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“Addressing the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Relationship”

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Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you this opportunity to address the U.S.-Pakistan strategic relationship.

Pakistan, the world’s second most populous Muslim state, is a nuclear weapons power occupying a strategic location abutting Afghanistan, Iran, China, and the Arabian Sea, among others. The country sits at the locus of several major U.S. policy concerns, including international terrorism, nuclear weapons security, democratization, relations with the Muslim world, and Afghan and regional stability. U.S. policy makers thus widely recognize that U.S. interests are served through the development of multi-tiered and direct engagement with Pakistan across a broad spectrum of issue areas.

Yet anti-American sentiments are widespread in Pakistan. Most observers agree that reducing these negative perceptions — a long-term and potentially difficult goal — will be necessary to meaningfully advance U.S. interests in its relations with Pakistan. Many argue that this goal is overshadowed by shorter-term policies that may fuel the very distrust the United States seeks to overcome.

A stable, democratic, prosperous Pakistan actively working to counter Islamist militancy is vital to U.S. interests. Pakistan has played and continues to play a central role in U.S.-led efforts to combat religious militancy. Yet the outcomes of U.S. policies toward Pakistan since 2001, while not without meaningful successes, have failed to neutralize anti-Western militants and reduce religious extremism in that country, in turn hindering efforts to stabilize neighboring Afghanistan. Many observers have thus urged a broad re-evaluation of such policies. Such a re-appraisal appears to have come in tandem with a significant increase in religiously-motivated extremism and violence in Pakistan in 2007, as well as with a series of political crises in Islamabad that severely undermined the status and credibility of Pakistan’s president and long-time army chief, Pervez Musharraf.

Islamist extremism and militancy has been a menace to Pakistani society throughout the post-2001 period and became especially prevalent in 2007. According to the U.S. intelligence community, “Radical elements in Pakistan have the potential to undermine the country’s cohesiveness.”¹ The recent spate of violence has coincided with political instability in Islamabad, where democracy has fared poorly (the country has endured direct military rule for more than half of its existence). In 2008, and for the ninth straight year, the often-cited Freedom House rated Pakistan as “not free” in the areas of political rights and civil liberties. Among political crises in Pakistan in 2007 were a judicial crisis that began in March and is yet to be resolved; a “second coup” by Pakistani President Musharraf, who imposed emergency rule for

¹ See [http://www.dni.gov/testimonies/20080227_testimony.pdf].

six weeks beginning in November; and the December assassination of Benazir Bhutto, a former prime minister and the country's leading opposition figure.

The Bush Administration did continue to proclaim its ongoing support for Musharraf even after his imposition of emergency rule and, to a lesser extent, following the sweeping rejection of Musharraf's parliamentary allies by Pakistani voters. However, in 2008, the Administration has shown signs of a shift in its long-standing Pakistan policies, in particular on the issues of democratization and on Islamabad's counterterrorism policies in western tribal areas.

Pakistan's worsening economic conditions, unstable political setting, and perilous security circumstances make the job of U.S. decision makers more difficult. Yet the country's political developments in particular may offer a rare opportunity to qualitatively alter the nature of this important bilateral relationship. As troubled as Pakistan's history with representative governance has been, the recent elections there appear to have reflected well the will of the country's electorate and to have set the stage for a much-needed consolidation of its democratic institutions. Moreover, the sweeping poll victory by Pakistan's two mainstream parties — and the correspondingly weak showing of the country's Islamist political coalition — is further evidence that Pakistanis are moderates not driven by extreme, much less militant, religious worldviews. Nowhere was this more evident than in the country's North West Frontier Province (NWFP), where a secular party ousted the Islamist incumbents to lead a new provincial coalition government based in Peshawar.

Mr. Chairman, in considering the U.S.-Pakistan strategic relationship, my statement today seeks to emphasize the important role played by mutual trust and respect, not only between governments, but between peoples. In order to properly portray the current setting, it may be useful to begin with a brief review of two key aspects that create both difficulties and opportunities for the United States: 1) Pakistan's political setting is extremely fluid, and 2) Pakistan's security circumstances are extremely precarious. In the former realm, Pakistani resentments grow when the United States is seen to be meddling in or seeking to substantively influence the course of their country's internal political developments. In the latter realm, many Pakistanis believe the United States does not recognize Pakistan's legitimate security interests and does damage to these through a perceived over-reliance on military efforts in the region.

Pakistan's Fluid Political Setting

The status and development of Pakistan's democratic institutions are key U.S. policy concerns, especially among those analysts who view representative government in Islamabad as being a prerequisite for reducing religious extremism and establishing a moderate Pakistani state. Bush Administration officials repeatedly have insisted that they themselves take this view. However, many critics of Administration policy assert that the Islamabad government was for more than six years given a "free pass" on the issue of representative government, in part as a means of enlisting that country's continued assistance in U.S.-led counterterrorism efforts. Moreover, Washington has come under criticism for seeking to interfere in Pakistan's domestic politics, especially with regard to preserving the status of President Musharraf.²

² For example, two former senior Clinton Administration officials criticized President Bush for choosing to "back the dictator" rather than offer clear support for democracy and rule of law in Pakistan. They assert that such a policy has damaged U.S. interests in South Asia and in the Muslim world (Sandy Berger and Bruce Riedel, "America's Stark Choice," *International Herald Tribune*, October 9, 2007). In late 2007 testimony before a Senate panel, one former U.S. diplomat offered that, "Overall U.S. policy toward Pakistan until very recently gave no serious attention to encouraging democracy in Pakistan" (statement of Amb. Teresita Schaffer before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, December 6, 2007). Numerous other U.S. officials have found the Bush Administration's allegedly meager attention to Pakistani democratization rooted in an aversion to any moves that could alienate Musharraf and so

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice counters these types of criticisms by contending that strong U.S. support for Pakistan's democratization process has been a "very well kept secret," and she rejects as untrue claims that the U.S. supported a military government in Islamabad without attention to democracy there.³ In an example of how the State Department itself contributed to keeping U.S. support for Pakistani democratization "secret," its 2006 *Country Report on Human Rights Practices* — issued by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor — did not use the word "democracy" or any of its derivatives in discussing Pakistan. It did, however, note that "restrictions on citizens' right to change their government" represented a "major problem."⁴

Pakistan's already fluid political circumstances were dramatically altered when February 2008 national elections seated a new civilian-led government in Islamabad. This government comprises a coalition of political parties opposed to President Musharraf's continued rule, and it may seek to oust the president from office well before the scheduled 2012 end of his present term, which is itself a matter of controversy. The relatively credible polls allowed the Bush Administration to issue a determination that a democratically elected government had been restored in Islamabad after a 101-month hiatus.⁵ This permanently removed coup-related aid sanctions that President Bush had been authorized to waive annually in the interests of U.S. national security.

Both before and after the elections, U.S. officials expounded a desire to see "moderate forces" within Pakistani politics come together to sustain their country's political and economic reforms and to carry on the fight against religious extremism and terrorism. The White House anticipates Pakistan's "continued cooperation" in this regard.⁶ In his first meeting with the new Pakistani prime minister, President Bush expressed an appreciation of Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani's commitment to "strong and vibrant and productive" relations with the United States, and for his understanding of the terrorism threat faced by both countries.⁷

By some accounts, however, the U.S. government sought to influence Islamabad's coalition-building process, in particular by pressuring the coalition-leading Pakistan People's Party (PPP) to strike a deal with remnants of the Musharraf-friendly Pakistan Muslim League Q-faction. Most Pakistanis expressed a keen sensitivity to signs of U.S. attempts to influence the post-election coalition-building negotiations. Some observers suspect the Bush Administration remains wedded to a policy that would keep the embattled Musharraf in power despite his weakness and lack of public support.⁸ This tack may fuel interagency disputes in Washington, with some career diplomats arguing the United States could damage its position by appearing to go against a clear popular mandate rejecting Musharraf. Deputy Secretary of State John

reduce his cooperation on counterterrorism ("Democracy Gets Small Portion of U.S. Aid," *Washington Post*, January 6, 2008). U.S. congressional committees have long expressed concern with "the slow pace of the democratic development of Pakistan" (S.Rept. 109-96) and "the lack of progress on improving democratic governance and rule of law" there (H.Rept. 109-486).

³ See [<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2008/05/104634.htm>].

⁴ See [<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78874.htm>].

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Federal Register 73, 69, p. 19276-19277, April 9, 2008.

⁶ See [<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/03/20080325-3.html>].

⁷ "Bush and Pakistan's Gillani Pledge to Fight Terror," *Reuters*, May 18, 2008.

⁸ See, for example, "Pressure on Asif, Nawaz to Work With President," *Dawn* (Karachi), February 23, 2008; M.B. Naqvi, "Untangling the Web of Intrigues" (op-ed), *News* (Karachi), April 16, 2008.

Negroponte — in the first post-election visit to Islamabad by a senior U.S. official — offered little in the way of public defense for Musharraf and called his future status a matter to be determined by “the internal Pakistani political process.”⁹ His statement was viewed by many observers as a stark and, for some, encouraging signal of a shift in U.S. policy.

Given Musharraf’s status as a generally moderate, pro-Western ally of the United States — an ally so valued that he was called “indispensable” by Bush Administration officials¹⁰ — his political diminishment and potentially ignominious exit from power complicates U.S. policy making. It may be useful, however, to view these complications as opportunities to participate in a renewal of representative government in Pakistan.

Never before in Pakistan’s history have the country’s two leading political parties come together to share power. While many observers praise what could be a new conciliatory style of party politics, others note that the PPP and the Pakistan Muslim League faction led by Nawaz Sharif (PML-N) spent most of the 1990s as bitter enemies. Opposition to President Musharraf’s continued power unites these parties at present, but with Musharraf likely to fan the flames of party competition — and with his possibly imminent departure from power removing the key unifying factor between them — many analysts are pessimistic that a PPP-PML-N accommodation can last. Indeed, domestic political squabbles over the modalities for restoring to office several Supreme Court and other high court judges who were deposed by Musharraf’s in November 2007 have led the PML-N to withdraw from the new federal cabinet and illuminate the fragility of the new ruling coalition.

Former Prime Minister Sharif, the same leader deposed in the Musharraf-led 1999 military coup, has past links to Pakistan’s Islamist parties and he issues sometimes strident anti-American rhetoric. He also calls for President Musharraf’s impeachment and subsequent trial for treason. Some analysts, especially in Pakistan, speculate that the United States is engaging in behind-the-scenes efforts to keep Sharif from return to the prime minister’s office, as he might well do if early national elections were to be held. Whether true or not, opinion polls suggest that the mere perception of such U.S. meddling is damaging to U.S. interests in Pakistan. Respect of and active support for Pakistan’s democratic institutions and rule of law is an explicit and noncontroversial U.S. policy. There is, however, a vigorous and ongoing debate over the extent to which such policy has been manifest in both words and deeds.

Pakistan’s Precarious Security Setting

It is not unreasonable to assert that the Pakistani nation was fairly traumatized by a huge increase in domestic, religiously motivated violence in 2007 and early 2008. According to U.S. Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell, the loss of human life related to Islamist militancy was greater in 2007 than in the previous six years combined.¹¹ In 2008, the influence of Islamist militants appears to grow unchecked in large parts of Pakistan beyond the western tribal areas, bringing insecurity even to the NWFP provincial capital of Peshawar, where signs of “Talibanization” include orders that schoolgirls wear burkas and attacks on stores selling film

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“US Says No Meddling to Save Musharraf,” *Associated Press*, March 27, 2008. See also “US Offers Support for Pakistan’s Parties,” *Associated Press*, March 11, 2008.

¹⁰ “U.S. Official: Pakistan’s Musharraf ‘Indispensable’ Ally,” *CNN.com*, November 7, 2007.

¹¹ Statement before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, February 7, 2008. The Lahore-based Pak Institute for Peace Studies issued an annual report which counted 1,442 “terrorist attacks, incidents of political violence, and border clashes” in 2007. These attacks, along with 61 military operations in western Pakistan, left 3,448 people dead (see [<http://pips.com.pk/san/pakistan/july7/AnnualReport.html>]).

DVDs and music CDs. Other so-called settled areas of Pakistan beyond the tribal regions have come under attack from pro-Taliban militants.¹²

Concurrent with this sharp increase in domestic insecurity in Pakistan has been the apparent resurgence on that country's territory of the very threat the United States has sought to neutralize in Afghanistan: Al Qaeda and affiliated groups who continue to plot anti-Western terrorist attacks. Despite years of effort and billions of dollars worth of resources, the estimated number of Al Qaeda suspects reported killed or captured in Pakistan — around 700 — has remained essentially unchanged since 2004. At an April 2008 House hearing on Al Qaeda, a panel of nongovernmental experts agreed that the ongoing hunt for Al Qaeda's top leaders was foundering. At the same time, however, the head of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, Michael Hayden, later portrayed Al Qaeda as being on the defensive in South Asia, claiming that its leadership is losing the battle for hearts and minds in the Muslim world. Yet Hayden's conclusion came only two months after his March 2008 assertion that the situation on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border "presents a clear and present danger to Afghanistan, to Pakistan, and to the West in general, and to the United States in particular." He agreed with other top U.S. officials who believe that possible future terrorist attacks on the U.S. homeland likely would originate from that region.¹³

While the U.S. government largely has removed the hyphen from its relationship with Pakistan and India, a new hyphen has appeared in the region as what for many years was seen as an Afghanistan problem is increasingly being identified by U.S. policy makers as an Afghanistan-Pakistan issue. Tensions between the Kabul and Islamabad governments — which stretch back many decades — have at times reached alarming levels in recent years, with top Afghan officials accusing Pakistan of manipulating Islamic militancy in the region to destabilize Afghanistan. Likewise, U.S. military commanders overseeing operations in Afghanistan have since 2003 complained that renegade Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters remain able to attack coalition troops in there, then escape across the Pakistani frontier. They have expressed dismay at the slow pace of progress in capturing wanted fugitives in Pakistan and urge Islamabad to do more to secure its rugged western border area. U.S. government officials and independent experts have voiced similar worries, even expressing concern that elements of Pakistan's military and intelligence agencies might be assisting members of the Taliban. In late 2006, the Commander of the U.S. European Command told a Senate panel it was "generally accepted" that the Taliban headquarters is somewhere in the vicinity of Quetta, the capital of Pakistan's southwestern Baluchistan province.¹⁴

¹² "Frontier Insurgency Spills Into Peshawar," *New York Times*, January 18, 2008; "Taliban Spreading Across Pakistan," *McClatchy Newspapers*, January 29, 2008; "In Northwestern Pakistan, Where Militants Rule," *Christian Science Monitor*, February 28, 2008.

¹³ Transcript: House Select Committee on Intelligence Holds Hearing on Al Qaeda, April 9, 2008; "U.S. Cites Big Gains Against Al Qaeda," *Washington Post*, May 30, 2008; "CIA: Pakistan Border's Clear and Present Danger," *Associated Press*, March 30, 2008.

¹⁴ Statement of Gen. James Jones before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, September 21, 2006. See also "In the Land of the Taliban," *New York Times*, October 22, 2006; "Next-Gen Taliban," *New York Times*, January 6, 2008. The Pakistani Taliban differ from their Afghan brethren in several respects, perhaps most significantly in a lack of organization and cohesion, and they possess no unified leadership council. Moreover, the Pakistani Taliban appear to have more limited objectives, in contrast with the Afghan Taliban who are struggling to regain national power in Kabul. At the same time, however, both groups pledge fealty to a single leader — Mullah Omar — and both share fundamental policy objectives with regard to U.S. and other Western government roles in the region (see "The Emergence of the Pakistani Taliban," *Jane's Islamic Affairs Analyst*, January 1, 2008).

Pakistan's mixed record on battling Islamist extremism includes an ongoing apparent tolerance of Taliban elements operating from its territory. The "Kandahari clique" reportedly operates not from Pakistan's tribal areas, but from populated areas in and around the Baluchistan provincial capital of Quetta. Many analysts believe that Pakistan's intelligence services know the whereabouts of these Afghan Taliban leadership elements and likely even maintain active contacts with them at some level as part of a hedge strategy in the region. Reports continue to indicate that elements of Pakistan's major intelligence agency and military forces aid the Taliban and other extremists forces as a matter of policy. Such support may even include providing training and fire support for Taliban offensives.¹⁵ Other reports indicate that U.S. military personnel are unable to count on the Pakistani military for battlefield support and do not trust Pakistan's Frontier Corps, whom some say are active facilitators of militant infiltration into Afghanistan. At least one senior U.S. Senator has questioned the wisdom of providing U.S. aid to a group that is ineffective, at best, and may even be providing support to "terrorists."¹⁶

Pakistan's New Efforts to Negotiate Settlements With Militant Elements . For the first time in more than eight years, the United States must deal with a new political structure in Islamabad, one that has fundamentally differing views not on the need to combat religious extremism, but on the methods by which to do so. Pakistan's new civilian leaders have called for renewed efforts at negotiating with the country's Pashtun tribal leaders and pro-Taliban militants, claiming a strategy reliant on military confrontation had backfired and allowed the militants to become stronger and more influential. Prime Minister Gillani insists that his government will not negotiate with "terrorists" nor with "anyone refusing to lay down arms." His foreign minister, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, has said the new government believes in "political engagement." He reportedly has assured Secretary of State Rice that Pakistan would "continue its role in the international struggle against terrorism."¹⁷ The Islamabad government insists it will maintain the army's presence in "restive areas" and is negotiating only with elements willing to lay down arms, and not with terrorists or militants. Pakistani military officials claim that "monitoring mechanisms" not included in past peace deals will ensure the success of present efforts.¹⁸ Truce deals reportedly have been struck in the Swat Valley and may be near completion in several of the tribal agencies.

Most Pakistani analysts appear to welcome the new government's policy shift and maintain some optimism that representatives of the people can succeed where past efforts have failed. Yet some commentators there are less sanguine and warn that without assurances that militants will end attacks across the Durand Line, peace agreements will not serve Pakistan's core interests and are bound to fail.¹⁹ One senior Pakistani political pundit called the May truce deal in Swat "the most abject surrender of state sovereignty in Pakistani history" and he predicted that the government's "opportunism" would lead to a worsening of Pakistan-U.S. relations.²⁰

¹⁵ See, for example, Ashley Tellis, "Pakistan's Mixed Record on Anti-Terrorism" (interview), February 6, 2008, at [<http://www.cfr.org/publication/15424>]; "Killing Ourselves in Afghanistan," *Salon.com*, March 10, 2008.

¹⁶ "Border Complicates War in Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, April 4, 2008; "Democrat Questions US Aid to Pakistan," *Associated Press*, May 27, 2008.

¹⁷ Yousaf Raza Gillani, "Pakistan's Moment" (op-ed), *Washington Post*, April 30, 2008; [http://www.mofa.gov.pk/Press_Releases/2008/April/PR_087_08.htm].

¹⁸ "Pakistan Seeks to Allay West's Fears of Army Pull Out," *Reuters*, May 18, 2008; "There Are Mechanisms in the Agreements This Time to Ensure Success" (interview), *Friday Times* (Lahore), May 30, 2008.

¹⁹ "Engaging the Mehsuds" (editorial), *Dawn* (Karachi), and "Truce With Taliban Won't Last" (editorial), *Daily Times* (Lahore), both April 25, 2008.

²⁰ Najam Sethi, "No Man's Land" (op-ed), *Friday Times* (Lahore), May 23, 2008.

Despite acknowledged setbacks — and a widely held view that the new government's dialogue efforts are destined to fail — the Bush Administration claims to strongly support Islamabad's efforts to adopt a more comprehensive approach to include economic and social development, and governance reform in the region, flowing in part from an acknowledgment that purely military solutions are unlikely to succeed.²¹ The Administration seeks to significantly increase development aid to the FATA to bolster Islamabad's own efforts there. Islamabad and Washington may, however, increasingly be at odds over counterterrorism strategy. An emphasis on negotiation alarms U.S. officials, who are concerned that such a tack would only allow extremist elements the space in which to consolidate their own positions, as appeared to be the case when truces were struck in 2005 and 2006.²² During his late March visit to Islamabad, Deputy Secretary of State Negroponte asserted that “irreconcilable elements” cannot be dealt with through negotiation. In early May, Negroponte was emphatic about U.S. apprehensions:

Let me be clear: we will not be satisfied until all the violent extremism emanating from the FATA is brought under control. It is unacceptable for extremists to use those areas to plan, train for, or execute attacks against Afghanistan, Pakistan, or the wider world.

He expressed being “concerned” and “skeptical” about official Pakistani efforts to negotiate with the region's extremist elements.²³

A key metric for the United States in gauging the value of truce deals will thus be the extent to which militants refrain from using tribal regions to plan and launch terrorist attacks. So far, the signs are not encouraging. Violent attacks against Afghan and NATO troops in Afghanistan reportedly have increased significantly in recent months, and Pakistani officials are showing signs of diminished concern about the cross-border movement of Pashtun militants at a cost to U.S. interests.²⁴ In a development alarming to Western military commanders, Pakistan appears to have suspended its participation in Tripartite Commission meetings with U.S., Afghan, and NATO officials to discuss cross-border issues.²⁵ Meanwhile, international donors and lending agencies appear hesitant to finance projects in the region while the security situation remains tense, and some in the U.S. government reportedly are wary of infusing development aid that could end up in the hands of elements unfriendly to U.S. interests.²⁶

Many independent analysts counsel U.S. patience that would allow the demoralized Pakistan army to recover from past setbacks as well as allowing the new civilian dispensation in Islamabad to win more broad public support for the battle against terrorism. A fundamental respect for Pakistan democracy would, from this perspective, seem to require U.S. government

²¹ Statement of Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia, “Regional Overview of South Asia,” March 7, 2007.

²² “Pakistan's Planned Accord With Militants Alarms U.S.,” *New York Times*, April 30, 2008.

²³ See [<http://www.state.gov/s/d/2008/104366.htm>].

²⁴ The outgoing commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan, U.S. Gen. Dan McNeill, has said he is “troubled” by Pakistan's negotiations with insurgent groups, noting that violence in eastern Afghanistan increases significantly when truces are arranged on the Pakistani side of the Durand Line. NATO's top commander has echoed the concerns (“ISAF Commander ‘Troubled’ by Pakistan Negotiations,” *Jane's Defense Weekly*, May 21, 2008; “Nato ‘Concerned’ Over Pakistan,” *BBC News*, May 27, 2008).

²⁵ “NATO Chief in Afghanistan Says Pakistan's Tack on Militants is Not As Expected,” *New York Times*, May 30, 2008.

²⁶ “Aid to Pakistan in Tribal Areas Raises Concerns,” *New York Times*, July 16, 2007.

tolerance for Islamabad's approach, at least in the near-term.²⁷ One former Bush State Department official favors cautious U.S. support for Pakistan's deal-making efforts, offering that Islamabad appears to have learned from past mistakes, that the new civilian government there needs the "breathing space" that cease-fires could bring, that Pakistani security forces need time to recover from a recent series of setbacks, and that truces could open the space to initiate new development projects. He does acknowledge, however, that the United States must carefully monitor the progress and outcome of such negotiations.²⁸

Among the most irreconcilable of elements in western Pakistan may be Baitullah Mehsud, the Waziri militant commander named as a prime suspect in the assassination of Benazir Bhutto and in numerous other domestic suicide bomb attacks. Mehsud refuses to recognize the Durand Line as a legitimate frontier and he explicitly rules out any end to the "jihad in Afghanistan."²⁹ The NWFP governor has claimed Mehsud oversees an annual budget of up to three billion Pakistani rupees (about \$45 million) devoted to perpetuating regional militancy. Most of this amount is thought to be raised through narcotics trafficking. Mehsud and his top lieutenants also reportedly are being used by the government as conduits for the payment of compensation to locals who have been negatively affected by fighting in South Waziristan.³⁰

Many analysts — both in Pakistan and beyond — insist that only by bringing the tribal areas under the full writ of the Pakistani state and facilitating major economic development there can the FATA problem be resolved. Officials of the newly seated Islamabad government appear to agree.³¹ From this perspective, any policies that strengthen the hands of destabilizing, anti-state elements such as Baitullah Mehsud can be considered counterproductive. Decision makers in Washington now face the difficult task of encouraging and materially supporting a holistic, long-term Pakistani approach to its militancy problem while simultaneously making clear to Islamabad's leaders that religious extremists intent on pursuing a violent international jihad represent a threat to all concerned parties and should be neutralized in the near-term.

U.S.-Pakistan Counterterrorism Cooperation . With a drastic increase in violent attacks in Pakistan in the latter half of 2007 — especially those targeting the country's security forces — it was hoped that Pakistan's military leadership might take a more welcoming view of U.S. offers of direct military assistance. Yet reports suggest that U.S. officials remain frustrated by signs that the Pakistani military is slow to shift away from a conventional war strategy focused on India. These officials have made clear that the United States stands ready to assist Pakistan in "reorienting" its army for counterinsurgency efforts, even if the now explicit U.S. readiness to increase bilateral counterterrorism cooperation is described by some as expressed to Islamabad in the form of "pressure."³² One recent first-person account by a well-known Pakistani journalist quoted Pakistani Army Chief Gen. Kayani as openly declining to "retrain or

²⁷ See, for example, Ashley Tellis, "Pakistan's New Tack on Fighting Terror," *YaleGlobal Online*, May 9, 2008.

²⁸ Daniel Markey, "Why Pakistan Plays 'Let's Make a Deal,'" *Foreign Policy*, May 2008.

²⁹ "Pakistani Taliban Leader Vows Jihad in Afghanistan," *Reuters*, May 24, 2008.

³⁰ "Mehsud Spending Up to 3bn on Militancy Annually: Ghani," *Daily Times* (Lahore), May 30, 2008; "Baitullah Now Govt's Trusted Ally," *News* (Karachi), May 31, 2008.

³¹ Barnett Rubin and Abubakar Siddique, "Resolving the Pakistan-Afghanistan Stalemate," U.S. Institute of Peace Special Report 176, October 2006; "Pakistan's Tribal Areas: Appeasing the Militants," International Crisis Group Asia Report 125, December 11, 2006; "BB's Assassination Reshaped History of Pakistan: Sherry Rehman," *Associated Press of Pakistan*, May 30, 2008.

³² "New Bid to Control Pakistan's Tribal Belt," *Christian Science Monitor*, January 31, 2008; "Pakistan's Musharraf Says No to US Troops," *Associated Press*, January 24, 2008.

re-equip troops to fight the counterinsurgency war the Americans are demanding.” Instead, according to this author, Kayani intends to keep the bulk of his forces on the Indian frontier.³³

The United States has limited options for directly addressing ongoing religious militancy in Pakistan, and Pakistani officials remain adamant in their rejection of U.S. proposals for greater direct U.S. military action on Pakistani territory.³⁴ Missile strikes in Pakistan launched by armed, unmanned American Predator aircraft have been a controversial, but sometimes effective tactic against Islamist militants in remote regions of western Pakistan. By some accounts, U.S. officials reached a quiet January understanding with President Musharraf to allow for increased employment of U.S. aerial surveillance and Predator strikes against suspected terrorist targets on Pakistani territory. With the defeat of Musharraf-allied parties in Parliament, many in Washington are concerned that this policy will be curtailed.³⁵ Indeed, an apparent mid-May Predator strike in the Bajaur agency may have killed a mid-level Al Qaeda operative, along with several civilians. Prime Minister Gillani strongly condemned the attack, calling the killing of “innocent people” “absolutely wrong” and “unfair.”³⁶

Prime Minister Gillani’s strong words may be seen to reflect a widely held Pakistani view that the United States has been selfish and myopic in pursuit of its own national interests, taking actions that are “penny wise and pound foolish.” Among the costs of such a tack appears to be a further increase in anti-Americanism in Pakistan. Recognition of Pakistan’s legitimate security interests and concerns regarding Afghanistan, and active support for warmer Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, are further explicit and noncontroversial U.S. policies. Yet on this topic we can identify another vigorous and ongoing debate over the extent to which the United States is genuinely committed to a long-term role in the region that will address Pakistani concerns. Perhaps first among these is Islamabad’s persevering perception of India as the leading threat to Pakistani security. This leads some commentators to urge a greater U.S. role in efforts toward a Pakistan-India rapprochement.

Pakistani Public Opinion

Nearly all empirical evidence suggests that anti-American sentiments are widespread in Pakistan. There is a tragic irony to this development, given Pakistan’s official status as a major non-NATO ally and key partner in U.S.-led counterterrorism efforts. The animosity appears rooted in a general disapproval of U.S. global policies and a specific resentment of U.S. policy toward Pakistan, itself. In a 2005 interview, President Musharraf conceded that “the man on the street [in Pakistan] does not have a good opinion of the United States.” He added, by way of partial explanation, that Pakistan had been “left high and dry” after serving as a strategic U.S. ally during the 1980s.³⁷ Some Pakistanis argue that their current “Waziristan problem” is largely traceable to U.S. policies in the region; my own interactions with Pakistani nationals of all stripes commonly touch upon this historical narrative.³⁸ Opinion polls consistently show a

³³ Ahmed Rashid, “Pakistan’s Worrisome Pullback,” *Washington Post*, June 6, 2008.

³⁴ “Islamabad Tribal Deals Spark Concerns,” *Financial Times* (London), May 15, 2008; “Pakistan Defies U.S. on Halting Afghanistan Raids,” *New York Times*, May 16, 2008.

³⁵ “Pakistan Shift Could Curtail Drone Strikes,” *New York Times*, February 22, 2008; “US Launches Waziristan UAV Strike With Tacit Pakistani Approval,” *Jane’s Defense Weekly*, March 19, 2008.

³⁶ “Anger After Apparent U.S. Missile Strike in Pakistan,” *Reuters*, May 15, 2008.

³⁷ “10 Questions for Pervez Musharraf,” *Time*, October 3, 2005.

³⁸ From this perspective, the United States essentially abandoned the region after infusing it with money and arms during the 1980s, thus “leaving the jihadi baby in Pakistan’s lap.” Furthermore, a U.S. failure to decisively defeat Afghan Taliban remnants in 2002, a diversion of key resources to the war in Iraq and the recruiting boon that war provided to jihadi groups, and a perceived over-reliance on allegedly ill-

significant segment of the Pakistani public citing U.S. support for President Musharraf and the Pakistani military as having been an impediment to, rather than facilitator of, the process of democratization there. Some will go further in identifying Musharraf's so-called "U.S. dictated" military policies in western Pakistan as the central cause of the spate of suicide bombings that plagued the country in 2007 and early 2008.

A major poll taken shortly before Pakistan's catastrophic October 2005 earthquake found only 23% of Pakistanis expressing a favorable view of the United States, the lowest percentage for any country surveyed. That percentage doubled to 46% in an ACNielsen poll taken after large-scale U.S. disaster relief efforts in earthquake-affected areas, with the great majority of Pakistanis indicating that their perceptions had been positively influenced by witnessing such efforts. However, a January 2006 missile attack on Pakistani homes near the Afghan border killed numerous civilians and was blamed on U.S. forces, renewing animosity toward the United States. Another noteworthy episode in 2006 saw Pakistani cities hosting major public demonstrations against the publication in European newspapers of cartoons deemed offensive to Muslims. These protests, which were violent at times, included strong anti-U.S. and anti-Musharraf components, suggesting that Islamist organizers used the issue to forward their own political ends. Subsequently, a June 2006 Pew Center poll found only 27% of Pakistanis holding a favorable opinion of the United States, and this dropped to 19% in a September 2007 survey by the U.S.-based group Terror Free Tomorrow, suggesting that public diplomacy gains following the 2005 earthquake had receded.³⁹

In January 2008, the University of Maryland-based Program on International Policy Attitudes released a survey of public opinion in Pakistan. The findings indicated that significant resentment toward and distrust of the United States persist among large segments of the Pakistani public:

- 64% of Pakistanis do not trust the United States to "do the right thing in world affairs;"
- more than two-thirds believe the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan is "a critical threat to Pakistan's interests;"
- only 27% feel that Pakistan-U.S. security cooperation has benefitted Pakistan; and
- 86% believe that weakening and dividing the Muslim world is a U.S. goal (70% believe this is "definitely" the case).⁴⁰

Another public opinion survey conducted the same month found nearly three-quarters of Pakistanis agreeing that religious extremism represented a serious problem for their country, yet only one-third supported Pakistani army operations against religious militants in western Pakistan, and a scant 9% thought Pakistan should cooperate with the United States in its "war on terror."⁴¹

These consistent survey findings should give pause to any informed observer and serve as a stark reminder that the national interest and the human interest do not always correspond in the

equipped NATO troops all combined to build and sustain in western Pakistan a religious extremist movement that did not previously exist (see, for example, Ali Abbas Rizvi, "American Connection to the Waziristan Problem" (op-ed), *News* (Karachi), January 29, 2008).

³⁹ See [http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=252] and [http://www.terrorfreetomorrow.org/upimagestft/Pakistan%20Poll%20Report.pdf].

⁴⁰ See [http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/jan08/Pakistan_Jan08_rpt.pdf].

⁴¹ See [http://www.iri.org/mena/pakistan/2008-02-11-pakistan.asp].

minds of ordinary citizens. It may be something of a cliché in policy circles to aver that Pakistanis need to recognize the fight against religious militancy as being in their own best interests. This does not seem to be a point that American interlocutors can force upon them. We at the Congressional Research Service are not aware that weakening and dividing the Muslim world is among the goals of U.S. foreign policy, meaning that a huge majority of the Pakistani people appear to be misapprehending the role the United States wishes to play in its relations with their country. To the extent that these misapprehensions persist, they are likely to create a formidable obstacle to the kind of genuine, mutually-held trust and respect that could benefit the governments and peoples of both countries.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. I am ready to answer any questions you may have.