



CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT
for International Peace

19

October 2002

Policy Brief

S U M M A R Y

Pakistan has become a strategic U.S. ally in the war against al Qaeda. For now, Washington's support of General Pervez Musharraf's military regime is untempered by any insistence on the restoration of democracy. But military rule is likely to increase hostility between Pakistan and India and undercut efforts to root out Islamic extremists, who have been the armed forces' political allies in the past.

Despite intervals of strained relations, the United States and Pakistan were allies for most of the Cold War. Like past periods of engagement, the present spell of close relations is likely to sour into disillusion unless the United States strongly encourages Pakistan to return to democracy. A democratic regime, however flawed, is more likely to provide long-term stability to Pakistan. Specifically, democratic rule would help contain Islamic militancy and would probably lead to improved India-Pakistan relations. ■

America's New Alliance with Pakistan: Avoiding the Traps of the Past

Husain Haqqani

Visiting Scholar, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Cooperation in the war against al Qaeda and the Taliban has revived Pakistan's alliance with the United States. For most of the Cold War the two nations were close military allies, but those ties came undone in bitterness and disagreement in the 1990s. Pakistan had expected a long-term U.S. commitment to its security as a payoff for its many years of allegiance, but the United States wanted Pakistan to end its pursuit of nuclear weapons and mend fences with India. These divergent expectations kept the two erstwhile allies apart until, in the wake of 9/11, Pakistan's military ruler, General Pervez Musharraf, agreed to support the United States' war on terror. Washington is hoping that Musharraf will transform Pakistan into a pro-U.S. outpost in Southwest Asia. But there is trouble ahead.

Pakistan is strategically important to the United States, but Pakistan's strategic concerns are not identical to America's. Its worldview is colored by the 1947 division of British India—into Muslim-majority and Hindu-majority areas—from which Pakistan and India emerged as independent states. Over the years, Pakistan's

leaders have used Islam and distrust of India as the glue to bind the country's various ethnic and linguistic groups. The result has been three wars with India in fifty-five years and Pakistan's emergence as a center of Islamic radicalism.

To compete with India, Pakistan maintains a standing army of more than half a million troops; the huge expenditures required to support this force are made at the expense of badly needed social and economic development. While a great majority of its 144 million people live in abject poverty, Pakistan has diverted scarce resources toward building and maintaining nuclear weapons; the government tested a nuclear device in 1998. Its missile program, aimed at ensuring military advantage against India, has also been a cause of concern to the United States.

The competition with India has made Pakistan's military stronger than any other national institution, to the point where it is independent of civilian control. The armed forces have ruled directly for more than half the country's post-independence existence and exert tremendous influence over all spheres of national policy. They oppose normalization



Husain Haqqani, a leading journalist, diplomat, and former advisor to Pakistan prime ministers, is a visiting scholar in Carnegie's Russian and Eurasian Program. He is also a syndicated columnist for *Indian Express* and the *Nation* of Pakistan, and serves as chairman of Communications Research Strategies, a Pakistani consulting company.

Mr. Haqqani's journalism career includes serving as Pakistan and Afghanistan correspondent for the *Far Eastern Economic Review*. He regularly contributes to numerous international publications, including the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, the *International Herald Tribune*, and *Gulf News*, and provides commentary for the BBC, CNN, NBC, and ABC on Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Islamic politics and extremism.

Mr. Haqqani also has a distinguished career in government. He served as an advisor to Pakistani prime ministers Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, Nawaz Sharif, and Benazir Bhutto. From 1992 to 1993 he was Pakistan's ambassador to Sri Lanka.

of relations with India and look upon ties with the United States mainly as a means of strengthening Pakistan's military capabilities.

Before 9/11, U.S. policy toward Pakistan had begun to recognize the military's pervasive influence as a cause of the country's problems. Consequently, the United States began to emphasize nonproliferation concerns as well as the need for an India-Pakistan dialogue. The United States also demanded restoration of democracy following the 1999 coup that brought Musharraf to power. But the war against terror has now become the predominant consideration in United States-Pakistan relations. In part to ensure its large share of national expenditures, the Pakistani military refuses to cede power and authority to civilians. The armed forces rationalize their dominant role by depicting India as an eternal threat to Pakistan's very existence. Given the military's power and its disposition to intervene in politics, civilian leaders cannot realistically pursue accommodation with India or reassign national resources to development. India's own obsessively anti-Pakistan (or, in the context of Indian domestic politics, anti-Muslim) interest groups appear to validate the arguments of the more aggressive elements in the Pakistani military establishment, and thus fuel the unending conflict.

Democracy: The Key to Real Change

Most Pakistanis have the impression that the United States prefers military rule to democracy in Pakistan. This view is rooted in the history of the two countries' relationship. During the 1960s, the United States maintained military bases and intelligence listening posts in Pakistan directed at the Soviet Union. Pakistan was the intermediary in initial U.S. contacts with the People's Republic of China; Henry Kissinger began his secret 1970 trip to Beijing in Islamabad. During the 1990s, Pakistan was the staging ground for the covert war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Pakistan's leaders through all these phases were military men brought to power by coups d'état. Washington's forthright backing of General Musharraf since 9/11 has reinforced the traditional popular

belief that the United States prefers a military dictator who will do its bidding.

Yet no matter how initially promising they have seemed, military dictators have always ended up multiplying Pakistan's problems instead of solving them. Repression at home and confrontation with India have characterized each of Pakistan's past military regimes. The focus on austerity dictated by heavy military spending (which is intensified by conditions attached to assistance by donors of international aid) has inflicted economic hardship on the poor. The U.S. association with these military regimes has led to diminished popular sentiment in support of the United States.

General Musharraf's regime seems firmly in control for now, and he has so far managed to contain his critics. But the unrepresentative character of his government leaves it vulnerable to criticism in a country that has yearned for democracy since independence.

Musharraf is taking advantage of international backing resulting from his support for the war against terror to sidestep demands to restore democracy. He tried to secure his position ahead of parliamentary elections, scheduled for October 10, through a one-sided referendum in April that was generally perceived as fraudulent and farcical. He now proposes to rectify what he sees as the weaknesses of past civilian administrations through amendments to the constitution that would make him an all-powerful president standing in judgment of elected leaders' performance. In addition, a national security council comprising military and civilian leaders would ensure adherence to the military's policy-making guidelines. Pakistan's politicians, professional associations, and news media have rejected Musharraf's scheme as a plan to perpetuate military rule. Religious political groups opposed to cooperation with the United States also oppose the rewriting of the constitution by decree.

Musharraf has made it clear that the new parliament will be subservient to him and the military. He hopes to change the label on his military regime, redefining it as a democracy without altering its substance. Having a military dictator in charge may be good for the current phase of the anti-terror war in Afghanistan,

though even that is debatable. Regardless, such a situation does not transform Pakistan into the stable ally the United States is seeking.

In describing the unfortunate character of Pakistan's current unrepresentative government, it is important to acknowledge that Pakistani democrats have a mixed track record. Rampant malfeasance and incessant partisan quarrels have characterized civilian rule. The politicians have consistently tried to rewrite the laws and the constitution instead of working within the legal system already in place. Several civilian prime ministers in recent decades have been removed in palace coups amid accusations of widespread corruption and incompetence (indeed, for vari-

done Musharraf's disregard for democracy, the United States should be impressing upon him the destabilizing effect civil-military divisions are having on Pakistan.

Two years ago, the U.S. president told the Pakistani people, "Clearly the absence of democracy makes it harder, not easier, for people to move ahead. The answer to flawed democracy is not to end democracy but to improve it." Instead of reversing that position, the current administration should make the return of democracy in Pakistan one of its priorities. The United States lost some ground by failing to object strongly when Musharraf decreed twenty-nine amendments to Pakistan's

Musharraf hopes to change the label on his military regime, redefining it as a democracy without altering its substance.

ous reasons no elected leader in the country's history has completed a full term in office). Yet democracy's chronic problems are rooted in the pervasive role of the armed forces in decision making. The military has encouraged political instability by taking sides in political disputes, at times funding campaigns and fixing elections. Pakistan's intelligence services play a behind-the-scenes role even when civilians are visibly in charge.

The war against terrorism and the deplorable record of Pakistan's civilian governments have made it easy for the United States to refrain from criticizing Musharraf publicly. But any impression that the United States supports a military-controlled polity will turn Pakistan's civilian leaders against Washington. They may be tempted to cooperate with Musharraf's Islamic critics in street protests that would probably be driven by anti-Americanism. Although the army has the ability to control street demonstrations, such protests could be used by Islamists within the military to dilute Musharraf's commitment to the United States. Instead of appearing to con-

stitution. But it is still not too late for an effort to ensure that Musharraf does not perpetuate military rule.

The centerpiece of this effort should be clear, consistent, and firm articulation by President Bush and his top aides that a return to democracy in Pakistan is critical to the long-term health of the new partnership between that country and the United States. They should make it clear that the United States is fully committed to helping Pakistan achieve that goal. U.S. officials may note that they recognize the past problems with democratic rule in Pakistan but should stress that it is nevertheless crucial for President Musharraf to steer the country toward democracy, not just through words but concrete actions. Then, at every critical juncture, such as the October parliamentary elections and the inaugural meeting of the new parliament scheduled for early next year, the U.S. government must stick to its principles and be firmly critical of any missteps.

It is hard to overestimate the influence that the United States has in Pakistan today. That influence means that unequivocal statements

from the U.S. government will have real impact on the Pakistani political elite and the military. The United States can add tangible incentives to the mix. For example, the Bush administration could link arms transactions, such as the recent sale of Hercules C-130 transport aircraft to the Pakistani army, to progress on a democratic transition. The administration could suspend or delay disbursements for Pakistan's law enforcement machinery under the new U.S. aid package until there are clear signs that the Pakistani intelligence services are reducing their

efforts to incorporate democracy-building initiatives into the new aid program the U.S. government is developing for Pakistan. The needs in this domain are enormous. Depending on whether the right conditions of political will and opportunity are present, U.S. support could be directed to strengthening political parties and the independent news media, bolstering the integrity and self-confidence of the new parliament, fostering judicial independence, and other activities likely to fortify the institutions of democracy. Pakistan's great need for financial

In describing the unfortunate character of Pakistan's current unrepresentative government, it is important to acknowledge that Pakistani democrats have a mixed track record.

interference with the functioning of political parties, the news media, or the judiciary.

The October parliamentary elections are a critical juncture both for the prospects of democratic progress in Pakistan and for U.S. policy. The U.S. government should not hesitate to speak out openly and bluntly about any shortcomings in these elections, including the overall environment in which they are held. Efforts by President Musharraf to deny mainstream political parties and leaders the right to contest the elections should not be condoned. If they are, Pakistan will end up with another civilian government that simply acts as a front for military decision makers.

The United States should also not allow Musharraf to treat the new parliament as a rubber stamp for his own decisions. A conflict is likely if Musharraf denies the new legislature the right to review his arbitrary amendments to the constitution. U.S. support at that stage should be strongly on the side of Pakistan's elected parliament.

This pro-democratic diplomatic line by the United States should be complemented by seri-

ous assistance is likely to outweigh whatever reservations Musharraf might have about such programs, giving the United States strong leverage in identifying priority areas for its aid efforts.

Preoccupation with India

Restoration of democracy is Pakistan's most critical domestic issue, but it probably cannot be attained without progress in relations with India. The military has often justified its intervention in domestic politics on grounds of securing the country internally in view of the confrontation with its giant neighbor. The United States therefore has a clear stake in how Pakistani government policy—both foreign and domestic—evolves. In particular, two pillars of Pakistan's security strategy that disturb the United States—support for Islamic militants in Kashmir and the possible use of nuclear weapons—are both rooted in Pakistan's problematic relationship with India.

Pakistani governments have looked upon Islamic militants as an instrument of regional influence for almost three decades. The policy of backing Islamic militants was encouraged

and funded by the United States during the anti-Soviet resistance in Afghanistan. After the Soviet withdrawal, the United States changed its policy but Pakistan did not.

Musharraf's military regime abandoned the Taliban immediately after the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, and subsequently allowed U.S. forces to use Pakistani air bases for operations inside Afghanistan. Pakistani intelligence services provided, and continue to provide, valuable information to the United States in its ongoing hunt for Taliban and al Qaeda members. The Pakistani military is now working with U.S. law enforcement officials in tracking down terrorists in the lawless tribal areas bordering Afghanistan. But Pakistan still harbors militants who target India.

The sorest point in the legacy of mistrust between India and Pakistan may be the dispute over control of Kashmir, a region in the Himalayas bordering both India and Pakistan. The majority of Kashmir's population is Muslim. According to the logic of British India's partition between Muslim-majority Pakistan and Hindu-majority India, Kashmir would have been part of Pakistan. But at the time of independence, the Hindu prince who was ruling Kashmir announced its accession to India. A United Nations Security Council resolution after the 1948 India-Pakistan war called for withdrawal of all troops from Kashmir and supported a plebiscite to determine the wishes of Kashmir's people. India says that the UN resolution is outdated and has sought to assimilate the part of Kashmir it controls into the Indian Union.

Kashmir is the center of a persistent insurrection that started after India rigged state elections there in 1989. Initially, the insurgency was indigenous and nationalist. Subsequently, it was taken over by Islamists backed by Pakistan.

Pakistan's nurturance of Islamic militants fighting Indian rule reflected a Pakistani strategy of transferring to Kashmir the tactics and assets that had been used to drive the Soviets from Afghanistan. It was a low-cost means of inflicting fiscal and military damage on India, which has had to deploy several divisions of its

army to maintain its control over parts of Kashmir. Pakistan's subsequently initiated support for the Taliban was also linked to the desire to maintain a training base in Afghanistan for Kashmiri militants, described by Pakistan as "freedom fighters."

The September 11 attacks fundamentally changed the context in which Pakistan's Kashmir policy operated. The U.S.-led international

Musharraf

General Pervez Musharraf is not an easy man to define. He rules by decree while professing to build a democracy. He supported the Taliban only to become famous for his role in its destruction. He seeks dialogue with India without hiding his belief that India is Pakistan's eternal enemy. He clings to power while claiming he came to it by accident. In a recent interview, he revealed that Richard Nixon and Napoleon are his leadership models.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif appointed Musharraf army chief in 1998, choosing him over two senior generals because he did not seem unduly ambitious. But within a year of his appointment, Musharraf had overthrown Sharif in a military coup. According to Musharraf, the military reluctantly took over because Sharif had tried to replace him as army chief while he was on his way back from a trip to Sri Lanka.

Musharraf promised reform and a swift return to democracy, which made him initially popular. Playing off Pakistan's tradition of scheming civilian politicians, he also cultivated an image as a plainspoken soldier. But that image has been blurred by a fraudulent referendum on his rule he conducted in April and by amendments to Pakistan's constitution he decreed in August to consolidate his power.

Musharraf rules with the help of a small circle of military friends. Not known for corruption, he maintains a spartan lifestyle. He has avoided a reputation for repression and has allowed a relatively free press. But he does not pause for legal niceties when he feels the need to get tough.

Musharraf demonstrated his willingness to take risks by abandoning support for Afghanistan's Taliban and taking on Pakistan's own Islamists. But his promises of reform remain unfulfilled. Some attribute this to incompetence, others to an instinct for survival that trumps whatever ideology he might possess. President Bush considers Musharraf an ally in the war against terrorism. But in Pakistan, Musharraf is now seen as just another military dictator who thinks all is well as long as he is in charge.

community would now actively reject violence against nonmilitary targets as a means of freedom fighting. Such violence was deemed “terrorism,” and the United States had proclaimed a policy of zero tolerance of terrorists. Hence, when Islamic militants attacked civilian targets in Indian-controlled territory in October and December 2001, India mobilized for major military retaliation, confident that the U.S. precedent would be applied. While the United States and other members of the international community now supported in principle India’s right to retaliate against terrorism, they were also afraid that any military conflict between India and Pakistan could become a nuclear war. The United States worked assiduously with Indian and Pakistani leaders to pull the two states back from the brink.

Islamic militancy has become a particularly disruptive issue in India–Pakistan relations in

armed. Challenging their power will require support from the mainstream of Pakistani opinion, which is not Islamist but feels excluded from political power because of Musharraf’s domestic policies. But Musharraf and the military do not want to root out the Islamists completely because of the militants’ utility in the unending conflict with India.

Pakistan should not expect U.S. support against India, but it does. The United States must make clear that its strategic need for Pakistani support against al Qaeda will not make it look the other way in case Pakistan renews support for Islamic militants in Kashmir.

History complicates this task of clarification. In the past, the United States inadvertently raised Pakistani expectations about U.S. sympathy toward Pakistan in its disputes with India, partly because U.S.–India relations were less than cordial during the Cold War. But dur-

Years of state patronage, including a phase of U.S. covert support, have left the Islamic militants well organized, well funded, and well armed.

recent years. Under intense Indian and U.S. pressure following a terror attack by extremist Muslims on India’s parliament in December, Musharraf initiated a series of moves aimed at limiting the influence of Islamic militants at home. But the new policy has been implemented too slowly and insufficiently from India’s point of view to have a positive impact on India–Pakistan relations. India considers Musharraf untrustworthy in view of his past support for Islamic militants and his belligerent statements about India. On the other hand, Musharraf’s decision to “abandon” them has been condemned by the Islamists, who are now threatening him personally in addition to carrying out attacks within Pakistan.

Years of state patronage, including a phase of U.S. covert support, have left the Islamic militants well organized, well funded, and well

ing Pakistan’s two wars with India (1965 and 1971), the United States did not help in the way the Pakistanis expected. The United States advised Islamabad against going to war on both occasions, wary of entanglement in India–Pakistan conflicts. Pakistan’s military leaders felt betrayed by the United States as a result. Years later, Pakistan’s role in the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan and the subsequent “abandoning” of both Pakistan and Afghanistan deepened the Pakistani perception of the United States as an unreliable ally.

With the end of the Cold War, American suspicions of a nonaligned India with close ties to the Soviet Union have dissipated. India’s economic reforms have moved the country away from its quasi-socialist practices, opening a huge market to U.S. businesses. Even though Pakistan is America’s wartime ally, it is India

that offers the prospect of long-term friendship. Instead of allowing this new relationship to become a disruptive factor in ties with Pakistan, the United States can put its influence to use with both South Asian nations to help with confidence-building measures.

The United States should also be willing to use whatever leverage it has with India, such as new U.S. military sales, to secure respect for human rights in Kashmir and an Indian willingness to engage in dialogue over the region's future. Once the process of dialogue has started, tensions will subside even if a final outcome takes years to achieve.

A Broader Agenda: Democracy and Development

During his first meeting with President Bush on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in September 2001, General Musharraf asked for concrete "gestures" of appreciation for Pakistan's support in the war against al Qaeda. Musharraf specifically sought to renegotiate the purchase of twenty-eight F-16 fighter jets ordered by Pakistan in the 1980s but held back by U.S. sanctions imposed in 1990 over Pakistan's nuclear program. The United States subsequently returned the money paid by Pakistan for the planes, but Musharraf wanted to reinstate the original sales agreement. He also sought revival of global interest in resolving the dispute over Kashmir. But the United States must be careful in choosing its gestures toward Pakistan. Diplomatic efforts over Kashmir are a good idea; aid that benefits only the Pakistani military is not. U.S. assistance should be clearly directed toward abetting Pakistan's transformation from a quasi-dictatorship dominated by the military and shadowed by militant Islamists into a self-sustaining democracy.

In addition to specifically pro-democratic measures, the United States should also commit itself to a broader agenda of support for Pakistan's socioeconomic development. Pakistan's impoverished and largely illiterate population needs schools and employment-generating vocational training institutes, not F-16s. The United States could help Pakistan

significantly in the near term by providing market access to Pakistani textile products, which are currently subject to quota restrictions emplaced at the behest of U.S. textile manufacturers. Cotton and cotton textiles account for 65 percent of Pakistan's exports. Improved market access would give a boost to the economy, including urban industrial workers and farmers. Pakistan's poor are reeling under the impact of economic restructuring mandated by the International Monetary Fund that has resulted in higher utility prices and greater unemployment. The number of people living below the poverty line has risen 10 percent in the last three years, to 40 percent of the population. The poor and the unemployed are potential recruits for terrorist organizations.

To deny terrorists this recruitment pool, a U.S. commitment to Pakistan's social and economic development is essential. The U.S. government seems to have an increasing appreciation of this need. In the past, Washington resorted to sanctions in an attempt to deter the development of nuclear weapons and to promote democracy. Forsaking these failed policies, Washington is now opting for inducements. Military sales have been resumed, and a generous package of economic assistance has been announced that would make Pakistan the fourth-largest recipient of U.S. aid. Pakistan's crushing foreign debt is being rescheduled. But much of this assistance has been earmarked for Pakistan's police and intelligence services instead of democracy promotion or social sector programs. This imbalance needs to be addressed.

Relations with Pakistan should not be viewed only in the context of the war against al Qaeda. Musharraf should not feel that he can get away with domestic repression as long as he hands over al Qaeda figures escaping from Afghanistan. While repaying Pakistan for its cooperation in the war against terrorism, the United States must not fail to press the policy changes that are needed to strengthen and stabilize a Pakistan governed by the rule of law and to wean it from seemingly permanent conflict with India. ■

The Carnegie Endowment normally does not take institutional positions on public policy issues; the views presented here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Endowment, its officers, staff, or trustees.

© 2002 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace



CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT
for International Peace

www.ceip.org

**Visit the new Carnegie
Endowment web site:
“A must for the web surfer
interested in global affairs.”**

—Dow Jones Business Directory

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to advancing cooperation between nations and promoting active international engagement by the United States. Founded in 1910, its work is nonpartisan and dedicated to achieving practical results. Its research is primarily grouped in three areas: the Global Policy Program, the China Program, and the Russian and Eurasian Program.

Related Resources from Carnegie Endowment

Visit www.ceip.org/pubs for these and other publications

SEPTEMBER 11, ONE YEAR LATER: A WORLD OF CHANGE, Jessica T. Mathews. Carnegie Policy Brief no. 18, special edition, September 2002.

ENHANCING NUCLEAR SECURITY IN THE COUNTER-TERRORISM STRUGGLE: INDIA AND PAKISTAN AS A NEW REGION FOR COOPERATION, Rose Gottemoeller, with Rebecca Longworth. Carnegie Endowment Working Paper no. 29, August 2002.

A NEW EQUATION: U.S. POLICY TOWARD INDIA AND PAKISTAN AFTER SEPTEMBER 11, Lee Feinstein, James Clad, Lewis A. Dunn, and David Albright. Carnegie Endowment Working Paper no. 27, May 2002.

DEADLY ARSENALS: TRACKING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION, Joseph Cirincione, with Jon B. Wolfsthal and Miriam Rajkumar. Carnegie Endowment, 2002.

DO RIGHT BY PAKISTAN, Husain Haqqani. *Asian Wall Street Journal*, September 4, 2002.

PERVEZ, THE FRIENDLY DICTATOR, George Perkovich. *Weekly Standard*, July 29, 2002.

AL-QAEDA'S NEW ENEMY, Husain Haqqani. *Financial Times*, July 7, 2002.

1779 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
CARNegie ENDOWMENT
for International Peace



www.ceip.org