

TERRORISM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SECURITY DYNAMICS OF PAKISTAN

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In the post - Cold War world, terrorism poses unique challenges to the liberal democratic state. It would not be incorrect to state that terrorism is an antithesis to democracy. The aim of terrorism is clear: to influence public opinion through symbolic violence, and to date there is no clear understanding of exactly what the "political formula" is that leads to terrorism.

In spite of the rising challenges of globalization on the one hand and internal fragmentation on the other, the contemporary nation - state, is still the most viable political entity, and nations without states are still struggling in their quest for statehood. However, with the end of bipolarity, feelings of irredentism, nationalism, religion and ethnicity stress the international system. Bruce Hoffman claims that these sentiments, not ideology, are fueling terrorism and forecasts that these forces "...long held in check or kept dormant by the cold war may erupt to produce even greater levels of non-state violence...."¹

By no means an issue specific to a single country or a region, terrorism has international implications and for a candid and honest analysis there is a need to trace the origin and genesis of this malaise. In our culture more often than not the delineation between a *Just* cause and a *Terrorist* activity has not been on clear-cut lines. But nonetheless there is no denying the fact that this menace, which has already become endemic to our society, requires concerted efforts to be countered and eradicated at all levels.

Until the beginning of the 1980s, this issue was not so dangerously intrinsic in Pakistan especially the aspect of religious intolerance and sectarian violence. In fact religion was by and large a personal issue, deeply ingrained in the national identity but demarcated from the daily functioning of the state. Many reasons such as the advent of Zia's Martial Law and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan correspondingly strengthened the clergy's hand, the

influx of arms and money from the US, Saudi Arabia and other countries sponsoring the jihad against the Soviet Occupation forces. Besides Indian state terrorism in Kashmir and elsewhere, the rise of transnational religious groups and most importantly Pakistan's own domestic situation were instrumental in making the country a hotbed of terrorist activities.

However, the issue of terrorism took on a global significance, in the wake of September 11th terrorist acts. Suddenly the world became sharply divided amongst those supporting the US in its unilaterally pronounced war against terrorism and those who did not. For Pakistan it presented both an opportunity to manage its domestic sectarian and terrorism problems and also to regain its lost diplomatic standing and reclaim its status of a trusted US ally. However, this placed the Pakistani administration in a precarious situation. At the home front, it had to face immense pressure from domestic forces, both religious and secular for its decision and secondly, the international support is also entirely conditional, balanced precariously. The fear of a sudden and swift withdrawal of support due to changes in US strategic priorities is causing deep concern in the country. In spite of the fact that the government has tried to manage the situation to its advantage, it is already facing extreme wrath from domestic forces for the negative fall out of this decision and much remains to be seen, what dividends lie in store for Islamabad.

This paper would attempt to address the following questions: First, to define what constitutes terrorism, the reasons behind its rise in Pakistan, its consequences, both internally as well as at external level. What steps were taken by the Pakistani establishment to tackle the rising menace of terrorism in the society? Was the Pakistani establishment's anti-terrorist posture in response to the US call for collective combat against terrorism or was it dominated by domestic concerns? What repercussions the Pakistani establishment has to face as a result of these policies? And lastly what more needs to be undertaken.

What is Terrorism?

Terrorism has proved increasingly elusive against attempts to formulate an agreed definition, mainly because it has constantly shifted and expanded its meaning and usage in a long chain of conflicts and violence. The adage that 'one man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter', reveals the wide range of variation in its interpretation. Simply stated, terror is 'extreme or intense fear'. It is a psychological state which combines the physical and mental effects of dread and insecurity. Terrorism thus implies a system or a concept in which terror is applied to cause fear, panic and/or coercive intimidation to exert direct or indirect pressure to achieve political objectives. Invariably the people are the main targets and the means employed are frequently violent though not necessarily extreme or excessive. It is a simpler explanation and may seem inadequate to capture the full magnitude of problems and new factors that are now associated with terrorism worldwide. But it provides a literal beginning by combining the intrinsic meaning with its purpose and application.

Walter Laqueur concluded that, 'terrorism constitutes the illegitimate use of force'.² While another writer, James M. Poland defined, 'terrorism as the premeditated, deliberate, systematic murder, mayhem and threatening of the innocent, to create fear and intimidation in order to gain a political or tactical advantage, usually to influence an audience'. The shifting focus from the accepted national objectives, which provided some political legitimacy to terrorism and the increasing lethality of violence, at times being irrationally excessive, have become the cause of serious public concern worldwide. Its fallout has been highly favorable to state terrorism, which thrives on the weakened opposition and operates even more boldly and brutally, as is being demonstrated by Israel and India following 11th September incident.

Implications for Pakistan

A large part of the rise in terrorism, sectarianism and extremist politics in Pakistan lies in the country's political history, its civil- military relations in which interest groups have retained

state power at the expense of democratic and socio-economic development. To strengthen and prolong their rule, various civil as well as military governments in the past have formed domestic alliances, mainly with the clergy, strengthened and manipulated marginalized political groups in an attempt to weaken stronger and popular-based political groups for instance the rise of Muhajir Quami Movement in the province of Sindh in the late 1970s - 80s as a counter weight to the Pakistan People's Party. In this process the civil society got badly undermined and the breakdown of democratic norms was compounded by problems such as the deterioration of justice system & the rule of law besides, lack of accountability as evidenced in massive corruption, smuggling, drug-trafficking, criminal violence, power personalization and Human Rights abuse. Thus, this increased polarization along ethnic and especially religious sectarian lines, marginalization and suppression of political opposition, alienation of ethnic minorities, together with extremist religious movement lead to political violence and intimidation. Compounded by economic failure, injustice and stagnation made worse by the relentless political penetration and enervation of state bureaucracy.

As they gathered momentum, these pathologies of governance choked off the horizontal relations of trust, cooperation, honesty, reciprocity and public-spiritedness that constitute the social capital of a vigorous prosperous democratic society based on "civic community." In the following lines, three main problem areas would be highlighted, mainly the Afghan Jihad and the problems associated with it, such as the unchecked refugee inflow, cross border trafficking of all kinds, gun running and weapons proliferation, the infamous madrassah culture giving rise to issues of sectarianism, religious intolerance and extremism coupled with militancy, and violence.

Afghan Jihad

Owing to traditionally strong cultural, religious and social ties between the people of the two countries and over 1000 miles of porous Pak- Afghan border, naturally got Pakistan involved in the Afghan war. Generally it can be said that Pakistan's role in the

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Soviet - Afghan war and acceptance of millions of refugees, has had serious implications for the country. To begin with, it entirely changed the country's orientation from a moderate Islamic state to an increasingly theological one. For President General Zia-ul-Haq it came about as a blessing in disguise. Firstly, it brought him closer to the US, making Pakistan a frontline state in the CIA sponsored war, and secondly, through the call for Jihad, Zia managed to gain the much needed legitimacy and clergy's backing which otherwise would have been not too easy to achieve.

Secondly, and the most glaring repercussion, was and remains the proliferation of weapons, both small and heavy, that resulted in enhanced violence, free gun running and display of firearms. Coupled with drugs, trafficking of illicit firearms as well as smuggling of commercial goods increased corruption and crime and the consequent loss of faith in the government's writ. As stated by Naseerullah Khan Baber, former Interior Minister, "drugs, terrorism and weapons were the fallout of Pakistan's role in Afghan Jihad," as a result of which "Afghanistan had become a training ground for terrorism that was being imported into Pakistan and other parts of the world."³

Some of the military training camps and religious schools in Afghanistan and parts of Pakistan became breeding grounds for ethnic and sectarian violence as well as terrorist training camps. During the Soviet occupation, Afghan and Soviet forces even conducted raids against Mujahideen bases inside Pakistan and a campaign of terror bombings and sabotage in Pakistani cities. In 1987 alone, some 90 percent of the 777 terrorist incidents recorded worldwide took place in Pakistan.⁴ The Afghan jihad correspondingly, gave rise to a violent gun culture in the Pakistani society, promoted trafficking and smuggling of counterfeit goods and currency in the country and also proved highly instrumental in the establishment of the infamous madrassah culture in Pakistan.

Pakistan, in spite of being a developing country with many problems of its own, accepted and at one point single handedly sustained not less than three million or so refugees on its soil. From the very outset, the government policy towards these incoming

refugees was flawed. In spite of not being a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Follow up Protocol, it was not binding on Pakistan to allow the refugees to enter its territory, but on sheer humanitarian grounds these refugees were accepted. The Pakistani government did initially try to register these refugees, but as the number grew with time, not only was that practice disregarded, but they were free to go anywhere in the country. Resulting in their spreading out far and wide, thus giving rise to resentment amongst the local population as well as increased demographic shake ups. Besides seeking local citizenship, the refugee population was spread over 300 camps mainly in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Balochistan and represented over 20% of the local population. In certain areas they even outnumbered the indigenous population.⁵

The most alarming repercussion of the Afghan Jihad was the rise in narco- smuggling and introduction of Kalashnikov culture, which became a hallmark of the 1980s. Where in the year 1980 there were virtually no heroin addicts in Pakistan, by 1981, the number reached 20,000 and within four years the number grew to an alarming 365,000 figure. According to one survey, by the year 1999, Pakistan had an estimated five million addicts.⁶ An extremely precarious and dangerous situation for a country such as Pakistan, for where on one hand, narcotics and drug money fuelled law and order problems, corruption, money laundering on the other hand it was encouraged by the foreign governments financing the Afghan Jihad so that the money earned from this channel could be spent in the purchase of arms and weapons from the international black market, thus creating a vicious cycle which after more than a decade continues unabated.

Weapons Proliferation

According to the 1998 census, Pakistanis owned around 2 million *licensed* firearms. In addition, officials of the Ministry of Interior believe that there are roughly 18 million more illegally held.⁷ Although weapons have somewhat always been available in the arms bazaars within the NWFP, such as Darra Adamkhel and Landi Kotal; the major impetus and free flow of modern light

weapons increased manifold after the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Given the nature of the proxy war millions of tons of military material were imported into the region, including a variety of weapons. Other countries also contributed in one way or another by providing the warring Mujahedin, with direct or indirect assistance both in material and finances, for example China wary of Soviet designs contributed weaponry, where as Saudi Arabia came forth with financial assistance.

As a front line ally, Pakistan became the conduit for this massive military assistance program, its top Intelligence outfit, the Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI) managing the receipt and distribution with the American CIA, coordinating the supply of weapons. With a bitter Vietnam experience still fresh in memory, the United States, did not want to be seen as providing direct military assistance for the Mujahedin, and for this reason massive amount of arms were purchased from all a variety of sources. Interesting trends could be witnessed in this undercover arms pipeline; the CIA would procure through Egypt large amounts of antipersonnel mines originally produced in Italy and so on. During this time period weapons even of Israeli and Indian makes could also be found in circulation. The CIA would then arrange for the arms to be either flown to Islamabad or shipped, via Oman, to Karachi.

Madrassah Culture

Traditionally, the Islamic religious schools *Madrassah* have been a sanctuary for the homeless and displaced people, sustaining and supporting thousands of poor people who otherwise lack access to formal education and served an important humanitarian role. In Pakistan, as in many developing countries, where education is not mandatory and many rural areas lack public schools. – Religious madrasahs on the other hand, located all over the country have been a regular source of free education, free food, housing, and clothing. According to a World Bank estimate only 40 percent of Pakistanis are literate. However, over a period of time, these religious institutions have become *Schools of Hate* as in the words of Jessica Stern, for not only most of these schools offer religious education

alone, at worse, some extremist madrasahs preach Jihad without understanding the concept: They equate jihad -- which most Islamic scholars interpret as the striving for justice (and principally an inner striving to purify the self) -- with guerrilla warfare only, with their own interpretation of social justice.

During the Soviet Afghan war, Madrasahs were already seen as "the supply line for jihad,"⁸ *Jihad* a highly revered tenet of Islam, has been used specially during the Afghan occupation by Soviet troops by vested interest groups, to exploit the common man's sentiment and allegiance to the cause in the name of religion. And after the end of the Afghan war, violence and militancy was spread in the name of jihad. During the 1980s, madrasahs were promoted as a way to garner the religious parties' support for the military rule and to recruit troops for the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan. At the time, many madrasahs were financed through *Zakat*, giving the government at least a modicum of control. But with time, funds and donations by wealthy Pakistani at home or abroad, private and government-funded organizations belonging to the Persian Gulf states, Saudi Arabia, and Iran increased which exacerbated the problem as these donors carried their specific interests, and with lessening state control, the madrasahs were now free to preach the warped and narrow version of a violent Islam as propagated by these actors.

Out of the estimated 40,000 to 50,000 madrasahs, only about 4,350 have registered with the government.⁹ These schools encourage their graduates, who often cannot find work because of their lack of practical education, to fulfill their "spiritual obligations" by fighting against Hindus in Kashmir or against Muslims of other sects in Pakistan. Such Madrasahs have become fiefdoms of the clerics who run them according to their biases. Hence, they oppose government policies towards any kind of regularization, or registration of the institution, for they fear that they could get secularized, the unchecked flow of finances being provided to them may get stopped or questioned and their authority might get curbed.

9/11 and The Changing Scenario for Pakistan

Following the events of 9/11, Pakistan actively joined the US-led international coalition against terrorism. However prior to this, President Pervez Musharraf mindful of the growing menace of terrorism at home had initiated various steps to curb and check the problem. One such action being the nation wide arms control campaign, which was initiated in Autumn 2000. Its main aim was to purge the society from gun running and make the country a weapons' free society. Besides two large sectarian based organizations such as the Lashkar-e-Jhanghvi and the Sipah-e-Mohammad were also banned, which initially were put on a watch list and later banned altogether along with few other such organizations after their activities were found harmful. However 9/11 not only brought Pakistan to the center stage of global politics, but also helped the government intensify its anti-terrorist activities. Pakistan's contribution in the war against terrorism has been crucial and acknowledged worldwide.

In the pre-9/11 period, Pakistan was suffering from a negative image problem due to various factors, such as: its support to the Taliban since 1994; corruption of the political elites; bad economic conditions; nuclear explosions in 1998; alleged support to the Kashmiri freedom struggle; the Kargil conflict and a military coup against a democratically-elected regime in 1999, and so forth. Pakistan joined the US-led coalition in anticipation that it would help instantly addressing all these problems. Though it was abundantly clear to the regime that joining the US-led coalition would mean, cutting off relations with the Taliban regime, thus effecting the precariously balanced Pakistan's Afghan policy and also carried implications for the freedom struggle in Kashmir, given that both the US and India have evolving strategic relations.

Pak – US Anti-Terrorism Cooperation

Besides, the formation of a *Joint Working Group on Counter-terrorism and Law Enforcement*, Pakistan also provided basing and over flight permission for all U.S. and coalition forces, and deployed a large number of its troops along the Afghanistan border in support

of *Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)*. By no means a small feat, as at the same time, Pakistani troops were also engaged along its western border to counter an unprecedented Indian military concentration. In return there was a revival of the *US-Pak. Defence Cooperation Group (DCG)* in September 2002, after five years. The first joint US Pakistan military exercises also took place since 1987, with approximately 120 soldiers from each country participating. The renewal of *US Assistance to Pakistan's Security-related Programmes* brought about a US assistance worth US\$396.5 million for FY 2002, an allocation of US\$56.5 million for FY 2003, and further entertaining the request for another US\$120 million worth of assistance for FY 2004.

According to rough estimates, regional terrorism efforts have caused the Pakistani economy losses in excess of \$10 billion since October 2001.¹⁰ In addition the US pledged 73 million dollars for border security, to be utilized specifically for intelligence gathering equipment and three helicopters for the interior ministry. Finally the Lifting of nuclear and democracy related sanctions. However, it must also be added that the reciprocal initiatives promised for Pakistan as envisioned in the earlier pronouncements of the West, did not come through in full. Nor did the Western governments make any significant contributions to address the issues arising out from the negative portrayal of Pakistan and Islam's image in their media. Besides, there is a growing perception amongst the people that with Afghanistan no longer as significantly important after Iraq, Pakistan has once again lost its chance, there would neither be any tariff relief nor trade concessions, besides the fiscal aid package would also be conditional.

Domestic Political Dynamics

Following the events of 9/11 and the subsequent developments in the region and around the world, there has been an increase in the anti-West and anti-American sentiments at the civil society level in the Muslim World in general and Pakistan in particular. This has happened specifically after having seen the devastation that followed the American bombing of Afghanistan, resulting in the loss of thousands of innocent civilian lives as

'collateral damage'. Besides, anti-American sentiments are a direct response to the malicious Western media campaign against Islam and the Muslims. There is a general perception that the Western media works in tandem with their respective governments, and these developments have impacted upon the electoral process in the country. One of the significant outcomes of this anti-US resentment is reflected in the success of the six-party alliance of religious political parties Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) in the October 2002 elections. All major parties in this alliance have been supportive of and traditionally have had links with various Afghan organizations, and were extremely critical of the US military operation in Afghanistan.

Pakistani public views with concern any possibility of compromising state sovereignty even to a little degree, such as the dissatisfaction surrounding the WANA operation, to flush out foreign militants, allowing foreign troops to be stationed on Pakistani soil and foreign intelligence agencies to operate within the country, or the signing of non-transparent agreements for cooperation on the war on terrorism. The assassination attempts on the president and later the prime minister is also indicative of the fact that the outlawed militant outfits are on a constant look out to seek an opportunity to sabotage totally the government's initiative. There is no doubt that the nation backed President Musharraf's decision for joining the anti-terrorism coalition for safeguarding the national interests. But the conditions and limits of collaboration needs to be defined now, especially in view of the deteriorating security situation on Pak-Afghan border, where clashes between US and Pakistani and Afghan and Pakistani troops are being reported with more frequency.

Fighting Terrorism: Domestic Response

President Musharraf in his January 2002 speech clearly outlined the government's posture towards terrorist outfits. With five more extremist organizations banned and barred from operating under new names, bringing a total tally to seven. The offices and assets of these organizations were sealed and confiscated and not less than 400 activists along with their leaders were rounded up and

arrested. Prior to this in a September 2001 address to the nation, President Musharraf pointed out four critical priority areas that needed to be preserved: 1) Security of the country, 2) Economy and its revival, 3) Strategic nuclear and missile assets and 4) the Kashmir cause. The Kashmir issue, which is of critical importance to Pakistan, was duly highlighted in both of Musharraf addresses.¹¹ While enunciating the government's policy on the issue of terrorism and replying to Indian allegation about Pakistan's alleged involvement in the October and December 2001 terrorist acts in Held - Kashmir and Delhi, the President stated:

*"These are the three problems, which create confusion in our minds. I want to lay down rules of behavior concerning all the three. Let us take the Kashmir Cause first. Kashmir runs in our blood. No Pakistani can afford to sever links with Kashmir. The entire Pakistan and the world know this. We will continue to extend our moral, political and diplomatic support to Kashmiris. We will never budge an inch from our principled stand on Kashmir. The Kashmir problem needs to be resolved by dialogue and peaceful means in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people and the United Nations resolutions. We have to find the solution of this dispute. No organization will be allowed to indulge in terrorism in the name of Kashmir. We condemn the terrorist acts of September 11, October 1 and December 13. Anyone found involved in any terrorist act would be dealt with sternly. Strict action will be taken against any Pakistani individual, group or organization found involved in terrorism within or outside the country. Our behavior must always be in accordance with international norms. I would also like to address the international community, particularly the United States on this occasion. As I said before on a number of occasions, Pakistan rejects and condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Pakistan will not allow its territory to be used for any terrorist activity anywhere in the world. Now you must play an active role in solving the Kashmir dispute for the sake of lasting peace and harmony in the region."*¹²

Deweaponisation Campaign

In response to the rising social violence and the easy availability of automatic weapons, in the autumn of 2000, the government initiated a National Arms Control & Recovery Campaign. The main goal of the campaign was to facilitate 'de-weaponization' through confiscation and prosecution of illegally held arms. A three-phase program, initially owners were encouraged to register licensed weapons. During the second stage owners could surrender illegal firearms over a two-week amnesty in June 2001. Although the number of weapons received was not expected to be great, the hope was that these measures would break the culture of freely carrying Kalashnikov rifles in public and facilitate future police intervention. In May 2001, the cabinet approved a *New Arms Control Policy and Action Plan for the Recovery of Illicit Weapons*. Earlier, a ban was imposed on the display of weapons throughout the country in February 2000, while issuance of fresh arms licenses was stopped totally from March 2000.

However sincere the government's arms recovery action plan might have been, unfortunately there was poor implementation and follow up. Especially after the 2002 elections, the campaign failed to meet up with its desired goals. More important was the targeting of the illegal arms market, but with Afghanistan still a troubled region, the warring factions continue to equip themselves with the required armaments.

Madrassah Reforms

Although there have been attempts to bring about reforms in the madrassah even during Zia's time period, but without much success. As part of the Musharraf plan, not only the mosques were to be reformed, i.e. all mosques would be registered, and no new mosques are allowed to be built without permission so to prevent its abuse.

While conducting operations, the Pakistan army invariably rounded up suspects, who mainly came from the Arab world as well as central Asian States. With no restrictions placed on the entry of

such activists in the past, the country hosted thousands of foreign jihadis in its various madrasahs and other places, mostly run by Arab NGOs, with virtually no documentation or registration in place. Besides arrests of wanted Al Qaeda suspects, the government by March 2002 identified for expulsion some 300 foreigners from the country.¹³

The National Security Council as early as December 1999 had formed a working group to recommend effective madrassah reforms without affecting the autonomy of madrasahs. On the basis of recommendations suggested, three model seminaries one each in Islamabad, Karachi and Sukkur were set up, and they function under the Pakistan Madrassah Education Board (PMEB).¹⁴ Established under the August 2001 Ordinance the PMEBS was basically to monitor the admission of both students and teachers in these seminaries, as well as set an appropriate curriculum for them. The government in June 2002 proposed another ordinance, for voluntary registration and regulation of the madrasahs. However, not only do the clerics dismiss these ordinances and find these model institutions as a showpiece with little relevance to, and impact on religious education but also dispute the government's involvement in mandatory registration and official financial scrutiny.

Under the ordinance no new madrassah would be set up without permission from relevant district authority, and the existing ones were to voluntarily register themselves with their respective PMEBS chapters. Not only would the finances of these institutions be monitored, with any foreign grant, aid or exchange of personal (both students and teachers) taking place without a *no objection certificate* by the Ministry of Interior. Secondly, the madrasahs administration would not be allowed to indulge in fueling extremist or sectarian sentiment. Proper routing of finances for the madrasahs has been one of the most difficult aspects, since there are very effective informal methods of monetary transactions.¹⁵

Through the regulatory system, the government plans not only providing the madrasahs with books, computers etc. but also allocate budget for hiring teachers, as well as launch teachers' training programs, besides the syllabus and courses taught at the madrasahs

would be monitored.¹⁶ However the problem the government is already facing is that in spite of claiming that there are 10,000 unregistered madrasahs, the number is much more. Not all madrasahs are willing to register, thus working on mere speculations is not enough.

Not all the madrasahs that exist are attached to some militant organization or spreading sectarianism, thus it is wrong to treat them as identical units. Secondly, the government's plan lacks a focal point with responsibilities dispersed amongst various ministries including concerned agencies. Thus many a times there is found an overlapping in the tasks assigned as well as a lot of confusion prevails at implementation phase. Effective madrasah reform requires a central regulatory authority that would regulate the functioning of these institutions, and also provide a focal point for donors, foreign governments, media as well as facilitate coordination between the various government departments. Laws and not temporary ordinance should be implemented, with availability of credible data as a necessary prerequisite to address the problem. Finally and most important is the need to create a nation wide financial Intelligence Unit to supervise, monitor and coordinate financial intelligence both within and outside the country.

Conclusion

The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks against the United States have radically-and permanently-altered the balance of power politics in South and West Asia, a fact that makes Pakistan very jittery. The United States can no longer afford to isolate a nuclear Pakistan and still hope that nuclear nonproliferation in South Asia — especially preventing the theft of fissile material or technology — remains a viable and effective policy. Pakistan's perspective regarding the balance of power in the region has to be seriously taken into consideration by Washington. This is because the United States may be able to find a long-term solution to terrorism only by committing itself to the maintenance of the balance of power in Pakistan's neighborhood. This means helping shape a regional order in South Asia with a resolved Kashmir issue as essential ingredients of a stable balance of power.

The fly in the ointment, however, is the willingness of the United States to commit itself to the role of a facilitator — along with Pakistan — and to ensure that this commitment remains unchanged for the next five to 10 years. As the lone superpower, America's strategic interests are much too cumbersome to remain focused on one particular region for long, even though South and West Asia remain highly explosive regions. But the U.S. "war" on transnational terrorism will have to go much beyond capturing or killing Osama bin Laden. Peace and stability in South and West Asia will neither be easy, nor materialize anytime soon, but neither can Washington afford continuing instability over the longer term.

End Note

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