of the Pakistani polity to ensure regime survival.”⁸⁰ Musharraf’s plan was similar to that of former ruler Gen. Zia in calling for a three-tiered system at the union, *tehsil* (town), and *zila* (district) levels, each with its own *nazim* (mayor) and *naib* (deputy) *nazim*. Notably, *nazims* were given nominally full administrative autonomy, thus bypassing provincial governments, and the elections were held on a non-party basis. The first such polling took place in early 2001. While noting that the devolution plan did provide some benefits — including greater attention to local needs and more facile public access to government officials — analysts have been skeptical of the system’s susceptibility to rigging, a lack of democratic accountability (there is no direct election of district *nazims*), and an apparent absence of genuine fiscal and administrative autonomy. Still, many non-Pakistani observers, especially those from international aid organizations such as the Asian Development Bank, see the *nazim* system as a bright spot in otherwise faltering efforts at Pakistani democratization.⁸¹

Although August 2005 municipal elections ostensibly were non-party affairs, officials from the opposition PPP complained in July that President Musharraf was violating the code of conduct by urging voters to cast ballots for candidates favored by the ruling PML-Q. Then, in a blow to the hopes of Islamist sympathizers, the Pakistan Supreme Court ruled that candidates with religious education were ineligible to run in municipal elections unless they have studied English, Pakistan studies, and Urdu. Islamist leaders criticized the ruling.⁸² The voting for candidates in 110 districts, which came in two phases on August 18 and August 25, involved deployment of tens of thousands of troops for security purposes, yet scores of Pakistanis were killed and as many as 1,000 were injured in poll-related violence around the country. Claims of widespread vote-rigging and women being barred

⁷⁸ (...continued)

Background Briefing Via Teleconference on President Bush’s Meeting With President Musharraf,” FDCH Transcript, Dec. 4, 2004; “Transcript: Interview With Pervez Musharraf,” CNN Late Edition, Dec. 5, 2004; Glenn Kessler and Dafna Linzer, “Musharraf: No Challenge From Bush on Reversal,” *Washington Post*, Sep. 13, 2005.

⁷⁹ “Country’s Elite Responsible for Problems: CE,” *Dawn* (Karachi), 16 August 2000.

⁸⁰ “Devolution in Pakistan: Reform or Regression?” International Crisis Group Asia Report 77, Mar. 22, 2004.

⁸¹ Bushra Asif, “Local Government Reforms in Pakistan,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, Dec. 1, 2003; David Rohde, “Local Politics in Pakistan Offers Hope for Democracy,” *New York Times*, Aug. 23, 2005.

⁸² “Musharraf Targeting Moderates, Alleges PPP,” *Dawn* (Karachi), July 30, 2005; “PPPP Accuses President of Violating Code of Conduct,” *News* (Karachi), Aug. 1, 2004; “Anger at Pakistan Election Ruling,” BBC News, Aug. 17, 2005.

from polling stations in the Frontier Province spurred Pakistan's major opposition parties — both secular and Islamist — to issue a joint call for a national strike to protest President Musharraf's "military takeover," "dictatorial behavior," and "blatant rigging." Ensuing protests were only moderate in scale (with Quetta being an exception) and Information Minister Rashid called the strike "a total failure."⁸³

Candidates favored by Pakistan's ruling party appear to have fared quite well in all four provinces, and PML-Q gains were seen as a major boost for President Musharraf, who may have to rely on the ruling party to win the presidency in 2007. Musharraf expressed satisfaction with "a victory for the moderates" and "a defeat for the extremists." However, one Pakistani analyst opined that the outcome would be unlikely to yield political harmony and had only exacerbated the sense of bitterness and alienation felt among opposition parties. Others warn that apparent irregularities could in fact harm Musharraf's image; a former Pakistani ambassador called the process a "typically vice-regal electoral exercise."⁸⁴

Human Rights

In February 2005, the U.S. State Department released its annual *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, which found that the Pakistan government's human rights record in 2004 "remained poor." The discussion of Pakistan, authored by State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, does not contain the words "democracy" or "democratic," and notes that the right of citizens to change their government "was restricted in practice." A March 2005 State Department report on human rights and democracy claimed that Pakistan's political parties "are generally weak, undemocratic institutions centered on personalities instead of policies. The judiciary is corrupt, inefficient, and malleable to political pressure." In May 2005, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom released an annual report claiming that, "The response of the government of Pakistan to persistent and religiously motivated violence in Pakistan continues to be inadequate" and again recommending Pakistan be designated a Country of Particular Concern. Islamabad rejects U.S. criticism of its human rights record, saying that "no country is perfect" and insisting that efforts are underway to improve the situation.⁸⁵

⁸³ Jo Johnson and Farhan Bokhari, "Pakistanis Vote Amid Claims of Election Rigging," *Financial Times* (London), Aug. 18, 2005; "Pakistan Polls Were Rigged, Says Opposition," Associated Press, Aug. 19, 2005; "Opposition Calls Strike Against Musharraf" *Daily Times* (Lahore), Sep. 6, 2005; "Opposition Strike Falls Flat," Agence France Presse, Sep. 9, 2005.

⁸⁴ Salman Masood, "Pakistan's President Consolidates Power in Local Elections," *New York Times*, Sep. 1, 2005; "Extremists Defeated in Polls: Musharraf," *Daily Times* (Lahore), Aug. 27, 2005; Hasan-Askari Rizvi, "Beyond the Local Government Elections," *Daily Times* (Lahore), Aug. 29, 2005; Aamer Ahmed Khan, "Musharraf Under Fire After Local elections," BBC News, Aug. 30, 2005; Husain Haqqani, "Hit-and-Miss Democracy," *Indian Express* (Bombay), Sep. 1, 2005.

⁸⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2004* (released Feb. 28, 2005) at [<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41743.htm>]; U.S. Department of State, *Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: The U.S. Record 2004-2005* (released Mar. 28,

Numerous independent observers identify major ongoing problems with Pakistan's human rights situation in general and lack of full democracy in particular. In its *Freedom in the World 2005* report, and for the sixth consecutive year, the often-cited Freedom House rated Pakistan as "not free" in the areas of political rights and civil liberties. Human rights groups have issued reports critical of the military-dominated Musharraf government for its "violent repression" of opposition political rallies, for protecting its "grip" on the country's economic resources, especially land, and for using Pakistan's role in the "war on terrorism" to maintain an oppressive, nondemocratic hold on national power. A coalition of Western human rights groups has chided the United States for providing military aid to "states carrying out persistent human rights violations," including Pakistan. Pakistan's leading human rights organization holds the government responsible for increasing violations of basic human rights and for failing to maintain law and order in the country.⁸⁶

Other developments in 2005 spurred Pakistan's secular opposition parties and independent human rights groups to accuse the Islamabad government of taking actions that contradict President Musharraf's stated policy of "enlightened moderation." For example, in March, ruling party parliamentarians allied with Islamists to reject legislation which sought to strengthen national laws against "honor killings" (the murder of women determined to have shamed themselves and their families). Prime Minister Aziz's cabinet later called for a restoration of a religious column on Pakistani passports, thus reversing an earlier decision to remove the column (Islamist politicians had launched a campaign to protest the government's decision to exclude the column).⁸⁷

In April, police in the eastern city of Gujranwala clashed with Islamist protestors opposed to women's participation in a foot race there. Some 900 Islamist party supporters, reportedly bused into the area from the North West Frontier Province, had attacked race participants with batons, Molotov cocktails, and other weapons. When a group of human rights activists later staged another "mixed marathon" including both men and women in Lahore, police used force to disperse them, and a former chairwoman of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan was among those "brutally dragged" into police vans and detained for several hours. Some Pakistani observers saw in the government's actions further evidence that the Islamist parties

⁸⁵ (...continued)

2005) at [<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/shrd/2004/43112.htm>]; Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (released May 11, 2005) at [<http://www.uscirf.gov/countries/publications/currentreport/2005annualRpt.pdf#page=1>]; Sadaqat Jan, "Pakistan Scoffs at U.S. Criticism of its Human Rights Record," Associated Press, Mar. 29, 2005.

⁸⁶ "Pakistan: End Persecution of Political Opponents," Human Rights Watch, Dec. 28, 2004; *Human Rights Watch World Report 2005*, Jan. 2005; "In Mala Fide: Freedoms of Expression, Association, and Assembly in Pakistan," International Federation for Human Rights (Paris), Jan. 17, 2005; "The G8: Arms Exporters," at [<http://www.controlarms.org/downloads/globalarmsexporters.pdf>]. "Human Rights Violations on the Rise: HRCF Report," *News* (Karachi), Feb. 2, 2005.

⁸⁷ "Pakistan Rejects Pro-Women Bill," BBC News, Mar. 1, 2005; Iqbal haider, "'Enlightened Moderation' and the Right," *Dawn* (Karachi), Mar. 29, 2005.

are able to exert great influence on Islamabad.⁸⁸ Also in May, police in Islamabad and Lahore used batons to break up gatherings of journalists marking World Press Freedom Day, injuring nine and detaining 30 more. The arrests came hours after Pakistan's information minister told a seminar that the media were free in Pakistan.⁸⁹

The treatment of women in Pakistan has been scrutinized in 2005. During the House hearing, Secretary Rocca expressed dismay at travel restrictions placed on Pakistani gang rape victim Mukhtaran Mai, a woman gang-raped at the order of a tribal council as punishment for relatively minor alleged trespasses by her younger brother. A State Department spokesman later said, "The United States expects Pakistan's leaders to honor their pledge to protect the basic human rights of their citizens, including freedom to travel." President Musharraf reportedly said he had imposed travel restrictions on Mai to protect Pakistan's image from Western nongovernmental organizations which are "as bad as the Islamic extremists." A *New York Times* editorial chided Musharraf for his handling of the case, which BBC News later called "a public relations disaster" and a leading Pakistani commentator called "a monumental blunder."⁹⁰ Facing criticism over this and other high-profile rape cases in his country, Musharraf came to the U.N. General Assembly gathering in New York in September 2005 with repairing Pakistan's image as one of his stated goals. However, his reported comment that rape in Pakistan was a "money-making concern" brought waves of criticism from both Western and Pakistani civil rights groups.⁹¹

Islamization and Anti-American Sentiment

Adding to U.S. concerns about Pakistan's domestic political developments are signs of "Islamization" and anti-American sentiment there. Pakistanis are a pious people, many or most of whom are unlikely to want separation between Islam and governance: A 2004 survey found nearly two-thirds of citizens saying "religion should play a paramount role in politics" and only 6% seeing no role for religion in politics.⁹² In June 2003, the Islamist coalition in the conservative North West

⁸⁸ "Clashes Over Pakistan Road Race," BBC News, Apr. 3, 2005; "Pakistan Police Brutality Claim," BBC News, May 14, 2005; "Police Mark World Press Freedom Day by Arresting and Beating Journalists," Azmat Abbas, "Enlightened Retreat," *Herald* (Karachi), May 2005.

⁸⁹ Reporters Without Borders Press Release, May 4, 2005.

⁹⁰ "Daily Press Briefing," U.S. Department of State Washington File, June 15, 2005; "Pakistan President Says He Imposed Travel Ban on Well-Known Rape Victim," Associated Press, June 17, 2005; "With Friends Like This ..." (editorial), *New York Times*, June 15, 2005; Aamer Ahmed Khan, "Pakistan's Gang Rape PR Disaster," BBC News, June 17, 2005; Najam Sethi, "Mukhtar Mai's 'Strength and Resilience Not For Export,'" *Friday Times* (Lahore), June 17, 2005.

⁹¹ "Outrage Over Musharraf Rape Remarks," BBC News, Sep. 16, 2005

⁹² International Foundation for Election Systems, "National Public Opinion Survey Pakistan 2004," available at [<http://www.plsc.org.pk/survey/index.htm>]. Still, Americans are not the

Frontier Province passed a Shariat bill in the provincial assembly, and the government of Baluchistan later established an Islamist legal council. In July 2005, the NWFP assembly passed a “Hasba” (accountability) bill that many fear will create a parallel Islamic legal body and be harmful to human rights. These efforts may seek to replicate in Pakistan the harsh enforcement of Islamic law seen in Afghanistan under the Taliban. Such developments alarm Pakistan’s moderates and likely elicited President Musharraf’s August 2003 vow to “finish off religious extremism” (a vow repeated in July 2005).⁹³ In August 2005, following a request from Musharraf that it reject the “Hasba” provisions, the Pakistan Supreme Court ruled that the controversial bill contained several unconstitutional clauses and blocked its implementation.

Pakistan’s Islamists routinely denounce Pakistani military operations in western tribal areas, resist government attempts to reform religious schools that teach militancy, and harshly criticize Islamabad’s cooperation with the U.S. government. One senior MMA leader went so far as to suggest that Western governments may have “engineered” the 7/7 London bombings.⁹⁴ Most analysts contend that two December 2003 attempts to assassinate President Musharraf were carried out by Islamic militants angered by Pakistan’s post-September 2001 policy shift. Yet Islamists’ political influence in Pakistan’s two western provinces is viewed by many as contingent upon the MMA’s continued basic acceptance of the current political system. This leads some to a conclusion that the Islamists — and Fazlur Rehman’s JUI-F, in particular — will not push against the Musharraf regime so far as to lose their own standing. By emitting a consistent message with little regard for the potential to offend Pakistani government or foreign officials, the Islamists’ issues resonate with the conservative, anti-Western sentiments of many Pakistanis. MMA power at the polling booth, however, continues to be limited.⁹⁵

Anti-American sentiment among Pakistani citizens is not limited to Islamic groups: A July 2005 Pew Center opinion poll found 51% of Pakistanis expressing confidence in Al Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden to “do the right thing in world affairs.” An earlier Pew survey found only 6% of Pakistanis believing the United States was sincere in its efforts to combat terrorism; about half viewed the United States as seeking to “dominate the world.” The Pakistani army, which was

⁹² (...continued)

only ones concerned about religious *militancy*: a July 2005 opinion survey saw 52% of Pakistanis polled say Islamic extremism was a threat to their country (Pew Research Center, “Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics,” July 14, 2005).

⁹³ “Pakistani Legislators Approve Islamic Law for Province,” *New York Times*, June 3, 2003; “Baluchistan Islamization Council Set Up,” *Daily Times* (Lahore) July 14, 2003; Najam Sethi, “Finish Off Religious Extremism: Musharraf,” *Daily Times* (Lahore), Aug. 5, 2003; “President’s Address to the Nation,” Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 21, 2005.

⁹⁴ Sadaqat Jan, “Radical Pakistani Lawmaker Says London Attacks May Have Been ‘Engineered’ by West,” Associated Press, July 8, 2005.

⁹⁵ Shafqat Mahmood, “The Mullahs Are Coming,” *News* (Karachi), Mar. 25, 2005; Ashraf Khan, “Voters Reverse Islamists’ Rise in Pakistani Politics,” *Christian Science Monitor*, Sep. 6, 2005.

significantly radicalized by Gen. Zia's policies in the 1980s, continues to be home to Muslim hardliners at the middle and lower ranks. In 2004 testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, one senior expert opined that "Pakistan is probably the most anti-American country in the world right now, ranging from the radical Islamists on one side to the liberals and Westernized elites on the other side." Support for this claim came from a June 2005 opinion poll which found 23% of Pakistanis expressing a favorable view of the United States, the lowest percentage for any country surveyed.⁹⁶

The leadership of the MMA's two main constituents — the Jamaat-i-Islami's (JI) Qazi Hussein Ahmed and the Jamiat-Ulema-Islami (JUI)-Fazlur's Maulana Fazlur Rehman — are notable for their sometimes virulent anti-American rhetoric; they have at times called for "jihad" against what they view as the existential threat to Pakistani sovereignty that alliance with Washington entails.⁹⁷ In addition to decrying and seeking to end President Musharraf's cooperation with the United States, many clerics also are viewed as opposing the U.S.-supported Kabul government. Despite their sometimes grating rhetoric, Pakistan's Islamists have benefitted greatly from Musharraf's undermining of the country's mainstream parties, and today the MMA can be considered a fairly cohesive political force that continues to present a serious challenge to Musharraf's policies of moderation.⁹⁸ Musharraf repeatedly has called on Pakistan's Muslim clerics to assist in fighting extremism and improving Pakistan's image as a moderate and progressive state.⁹⁹

Legislation and Issues for Congress

U.S. Aid and Aid Restrictions

Pakistan is among the world's top recipients of U.S. assistance, with more than \$2.6 billion in U.S. aid allocated for FY2002-FY2005, including about \$1.1 billion for security-related programs. In June 2003, President Bush hosted President Musharraf at Camp David, Maryland, where he pledged to work with Congress on establishing a five-year, \$3 billion aid package for Pakistan to cover FY2005-FY2009. General Musharraf's extra-constitutional seizure of power in October 1999

⁹⁶ Pew Research Center, "Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics," July 14, 2005, and "A Year After Iraq War," Mar. 16, 2004; John Lancaster, "Pakistan Struggles to Put Army on Moderate Course," *Washington Post*, Apr. 4, 2004; Statement of Stephen P. Cohen Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Jan. 28, 2004; Pew Research Center, "U.S. Image Up Slightly, But Still Negative," June 23, 2005.

⁹⁷ See "US Trying to Destabilize Pakistan, Iran: MMA," *Dawn* (Karachi), Nov. 4, 2003; "MMA Says Check on Seminaries to be Resisted," *Dawn* (Karachi), Nov. 11, 2003. JUI leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman reportedly said he considers Americans to be "criminals" and the Taliban "innocent" ("MMA Opposes Pak-US Military Drive," *News* (Karachi), June 24, 2003).

⁹⁸ See Vali Nasr, "Military Rule, Islamism, and Democracy in Pakistan," *Middle East Journal* 58, no. 2, Spring 2004.

⁹⁹ Rana Qaisar, "Clerics Asked to Help Fight Terror," *Daily Times* (Lahore), Feb. 18, 2004.

triggered penalties under Section 508 of the annual foreign assistance appropriations act, which bans non-humanitarian U.S. assistance “to any country whose duly elected head of government is deposed by military coup or decree.”¹⁰⁰ In October 2001 (P.L. 107-57), Congress waived coup-related aid restrictions for FY2002 and granted the President waiver authority for FY2003. President Bush exercised this in March 2003. A November 2003 emergency supplemental appropriations bill (P.L. 108-106) included a provision extending the President’s waiver authority through FY2004; this was exercised in March 2004. In December 2004, Congress extended the President’s waiver authority through FY2006 with the passage the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-458).¹⁰¹ Pending legislation in the 109th Congress (the Targeting Terrorists More Effectively Act of 2005, S. 12) includes Pakistan-specific language regarding “a number of critical issues that threaten to disrupt” U.S.-Pakistan relations. Government institutions, democracy, and rule of law are among these.

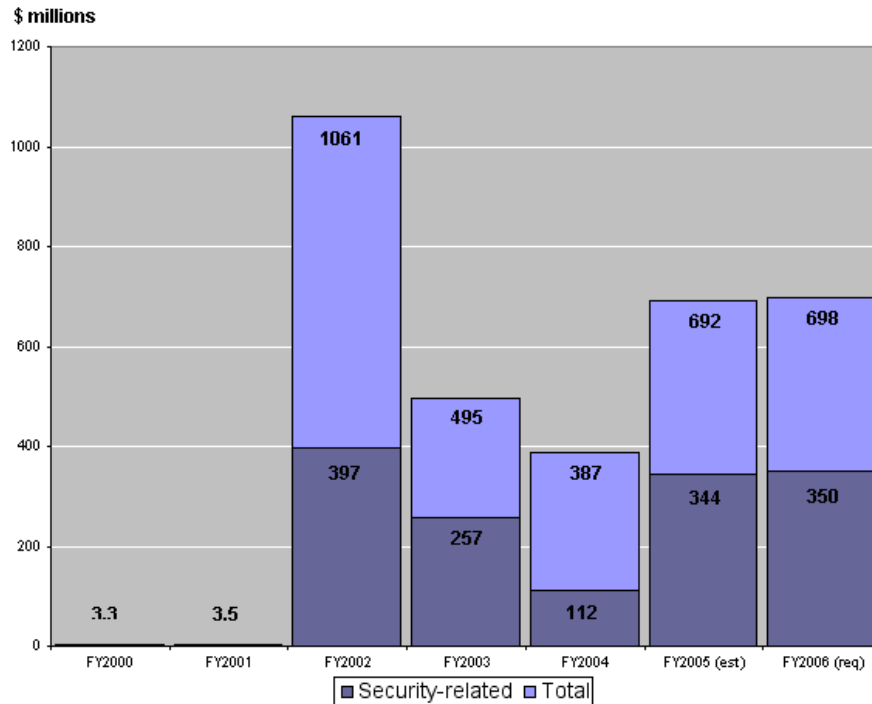
Since August 2003, Pakistan and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) have been cooperating on a five-year grant program to support more participatory, representative, and accountable democracy in Pakistan. Six “good governance” projects have been funded with more than \$32 million to date; the total over five years is expected to roughly double that amount. Three programs — Strengthening National and Provincial Legislative Governance in Pakistan, Support Democratic Local Government and Decentralization, and Improve Justice Sector/Legal Framework — account for the great majority of budgeted funds. According to USAID, the projects aim to support Pakistan’s progress toward more democratic, responsive, and transparent governance by helping to strengthen legislative bodies, political parties, and civil society.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Assistance may be resumed to such government if the President determines and certifies to the Committees on Appropriations that subsequent to the termination of assistance a democratically elected government has taken office.

¹⁰¹ Legislation in the 108th Congress included H.R. 1403, which sought to remove the President’s waiver authority. This bill did not see floor action. In 2002, some Members of the 107th Congress had suggested a reimposition of restrictions on aid to Pakistan in light of what were perceived to be continuing anti-democratic practices by the Musharraf government. A bill on such sanctions (H.R. 5150) saw no floor action. See also CRS Report RS20995, *India and Pakistan: U.S. Economic Sanctions*, by Dianne Rennack.

¹⁰² USAID estimates a FY2006 expenditure of \$15.6 million for governance-related projects. See [<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2006/ane/pk.html>].

Figure 1. U.S. Assistance to Pakistan, FY2001-FY2005 and 2006 Administration Request



Sources: U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development.

Notes: FY2005 amounts are estimates; FY2006 amounts are requested. FY2005 amounts include Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2005 (P.L. 109-13) allocations of \$150 million in Foreign Military Financing and \$4 million in additional counternarcotics funding for Pakistan.

Succession Issues

An acute concern of many U.S. policymakers is the issue of political succession in Pakistan, especially as it relates to potential domestic upheaval and control of that country's nuclear arsenal.¹⁰³ The constitutionally designated successor to the President is the Chairman of the Senate, currently PML-Q member and Musharraf

¹⁰³ David Sanger and Thom Shanker, "A Nuclear Headache," *New York Times*, Dec. 30, 2003. The physical security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons materials and technologies has become a vital issue in the wake of September 2001 and appeared vulnerable after the public exposure of Abdul Qadeer Khan's transcontinental proliferation network. Al Qaeda members reportedly have met with Pakistani nuclear scientists (Kamran Khan and Molly Moore, "2 Nuclear Experts Briefed Bin Laden, Pakistanis Say," *Washington Post*, December 12, 2001). See also CRS Report RL31589, *Nuclear Threat Reduction Measures for India and Pakistan*, by Sharon Squassoni; CRS Report RL32745, *Pakistan's Nuclear Proliferation Activities and the Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission: U.S. Policy Constraints and Options*, by Richard Cronin, Coordinator; and Rajesh Basrur and Hasan Askari-Rizvi, "Nuclear Terrorism and South Asia," Cooperative Monitoring Center Occasional Paper 25, Sandia National Laboratories, Feb. 2003.

loyalist Muhammadmian Soomro, an international banker from a well-known Sindhi family. It is the President's prerogative to appoint Army Chiefs. The consensus view among analysts has the Pakistani military maintaining its substantive administration of the country in the event of President Musharraf's premature removal. The nature of such a potential removal likely would influence the scope and intensity of military governance. For example, if Musharraf were removed through violent means, it is quite possible that the army would declare martial law and rule directly for a period. In any case, it is widely assumed that the hierarchical solidarity and historic professionalism of Pakistan's military would result in its continued effectiveness as a stabilizing force, at least in the short- and perhaps middle-term. Despite the apparent sturdiness of the military's command structure, there remains widespread pessimism about the ability of political institutions built by Musharraf to survive his sudden removal, and so doubts remain about the viability of political succession mechanisms. Moreover, it is not clear that Musharraf's successor would carry on his strongly pro-U.S. policies: in March 2005, Defense Intelligence Director Jacoby told a Senate Armed Services Committee panel, "If Musharraf were assassinated or otherwise replaced, Pakistan's leader would be less pro-U.S."¹⁰⁴

After his September 2001 policy shift, Musharraf moved to purge pro-Taliban Islamists from the higher ranks of the military. Vice-Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen. Mohammed Yusuf, a moderate, was seen as the most likely successor to the position of COAS, although some observers identified the Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff Committee, Gen. Mohammad Aziz, as a contender. While considered fully loyal to the army, of Pakistan's 30 highest-ranking officers, Gen. Aziz may have been the only remaining officer with meaningful links to Islamist groups.¹⁰⁵ Both Gen. Yusuf and Gen. Aziz retired in October 2004. President Musharraf named two close allies to replace them: Lt. Gen. Ahsan Salim Hayat, the Karachi Corps Commander, is the new Vice-COAS and the senior-most army officer after Musharraf; ISI chief Lt. Gen. Ehsan ul-Haq, a moderate who oversaw the removal of pro-Taliban officers from Pakistan's intelligence service after September 2001, was appointed Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff Committee. Gen. Hayat narrowly escaped assassination in a bloody June 2004 attack on his motorcade, an event that appeared to confirm his status as an enemy of Islamic extremists. The newly promoted four-star general is believed to be one of Musharraf's closest allies in the military and his most likely successor as Army Chief.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Najam Sethi, "First or Second Class?" *Friday Times* (Lahore), Oct. 15, 2004; Hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee on "Threats to U.S. National Security," FDCH Testimony, Mar. 17, 2005.

¹⁰⁵ B. Raman, "After Musharraf, What?" *Outlook India* (Delhi), Dec. 25, 2003.

¹⁰⁶ "Pakistan's Musharraf Names Aides to Top Army Slots," Reuters, Oct. 2, 2004.; Zahid Hussain, "Musharraf Keeps Army Post in Military Shake-Up," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 4, 2004; B. Raman, "How the Indians are Viewing the Latest Pakistan Army Reshuffle," *South Asia Tribune*, Oct. 5, 2004. A useful hypothetical succession scenario is in "Not By Prayer Alone," *Friday Times* (Lahore), Jan. 7, 2005.

Outlook and Policy Options

Outlook. There continues to be few signs that the government of President Musharraf and its supporters in parliament and the military will move to relinquish power before scheduled 2007 general elections. A continuing lack of unity among opposition groups remains a serious constraint on their ability to pressure the Musharraf-led government. Beyond obvious differences over the role religion should play in Pakistan's governance, the MMA and the ARD find themselves with opposing views on such sensitive issues as proposed amendments to the controversial blasphemy law and Hudood Ordinances (related to women's rights), both of which are criticized as unjust and oppressive by human rights groups, but which are considered sacrosanct by the Islamists. Some analysts identify less obvious factors behind opposition disunity, including an active campaign of "divide-and-rule" by the military, and previous hints of an accommodation between Musharraf and the ARD have not panned out. There are, however, signs that a below-board accommodation between the Pakistani military and the Islamist parties is disintegrating.¹⁰⁷

Pakistan's unstable and even deteriorating domestic security circumstances — seen in still tense relations with Pashtun tribesmen in border regions near Afghanistan, and continuing sectarian violence and Islamic militancy in urban centers — can have the effect of improving the army's standing among some sectors of the Pakistani public. One U.S. scholar suggests that criticism of Pakistan's apparently slow movement toward democracy is arbitrary and ignores the potential cost to U.S. policy interests that faster movement might entail. Such cost could include a more constrained Pakistani military and political leaders in Islamabad whose greater responsiveness to public opinion might mean reduced cooperation with the United States.¹⁰⁸ However, and as noted above, this view is disputed by numerous observers who insist that the strengthening of Pakistan's democratic institutions and civil society is itself a fundamental requirement for the creation of a stable and prosperous Pakistani state.¹⁰⁹

Pakistan has come a long way since the 1990s, when "potential failed state" was not an unusual label for this important country. During President Musharraf's tenure, Pakistan's macroeconomic indicators are greatly improved and relations with India have warmed. The country's international standing is at least partially rehabilitated, especially with the government's status as a key member of the international anti-terrorism coalition. Even some of Musharraf's most vocal critics have acknowledged

¹⁰⁷ M.B. Naqvi, "Why the Opposition Stays Divided," *News* (Karachi), Jan. 12, 2005; "No Dialogue With Musharraf, Says Fahim," *Daily Times* (Lahore), Sep. 14, 2005; Ahmed Rashid, "Musharraf's Double Game Unravels," *International Herald Tribune*, Aug. 10, 2005.

¹⁰⁸ Robert Wirsing, "Pakistan's Transformation: Why It Will Not (and Need Not) Happen," *Asia-Pacific Security Studies* 4, no. 2, Jan. 2005.

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, Ashley Tellis, "U.S. Strategy: Assisting Pakistan's Transformation," *Washington Quarterly* 28,1, Winter 2004-05; Council on Foreign Relations and the Asia Society, *New Priorities for South Asia: U.S. Policy Toward India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan*, 2003.

the concrete benefits of his leadership.¹¹⁰ Yet, despite the potentially brightened prospects for future civilian governance in Pakistan, military rule substantively continues, and most analysts foresee little or no power being transferred to the country's civilian political leaders in the near- and middle-term.

When, in May 2005, Musharraf declared his intention to seek to remain in office beyond 2007, many analysts saw him following a nondemocratic path similar to that taken by previous Pakistani military rulers. In the same month, a senior Pakistani journalist and editor declared on behalf of his staff, "We are tired of pious lectures on democracy and constitutionalism" from officials who pursue neither with sincerity. In addition, fewer and fewer independent onlookers find Musharraf's repeated pledges to defeat Pakistani religious extremism as anything more than "rounding up the usual suspects."¹¹¹ Pakistan's foreign and defense ministers have issued separate assurances that President Musharraf will contest 2007 elections as a civilian, but Musharraf himself has not ruled out remaining in uniform beyond 2007.¹¹² So long as the military continues to exert preeminent control over Pakistan's governance — and Islamist forces continue to succeed in blocking efforts to alter controversial civil laws and reform religious schools — there will be doubt cast on Musharraf's claims to be pursuing a policy of "enlightened moderation."

Policy Options. U.S. policy options regarding Pakistan's governance system and civil society can be seen to fall into four broad categories: status quo, increased pressure, increased incentives, and adjusting emphases of current aid programs. Some of the policies could be employed in tandem.

- **Status quo:** At present, the United States provides large-scale assistance to Pakistan under annual waivers of coup-related sanctions granted by Congress and exercised by the President. The Bush Administration has not issued strong public criticisms of Pakistan's apparently halting process of democratization while still encouraging movement toward establishment of full democracy. No conditions have been placed on U.S. aid to Pakistan. A continuation of this policy would seek to prod Pakistan's power brokers in the military to create circumstances in which fully free and fair national and provincial elections could take place in 2007, at which point the U.S. President might be in a position to determine that Pakistani democracy had been restored and Section 508 aid restrictions could permanently be removed. Continued marginalization of Pakistan's moderate opposition parties and controversy over reported

¹¹⁰ Najam Sethi, "First or Second Class?" *Friday Times* (Lahore), Oct. 15, 2004.

¹¹¹ "Musharraf's Push for Another Term a Blow to Democracy: Analysts," Agence France Presse, May 18, 2005; Najam Sethi, "We Are Tired ...," *Friday Times* (Lahore), May 20, 2005; Stephen Cohen, "Musharraf's Great Failure," *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), July 27, 2005.

¹¹² "Pakistan Foreign Minister Says President to Contest Elections as Civilian," BBC Monitoring South Asia, June 4, 2005; "Musharraf Will Shed Uniform in 2007: Rao," *Daily Times* (Lahore), June 5, 2005; Glenn Kessler and Dafna Linzer, "Musharraf: No Challenge From Bush on Reversal," *Washington Post*, Sep. 13, 2005.

irregularities in August 2005 municipal polls fuel skepticism that status quo policies are effective.

- **Increased Pressure:** The United States has several options that would seek to increase pressure on the Pakistan government so as to spur more full and rapid movement on democratization in Pakistan. These include ending or reducing U.S. aid and/or placing conditions on continued U.S. aid, for instance by setting democracy-related benchmarks. Ending or reducing assistance to a Major Non-NATO Ally at a time when Pakistan plays a key role in U.S.-led anti-terrorism efforts is likely to be counterproductive in the context of broader U.S. interests, some say, and sanctions in the recent past resulted in greatly reduced U.S. influence in Islamabad and little success in attaining U.S. objectives. There are those who argue, however, that without conditionality on U.S. aid, the Pakistani military will have little motivation to fully remove itself from Pakistan's governance.
- **Increased Incentives:** Another option for U.S. policy would involve offering *additional* aid to Pakistan linked to that country's progress with its domestic reform agenda (and perhaps also with its cooperation in counterterrorism and nonproliferation). Such incentives could be for the benefit of the country generally or for the military in particular (many saw the March 2005 decision by President Bush to resume F-16 sales to Pakistan as a "reward" for the Musharraf government's cooperation on counterterrorism). For example, the future sale of major U.S. weapons platforms to Pakistan could be offered as a "bonus" that would follow successful implementation of full democracy in Islamabad or, short of that, for certain substantive actions on the path to that goal (e.g., the return to Pakistan of exiled opposition figures). This form of positive reinforcement could be employed in tandem with a policy of negative conditionality noted above.
- **Adjusting Emphases of Current Aid Programs:** President Bush's 2005-2009 aid plan for Pakistan calls for a 50-50 split of funds for economics and funds for military financing. A policy of continuing current aid allocations while emphasizing economic aid over military aid — a policy recommended by a Council on Foreign Relations and the Asia Society taskforce¹¹³ — could serve to more effectively bolster Pakistan's social and economic development, and could quicken the pace of democratization and education reform there. Skeptics of this approach emphasize that ongoing security threats, especially as related to instability in neighboring Afghanistan, require ensuring that Pakistan's military feels secure and well-equipped.

¹¹³ Council on Foreign Relations and the Asia Society, *New Priorities for South Asia: U.S. Policy Toward India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan*, 2003.

Given Pakistan’s strategic setting, large Muslim population, experience with religious extremism, weapons proliferation activities, and historical involvement in regional conflict, the level of stability and quality of governance there are likely to remain of keen interest to most U.S. policymakers.

Figure 2. Map of Pakistan



Source: Map Resources. Adapted by CRS. (M.Chin 03/03)