



# Pakistan Today; Challenges and Opportunities

An address given to the Los Angeles World Affairs Council  
on July 7 2009 by

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Pakistan is a pivotal state... people say that all the time. I don't know what they mean but I can tell you what most people in Pakistan think about why we are a pivotal state. Let me give you five reasons why we are a pivotal state.

First, there is location – a huge geo-strategic location means that we straddle three regions – south Asia, southwest Asia and the Middle East. These regions create volatility, but looking ahead a great opportunity, as well. But for now, location has been more of a challenge than an asset.

The second reason is demography; the fact that we are a large country. We are the sixth most populous nation in the world, the second largest Muslim nation in the world and, of course, the demography. I think demography is not just about numbers; it's about the quality of people that we decided to export, although we'd like a lot of them back now. They've done tremendously well in your country and in so many other countries in Europe.

The third is self-evident – Pakistan's Islamic identity. It is a Muslim nation.

The fourth is also self-evident so I won't spend time on that – it's a nuclear capable state.

The fifth is something looking ahead. Pakistan is located at the crossroads of huge and dynamic markets at a time when people like Fareed Zakaria have been saying that the tide has been shifting – economic policy is shifting “from the West to the rest,” and the rest happens to be mostly in Asia.

So, here we are with our border with China; with India, and the fact that opportunity, (along with) the fact that we are part of Asia means that we can, in the future, become a very important hub to widen linkages between different markets and different regions. Our vision of ourselves in the future is one of a country that serves as an economic, trade, communication and energy corridor between various regions and various countries. So, this is something about our potential.

Let me now turn to a topic on which you would never find a Pakistani disagree – and we disagree on just about everything else – but on this topic we do not disagree: cricket. I know this is not a game that’s played in your country but you all know about cricket – this is a funny game that is played while wearing white trousers and white shirts even though that’s changed somewhat now. I don’t know how many of you know, but I’m sure that every Pakistani-American in this room knows that recently, about two weeks ago, the Pakistani team won the World Cup in what is called 20-20 cricket.

This World Cup victory was just amazing because it came after a number of years in which the Pakistani cricket team had been in complete disarray; it had been almost internationally isolated in cricket and the fact that the team won, I think, says something about the resilience of the number of people on that team who were able to bounce back and, wow, did they bounce back quite effortlessly.

I think that cricket can serve as a metaphor for national fortunes. It does say something also about the resilience of the nation that has too often been

written off. As long as I can remember, every year of my long life, my country has been written off. It was supposed to have imploded many years ago. These predictions of Pakistan's imminent demise have been given the lie every time by the Pakistani people – they've bounced back, they've shown how resilient they are and they've also shown that when times have been tough, they're tough, too. They're tough enough to take the tough times that have tested us as a country and as a nation.

Many of you will recall that just a few months ago, there were dire forecasts about Pakistan's imminent fall to the Taliban. It was said that extremist militants were 60 miles from the capital, which was in danger of falling to the barbarians that were at the gate. These were the headlines: "Pakistan will implode in six months," declared a top counter-insurgency expert who is now also serving as a consultant to General Petraeus.

Taking a cue from this media hype, the U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, said, "If Pakistan was to fall the Taliban would have the keys to this country's nuclear arsenal." These media-driven alarmist scenarios were not just unhelpful and unfair with a country that is a close ally of the United States. They were wrong. An outlook that is not predicated on hard objective assessments of reality, I think, runs the danger because if it's sold as a basis for policy then that policy can be previously flawed.

Countries, I think, can easily be turned into caricatures and people easily into stereotypes, and I fear sometimes that my country has fallen into this caricature. It's not a caricature. It's a country of 170 million people. We are diverse. We've had our problems. We are located in a very rough, tough part of the world. But we are not the way that we are depicted often in the media.

I think, from my own understanding – since I have many friends in the British and American governments – I believe that when Washington went

into a panic a couple of months ago it was London that played a role in calming Washington down. Instead of saying, "We've been in this part of the world before," and as an ex-colonial power I guess they have, they said, "We know this country a lot better than you might think and we can assure you that this is not a failed state. It may be failing in many ways; its leadership may be failing to address some issues; its capacity may be tested, but that doesn't amount of a failed state. This is a very dynamic country."

I wanted to start with that because I know that this is what is really uppermost on people's minds. I want to say that this doesn't mean that the challenges Pakistan faces are not daunting; not imposing not complex, not unprecedented. They are all of the above. But we have to remember that these challenges have emerged over a period of time. They didn't occur overnight. It took awhile for these to really crystallize into what we can confront today. In my mind, they are consequences of the interplay of four factors, some are internal, some are external.

The first is they are the blowback that Pakistan has faced from its long Cold War engagements and, of course, the blowback from the 2001 military intervention in Afghanistan.

The second factor is that the country has had a record of poor governance and have been postponed reforms; urgent reforms that should have been undertaken but were not undertaken in time and therefore, created a cumulative sort of backlog of problems that governments then had to exist to address. I think that this record also demonstrates, or shows, or displays the fact that we've often had too much government and too little governance in Pakistan. I do not think I need to spell that out; you know what I mean.

The third factor is that there has been endemic political instability in Pakistan. We've lurched between long periods of military rule with short

periods of usually weak and ineffectual civilian rule. I think that this unbroken cycle is something that we are struggling to break, but it has defined, in a way, the context in which we have had to operate.

The fourth factor is sort of what I talked a little about before: we live in the shadow of a very big neighbor: India, with which we have had adversarial relations. It isn't just that it's India next door and the relationship has been a very troubled one. It's also because our whole neighborhood is a very rough and tough one. I think that, if countries were like people, I guess we would have packed our bags and left a long time ago. But we didn't have that option. So, the fact that this was a region with great political volatility as well as a great deal of conflict and tension contributed to the cumulative challenges we face today.

So, let me try to walk you through some of the security challenges that Pakistan faces. We face challenges of governance. We face challenges of illiteracy. We face challenges of underdevelopment. But, I want to focus today on the security challenges because this is, I know, something that interests all of you. The security challenges Pakistan faces emanate currently from terrorism and Islamic militancy on the one hand and the longer standing unresolved tension between Pakistan and India on the other hand. So really, these issues of militancy and the lack of strategic stability in the India-Pakistan equation are at the very heart of the security crisis in the country, and in the region. Let me deal with militancy and terrorism. As Pakistan sees it, its internal threat comes from four sources.

First, al Qaeda.

Second, what is called, I know you have been reading about this in the *New York Times* mostly, the second threat comes from the Pakistani Taliban. I will say a few words about who are they and where they come from a little later.

They're headquartered in part of Pakistan's tribal region; tribal borderlands with Afghanistan. The Pakistani Taliban has an emerging nexus with al Qaeda.

The third threat comes from assorted militant groups, sectarian organizations and breakaway splinters of Kashmiri groups. These are groups that have fought in the past in Kashmir, but have mutated and morphed into very deadly organizations that are forming a nexus with the Pakistani Taliban, and through the Pakistani Taliban, with al Qaeda. In other words, these are not franchises, and these are not affiliates of al Qaeda, but a nexus seems to have emerged between these different groups.

Fourthly, of course, we have the Afghan Taliban. But as we all know, their focus is Afghanistan and not Pakistan. Yet, they do come in and out of our borderlands and therefore are a source of instability in Pakistan.

I think it's important to recognize – because sometimes the media coverage doesn't quite recognize – the separate identities of these groups and the fact that these groups have different agendas; different ethnic identities; different motives. Some have global motives. That's Al-Qaeda, obviously. The Pakistani Taliban has no global motive but clearly has a motive within the country. And, of course, the smaller groups, the sectarian organizations and other splinters I was talking about have even more localized motivations and agendas.

Pakistan does not face a unified threat from all these groups. This makes our task easier as we look ahead. But it also makes it difficult because analytically you can unbundle these groups. You have to unbundle them; treat them as separate entities. But, at some level, they begin to have mutual sympathies with each other. And yet, Pakistan has to confront them separately; try to deal with them not as one conflicted threat – because that

would be a huge strategic error – but to pick them off in terms of what causes the most immediate threat; what causes the greatest threat; that's what Pakistan has tried to do.

I think that in that context it is easy to understand why people like me and others who live in Pakistan – who come from Pakistan – sometimes wonder why people talk about the threat of “Talibanization,” that somehow begins to connect all these groups and turn them into one group called the Taliban. There is no such thing. There is a Pakistani Taliban; they are a deadly group. They have to be confronted. They are being confronted.

But, Talibanization tends to put in one box very different organizations that we have to then deal with as sources of the militant threat to Pakistan. So we have to be very careful that we don't, on the one hand, exaggerate the threat but, on the other hand, minimize the threat. And we shouldn't really attribute and ascribe Talibanization in Pakistan with greater reach, strength, coherence and cohesiveness than they actually have.

For the past several years, Pakistan has followed a pretty patchwork policy based on firefighting in dealing with the groups that are holed up in its frontier regions, which in acronym is FATA, the “Federally Administered Tribal Areas.” In the tribal areas, we've tried to respond to the threat in a patchwork way. Obviously, we need to have a much more coherent strategy. We need to have a more consistent application of that strategy. But I think so far the approach that has been taken for dealing with the threat in the tribal areas has been one that has vacillated between inconclusive military operations and very controversial peacekeeping, and it seems that none of these have really worked very well.

But something has changed in the last couple of months. We have the current ongoing operation in a place called Swat and it seems to mark a

break with the record that I was just describing. I want to say just a few words about why does it break, why does it mark a break with the past?

I think the most significant aspect of why there has been a break in the past is the fundamental shift in the public mood. Until recently, the public was very ambivalent; the public was not sure who the enemy is. The public also said this was an issue or a threat that was located in a very remote part of the country and it wouldn't really affect them; wouldn't affect their way of life. Our people are like people everywhere else in the world – they feel, "Well, it's not really affecting my daily life, why should I put my head in it and become a target," because those are mistakes.

But that changed. The people of Pakistan led the way in how they responded to what was happening in Swat, and the leaders followed. This is an interesting example of how the people lead the leaders. It was the public's response to the atrocities and excesses of the Taliban in the Swat area in Pakistan's northwest frontier province. It was their conduct that produced this reaction, because the actions of the Taliban were shocking, and the complete antithesis of what people felt the country should be all about.

There was, for example, something that circulated on our television – pretty much every television network in Pakistan – a video of a teenage girl being whipped by the Taliban with people holding her down. It was very dramatic, the impact this had on the public mind of Pakistan. The people had a sense of deep revulsion. Then there were instances of beheadings that the Taliban carried out, and again that produced widespread revulsion, shock and horror.

The shift in public opinion meant that increasingly the Taliban began to be seen as criminal and not a political actor. Up until then there was some ambiguity in people's minds about whether they were a political actor who wanted their demands fulfilled. So what are their demands? Maybe we should

respond. This changed quite dramatically when people saw what they were doing. This is captured by recent polls which show that 80% of Pakistanis now view the Taliban as a critical threat to the country. This compares with 34% who viewed the Taliban as a threat about a year ago. This was a very dramatic shift.

Something that has been underreported, I think, is this shift in the public's mood by the Barelvi Ulema or the Barelvi clergy in Pakistan. Who are the Barelvis? Pakistan has several schools of Islamic thought, not unlike other Islamic countries. The Barelvis are the closest to the Sufi tradition and they are the most tolerant. It's estimated that something like 70% of the people of Pakistan are followers of the Barelvis school.

Please remember that the supposed school that al Qaeda claims to have allegiance to is completely different from this. The Deobandi is another Pakistani school of Islamic thought which has been associated with some elements of militants and militancy. So, here are people who have been on television, holding conventions, holding seminars – religious fellows who came out of it who will not accept it, who will not accept the imposition of Sharia or Islamic law at gunpoint.

I think this is the critical distinction that is drawn. The Sharia is something that people will, if you take a poll, say, "Yes. We would like to live under the Sharia." But these people were violating something intrinsic to our religion and found in our holy book, the Holy Koran; a verse that says, "There can be no compassion in religion."

And yet here are people who think quite the opposite of what the Koran prescribes. Let's not forget that if the text were to call it Takfiri ideology that al Qaeda has adopted; that the Takfiri basically rejects this Koran's role – the rejected part of the Koran – and says that we have an obligation to turn

people into Muslims, and if it takes killing Muslims and non-Muslims, so be it – that's the al Qaeda ideology.

This is the complete antithesis of that kind of ideology, and the one thing that I was really struck by as a woman was how many people; many of the scholars, went on television saying, "We will not permit people to stop our girls from going to school because the Holy Prophet, Father Mohammed, himself urged knowledge for girls and boys. So, this is completely against our faith; our religion, and therefore completely un-Islamic. It also declares suicide bombings as un-Islamic and anti-Islamic.

So, I think when you look at what's been happening in Pakistan in the last two or three months, it's important to recognize that the shift in public opinion comprises people from the clergy itself who have been confronting what people call "militant Islam." We also have to recognize that ultimately militant Islam has to be confronted by Muslims themselves. That is where the legitimacy comes. Ordinary Muslims do not have to be religious scholars, and until they are able to confront this, this problem will not go away militarily.

So, this is one dimension of what has happened, the consequences being very solid public support for the military operation that has taken place in Swat and that is now beginning in one of the tribal areas where the leader of the Pakistani Taliban is headquartered. His name is Baitullah Mehsud. He heads the Pakistani Taliban, and he is headquartered in a place called South Waziristan, which is one of our seven tribal agencies.

Now, the Pakistani military is taking the war to his headquarters because clearly he is the one who has been responsible for the state of bombings. There are many who believe, though there is no conclusive evidence, that former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's assassination was actually ordered by Baitullah

Mehsud. Since there is still an inquiry, I would not like to say that this is a conclusive or closed chapter. So this is the kind of threat that this man causes.

We also have to recognize that Pakistan borders Afghanistan. Afghanistan's stability – the sooner that it is able to return to a more normalized state of affairs – is something that will have an impact on Pakistan, and vice-versa. I think often we hear the impact of Pakistan on Afghanistan, but somehow the media doesn't throw that question around the other way, which is the destabilizing effect that decades of instability and conflict in Afghanistan have had on Pakistan, producing a witch's brew of problems for Pakistan for many many years – radicalization; drugs.

We still host around 2.5 to 2.9 million Afghan refugees. We have played host for three decades. I know of very few countries that would have done that without straining their resources or without creating animosity and ethnic conflict. None of that happened because these are all Pashtuns on both sides of the border. We have done that, and the impact on our security has obviously been very difficult.

Now, I want to say a few words about al Qaeda because this is something that is uppermost in everyone's minds. In the U.S., its strategy review has made its new mission focus on disabling, defeating and eliminating al Qaeda. So here is the assessment from the Pakistani perspective. My own impression of what our security establishment believes is the present strength of al Qaeda is as follows:

Al Qaeda has adapted to the sustained pressure by both the U.S. and Pakistani authorities by forming a nexus with the Tarik Taliban or the Pakistani Taliban, and through them to some of the militants based on the Punjab. Now, these are not affiliates. They all have different motivations and different agendas, but what seems to have tied them together is a common enemy. That enemy is the state

of Pakistan, and it is the army of Pakistan that is seen by these militants as acting as a surrogate for the United States and, therefore, the enemy.

The Pakistani security establishment certainly believes that the original al Qaeda has been considerably weakened and seriously marginalized. Its military capabilities and reach have been degraded by actions over a period of time, and its capacity to launch mass casualty attacks on the West, particularly the U.S. mainland, has been curtailed. Not eliminated, but curtailed – a significant difference from where we were two years ago.

But the threat has not disappeared. The threat has not disappeared because the al Qaeda network is still based on the borderlands between Pakistan and Afghanistan. But it has decentralized its operations. There are now indications of a shift underway as pressure mounts on them to the Maghreb and North African countries, particularly Somalia and Yemen. In fact, I hear many people describe Yemen – not Somalia – as the potentially new Afghanistan.

That could be a place which becomes a base or a home for many of these people who are now fleeing the sustained and increased pressure on them. I'll reinforce this point. Al Qaeda's power and strength now lies more in its idea than on a command and control system or organization, because that doesn't exist anymore. It exists in a very different form. Its mobilizing strength lies in its ideology and its ability to inspire disaffected members of the Muslim communities all over the world. So what this urges is the need for us to engage in the realm of ideas; to deal with al Qaeda as much ideologically and militarily as through the use of force. This is important.

I can't help but mention the fact that President Obama's Cairo speech was such an amazing address. It was such an amazing overture to the Muslim world based on this belief that unless he deals in the long run with the sources of Muslim

grievances across the Muslim world, how will we ever close the gap that has opened up between the West and the Muslim street? Muslim elites may be lining up to shake hands with people in Washington and London, but the Muslim public still remains very weary of the burden of history.

There is a burden of history; a colonial record. A kind of policy that was followed, which was not seen as even-handed by the Muslim street, whether it be in Karachi or Jakarta or Dubai. Take a poll and you'll be struck by the commonalities that you will find in terms of the expectations of the Muslim world. Of course, I realize it's a two-way street. An engagement cannot be one-way, so I think what President Obama has done is address some of those issues that men of violence use to leverage legitimate grievances for completely illegitimate ends.

The threat that comes to Pakistan is from terrorism and a hybrid form of war that has been imposed on Pakistan by groups that combine terrorism with guerrilla hit-and-run tactics – a hybrid war – which countries, yours included, find very difficult. We need completely new ways of responding to this enemy because the enemy is using completely new ways of fighting.

Other than that, the more enduring threat that emanates in the region is the adversarial relationship between Pakistan and India. Even though in recent years we have seen the promise of peace, somehow that promise has not yet translated into a reduction of tensions on a durable basis. I think there are three reasons why Pakistan has a perception of threat from India. Many times people in the West get really impatient with us and say, "You know, no one is threatening you." I've always said security or insecurity, like beauty, lies in the eye of the beholder. If I feel threatened, there is nothing anyone else can do about it. I feel threatened because I feel threatened on the basis of certain ground realities. Let me just list them. There are three.

The first, of course, is the history of conflict between India and Pakistan. We have had three wars, four near wars, and I don't know how many virtual wars. We have somebody who served in Delhi, our Consul General, Mr. Ibne Abbas, so I will defer to his judgment. He knows much more about that area than I do. But the history of conflict is pretty obvious. We have unresolved disputes, including Kashmir, but over a lot of other issues. The water issue is now emerging as a key point of divergence between India and Pakistan, and this will need to be addressed; countries that went to war over water. We know that.

And thirdly, something that just went under-reported again in the West is military posture that India has adopted. Remember, military everywhere in the world respond to capabilities – they do not respond to intentions. Intentions can change from morning to night. Its abilities are such; and the way that they have been deployed – 70% of India's land, air and sea forces are deployed against Pakistan, and these assets can be very quickly organized.

India may have no intentions, and I'm sure it doesn't, but these assets can be very quickly mobilized at a time of tensions. In 2002, an attack took place on the Indian Parliament building, you will all recall, that led to a very long military standoff between the two countries – a very dangerous standoff.

So, whenever I am in Washington or London I tell my friends who want Pakistan to re-think its security paradigm that to forget our eastern border is easier said than done because Pakistan cannot ignore the history; it cannot ignore the empirical realities of the present. It cannot ignore the positioning of assets that they take. If the West – the United States – wants Pakistan to change its security paradigm, it cannot simply wish it so. It must address the conditions on the ground that led to its security paradigm.

I hear a great deal, especially in the media, that given the threat from the western border, what is this country doing with its forces on the eastern border? Our response is always, “Well, if you can get the other side to reposition its assets we will agree to reposition ours yesterday. We’ll do it as fast as that.”

I’d like to end and leave time for questions and answers on the opportunities that President Obama’s plan offers for the region. I think, first of all, that President Obama’s election was enthusiastically welcomed in Pakistan despite the cynicism and the skepticism that had taken hold for many, many years. He excited people all over the world, including in my country.

When he came up with this strategy review people were impressed because he had all the right instincts; he struck all the right notes on this strategy review of Afghanistan and Pakistan. But now, a few months after the strategy review was announced, the question that people are asking is, “We’ve heard you talk the talk; we’d like to see now how you will walk the walk. Because translating these instincts into concrete plans and strategy is obviously very hard and we’d like to see how you will do that.”

But in terms of the broad objectives of the strategy review, Pakistan agrees with pretty much all the amendments of the strategy to try and give the United States a clearer objective in Afghanistan, because I think that objective was lost. We all know that – that’s why the review took place.

So, it refocuses the U.S. mission onto fighting al Qaeda. It also talked about a civilian surge, spending more on development in Afghanistan, helping create Afghan national army and building capacities in both Afghanistan and Pakistan – all of which are very worthwhile, noteworthy objectives.

The review also talked about talking to the Taliban at some point; at some level – something that Pakistan has advocated for many years. But whenever we advocated it people would look very suspiciously and say, “Ha, maybe these guys have been in bed with the Taliban all along and we didn’t know about it.”

We said that because we knew we needed to separate al Qaeda from the Taliban if we were going to get anywhere in Afghanistan, because the U.S. can’t multiply its enemies anymore than we can multiply our enemies in that region. We have to separate what is lacking in the Taliban and what is desirable and perhaps what is attainable over a longer period of time.

It is a desirable goal to try to transform Afghan society, but to try to transform the Afghan society at a time of Pashtun alienation – the Pashtun are the majority group there; the foundation for the Taliban insurgency – it’s hard. This is not winnable in these times in this context. We have to change that context. The Obama position has been welcomed, but there are a number of concerns about certain aspects of the Obama review.

There are two specific areas which are worrisome for Islamabad and these are concerns with the military escalation dimension of the strategy. The military escalation is the deployment of an additional 21,000 troops in Afghanistan. We know all about that. You’ve been hearing about it in some news releases in the press. I think there were some casualties because of these additional people that have been deployed in Helmand in southern Afghanistan.

So here is the issue from Pakistan’s point of view: any additional engagement militarily on the Pakistan/Afghan border surely endangers Pakistan. It can lead to greater influx of militants fleeing across the border into Pakistan; more refugees coming in. When major engagements take place, people run away. They’re not going to fight set-piece battles; they’re not a conventional force.

They run away and come back to fight another day. So for us the concern is that they come into our country more and more as we would not want them to use Pakistan as a sanctuary, as a base, or as a launching pad for attacking anybody.

The second is, of course, more refugees will come. We have our internally displaced people because of the Swat. As you know, two-million-plus people have been displaced, and we need to get them back to their homes.

Thirdly, for all the talk about the U.S. trying to negotiate other ways of getting supplies to Afghanistan for NATO and U.S. forces, 80% of all supplies that go to the forces in Afghanistan go through Pakistan. That hasn't changed. The danger is that once there are additional troops, the need for more supplies will go up. We estimate probably triple. Triple means more convoys; more trucks going in, and that means more targets. That will make the supply chain more vulnerable to attacks by militants.

We feel that U.S. forces will be facing the enemy with the supply line behind the enemy. I'm no military expert, but I'm told by military experts that's how not to fight any kind of war. You have to have your logistics and supply chains behind you, not in front of you, especially when somebody is firing at you. So, I think there are areas that will need to be addressed.

This is one area, and the other area is the intensified use of drones in Pakistani territory. For all its effectiveness attributed to these drones, I think a certain thing that one must always keep in mind is that a tactical gain at the expense of a strategic loss; not a great idea. Secondly, it focuses too much on military engagement and not enough on the ideological.

The problem with that is that you take out, which is what I'm told, eleven out of the top twenty Al-Qaeda people who are supposed to be holed up there, but as

soon as those twenty are taken out, another twenty replace them. So if you have a supply line of available people to fill those posts, what is says is that a military approach is incomplete and insufficient. It is something that needs to be supplemented by something else. Many in Pakistan, including myself, have many serious reservations and misgivings over this.

Don't forget that Pakistan's national assembly, our federal legislature, and our two provincial assemblies – from the provinces of Blochistan and the frontier, which are the two strategic provinces that border Afghanistan – have all adopted unanimous resolutions condemning drones, which are seen as a violation of Pakistan's sovereignty.

So, we either respect the democratic will of the people of Pakistan, as expressed through resolutions, or we don't. If we don't, then we do it at great peril because that will have consequences. I do believe, and I'm sure you would agree, that any policy that does not have public support in any country is unsustainable. It can ride for six months; eight months, but it begins to run out of steam because there is just no more public support for that.

Finally, I would say that one of the risks of the Obama plan is that it has unintentionally ended up treating Pakistan and Afghanistan as part of a trilateral approach. You could rightly say that there is great need for coordination between these two countries, because after all we have common goals; there are convergent objectives.

But, look at the acronym used for the policy AFPAK but if you AFPAK the bilateral relationship into this box between Pakistan and the United States, then you eroded unwittingly and unintentionally a very critical dimension of what needs to be done in the region. Plus, it's important that Pakistan cannot be seen as a function of another country. If Pakistan is viewed through the prism of just

Afghanistan, I think the policy that will be applied cannot be called Pakistan policy; it can be called AFPAK, as much as many people in Pakistan find that term very offensive because it hyphenates two sovereign nations.

I'm told by Afghan friends that they don't like it any more than the Pakistanis do. But, though hyphenation is a policy convenience, with someone like President Obama, who understands things like respect; sensitivity; the culture of other societies, I think there should be a greater sensitivity to the fact that this does lump together two sovereign nations which are so vastly different in their histories, capacities and levels of socio-economic development.

So really there are areas which I think will need further work down the road because this is a very serious enterprise, and with a serious enterprise, we all need to be on the same page. Sometimes you have to work really hard to be on the same page. Sometimes our timeframes vary. Sometimes, we find that our friends from the United States understandably have a "do it and do it fast" culture while we come from the East, and believe that sometimes things cannot be fast-tracked.

They take their time, and I think sometimes that produces the friction; the sense that, "Oh, well, Pakistan is not really with us because it didn't do that yesterday and it's not going to do it a day after. We don't trust really them." We really need to get past that, and I know there is a great deal of that out there. It's mutual. It would be unfair for me to say that it is one-sided. I think Washington views Pakistan in a certain way, and Pakistan also views Washington with a degree of question marks about the ability to stay the course; that it should do things in a manner that respects Pakistan's red lines, and the time frame issue.

And I will end on the note that the relationship is such a critical one with critical objectives; that it is very important to try to address some of the tensions that

have emerged in this relationship. Like I said, some of these tensions are about time frames; narrower tactics. It's how to achieve a certain objective and how long it will take, because the last thing I heard when I was in Washington was that there is a desire on the part of the administration to show results in Afghanistan by the time of the next midterm congressional elections.

A counterinsurgency is not something that is very amendable to political timetables, so we would have to be very careful here because my concern is that you have set yourself up for great challenges because you want to do this in certain period of time. You want to fast-track things; fast-track how to stop the problems in Afghanistan.

We already have seen that the heavy reliance on aerial power and bombings has led to a great deal of alienation among the Afghan people. You need to win their hearts and minds just like in Pakistan. My government needs to win the hearts and minds of those people from where these terrorists and militants are operating so with those words, let me conclude.

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