

Pakistan: Country Profile

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Pakistan has been in the grip of a series of political crises for the last few years, which have only been compounded by an economic downturn. The country is badly governed and has consistently ranked amongst the more corrupt countries in the world – habitually falling below its South Asian neighbors in Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index. In addition, Pakistan’s status as a frontline state in the War on Terror has been concomitant with a deteriorating security climate, lawlessness, the rise of violent extremism and an increased tendency towards intolerance and xenophobia in society. Paradoxically, the country has also seen the emergence of a vibrant and free media which has assumed an important role as an opinion maker; and (in small pockets of society and mainly confined to big cities), a revival of the arts and cultural activity.

Although the nation repeatedly appears high on the list in the Failed States Index published annually by the Fund for Peace,¹ it continues to defy predictions of impending disarray and has continued to function as a polity, albeit a badly governed one, for most of its history.

Rise of Militancy and Extremism

The government’s decision to side with the US in the war against terror marked an important reversal of policy, wherein Pakistan appeared to withdraw from its unstated position of supporting a Pashtun-led, right-wing government in Afghanistan. At the same time, the new policy raised hackles in the country, with both the religious right and much of mainstream civil society condemning the US invasion of Afghanistan as immoral and unnecessary. As could be expected, the re-grouping of the Taliban in Afghanistan has been accompanied by

a rise in militancy in Pakistan, where militant groups have risen against the Pakistani state not only in protest for its official policy on Afghanistan, but also because of its attempts to monitor and control the activity of armed groups operating within or from its territory.²

The militancy was initially (at the beginning of the last decade) largely confined to the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan, but in recent years extremely well-coordinated and “professionally” executed attacks have taken place on key government and military installations in all of Pakistan’s major cities. Analysts surmise that the situation could have been worse in the aftermath of the killing of Osama Bin Laden in Abbotabad; given that large-scale reprisal attacks by Al-Qaeda supporters were expected. That these did not occur on the expected scale may indicate that Pakistan’s security and intelligence forces have begun to make headway in combating terrorism. At the very least, the policy of appeasement championed by Pakistan’s military (peace pacts with militant groups, allowing the virtual takeover of the administration in one division of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province by militants for almost two years)³ which was the first recourse through the early years of the militancy

Terrorist attacks in response to Pakistan’s foreign policy stance are only one side of the coin. On a wider scale, the country is increasingly beset with issues of extremism wherein armed groups claiming to represent the two main Muslim sects (Sunni and Shia) are pitted against each other and committed to carrying out a low-intensity conflict by targeting each other’s leaders, disrupting public processions and attacking each other’s sites of worship. Whereas such sectarian violence is not new for the sub-continent or indeed for the Muslim world in general, in Pakistan it situates itself in a geo-political context, and has almost assumed the characteristics of a proxy war between foreign powers committed to promoting particular interpretations of Islam. That such conflicting ideologies have found a ready battleground in Pakistan is not surprising given the diversity of Pakistani society, the long periods of military rule which succeeded in stifling legitimate means of political expression, and the increasing lawlessness and lack of good governance which has characterized administration over the decades.

The extremist mindset is not apparent only in sectarian conflict but also in the targeting of minority communities. The most obvious example is that of the persecution of the Ahmedi community, who were declared non-Muslims through a constitutional amendment passed in 1974.⁴ While the amendment effectively relegated the community to a second-class status apostates in a religious society, it was not until General Zia-ul-Haq’s Ahmedi-specific additions to the penal code, which banned the community from identifying themselves as Muslims in any way, that the true persecution of the sect began. In addition to terrorist attacks on the places of worship of the community, there have been instances of protests against the location of their community centers, the appointments of Ahmedis to public office, the admissions of members of



the community in professional colleges and even a move by a bar association to ban a soft drink manufactured by a company purportedly owned by a member of the community. In what is one of the more shocking incidents, pamphlets exhorting citizens to murder Ahmedis have been distributed in Faisalabad, one of the largest cities in the province of Punjab (see JI, 2011 for details of this and other incidents). Examples of intolerant behavior towards other minority communities, particularly Hindus in southern Sindh and Christians in Punjab also abound; but are less likely to translate into violence, and therefore receive less publicity.

While militancy and terrorism are perceived as threats to the state by the powers-that-be in Pakistan, the rise in extremism has not been effectively challenged by any state institution. Attempts are made to investigate and prosecute when violence is perpetrated by extremists, but incidents of threats and intimidation carried out by such groups are largely ignored by local administration and law enforcement agencies. The civil administration, which is no doubt stretched to capacity, seems to want to pick its battles.

In terms of incidents of violence, the number of attacks perpetrated by extremists and terrorists actually decreased in both 2010 and 2011, compared to the highs of 2008 and 2009, when violence peaked in response to the government's actions against militants in Islamabad.⁵ But Pakistan is far from having achieved acceptable levels of internal security. The total number of attacks in 2011 (including terrorist attacks, clashes between security forces and militants, political and ethnic violence and drone attacks) were estimated at 2,985 in 2011, compared to 3,393 in 2010 and 3,816 in 2009. Over 2,000 people died in terrorist attacks alone in 2011, and close to 4,500 were injured (PIPS, 2011). Pakistan has lost close to 40,000 lives in terrorist incidents and in clashes with security forces since the war on terror began (EAW, 2011; Special Section 1). This is more than the number of lives lost in the four wars with India.

“The floods and the war on terror combined have taken an inestimable toll on Pakistan’s economy”

Insurgency and Separatism

Pakistan was conceived as a federation, but state power has remained largely centralized for much of the country's history.⁶ Perhaps because of this tendency, Pakistan has tragic experience with separatist movements, as half of the country seceded to become the independent state of Bangladesh in 1971. Smaller, and less popular separatist movements had emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in the provinces of Sindh (under the banner of the Jeay Sindh tehrik), and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (the leftist Pakhtunistan movement which had the encouragement of the

pre Soviet-invasion government of Afghanistan). It is in the province of Balochistan, however, that the Pakistani state has consistently faced the greatest challenge to its authority.

At the root of the disputes between the federal and provincial governments is the sense of deprivation which permeates Balochistan. It remains Pakistan's poorest and least developed province in spite of its apparent mineral wealth and development potential. The province, which occupies 44% of the country's land area, and houses just 5% of its population (PCO, 1998), has been the scene of a series of movements against the federal government since 1948, all of which have resulted in the dispatch of troops to the province to quell the protests. The latest in this series of insurgencies began in 2006; after the murder of a prominent Baloch leader, allegedly by the Pakistan Army; and continues to date.

In addition to the targeting of military installations allegedly by Baloch nationalists, the province's ethnic and sectarian diversity, and the fact that Balochi speakers do not make up a majority there, ensures that the possibility of ethnic tensions arising is always present.⁷ The recent troubles in Balochistan have included the disturbing trend of ethnic Punjabi settlers (even settlers of long standing) being targeted for assassination, while the Shia Hazara community (which migrated from Afghanistan in the 19th century) has also been the target of repeated and horrific attacks.⁸ In general, Baloch nationalist groups have denied involvement in sectarian attacks, and no headway has been made in the investigation of such incidents. The list of atrocities in the province continues to grow, and includes the issue of “enforced disappearances,” where Baloch nationalists have been kidnapped and murdered, allegedly on the instructions of security agencies. As the situation in the province deteriorates, the motives and rationales of different stakeholders are becoming ever more murky and inexplicable.

Balochistan's grievances mainly stem from the province's lack of control over its valuable natural resources; notably, natural gas, the extraction and sale of which is a federal government preserve. Pakistan's largest gas field discovered to date, the Sui field, is located in the province, and has been operational since 1955. Yet, natural gas was not supplied to the province, even to the provincial capital of Quetta, till the mid 1980s. At a more administrative level, the province has disputes with the central government on the formula for payment of royalty on gas from the Sui field; and has demanded a greater share of the gas development surcharge that is distributed across gas-producing provinces.⁹ Balochistan's demand for a review of the criteria according to which the federal government distributes funds across provinces has only recently been taken note of, in the National Finance Commission (NFC) award finalized in 2010. At long last, the province's contention that service delivery in Balochistan is exceptionally expensive due to the thinly scattered population, has been accounted for in the allocation of federal funds.¹⁰

The province's economic and administrative demands can still be dealt with, but repeated military action has alienated the Baloch population, and strengthened the hands of separatists. The Government of Pakistan's response has been inadequate. The current government started off well, when the President, himself an ethnic Baloch, went to Quetta in March 2009 and pledged to start a process of reconciliation. Thereafter, the government introduced a Balochistan Package in parliament in November 2009, which promised to address at least some of the resource distribution issues, while also focusing on an end to human rights abuses in the province. More than two years later, little progress has been made on implementation of the package, and the province remains in the grip of unrest.

Balochistan has recently begun to hit international headlines, first as a possible location of the Taliban high-command; and more recently because a US Congressional committee convened a hearing on rights abuses in the province. The February 2012 hearing resulted in the presentation of a bill in the House of Representatives demanding that the US support the right of self-determination in Balochistan. As expected, the presentation of the bill has provoked outrage on the part of the Government of Pakistan, which has termed this as an outrageous example of interference in the country's internal affairs. Whatever the outcome of this process may be in the US Congress, the fact that the Balochistan issue has begun to resonate internationally should prompt the Government of Pakistan into action. An amnesty was declared in end February 2012, for Baloch nationalist leaders who have criminal cases registered against them, but whether the process of reconciliation will be taken further by both sides remains to be seen.

Political Instability

Pakistan's internal security has perhaps never been as precarious as it has been over the last four or five years. But political instability has plagued the country since its inception. The first general election (conducted on the basis of adult franchise) was not held till 23 years after the country's independence, and the first elected civilian Prime Minister was executed on criminal charges under martial law. Military (or military backed) regimes have ruled Pakistan for half of the country's existence. Peaceful (and scheduled) transfers of power are rare – the assembly elected in 2002 was the first in the country's history to complete a five year tenure. And that may be because it operated under a head of state who was also Chief of Army Staff. The current government, which has now completed four years of its rule, may be the first entirely civilian government to serve for a four and a half or five year period.

The last few years have seen an exacerbation of tensions between different branches of the state (mainly the government and the judiciary); and also between the government and the military. The altercations with the judiciary carry over from the previous government, and are rooted in the reluctance of the current dispensation to re-instate the Chief Justice (CJ) of the Supreme Court, who was removed by President Musharraf on charges of abuse of power. The CJ was eventually restored to office in March 2009, after a civil society movement, supported by almost all opposition parties. The government's apparent hesitation to restore the CJ to office, in spite of the fact that to do so was a campaign promise in the election of 2008, as well as a point of agreement with its coalition partners, is indicative of its sense of insecurity. The perception was that the CJ would pursue corruption cases against the sitting President, and involve international stakeholders in the investigations – an assumption that has been borne out by the Supreme Court's judicial activism over the last three years. The confrontation between the government and the Court is currently at a high point, with the Prime Minister facing contempt charges for refusing to follow the Court's instructions regarding re-opening criminal charges against the President.

A similar state of confrontation has marked the government's interaction with the military. Although almost all civilian governments in Pakistan have had tense relations with the army high command at one time or the other, the current state of deadlock has roots in both the domestic and regional state of affairs. Initially, relations were stable, as evidenced by the fact that the new parliament allowed President Musharraf to resign, rather than face impeachment charges. Further the former president was given full military honors on the occasion of his relinquishing office, and allowed to leave the country without facing charges for his subversion of the Constitution. The government also allowed the military to prepare policy on, and implement the response to the growing militancy in the country for the first few years of its rule. The military apparently intervened behind the scenes during the movement to restore the Chief Justice, and was part of the group of stakeholders who urged the President to restore the CJ to office.

However, civil-military relations began to noticeably deteriorate after the US forces raided Bin Laden's compound in Abbotabad. Just six months after the raid, a scandal over an alleged informal memo sent by Pakistan's Ambassador to the US to the Pentagon surfaced in the press, and has led to speculation that the civilian government was worried about the possibility of a military coup in the aftermath of the May 2 incident. Some analysts suggest that this does not seem credible given the questions that were raised at the time regarding the military's role (or lack thereof) in the hunt for Bin Laden. Further, the proceedings to investigate the incident continue to be hampered by logistic issues and difficulties in gathering electronic evidence. Nevertheless, the scandal can be interpreted as, at the very least, an attempt to deeply embarrass an already beleaguered government.

The clashes between institutions that characterize Pakistan's politics extend to different tiers of government. The system of administration was, until recently, highly centralized. Ironically, military regimes have had a record of pushing local government reform through, perhaps partly to bypass political parties, which tend to be organized mostly at the provincial as opposed to the local government level. By far the most ambitious governance reform initiative launched in Pakistan was in the year 2000, when General Musharraf announced the Devolution Plan. The key reforms brought about under devolution were in the functions of sub-provincial governments.¹¹ But the rollout of the Plan was delayed and hampered by the reluctance of provincial governments to cede power and fiscal authority to local governments (see Mezzera, et. al., 2010). After the fall of the Musharraf government, the local governments were allowed to serve out their second terms, but the Local Government Ordinances of 2001 (essentially the same legislation that had been applied to all the four provinces) were sent for review and amendment to the respective provincial assemblies, who are in the process of

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deciding whether, and in what form, they will sanction the functioning of local governments. Pakistan's political instability has contributed to the deteriorating law and order situation in almost all of the country's major cities. In Karachi, Pakistan's biggest city, for example, political rivalries have morphed into gang warfare and the emergence of underworld mafias which control the provision of services to parts of the city; as well as engaging in turf wars for the “right” to carry out extortion; illegally occupy state land; and quite often, intimidate the media and the local administration.

At a more basic level, Pakistan's politics, particularly rural based, play out within an elaborate framework of patronage systems. Chances of being elected to office are better for candidates who are known to have influence in the local administration, police, and in the lower judiciary. While the existence of local governments from 2000 to 2009 did bring about some change, provincial and national representatives in Pakistan tend to spend a lot of time on promoting better local level public services in their constituencies, rather than concerning themselves with policy-making. Family networks are often the prime means of getting things done at the local level, which is why patronage of the wider clan is also important. In the absence of strong institutions and effective systems of accountability, the state appears to be increasingly helpless and ineffective.

Economic Decline

Private sector led growth surged in the middle of the last decade, helped by an environment of relative policy stability, but also by a loose monetary policy and a boom in consumer financing. That the foundations of the high growth (over 8% for two years from 2005 to 2007 - a record for Pakistan) rested on unstable foundations was obvious from the fact that the international food and fuel price hikes of late 2007 essentially halted the growth spurt. Thereafter, the growing energy crisis shaved off a couple of percentage points from growth in large-scale manufacturing, and consequently, GDP. Agricultural growth had in any case been variable, even during the boom years. With the commodity producing sectors both in decline, services alone could not keep up the momentum, and average GDP growth slumped to a little less than 3% for the years from 2008 to 2011. The country also suffered what was perhaps its greatest natural disaster in this while, when the floods of August 2010 caused damages of about \$40 billion.¹²

There is little doubt that the floods, and the war on terror combined have taken an inestimable toll on Pakistan's economy. But some of the slow-down can also be attributed to bad policy management. The government's domestic debt has increased by almost 60% between the fiscal year (FY) 2009 and FY2011¹³ - from \$42 billion to just over \$66 billion. Domestic debt is now equivalent to about 35% of the GDP. Monetary policy is equally lax. In the first four months of the current fiscal year, i.e. from July to October 2011, total borrowing from the central bank amounted to \$3.4 billion, or \$27 million a day. This is \$7 million higher than the borrowing of \$20 million per day at the approximately the same time last year (SBP, 2011).

The government's inability to control the fiscal deficit to below 5% of GDP, and reluctance to impose a value added tax on consumption were some of the factors behind the non-completion of the IMF's most recent program in Pakistan. The program, worth \$11 billion, which was approved in November 2008 ended in September 2011 without the disbursement of the final two tranches, which would have amounted to \$3.6 billion.

With the IMF's program remaining incomplete, US aid (both military and economic) more or less suspended post the Osama Bin Laden debacle, and no other major inflows on the capital account, Pakistan's balance of payments will be increasingly under pressure in the near future. The current account deficit in the first quarter is estimated at \$1.3 billion, compared to a deficit of \$543 million in the first quarter of the last fiscal year. This is due at least partly to the significant fall in international prices of cotton yarn. Pakistan's exports have been riding on a commodity price boom over the last two years, which now seems to be tapering off. That the money markets are picking up on the possibility of the deterioration in

the external account is evident from the way the currency has depreciated – at 4.5% in the first two quarters of the current fiscal year.

In FY2006, overall poverty was estimated at 22.3%, thus just under a quarter of the population was estimated to fall below the poverty line. The distinction between urban and rural poverty is important here – rural poverty incidence was estimated at 27% in FY2006 as opposed to urban poverty incidence of only 13.1% (EAW 2008, Table 13.6).

The Federal Government's poverty estimation methodology has, however, been criticized on a variety of counts, including faulty survey design and technique of estimation, etc. The World Bank estimated poverty incidence in Pakistan at 28.3% in FY2005 using the official raw data. Nevertheless, the Bank estimates also showed a declining trend in absolute poverty between FY1999 and FY2008 – in fact the Bank's estimates for FY2008 show that poverty incidence was 17.2%, an interesting result for a year when food inflation was on the rise (WB, 2010).

General elections are not due till February 2013, but are very likely to be called by the end of the current year. The security situation appears to have stabilized somewhat, but the government badly needs an upturn in the economic indicators before it goes to the polls. But there is no economic plan on the table, and policy-making continues to be ruled by short-term imperatives. This will be particularly true in an election year when an austerity program, for example, could be political suicide. The last two fiscal years were amongst the more dismal ones in Pakistan's history, not least because of the floods of 2010. Unfortunately, the country's economic fortunes are unlikely to improve significantly in the short run.

Society

As mentioned earlier, Pakistan's body-politic has seen a gradual but obvious shift to the right since the 1980s. Public opinion polls do not have a long history in the country, so comparisons over time are not possible. Nevertheless, Pakistanis are deeply religious, and also appear to favor strict adherence to Islamic law. A recent poll found that 43% of Pakistanis felt that religion was an important factor in the lives of their fellow countrymen and 73% favored the application of Islamic law, including punishments such as stoning and amputation (see Gallup, 2011). This personal religiosity does not, however, translate into support for extremist organizations. The results of a Pew Poll conducted in Pakistan in 2010 showed that only 18% of those polled had a favorable view of Al-Qaeda in 2010 compared to 25% in 2008. Similarly only 15% had a favorable view of the Taliban compared to 27% in 2008. In contrast, 25% had a favorable view of Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, the group which has been active against the Indian military in Jammu and Kashmir.¹⁴

Nor does the covert religiosity necessarily result in restricting public space for women. While more conservative dress codes are now apparent in urban areas, more women are continuing into higher education than ever before. About a third (30 to 35%) of the total enrolment in public sector universities consisted of women in the end of the last decade, up from less than 20% a decade earlier (Khan, 2007). Although the participation of women in wage employment in sectors other than agriculture has remained largely stagnant around 10% over the last decade (LFS, various issues) the growth in tertiary education amongst women should help change that.

Public opinion on religious issues was brought into sharp relief in Pakistan in early 2011, when the murder of the then Governor of Punjab was hailed by a significant section of society, including members of the legal community. The Governor had taken a strong stance against section 295C of the Penal Code, the so-called Blasphemy Law.¹⁵ There is little public outcry on media reports on persecution of Ahmadis or other minority communities. In an equally disturbing trend, the increased cost of travel and the poor security situation in parts of the country has resulted in a fall in domestic tourism, as well as business and family visits from other parts of the country. This has contributed to the further marginalization of communities in relatively remote areas.¹⁶

Nevertheless, there have been some positive cultural developments in the country over the last decade. The Musharraf regime liberalized the media by allowing private television and radio channels to set up operations. Almost all of Pakistan's big media houses, which publish national newspapers, responded to this measure with the launch of news and entertainment channels. The spectacular growth of electronic media, both in the number of channels and in the diversity of programming, is one of the success stories of the last decade. Further, in spite of some effort on the part of the government to regulate the media (through the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority or PEMRA) from time to time, the press has remained largely independent and in fact fiercely critical of incumbent governments. Unfortunately, this boldness has come at a price for some – Pakistan is acknowledged to be one of the more dangerous countries for journalists. According to the South Asia Free Media Association (SAFMA) 12 journalists were killed in the line of duty in Pakistan in 2011.¹⁷ The perpetrators of this violence are alleged to include security agencies, militant groups and even armed wings of political parties. That such an atmosphere has not deterred the media from its bold stance is commendable.

The Musharraf years also saw a revival of the arts, as evidenced by the establishment of the National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA) in Karachi in 2006, and the opening of the National Art Gallery in

Islamabad in 2007. The three major cities of Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad have witnessed an upsurge in productions of concerts and stage plays, including new (for Pakistan) genres such as musicals; opening of small, independent art galleries; and a thriving music scene with some performers crossing the border to take advantage of lucrative opportunities in India. In the last five years, at least two Pakistani films have been released in international markets (in the UK, US, India and the Middle East) to critical acclaim.¹⁸ The country also achieved a singular honor in February 2012, when a Pakistani female director was declared a co-winner of the Academy Award for short documentaries – the first time that any production or person from Pakistan has been nominated for and/or won an Oscar.¹⁹

Pakistan's Global Standing

“In Pakistan a political process has continued more or less uninterrupted for almost a decade and does not appear to be facing any danger of immediate derailment”

Pakistan currently has a poor image in the international community, not least due to the discovery of Bin Laden in a garrison town in May 2011. Its relations with the US in particular have deteriorated sharply in the last one year. Military and civilian aid is all but suspended, accusations of complicity with insurgent groups in Afghanistan are being freely bandied about, and an atmosphere of mistrust prevails on both sides. In general, in the eyes of the world, the country has come to be closely associated with the War on Terror and is bracketed with Afghanistan (the so-called Af-Pak formulation) in discussions on regional issues. The western regions of the country (the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, and the tribal areas) have strong ethnic, tribal and cultural links with Afghanistan. But Pakistan is a diverse nation with a history that distinguishes itself from that of Afghanistan; not least in Pakistan's status as part of the Turko-Muslim Empire ruled from Delhi, and later as a British colony. As a consequence of the latter eventuality, Pakistan's structure of administration (in terms of the structure of both the civil and military bureaucracy); its systems of representation, and much of its infrastructure (particularly irrigation systems and the railways) are more like those of other South Asian nations than Central Asian ones.

In addition to the association with Afghanistan, Pakistan has been associated in the international press with myriad human rights abuses, rising religious extremism, the support of insurgency in the region, and training camps for terrorist groups operating in the west and regionally. Pakistani media, arts, literature and sports have limited outreach internationally and the country has little opportunity to present a soft image to the world.

Viewing Pakistan through the Af-Pak lens, and solely as an exporter of terrorism, promotes the distorted view that the country is a failed state moving towards either dismemberment or chaos, with a central authority gradually eroding. There is no denying that Pakistan is badly governed, and is faced with severe challenges. These include an existential threat stemming both from militant groups who oppose Pakistan's constitution and state institutions, as well as an intensifying separatist movement in its largest (when measured by area) province. However, the country continues to be served by functioning, though imperfect institutions such as national and provincial legislatures, an activist judiciary, and civil and military bureaucracies which have become politicized, but remain somewhat accountable. Most important, a political process has continued more or less uninterrupted for almost a decade and does not appear to be facing any danger of immediate derailment. To the extent that change in Pakistan continues to occur within the framework of a legal and constitutional framework, the country has a chance to work out solutions to its problems.

Notes

1. See <http://www.fundforpeace.org>
2. These groups include both those consisting of Pakistani nationals supporting the Taliban insurgency, as well as those that were operative in Indian Administered Kashmir
3. Peace pacts were forged with militant leaders in the tribal agencies, particularly South and North Waziristan on more than one occasion from 2003 to 2006. The Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM), a militant group with a long history of attempts to impose Sharia law in the Malakand region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, ousted the local administration from the region in 2007, and remained more or less in power in the Malakand division from late 2007 to mid 2009, before a military offensive finally unseated their leaders.
4. The community are followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmed, a 19th century preacher who claimed to be a divinely ordained messenger. His claims are interpreted as having challenged the finality of Prophethood, an integral tenet of Islam, wherein the Prophet Mohammad is accepted as the last of all prophets.

5. From April to July 2007, the Red Mosque, a large mosque cum seminary located in the capital city, Islamabad, was the scene of a face-off between government and militants demanding the immediate imposition of Sharia law across Pakistan. The confrontation resulted in military action against the militants, and a storming of the mosque, in which a significant number of casualties took place.

6. This condition is only now being rectified through the 18th Amendment of the Constitution, which transfers significant powers to the provinces.

7. According to the population census of 1998, Balochi and Brahui speakers when taken together accounted for 55% of Balochistan's population while Pashto speakers constituted 30%.

8. Including at least three mass-murders in the summer of 2011 when buses carrying Hazara passengers were attacked.

9. In case of calculation of royalty, the Balochistan Government contends that the fact that different formulae are being used for calculation of wellhead prices from gas fields is unjustified, and all wellhead prices should be linked to the international prices of crude oil. The gas development surcharge is calculated as a proportion of the province's total contribution to natural gas production. Once again, the provincial government disputes this formula (its contribution to total national production is currently estimated at about 25%), and contends that the surcharge payment be based on the share of the profits that the province generates in gas production.

10. The allocation of funds under the NFC awards were previously primarily on the basis of population distribution across provinces. However, the range of criteria has now been expanded, and inverse population density is now used as one of the criteria, although it carries a weight of only 2.7%. Population is still the primary criterion, but its weightage has been reduced from 100% to 82%.

11. District governments were given functional responsibility for provision of services in primary and secondary health care, all levels of education up to high school, agriculture, and intra-district roads. Town and tehsil governments are responsible mainly for municipal functions, including water supply and sanitation, and roads and streets other than district and provincial roads. Union councils are not required to carry out municipal or administrative functions as such, but are responsible for implementing small-scale development schemes, maintaining parks and public places in the union council, and organizing local markets and fairs.

12. The estimated value of damage from the floods was announced as \$43 billion by the Prime Minister in an address to the cabinet on 2 September 2010. As this

would amount to about a quarter of GDP, it may have been over-stated. The World Bank, Asian Development Bank and the Government of Pakistan in a joint Damage Needs Assessment estimated that reconstruction and rehabilitation would require about \$10 billion in funding (GoP, et. al., 2010).

13. The fiscal year in Pakistan runs from 1 July to 30 June. The term FY2009 refers to the year ending 30 June 2009.

14. See <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1683/pakistan-opinion-less-concern-extremists-america-image-poor-india-threat-support-harsh-laws>

15. The law recommends the death penalty for anyone found guilty of blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad. Although there is no instance of capital punishment actually being carried out under this law, there have been a number of recorded instances of vigilante action taking place against people accused under the law. Lawyers who defend those accused of blasphemy, and/or judges who acquit in such cases have been known to face threats and intimidation.

16. A recent BBC news report interviewed people on the street in Lahore, capital of the largest province (by population), Punjab; and asked them what they knew about Balochistan. A number of the interviewees were hard pressed to even name a single city of the province. See http://www.bbc.co.uk/urdu/multimedia/2011/03/110301_baloch_media_kq.shtml

17. News Report in the Daily Dawn, 31 December 2011: "2011 Saw 12 Journalists Killed in Pakistan."

18. "Khuda key Liye" and "Bol", both produced by Shoaib Mansoor.

19. <http://oscar.go.com/nominees>

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