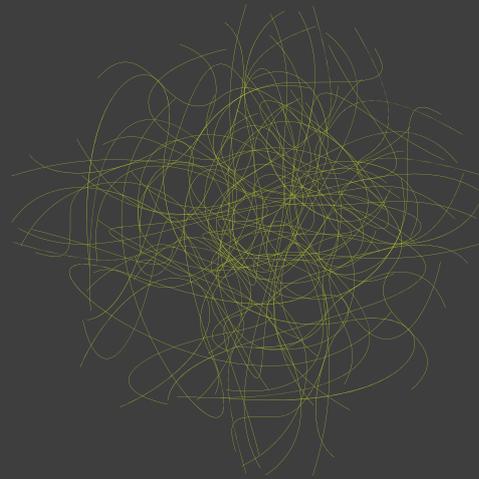


**Sources of Tension
in Afghanistan and
Pakistan: A Regional
Perspective**

**Building a
Secure Future
for Pakistan:
A Role for the EU**

Gerald Stang

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BUILDING A SECURE FUTURE FOR PAKISTAN: A ROLE FOR THE EU

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1) Introduction

The last decade has seen frustration in Europe and the United States (US) about Pakistan's role in the Afghanistan conflict and in the fight against terrorism. The 2003 European Security Strategy lists a series of security threats facing the European Union (EU): terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts (with Kashmir listed first), state failure, and organised crime.¹ Pakistan, in conjunction with its neighbour Afghanistan, is a potential worry for everyone. While newspaper headlines may give the impression that these problems are acute and unsolvable, however, Pakistan today is actually better placed to cooperate with the EU in confronting these threats than at any time in the past decade.

Pakistan's nuclear weapons program continues to be a worry for the international community, but progress has slowly been made in recent years.² As North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) forces count down the days to their departure from Afghanistan, Pakistani opinion has become increasingly focused on the need for shaping some kind of durable peace. Most Pakistani leaders recognise both the improbability and undesirability of a new Taliban regime in Afghanistan and recognise that it is in Pakistan's interest to have a stable Afghan neighbour. Following the sharp increases in internal militancy since 2007, Pakistan has also slowly started to recognise the costs of sheltering and supporting terror groups that can attack India or other targets. Now that Pakistan has transitioned from military rule, Pakistan's international partners have an opportunity to increase engagement with Pakistan and develop a better relationship.

For the US, taking advantage of this opportunity will be difficult, as US actions are viewed with almost uniform negativity by the Pakistani public. The US has built a long-standing military relationship with Pakistan, but this has proven insufficient at advancing stability in Pakistan and security for the region. The EU, however, does not suffer from the same trust deficit with Pakistan. While the US will continue to be the primary point of focus for the Pakistani government, the EU will have increasing space to forge a partnership with Pakistan that addresses key EU interests.

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1. Council of the European Union, 'A Secure Europe in a Better World - European Security Strategy,' 12 December 2003; The strategic importance of Pakistan for these threats was explicitly recognised by the EU Council statement, 'Strengthening EU Action in Afghanistan and Pakistan,' 27 October, 2009.
2. Kerr, Paul K. and Mary Beth Nikitin, 'Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons: Proliferation and Security Issues,' 2011.

In 2012, the EU and Pakistan signalled their intent to build a broad political relationship by initiating a Strategic Dialogue and signing a new EU-Pakistan 5-Year Engagement Plan covering counter-terrorism, disarmament, narcotics, democracy, human rights, trade, agriculture, energy and science and technology.³ Giving life to the Plan will involve a focus of time and resources on a limited set of priority areas that meet the interests of both parties.

This paper argues that the best way for the EU to shape its relationship with Pakistan is with a framework that prioritises support for democratic consolidation. This should involve the designation of governance and human rights as the primary sector of focus in the EU aid program and the designation of Pakistan as an EU Strategic Partner. The first section of the paper reviews the status of the relationship between the EU and Pakistan today. The second section looks at the importance of democratic consolidation for development and the pursuit of regional security goals. The next two sections analyse what factors are supportive of democratic consolidation in Pakistan and what challenges need to be overcome. The final section outlines ideas for how the EU could frame its relationship with Pakistan.

2) Trade, Aid & Security: The EU-Pakistan Relationship Today

The EU generally includes the language of support for human rights and democracy in its international relationships, but how much priority these issues receive varies according to the relationship. Due to Pakistan's importance for the conflict in Afghanistan following 9/11, European and American governments were relatively supportive of the Musharraf dictatorship, offering it significant economic support with little pressure to democratise. Since Musharraf was thrown from power in 2008, the EU has given positive signals towards the new civilian regime, upgrading engagement at the political level with summits in 2009, 2010 and 2012, and slowly increasing support for governance activities. Despite these indicators, however, Pakistan has remained relatively low on the agenda in Brussels. No parliamentary delegation exists for Pakistan, though there are delegations for India and for Afghanistan. For Pakistan, the EU is not high on the agenda, being seen primarily as an export market.

Trade

The EU is Pakistan's largest market, importing a quarter of all Pakistani exports, well ahead of the next largest markets, the US (15%) and Afghanistan (11%).⁴ The new 5-year Engagement Plan calls for expansion of this trade and work toward a free trade agreement (FTA). Pakistan is primarily interested in reduced EU tariffs so that it can export more clothing, textiles and leather products, which together account for 87% of their exports to the EU. The limited diversity of Pakistani exports places them in direct competition with many other poor countries seeking better access to the EU market. Pakistan benefits from enhanced access to the EU market through the generalised system of preferences (GSP) which allow almost 20% of Pakistani exports to enter the EU duty-free and another 70% to enter at a preferential rate. Approval for granting Pakistan GSP+ preferences is on hold pending 'effective implementation' of human rights and labour standards.

3. European Union External Action Service (EEAS), 'EU-Pakistan 5-year Engagement Plan,' February 2012.

4. World Trade Organisation, Pakistan Country Profile, September 2012.

Ranking 47th among EU trade partners, Pakistan has not been a priority for EU trade initiatives. Following the 2010 floods, however, the European Council approved a unique plan to grant Pakistan Autonomous Trade Preferences (ATP) as a form of economic support. Because the ATP package was specific to Pakistan, the EU required a World Trade Organisation (WTO) waiver. Pakistan and the EU lobbied other WTO members, eventually narrowing the list of eligible items and adding quotas on others, diluting the original measure.⁵ India was originally opposed but when Pakistan granted India most favoured nation trade status in 2011, India approved the waiver. The eventual agreement of India and Bangladesh to accept improved Pakistani access to EU markets may be interpreted as a small success for the EU role in facilitating regional economic cooperation. However, even though the WTO passed the waiver in February 2012, late approval by the EU Parliament meant that the intended provisions did not enter into force until November 2012, barely a year before their scheduled expiry at the end of 2013. The extensive efforts put into the ATP process may thus have limited impact. For comparison, the US made plans for Reconstruction Opportunity Zones to allow exports from the regions near the border with Afghanistan to have duty-free access to the US, but the idea stalled. The US also has a GSP program but since textiles are excluded, the program is of limited use for Pakistan.

Aid

In addition to several hundred million Euros in humanitarian aid, the EU earmarked €25 million in development aid over the 2007-13 period.⁶ While not insignificant, support from EU institutions ranks behind the US, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank and the UK. The UK has a diverse aid program involving sector budget support, technical cooperation and humanitarian aid totalling almost £600 million between 2005/06 and 2009/10.⁷ Total US aid to Pakistan dwarfs EU support and is expected to total almost USD\$19 billion over the 2007-13 period, approximately 60% of it security-related.⁸

Current EU aid to Pakistan prioritises two focal sectors. The first is rural development and natural resources management in Khyber-Pakhtunkwa (KP) and Balochistan, aimed at reducing regional disparities and promoting stability. Unrest and limited government capacity in these provinces has slowed progress in this sector. The second focal sector of education and human resources development has had more success, particularly in helping build capacity of provincial education reform units. These two focal sectors absorbed almost 80% of the aid budget for the 2007-13 period. Much of the support has been directed to civil society groups, NGOs and international development organisations with limited support channelled through the different levels of Pakistani government.⁹ In planning its aid program, the EU seems influenced by the view of Pakistan as a volatile country in need of regional 'stabilisation' through economic development programs.¹⁰ The Pakistani government's 2009 'Malakand Comprehensive Stabilisation and Socio-economic Development Strategy' describes a host of security, governance, economic development and education goals that can contribute to 'stabilisation' and reduced militancy. Donors, including the EU, responded to the short term stabilisation idea as a response to the 2009 crisis. This short-term stabilisation

5. Interview with EC official 7 June 2012.

6. European Community, 'Pakistan- European Community - Country Strategy Paper for 2007-13'; European Commission, 'Conclusions of the Mid-Term Review of the Country Strategy Paper for Pakistan (2007-13) and Multiannual Indicative Programme 2011-13', 2010.

7. UK Department for International Development, Statistics on International Development 2011, 'Total DFID Expenditure and GPEX by Recipient Country (Asia)' for Pakistan for the years 2005/06-2009/10.

8. US Congressional Research Service, 'Direct Overt U.S. Aid Appropriations and Military Reimbursements to Pakistan, FY2002-FY2013,' February 29 2012.

9. European Union, 'Summary of EU-Pakistan Cooperation,' November 2011.

10. See European Commission, 'Conclusions of the Mid-Term Review ...', 2010, p.5; Interview with member of EU delegation to Pakistan, 10 July 2012.

view, while understandable in periods of crisis response, diverts attention from longer-term focus on the construction of a strong democratic Pakistani government to lead development and security improvements.

Most aid is not delivered through the state due to problems with fiscal management and corruption. The EU provides a limited amount of sector budget support for health and financial services and has a successful government support program to help build capacity for managing education reforms in Sindh and KP. The EU has recognised the importance of cooperating with the Pakistani government on governance and improved public financial management (PFM), working with the UK, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank on PFM reforms, but following up with support and pressure for implementation has not been a priority for the EU or Pakistan.¹¹

Between 2007 and 2009, support for democratisation and human rights constituted 7% of EC support, primarily focused on civil society efforts to ensure access to justice.¹² Following the 2008 election of the Zardari government, the EU increased support for governance, democracy and human rights. For the years 2010 to 2013, this sector accounted for 22% of the total aid budget but is still considered a non-focal sector. Much of this funding was targeted at support for civil society groups working on human rights issues. The EU also funds democratic support projects including the 'Support for Electoral Reforms' project to help electoral legislation meet international standards, and the 'Improving Parliamentary Performance' program with the goal of improving management capacity of elected representatives, secretariats and committees.

Security

Despite efforts to expand trade and aid programs, the US remains primarily a security partner for Pakistan, having developed long-standing military and intelligence partnerships. The UK has also been a partner to Pakistan on military and intelligence issues, though Washington remains, by far, the most important security partner for Pakistan.¹³ The EU has increasingly acted as a convener of member state work for counter-terrorism issues, but this trend has had limited impact on bilateral external relationships like the one with Pakistan. Like many countries, Pakistan often prefers to work through existing relationships with individual EU member states, rather than navigate the complex, evolving and member state-dependent foreign policy decision-making process of Brussels. This issue is particularly relevant in the security field, where the EU has no independent military power or unique intelligence capacity for working with counter-terrorism partners. The EU's only explicit counter-terrorism project in Pakistan was funding for a National Counter-Terrorism Authority, but political wrangling in Islamabad prevented its institutionalisation.

Counter-terrorism, however, can also be pursued through other efforts such as security sector reform. Reform of the judicial system and civilian police agencies has become a major point of discussion in the international community.¹⁴ Under the Instrument for Stability mechanism, the EU has funded a civilian law enforcement capacity building mission in Balochistan since 2010, though the small program has not been well

11. European Commission, 'Conclusions of the Mid-Term Review...' 2010, p.37, 69-70; Interview with member of EU Delegation to Pakistan, 10 July 2012.

12. European Commission, 'Conclusions of the Mid-Term Review...' 2010, p.32

13. See UK Cabinet Office, 'UK policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan: the way forward,' April 2009.

14. See International Crisis Group reports: 'Reforming the Judiciary in Pakistan,' (2008), 'Reforming Pakistan's Police,' (2008), 'Reforming Pakistan's Criminal Justice System' (2010) ; Abbas, Hassan (ed.), 'Stabilizing Pakistan through Police Reform,' 2012.

situated within a broader Pakistani strategy or wider EU engagement on the topic.¹⁵

The Country Strategy Paper (CSP) argues that the EU can best help address security issues by reducing poverty and promoting good governance and that *“The EU/EC has supported Pakistan’s prominent role in the fight against terror by increasing market access.”*¹⁶ The idea that the EU can use its trade clout to be a security actor is an appealing one, but unsupported. The theoretical linkages connecting liberal market access to economic development and then to changing political and security conditions are uncertain. Evidence from a major survey across Pakistan in 2011 indicates a negative relationship between poverty and support for militancy in Pakistan.¹⁷ A more realistic approach would recognise that the economic benefits that flow from increased trade and development aid are helpful for poverty reduction in the long term, but cannot be counted upon to lead to a reduction in support for militancy or to change the political equations at the root of political violence in the country.

3) Why Democratic Consolidation is Important for Pakistan

Pakistan is poor, Muslim, beset by violent militants and has a political culture that has often been described as ‘feudal’. These are not characteristics that one normally associates with successful democratic systems. Pakistani democracy clearly has challenges to overcome, so it is important to understand what the benefits are of focusing on democratic consolidation.

Better Conflict Management

The fight against terrorism, militancy, violent separatism, and sectarian violence can be most effectively pursued by a democratic government responsive to the rule of law. Effective democratic governance can undermine incentives to violence by opening up access to the decision-making process. It can also provide a more effective response to violence by right of a stronger claim to political legitimacy in the pursuit of police and military action to protect the states and its citizens.

The peaceful effects of implementing democratic mechanisms will take time to materialise as the institutions and culture of democratic practice become entrenched. This has proven to be more difficult in poor countries like Pakistan than in countries with better socio-economic conditions.¹⁸ In Pakistan, various military dictators have badly mismanaged political conflict. This was seen in 1971 in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and today in Balochistan, where heavy-handed military actions have stoked resentment without containing nationalist and separatist violence. Decision-making on key issues in Balochistan has remained with the military and intelligence agencies and the paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC).¹⁹

It can also be seen in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) along the border with Afghanistan, where 60 years of misgovernance by

15. Interview with EEAS officials, 6 June 2012.

16. European Community, ‘Pakistan-European Community - Country Strategy Paper for 2007-13,’ p.15.

17. Fair et al, ‘Democratic Values and Support for Militancy: Evidence from a National Survey of Pakistan’2011.

18. Paul Collier and Dominic Rohner, ‘Democracy, Development and Conflict,’ 2008, pp. 531–540.

19. Rumi, Raza Ahmad, ‘Pakistan: Ungoverned Spaces’, 2012, p.10.

centrally appointed political agents and official *maliks* has politically marginalised the population. Never having been subject to the same federal laws or allowed to appeal to the same courts, FATA has been misruled for decades. The rise of *jihadi* mullahs and overflow from the war in Afghanistan in the last decade has violently disrupted this system and highlighted the need for a better governance framework. The problem is more than just one of governance capacity but of the *"inability of the postcolonial state to define, negotiate and respect citizenship. There is an urgent need for democratization and shifting the focus on 'human security' from the archaic notions of 'national security'..."*²⁰

President Zardari's 2011 reforms of the Frontier Crimes Regulation and the extension of the Political Party Order are a step in the right direction, but the recent changes are partial and controversial.²¹ The continuation of civil rule in Islamabad is essential for continued reform in FATA. Much more is required to limit the military's right to act with impunity in the region and to extend full citizenship rights to the people of the region, but only civilian governments have proven willing to take concrete steps toward these goals.

Economic Stabilisation & Improved Resource Allocation

For developing countries, democratic rulers have not always proven better at economic management. For a fledgling democracy like Pakistan, however, political stability is essential for creating an attractive environment for investment and growth. Any military threat of regime change, and with it the expectation of a second eventual regime change at the end of temporary military rule, is likely to be economically disruptive. As democracy stabilises, Pakistan can also benefit from a reduction in the influence of the Pakistani army in domestic affairs, leading to more transparent management of military budgets and reallocation of resources toward health, education and infrastructure. Because of genuine national security challenges, military expenditures will likely continue to be high under any government, but civilian control over military expenditure would likely result in a different use of resources.

Improved International Relations

A democratic Pakistan presents a face to the world that can improve its relations with other democratic states, including India. The problem of understanding the multiple, seemingly independent actors within the military and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), and their divergent aims, would become less acute if all were to become genuinely responsive to a central civilian government. Pakistan's international security challenges will not disappear even after the civilian regime wins control of security policy from the military because, at least in broad terms, their views on India and Afghanistan have not been divergent. Civilian governments have struggled to conclude a successful peace deal with India for the same reasons that military governments have. Public opinion has resisted any permanent deal with India that did not resolve the Kashmir problem in Pakistan's favour. When Musharraf came close to a deal with India in 2007, pushback from his generals convinced him that he would be unable to sell the deal to Kashmiri militants or to the general public.²²

20. Rumi, Raza Ahmad, 'Pakistan: Ungoverned Spaces', 2012, p.16.

21. FATA Research Centre, 'FCR Amendments: A way forward or hurdle for Peace and Development in FATA,' 2012.

22. Coll, Steve, 'The Back Channel: India and Pakistan's Secret Kashmir Talks,' 2009.

Recent advances in trade discussions have shown that both India and Pakistan are interested in trade and visa liberalisation.²³ The Pakistani military appears increasingly open to an improved relationship with India, but winning over public opinion and other domestic constituencies, notably the intelligence services and the often obstructive bureaucracy, will require time and political finesse.²⁴ It remains uncertain whether these hesitant steps on trade will lead to normalisation in the absence of agreements over security, terrorism and Kashmir, but democratic consolidation in Pakistan would remove one of the major planks that India has used to delegitimise Pakistan's claims on the thorniest issues.

4) A Democratic Pakistan – Why It Can Work this Time

With the most recent period of civilian rule beginning amidst economic decline, domestic insurgency and war on its border, hopes for successful consolidation of civilian rule have not been high. These dire conditions are compounded by the fact that the current president, Asif Ali Zardari, widely derided for his allegedly high level of corruption, inherited his party's leadership following the murder of the most popular politician in the country, his wife, Benazir Bhutto. Despite these difficulties, however, the Zardari-led Pakistan People's Party (PPP) government is close to finishing its full term. Should the upcoming 2013 national elections take place as planned, it will mark the first successful civilian transfer of power in Pakistan's history. While there are no guarantees that democracy will flourish, there are several factors that indicate that the current efforts at democratic consolidation have a good chance of succeeding.

First, Pakistan already retains the political and legal institutions necessary to frame and protect a democratic system, including a democratic constitution, independent judiciary, elected parliament and a federal system with shared power at multiple levels. Pakistan may not earn top marks for the functioning of these institutions, particularly the poorly attended parliament, but it does not fail any of them. The federal system, in particular, is being strengthened by an ongoing, widely supported decentralisation of power from the presidency and from the capital. Specifically, the Zardari government's 2010 passage of the 18th constitutional amendment to undo the consolidation of power in the presidency, and the 7th National Finance Commission (NFC) award to decentralise fiscal power to lower levels of government, were massively supported in parliament and by the provinces. It is unprecedented for a president to willingly see the power of his own position reduced and to win enough support from the political elite to accept decentralisation of both responsibility and finances. The implementation of these changes over the coming years will modify the exercise of political power, however, and will be the subject of political contestation. A poorly managed, under-funded process could prove disruptive, leading to confusion, corruption and conflict. Successful decentralisation, however, holds the potential to break the central monopoly of decision-making, bring resource decisions closer to citizens and re-legitimise the national project for small and excluded groups.

Second, there is broad, if conflicted, support for democracy. One 2011 poll found strong majorities support democratic values including property rights, free speech, independent courts, being ruled by elected

23. Price, Gareth, 'India and Pakistan: Changing the narratives', 2012, p.7.

24. Hooper, Emma, 'Military, Militants and Mandarins: prospects for trade and peace between two nuclear powers,' 2012.

representatives, civilian control of the military, and freedom of assembly.²⁵ Another 2011 poll indicated that 46% of Pakistanis said democracy was preferable to any other type of government, 19% indicated that “*in some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable*” while a full 35% didn’t know or indicated that it didn’t matter to them.²⁶ This suggests a disconnect between the government and its citizens, regardless of governance type.

The political classes also want democracy to succeed. Following the dismissal of both PPP and Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN) governments during the 1990s, the Pakistani political class has been broadly united in their preference for democratic continuity, reducing the likelihood that opposition politicians will ally with the military in a zero-sum challenge to whichever party is currently in power. The blueprint for this unity was laid out in the 2006 Charter of Democracy agreement between Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif. Despite the years of turbulent politics since then, agreements over the 18th constitutional amendment and the 7th NFC award, the passage of a record amount of legislation by the current parliament, and the completion of Zardari’s full term in office indicate that the Charter was more than empty rhetoric.

Third, countries which have had previous experience with democracy have proven more likely to succeed with democratic consolidation.²⁷ This underscores the importance of the coming 2013 elections in Pakistan. Pakistan has the advantage of having experienced democracy under more than one party, with both Benazir Bhutto’s PPP and Nawaz Sharif’s PML ruling during the 1990s. Optimism can also be found in the fact that the transition from military rule was publicly supported, relatively peaceful, and was situated within a debate over the rule of law in which the legitimate writ of law was widely recognised as having triumphed. A peaceful, well-managed transition from autocracy has been highlighted as one of the key elements in supporting democratic consolidation.²⁸

Fourth, the development of a vibrant media is changing politics in a country where political organisation has historically been described as feudal and top-down. Earlier democratic periods took place without a free press, but by 2012 the media had grown to include almost 100 private television channels and 115 private radio stations.²⁹ The media has helped fill an important accountability watchdog role that a weak parliament has struggled with in the face of public pressure over corruption. Not all is perfect, however, as Pakistan is one of the least safe places in the world to be a journalist and the government still pushes to constrain media voices on some issues through overuse of the Official Secrets Act and blasphemy law.³⁰ There is also a split between Urdu and English media in the focus of coverage and an ongoing debate over sensationalism, lack of professionalism and incentives to violence in the media. While not dismissible, such worries over media content are of second-order importance relative to the fact that multiple competing voices and visions are now available to the public. No one voice or idea can easily dominate public debate. Media standards in Western democracies evolved immensely over the last century, but throughout that evolution, the media played an important role in ensuring continued democratic rule. The presence of multiple competing voices in public spaces will be an important factor for confronting radicalisation across the country.

25. See Fair et al, ‘Democratic Values and Support for Militancy: Evidence from a National Survey of Pakistan’, 2011.
26. Pew Research Center, ‘Arab spring fails to improve U.S. image,’ Global Attitudes Project, 17 May 2011.
27. Huntington, ‘The Third Wave – Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century’, 1991, p.270; de Souza et al, ‘Surveying South Asia,’ 2008.
28. Huntington, ‘The Third Wave – Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century’, 1991, p.276.
29. InfoAsAid, ‘Pakistan Media and Telecom Landscape Guide’, 2012.
30. Freedom House, ‘Freedom of the Press, 2011’.

Fifth, there is wide support among the population to make Pakistan a successful Muslim democracy. Many religious groups are able to mobilise their religious brethren for some political cause, but the diversity of religious affiliation and practice in the country often requires the creation of political coalitions across religious lines. Z.A. Bhutto's 1974 anti-Ahmadi legislation, for example, won support across most Sunni and Shi'a groups, but much of Zia's Islamisation program during the 1980s ran into resistance because it was too beholden to a narrow group of fundamentalist Sunnis. There is considerable multi-vocality even within the fundamentalist Sunni camp. Pakistan's most well-established fundamentalist Islamic group, the *Jamaat-e-Islami* (JI), includes members of Deobandi, Nadwi, Islahi, and Ahl-i-Hadith orders.³¹ Despite the breadth of this coalition, however, their strictly religious appeal has limited their electoral success, even at their 2002 electoral high point. It is likely that Islamic revivalism is less of a threat to democracy than is commonly suggested and that it is more likely to be adapted to fit democratic practices than the other way around.

International analysis often focuses on the most extreme Islamist militants and terrorists. As disruptive as these groups are, they are not representative of broader Pakistani society, which is able to construct and work within a free political system. Just as the majority of Afghan citizens, having experienced life under a Taliban regime, are opposed to the return of Taliban in rule in their country, so has the Pakistani public become increasingly opposed to the type of governance regime that the Pakistani Taliban attempted to impose during their temporary rule over Swat and Buner in 2009.³² The strength of extremist Islamist discourse in the public sphere has serious implications for many issues including the treatment of religious minorities, the constraints of blasphemy laws, and the treatment of women. Radicalisation of mindsets in Pakistan has become an increasingly worrisome source of tension in the country, exacerbated by both media hysteria and education curricula across the country.³³

The success of revivalist Islam, however, while increasing the level of Islamisation of the whole political system, may also 'immunise the system' against further expansion.³⁴ The repeated electoral failure of explicitly fundamentalist political parties in Pakistan suggests that other political actors, particularly Nawaz Sharif's PML-N, have been able to adjust to the presence of fundamentalist political actors, modifying their tactics and rhetoric to counteract the new competition. For external observers, it is important to recognise that anti-Americanism and religious conservatism can, and do, co-exist with support for democratic processes among much of the Pakistani public. The consolidation of democracy in deeply religious Pakistan will not change the country into a secular democracy on French or American models, but can lead to a system that is responsive to the Pakistani public and is shaped according to local ideas of secularism, liberalism, and political organisation.

Sixth, Pakistani society is changing, and with it the use of political power. Pakistan is 65 years old but half of its population is under the age of 20. While this youth bulge will pose difficulties for economic development and poverty alleviation, it represents a face of

31. Vali Nasr, 'Islamic Extremism and Regional Conflict in South Asia', 2005, p.23.

32. See Pew Research Center, 2012, p.16; and ABC News/BBC/ARD/Washington Post Poll, 'Afghanistan: Where Things Stand,' December 2010, p.11.

33. Hooper et al, 2012, p.23.

34. Vali Nasr describes the *Jama'at-Islami* as Pakistan's leading revivalist party, disparaging popular religious practices and seeking to change the established order in Pakistan and across the Muslim world. See S.V.R. Nasr, 'Democracy and Islamic Revivalism', 1995, p.271.

Pakistan that does not recall the 1971 break-up of the country, much less Partition. Political debates are increasingly addressed without the constraints of the founding discussions on what Pakistan means as a home to protect the interests of South Asia's Muslims. Attachment to Pakistan is weaker in much of Balochistan and KP, but generations of Pakistanis have become imbued with national pride in the face of suggestions that the state will dissolve. While some international observers, particularly in India, continue to question the viability of Pakistan as a state, Pakistanis are more likely to argue that "*Pakistan, like India, has acquired its own identity and people in Pakistan have become comfortable with the idea of Pakistan.*"³⁵

One continued uncertainty in Pakistan has been over the potential political role of Pakistan's middle classes. A Pakistani middle class has never previously reached a critical mass to navigate between the inherited feudal / tribal / clerical aristocracies and the poor masses, but may eventually become a force that can change politics. Clientilism remains alive and well, and the size, wealth and level of conservatism of the middle classes are uncertain. It remains to be seen whether better economic development will allow Pakistan's middle classes to develop interests apart from the old feudalistic politics.

5) A Democratic Pakistan – The Challenges

Pakistani politics can be turbulent, making it difficult to discern what constitutes a major threat to the democratic system. In June 2012, Prime Minister Gilani was forced to resign by the Supreme Court and his successor ordered to proceed with a corruption investigation against President Zardari. In the past, judicial activism of this kind was likely to be traced back to the most powerful political actors in the country: the military.

Civil-Military Relations

The military has consistently maintained a higher level of prestige than civilian actors, but the end of the Musharraf regime in 2008 showed that the military was not powerful enough to prevent other domestic actors from forcing a dictator from office. Keeping the military out of politics for good, however, will require concerted effort. Most of the officers that had been placed throughout the various organs of civilian government by the last military regime have been removed, but the military retains control of security policy and defence budgets. While military leaders may not be keen to relinquish a leading domestic role, they may be sincere in their public stated preference for competent civilian rule of the country.³⁶

What will be required for the military to accept control by the civilian government? First, the civilian leadership must be considered capable of handling security affairs. This will require civilian politicians to build the expertise and institutions needed to direct security policy. This has begun with the Defence Committee of the Cabinet beginning to play a convening role in place of the moribund National Security Council, and the newly empowered parliamentary committee on security pub-

35. Ayesha Siddiqi, 'Security Perspectives from Pakistan,' October 2006.

36. The head of Pakistan's armed forces, Parvez Kayani, has declared his support for democratic rule; see Khalid Qayum, 'Pakistan's Army Chief Kayani Pledges to Stay Out of Politics,' Bloomberg, 6 March 2008.

licly debating US-Pakistan relations and other issues.³⁷ Second, if the government were to win public support through competent rule, the military would be more willing to trust civilian leaders because of their competence, and less willing to overthrow them because of their public support. Third, the civilian government must carefully manage the privileges of the military, easing the military out of political life in such a way that the military does not feel that their prestige, budget, and economic privileges are too rapidly disrupted.

Managing the civil-military relationship will be made more difficult by ongoing militant battles, terrorist attacks, and separatist violence that continue to disrupt opportunities for peaceful political engagement. Nearly 40,000 people were killed between 2008 and 2011.³⁸ Though violence has declined since a peak during the 2009 crackdown on the *Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan* (TTP), the state still struggles to provide basic security. Criminal justice reforms are badly needed to contain the violence and create trust in the government. The role of the military in domestic issues like Baloch separatism and counter-terrorism is hurting state legitimacy in those areas. Multiple interrelated conflicts involving sectarian groups, separatists, international jihadists, the TTP, political militias, and Kashmir-oriented groups will require short-term containment and long-term political solutions.

Regional Pressures

Pakistan's approach to India is changing but serious issues remain, impacting the domestic power balance and Pakistan's capacity to benefit from regional economic opportunities. Pakistan, particularly the military, remains obsessed with India's role in Afghanistan and paranoid about their potential role in Balochistan. In 2011, after 3 years of internal conflict displacing millions of people, Pakistanis were still three times more likely to identify India as the biggest threat to Pakistan than to identify the Taliban, a level of antipathy shared by Indians.³⁹ Large majorities in each country consider it important to improve relations between the two countries but do not agree on the basis for talks to begin normalisation. India is focused on the threat of terrorism from Pakistan but has expressed willingness to open to Pakistan on trade and culture issues. Pakistani businesses are increasingly interested in some trade opening with India, but Pakistani political and military leaders prefer to include substantive political topics such as Kashmir and the Indus water dispute as part of any opening process. For Pakistan, the permanent Indian threat ensures that security considerations, and the military's control over these considerations, remain a major issue for any civilian government.

Pakistan's troubled relationship with Afghanistan will also continue to influence the domestic power balance and Pakistan's internal security. The 2014 NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan looms large in Pakistani strategic thinking, both for the regional power balance and domestic security. Pakistan seeks to de-hyphenate from Afghanistan and wants to avoid pro-India government in Kabul, but is not interested in a full return to power of the Taliban either. Unfortunately, the war in Afghanistan seems unlikely to draw to an end soon, fuelling violence and uncertainty in the region.

37. See the excellent and regular reports of the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) for analysis of the evolving nature of civil-military relations in Islamabad; Ejaz Haider, 'The Parliamentary Committee on National Security's laundry list,' 27 March 2012.

38. Pak Institute for Peace Studies, 'Pakistan Security Report 2011,' January 2012, p.6.

39. Pew Research Center, 'U.S. Image in Pakistan Falls No Further Following bin Laden Killing,' 2011, p.35.

Economic Troubles

The economy is struggling, government finances are in poor shape, and a population boom means that the creation of economic opportunities for Pakistani citizens is likely to become even more challenging. The continuation of domestic militancy, in combination with the global economic turndown, has limited the flow of investment money into the country. The state also struggles with one of the lowest tax to GDP ratios in the world, constraining government finances. This poses major challenges for poverty reduction, economic development, and consequent support for democratic governance. As political legitimacy can best be earned through effective governance that connects the government with its citizens, democratic consolidation is made more difficult if a government is unable to provide macro-economic stability, an environment of economic opportunity and basic services such as access to water and power.

5) The EU & Pakistan – Recommendations for Engagement

The new EU-Pakistan 5-year Engagement Plan is broad enough that not all parts of the Plan will receive resources and political support. The EU wants to work with Pakistan on counter-terrorism, economic development, and efforts at building peace and stability in the region. Pursuit of all of these goals can be best achieved by assisting Pakistan's own efforts to build a capable, responsive democratic state. The EU cannot play, or be seen to play, a political role in the domestic balance between civilian leaders and the military. It can, despite continued financial constraints and limited political leverage, support improvements to the functioning of Pakistan's democratic process and the functioning of the state. In the long run, improvements in government effectiveness and accountability can lead to improved civilian management of security affairs and increased popular support for democratic rule.

(a) Make Democracy, Governance & Human Rights the Focal Sectors of Aid to Pakistan

The EU can assist Pakistan's development by making support for democracy, good governance and human rights the primary focal sector for its aid program, working at both the federal and provincial levels. With regard to democracy, the Pakistani Election Commission has made important progress since 2008, though significant steps remain incomplete and the EU has valuable technical support that it can offer. Continued support for existing democratic support projects, including the 'Support for Electoral Reforms' project and the 'Improving Parliamentary Performance' programme, can play a valuable role particularly if this support can be extended to provincial assemblies and developed as part of a significant long-term support programme for capacity building. The provision of aid directed at capacity building in democratic processes has been shown to be associated with the survival of democratic regimes, particularly in multi-party democracies with prior experience in institutionalised democratic practice.⁴⁰

40. See the large-N two-decade analysis of the connection between democracy and governance aid in Simone Dietrich and Joseph Wright, 'Foreign Aid and Democratic Development in Africa,' 2012.

The creation of an EU parliamentary delegation for Pakistan, and support for Pakistani parliamentarians to form their own delegation, could also help the Pakistani democratic process. Parliamentary cooperation has been limited, but engaging them with a parliamentary delegation sends a supportive political signal. Excessive focus on the executive branch of government in developing democracies has been shown to lead to missed opportunities for developing strong, responsive parliaments.⁴¹ This will be important as Pakistani parliamentarians increasingly play a larger public role, especially in the security field.

With regard to governance, the EU should work with and through the state as much as possible. The current primary focus on rural development and social stabilisation in the EU aid program sidesteps the problems presented by having poorly functioning and under-resourced state institutions. A more effective and accountable Pakistani state at federal, provincial and local levels can lead, and make better use of international assistance, for economic management, public service delivery and the pursuit of security improvements. Corruption remains a major problem, but one that should be addressed directly over an extended period by donors working with the state to improve administration safeguards. The EU has expressed support for the Pakistani government's goals for economic development, poverty reduction and the strengthening of the democratic system. Rather than pushing political conditionality on a grudging partner, technical assistance and funding, buttressed by narrow fiduciary and process conditionality can be used as a means to direct more and more funding to a Pakistani state whose broad policies are already supported by the EU. Support for improved bureaucratic functioning and financial management does not require pressures to redefine agreed policy goals.

State support focused on public financial management (PFM) can help the government increase spending transparency and effectiveness. The long-term fight against corruption will require political focus and technical assistance. Multiple past assistance projects have been interrupted or achieved limited success, but the increasing focus on corruption in the Pakistani media has increased pressures on the government to respond to corruption issues, making them more open to international technical support. Past experience with international technical assistance to address transparency and corruption has shown the necessity of domestic political support for success.⁴² Continuity of a democratic regime should limit the volatility of such support programs. The dedicated involvement of a political actor such as the EU, particularly in partnership with the Department for International Development (DFID), can buttress structured long-term efforts by technical actors such as the World Bank and ADB. The EU can actively support the World Bank's Project for Improvement of Financial Reporting (PIFRA) to strengthen government mechanisms of fiscal control and push to include this issue in strategic dialogue with Pakistan.

As government financial management improves, the EU can increase sector budget support and, eventually, general budget support through the use of Good Governance and Development Contracts. This can have the advantages of increasing local ownership of policies and budgets, shaping dialogue between donors and recipients, improving donor predictability and increasing democratic accountability as accountability for

41. See the example of EC support to South Africa through the Legislative Support Program and its successful shift from project to sector budget support. 'European Commission Support to Parliamentary Development in the ACP (2000-2009): An Assessment', July 2010.

42. Dijkstra, A. Geske, 'The Effectiveness of Policy Conditionality: Eight Country Experiences,' 2002, p.307-334.

expenditures becomes monitored through domestic systems rather than through deals with donors. Harmonisation with EU member state efforts (the US is unlikely to participate) will be important for sector budget support efforts to proceed smoothly. The EU education aid program in Sindh can be used as a model, as it successfully used sector budget support to help improve government management of education, rather than seeking to improve service delivery through third party programs. This model has the dual benefits of supporting education, an essential part of Pakistan's poverty reduction programs, as well as strengthening the government.

EU assistance to the Pakistani state can also be directed toward supporting the complex, but politically important, decentralisation process. With the expected creation of at least one new province and the devolution of responsibility to lower orders of government, technical assistance will be in high demand.⁴³The 7th NFC was a political success but there is danger in decentralising funding without developed systems of financial governance and local accountability. The EU can work with the World Bank and ADB Decentralisation Support programs to provide both financial and technical assistance at the provincial level, and perhaps eventually at the local level, with a focus on Sindh and KP where the EU has experience and existing relationships. Helping the Pakistani state improve its capacity to function at the local level will involve slow, patient work but is essential for building long term stability.

(b) Provision of Security Support

National security threats remain at the core of the troubled relationship between Pakistan's civilian government and the military leaders who are hesitant to entrust security decisions to their civilian partners. Building a more balanced relationship between civilian and military leaders is essential for democratic consolidation, but one that can be addressed only indirectly by international actors. The US, despite its limited leverage, is best placed to lead international dialogue with the military. The EU, without its own military or intelligence services, is better placed to assist the civilian government improve its governance capacities, as discussed above. The civilian government, in turn, will be better placed to win the necessary confidence of military decision-makers.

The EU can also work directly with the Pakistani government on some security issues, including on regional conflict mediation or reforms in the police or judiciary. The EU can seek to engage Pakistan and India on normalisation of their relationship. This will require caution, patience and respect, but 60 years of international disengagement has not worked. Existing regional cooperation organisations are likely to remain ineffective and the US is no longer seen as a neutral arbiter, if they ever were. India dislikes the idea of external interference and will likely resist any efforts. The potential advantages, for both countries and for the world (freeing resources from the military, helping development and growth through opening trade ties, reducing the likelihood of nuclear war, lowering the heat in Pakistan's approach to Afghanistan, etc.), are too important for the issue to be side-stepped. India-Pakistan relations should remain on the agenda for dialogues with the states in question as well as with the UK, US and China. Though nobody in the region is calling openly for

43. The Pakistani Senate passed a bill on 7 March, 2013 to create the new province of Bahawalpur Janoobi Punjab out of southern Punjab, though it is uncertain whether the National Assembly and the Punjab Assembly will also pass the bill, as required, particularly after the walk-out of the most powerful party in the Punjab, the PML-N from the voting. Some variation on the Senate-approved plan may still be passed by all three houses after the elections. See Gishkori, Zahid, 'Bahawalpur South Punjab: New province bill sails through the Senate', *The Express Tribune*, 7 March, 2013.

more EU involvement, if the EU wants to develop as a voice representing European interests abroad, it will increasingly need to engage in these difficult issues. The EU can also continue to work with Afghanistan, Pakistan, the UK and the US to maintain regional dialogue and cooperation while avoiding treating Pakistan as an adjunct of the Afghanistan conflict.

Work on judicial and police reform is also suited to the EU's competencies and will be important in Pakistan for pursuing counter-terrorism activities and for reducing the role of the military in domestic security. Successful police reform can create opportunities for building trust and cooperation between military and civilian security agencies. Following the EU's fragmented and under-resourced security sector reform efforts in Afghanistan, however, the EU might be best placed to work on these issues as a supporting partner if the UK or the US takes the international lead in well-resourced, government-led programs.

(c) Working with Partners

In addition to leading donor harmonisation among EU member states, the effectiveness of EU engagement with Pakistan will be magnified if it can work in a complementary fashion with other partners, particularly with the UK, the EU member state most engaged with Pakistan, and with the US, Pakistan's most important donor and security partner. Despite declarations to the contrary, US civilian aid will continue to bypass the state and military aid will continue to be a major focus of the US-Pakistan relationship. The US is difficult for Pakistani leaders to work with, narrowing its room for manoeuvre in supporting government reforms due to the threat of being perceived as meddling with internal political balances. The EU can play a complementary role in providing state support, buttressing civilian institutions and assisting democratic development in ways that the US cannot.

The UK is the dominant EU member state in shaping European approaches to Pakistan. Though the UK plays an important role as part of the EU, when pursuing foreign policy objectives, including in Pakistan, the EU and UK often have separate approaches. The UK is currently the only member state with a significant security relationship with Pakistan and is hesitant to see Brussels as a partner on security issues. The organisation of EU efforts, in both Brussels and Islamabad, will be increasingly effective if it can actively show itself as an important partner to London with dedicated interests and complementary resources. This cooperation may become increasingly important if Pakistan welcomes coordinated international support for police, judicial and military reforms.

(d) For the Long Term

The EU should also move towards making Pakistan the EU's 11th Strategic Partner by the end of the current 5-year Engagement Plan. Pakistani leaders are very aware of how their country is viewed and treated by Europe and the United States. The creation of a Strategic Partnership between the EU and Pakistan would be an important signal that the EU wants to prioritise the relationship, bringing Pakistan into the same circle of

important EU partners such as Brazil, China and India. The designation would also help the process of winning the needed EU resources to create permanent cooperation instruments in multiple fields.

While this paper argues for significantly more resources and attention towards good governance, democracy, and PFM reforms, all cooperation efforts in Pakistan will need to be negotiated with the Pakistani government. Economic development and poverty alleviation programs that have been designed to complement Pakistan's poverty reduction strategy plans will thus continue to constitute part of EU aid with the long-term goal of transitioning control of this work to an increasingly capable Pakistani government.

EU trade with Pakistan will also remain a relevant issue. Continuing discussions on expanded access to the EU market can ensure that the Pakistani government will remain open to dialogue. While increased trade can be important for assisting with long-term economic development, it has limited efficacy for addressing short-term institutional and security challenges. This is especially true for Pakistan, which already benefits from reasonably liberal access to the EU market and would thus reap only limited economic gains from incremental increases in market access. The economic impact of any increased access to the EU market will also be limited as long as Pakistan's exports are limited primarily to textiles and constrained by domestic infrastructure challenges. The EU can continue providing trade-related technical assistance, pursuing the process for granting Pakistan GSP+ market access and discussing an FTA. Even limited progress on an EU-Pakistan FTA may push Pakistan towards trade liberalisation in other directions, including with India. Unfortunately, regional trade and cooperation models such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) are basically dead without improved political normalisation in the region and should not receive more than perfunctory EU attention. Such models are unlikely to be conduits to peace, but will more likely flower as a side-effect of any eventual peace.

6) Conclusion

The current period of democratic consolidation provides an excellent opportunity for the EU to engage deeply with Pakistan in a way that meets Pakistani interests, fits with the EU interest in the spread of democracy and human rights, and helps address EU security concerns. Democratic consolidation is not a smooth or linear process and Pakistani democracy will continue to be challenged by a domineering military, a weak economy, endemic corruption and a difficult regional security situation. Pakistan, however, has the institutions of democratic government already in place, previous experience with democracy, a supportive populace, a diverse and expanding media and a diversity of religious practice that has not allowed any one viewpoint to define the relationship between Islam and democracy. Democracy in Pakistan is not a secondary issue that can be set aside in the hope that a more supportive environment will appear. It is central to the construction of a stable political order and a secure regional and domestic environment.

The EU can prioritise support for Pakistan's democratic consolidation by offering aid for improving the robustness of its democratic institutions and the transparency of its core government functions. Support targeted on the processes and institutions of democracy is likely to be more effective than general economic development assistance at helping Pakistan institutionalise its democratic system. With a bright media spotlight and public expectations increasingly focused on issues of corruption and government effectiveness, technical support provided directly to the government is likely to be more effective than aid to NGOs and civil society at developing the strong government institutions that must be central to efforts at building sustainable peace in the country. Improved government capabilities will also be essential for convincing military leaders to trust the civilian government in directing key national issues. By working closely with partners in the US, the UK, and international financial institutions, and by moving beyond an aid and trade relationship, the EU can become a leading international partner for Pakistan. The EU can also pursue the new EU-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue with a view to making Pakistan a full Strategic Partner, supported by sustained political engagement and focused support programs. The EU can play a limited but important role in helping Pakistan develop consistent democratic rule, engage peacefully with its neighbours and pursue balanced economic development.

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