

# The United States and Terrorism in Southwest Asia

Samina Ahmed

September 11 and Beyond

The September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon transformed U.S. policy in Southwest Asia. As the United States embarked on a long-term, comprehensive campaign to counter global terrorism, Pakistan once again assumed the position of a frontline state, just as neighboring Afghanistan became the target of a new U.S. hot war in Asia. U.S. indifference to the turmoil within Afghanistan evolved into a policy of active intervention, and past differences with Pakistan were overlooked in the effort to develop a military partnership in the war on terrorism. These changes in U.S. policy in Southwest Asia could bear long-term implications for American security.

In formulating U.S. policy toward terrorism in Southwest Asia, George W. Bush and his administration should analyze the challenges they confront from a historical perspective. In doing so, the United States may be able to avoid past mistakes and identify the most effective ways of combating terrorist threats from the region and beyond. With global terrorism becoming the focal point of U.S. policy, the United States must also assess the long-term implications of this policy for Pakistan and Afghanistan in particular and for a complex and conflict-prone neighborhood more generally. Recognizing that terrorists and terrorist networks have a global presence, the Bush administration emphasizes that the war against terrorism will not end with the elimination of Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda associates in Afghanistan. The policies that the Bush administration pursues will, however, determine its effectiveness in eliminating terrorist threats to U.S. security from Southwest Asia.

## *Flawed U.S. Policies and Terrorism in Southwest Asia*

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has emphasized that the U.S. war against terrorism in Southwest Asia will be fought largely through unconventional means.<sup>1</sup> In the 1980s the United States fought another war in this region

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1. See Donald H. Rumsfeld, "A New Kind of War," *New York Times*, September 27, 2001, <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/09/27/opinion/27RUM.html>.

through similar means, a covert war against the Soviet Union and a series of Soviet-backed regimes in Afghanistan. Bin Laden and his terrorist associates, their Afghan hosts, and the Pakistani military are all part of this past U.S. history.<sup>2</sup> In December 1979 the Soviets intervened militarily in Afghanistan to protect a pro-Soviet regime against Pakistani-backed Afghan insurgents. Given an opportunity to undermine the Soviet Union, the United States became a partner in Pakistan's proxy war.

The United States chose Afghan religious extremists as their allies in this covert war. They were handpicked by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency from among Pakistan-based Afghan dissidents and refugees to head the resistance. Trained by the Pakistani military and the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and given generous U.S. military assistance, the *muja-hideen* (holy warriors) waged a *jihād* (holy war) against the government in Kabul and its Soviet allies. Although internal alliances were forged initially along tribal, ethnic, and regional lines, external patronage of Afghan religious extremists gradually transformed Afghanistan's political landscape.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout the 1980s religious extremists gained ground against their moderate and secular counterparts within the Afghan diaspora and resistance, and after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, within Afghanistan itself. Following the Soviet withdrawal, as the holy warriors fought among themselves for power, forging and breaking alliances, another contender for power—the Taliban—emerged in 1994. By 1996 this diverse group of Pashtun military commanders and religious leaders and their students (*taliban*) had gained control over most of the state. It is these Pashtun commanders, clerics, and their cadre who became bin Laden's hosts and protectors in Afghanistan.<sup>4</sup>

During the 1980s, as the United States forged an informal global coalition in its proxy war against the Soviets in Afghanistan, it brought onboard allies such as Saudi Arabia. The Saudis saw in the Afghan war an opportunity to export to

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2. See Mark Urban, *War in Afghanistan* (London: Macmillan, 1988); Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995); Olivier Roy, *Afghanistan: From Holy War to Civil War* (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 1995); Diego Cordovez and Selig S. Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan: The Inside Story of the Soviet Withdrawal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); and Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000).

3. Rasul Bux Rais, *War without Winners: Afghanistan's Uncertain Transition after the Cold War* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 14.

4. Supreme leader, Mullah Mohammed Omar was a commander in Younis Khalis's Hezb-e-Islami, one the most radical of the Pashtun religious parties. Peter Richard Valentine Marsden, *The Taliban: War, Religion, and the New Order in Afghanistan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 44.

the region their brand of Sunni orthodoxy: Wahabism.<sup>5</sup> Also during this period, the CIA recruited thousands of religious extremists from states in the Middle East and North Africa—including Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen—to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan. Among these recruits was Saudi millionaire Osama bin Laden who, with the backing of the Saudi monarchy, helped to finance the Afghan resistance, at the same time propagating the Wahabi ideology within Afghanistan's political circles. The alliances that bin Laden and other Arab extremists formed within Afghanistan in the 1980s have become a liability for the United States in the twenty-first century.

With the Soviets gone from Afghanistan and his holy war over, bin Laden returned to Saudi Arabia in 1989. Following the 1991 Persian Gulf War, he launched another *jihad*, this time against a corrupt Saudi regime and its U.S. supporters. Forced into exile by his erstwhile royal Saudi patrons in 1991, bin Laden joined ranks with other Arab and North African Afghan war veterans to form the al-Qaeda terrorist organization in Sudan. Its goal is to destabilize the Saudi and other U.S.-supported Middle Eastern regimes and to undermine the security of their American backers.

Expelled from Sudan under U.S. pressure, bin Laden and his al-Qaeda cadre returned to Taliban-controlled Afghanistan in 1996, assured of sanctuary by the common bond of Sunni orthodoxy and the links they had forged with Pashtun commanders during the Afghan war.<sup>6</sup> Al-Qaeda's ties to the Taliban were further strengthened by the financial assistance provided by bin Laden to the Pashtun militia. In addition, al-Qaeda cadre fought alongside the Taliban in their war against their Afghan rivals. It is from this base in Afghanistan that bin Laden and the al-Qaeda network operated with impunity against the United States.

Sources of funding for the present-day terrorists in Southwest Asia can also be traced to past U.S. actions. In the 1980s, U.S. officials had chosen to ignore the *mujahideen's* production and sale of opium and heroin to finance their anti-Soviet operations.<sup>7</sup> Dominating the European, Russian, Central Asian, and Southwest Asian markets, the Afghan drug trade funded the activities of all actors in Afghanistan including the Arab terrorists, the Taliban militia, their

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5. See Ayman Al-Yassini, *Religion and the State in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1985).

6. Bin Laden's first Afghan hosts in the eastern province of Jalalabad were former commanders who had known him from the Soviet-Afghan war years.

7. Arthur Bonner, *Among the Afghans* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1987), pp. 313–315.

non-Afghan (including Pakistani and Arab) supporters, and the anti-Taliban coalition, the Northern Alliance.<sup>8</sup>

The Afghan drug trade has also had a major impact on neighboring Pakistan. Since the 1980s, when Pakistan was a major player in the U.S. proxy war in Afghanistan, Pakistan's drug economy has continued to expand. At present, it constitutes a major source of funding for Pakistani Sunni religious extremists. Trained in Afghan camps, using Taliban-controlled Afghanistan as a sanctuary and base of operations for terrorist attacks on their Shi'a opponents in Pakistan, these anti-American Pakistani militants have been among the most vocal opponents of the current U.S. military campaign in Afghanistan.

There is also an indirect linkage between past U.S. policies in Southwest Asia and the rise of religious extremism in Pakistan, a hitherto moderate Muslim state. During the 1980s, massive U.S. military and economic assistance had helped Mohammed Zia ul-Haq and his regime to acquire international legitimacy and consolidate their hold on power.<sup>9</sup> Facing domestic resistance, the regime forged alliances with Sunni extremist groups and organizations to undermine its secular opponents, in the process distorting Pakistan's legal system and providing the clergy with unprecedented access to political power.<sup>10</sup> The regime also provided funding to Pakistan's *madrasas* to indoctrinate and train recruits for the military's interventionist policies in Afghanistan and Indian Kashmir. While sectarian conflict became endemic in Pakistan during this period, Pakistani religious militants developed close links with their Afghan and Arab counterparts in Afghanistan. Sympathetic to bin Laden's cause and closely aligned with his Taliban hosts, these Pakistani extremists and the *taliban* who graduate from their religious schools have become a threat to U.S. security in Southwest Asia.<sup>11</sup>

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8. Also known as the United Front, the alliance comprises political parties and military commanders from the Shi'a Hazara, Uzbek, and Tajik minorities. Most of the opium grown in Afghanistan today is in areas controlled by the Northern Alliance. United Nations Drug Control Program, *Annual Opium Poppy Survey, 2001*, [http://www.odcp.org:80/pakistan/report\\_2001-10-16\\_1.pdf](http://www.odcp.org:80/pakistan/report_2001-10-16_1.pdf).

9. Omar Noman, *The Political Economy of Pakistan: 1947–85* (London: KPI, 1988), p. 121.

10. Samina Ahmed, "Centralization, Authoritarianism, and the Mismanagement of Ethnic Relations in Pakistan," in Michael E. Brown and Sumit Ganguly, eds., *Government Policies and Ethnic Relations in Asia and the Pacific* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), pp. 109–110.

11. Although more than half of its students are Afghans, Madrasa Darul Uloom Haqqania, the seminary responsible for creating the Taliban, also trains students from a number of other countries—including close U.S. allies Turkey and Kuwait. Jessica Stern, "Pakistan's Jihad Culture," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 6 (November/December 2000), pp. 123–124.

### *Waging War in Southwest Asia*

Since September 11, 2001, when Afghanistan became the focus of the U.S. war against terrorism, U.S. policy toward Pakistan has undergone radical change. On the brink of the September 11 attacks, the Bush administration was in the process of forging close diplomatic and strategic ties with India. As high-level diplomatic and military exchanges were taking place, Secretary of State Colin Powell declared that "India has the potential to keep the peace in the vast Indian Ocean region and its periphery."<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage conveyed President Bush's intention "to work closely" with Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee "to promote common interests in Asia and beyond."<sup>13</sup> In contrast, India's principal regional rival, Pakistan, was being subjected to a wide range of U.S. sanctions. Indeed, around the same time that Washington was beginning to ease some of the economic sanctions that it had imposed after Pakistan's May 1998 nuclear tests, it was leveling a new set of economic and military ("democracy") sanctions in response to the October 1999 coup d'état that brought Gen. Pervez Musharraf to power.

In 1999 U.S. relations with Pakistan were strained over a number of issues, including Pakistan's support for the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. The United States had ceased its proxy Afghan war following the Soviet withdrawal and the end of the Cold War. Pakistani intervention in Afghanistan had continued unabated, however, culminating in the Taliban's ascendancy in the mid-1990s. Recruiting Afghan students from the *madrasas* of Pakistani religious parties and co-opting Pashtun military commanders and tribal chiefs, Pakistan had helped to create the Taliban militia. With Pakistani military, logistical, and economic support, the Taliban ousted President Burhannudin Rabbani's Northern Alliance regime from Kabul in 1996 and subsequently captured 90 percent of Afghan territory.<sup>14</sup>

Until the Taliban provided sanctuary to bin Laden in 1996, the United States had considered the Sunni extremist Afghan militia as a potential ally against

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12. Quoted in Samina Ahmed, "Nuclear Proliferation in South Asia: U.S. Policy Challenges," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, Vol. 6, No. 28 (July 2001), p. 2.

13. Quoted in C. Raja Mohan, "Bush Proposal Aimed at 'Rogue States': Armitage," *Hindu*, May 21, 2001, <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/2001/05/stories/0121006.html>.

14. Anthony Davis, "How the Taliban Became a Military Force," in William Maley, ed., *Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), pp. 44–46, 61–62.

Shi'a Iran. Only after the Taliban rejected U.S. demands to expel bin Laden did the United States pressure Pakistan to withdraw support from its Afghan ally. Antagonized by Pakistan's refusal to comply with its request and concerned about Pakistan's proxy war in Kashmir, the United States became even more estranged from its former Cold War ally.<sup>15</sup>

Since the September 11 attacks, the United States has reversed course in South and Southwest Asia. Adopting a more even-handed approach in its dealings with India and Pakistan, the Bush administration is more than willing to work with the Musharraf regime in return for Pakistani support of U.S. military and diplomatic objectives in Southwest Asia. For their part, General Musharraf and his military colleagues have eagerly supported U.S. goals in Afghanistan in the interest of regime survival and to reap the rewards of cooperation with the United States and its allies.

On October 7, 2001, the United States initiated its military campaign in Afghanistan. Pakistan provided the United States with logistical support, intelligence sharing, and access to its airspace and military bases. Pakistan's military intelligence helped to identify vital targets, including Taliban command and control posts as well as terrorist camps and bases in Afghanistan. U.S. forces used Pakistani military bases and depended on Pakistani logistical support for ground operations against Taliban targets and against terrorist sanctuaries in southern and eastern Afghanistan, bordering on Pakistan's Baluchistan and Northwest Frontier Provinces.<sup>16</sup> By exercising its leverage over landlocked Afghanistan (which is dependent on Pakistani routes for trade and vital supplies), as well as exerting its historical influence on cross-border Pashtun tribes and using its long-standing ties with Afghan political factions, Pakistan played a vital role in shifting Afghanistan's political and military dynamics in favor of the United States.

As a result of Pakistan's collaboration in the Afghan military campaign and to ensure its cooperation in restoring stability in a post-Taliban Afghanistan, the Bush administration and its allies not only eased diplomatic sanctions on

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15. In its annual report, *Patterns of Global Terrorism for the Year, 2000*, the United States identified South Asia as a focal point of anti-U.S. terrorism, accusing Pakistan of providing increased military support to the Taliban. From 1991 until 1993, the United States had even considered putting Pakistan on its list of terrorist states for its support of Kashmiri extremists. Dennis Kux, *The United States and Pakistan, 1947–2000: Disenchanted Allies* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Press, 2001), pp. 316, 321–323. See also Tahir Mirza, "U.S. Accuses Pakistan of Backing Taliban," *Dawn*, May 1, 2001, <http://www.dawn.com/2001/05/01/top4.htm>.

16. Pakistan shares a 1,560-mile-long border with Afghanistan, and major Afghan cities once controlled by the Taliban lie less than fifteen minutes flying time from Pakistani air bases.

Pakistan but also extended substantial economic incentives to the Musharraf regime. In November 2001, President Bush disclosed that the United States would provide Pakistan with "more than \$1 billion in U.S. support" in addition to preferential terms of trade for Pakistani products and support for new soft loans and extensive debt relief from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.<sup>17</sup> In addition, Pakistan's major aid donor, Japan, removed sanctions that it had imposed after Pakistan's 1998 nuclear tests, and the United Kingdom canceled £24 million in loans.

The incentives offered to the Musharraf regime partially explain Pakistan's decision to support U.S. military operations in Afghanistan. In September 2001 not only was Pakistan subjected to U.S., European, and Japanese sanctions, but its economy was growing by only 2.5 percent to 2.7 percent a year, and its foreign exchange reserves were less than \$1.5 billion.<sup>18</sup> Given that debt servicing and defense consumes nearly 75 percent of his government's annual revenues, Musharraf was hard-pressed to meet even the needs of his political constituency, a half-a-million-strong military. More important, Musharraf and his colleagues were aware that their regime's very survival was at stake. Had they refused to cooperate with the United States, Pakistan would have been targeted by the U.S.-led international coalition for its support of the Taliban and linked, by association, with their al-Qaeda guests. By siding with the United States and its allies in the fight against terrorism and by fully cooperating in the U.S. military campaign in Afghanistan, the Musharraf regime gained international diplomatic and economic support, thus strengthening it against domestic rivals. It also neutralized threats from a hostile Bharatiya Janata Party government in India and gained a voice in shaping a post-Taliban order in Afghanistan.<sup>19</sup> As Pakistan's military regime obtains international legitimacy with U.S. support, the Bush administration must assess the impact of its policies and counter-terrorism strategies in an unstable Southwest Asia.

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17. In September 2001 Pakistan's total foreign debt was \$37 billion, including \$12.5 billion in bilateral debt and \$15.4 billion owed to international financial institutions. "Islamabad Offered \$800 Million Immediate Cash Relief," *Dawn*, October 21, 2001, <http://www.dawn.com/2001/10/2/top5.html>; and Karen DeYoung, "Bush Urges Coalition to Fulfill Its 'Duties'; \$1 Billion Aid for Pakistan Announced," *Washington Post*, November 11, 2001, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A9019-2001Nov10.html>.

18. Shahid Javed Burki, "Lower Growth, Rising Poverty," *Dawn*, July 24, 2001, <http://www.dawn.com/2001/07/24/top3.html>.

19. Justifying Pakistan's pro-U.S. policy, Musharraf said: "Think of the scenario if the international coalition would have been against us with India on their side. But now we have no threat to our strategic (nuclear) assets and they are safe." "India Warned against Adventurism: Pakistan Can Defend Itself," *Dawn*, October 23, 2001, <http://www.dawn.com/2001/10/23/top1.html>.

### *Implications of U.S. Policies in Southwest Asia*

Mullah Mohammed Omar's regime in Afghanistan disintegrated as a result of U.S. military force and diplomatic pressure, transforming the country's internal dynamics in the process. But the Bush administration must learn from past U.S. mistakes if it is to deny sanctuary and a base of operations for terrorists in Afghanistan. In the 1980s U.S. policy created an enabling environment for terrorism to flourish on Afghan soil. Should the United States embark once again on a proxy war in Afghanistan, it might win the battle but lose the war against terrorism in Southwest Asia.

The United States has repeatedly denied any intention to back a Northern Alliance-dominated, post-Taliban government. However, should U.S. policy-makers pursue a divide-and-rule strategy by extending covert support to the minority alliance against its Pashtun rivals, the civil war in Afghanistan will continue unabated. A direct U.S. role in the formation of a multiethnic government through, for instance, a *loya jirga* (grand council) would also prove counterproductive, because such an arrangement would lack domestic legitimacy and therefore be internally contested. An unstable Afghanistan would remain a sanctuary and base of operations for terrorists. In the absence of an effective state authority, Afghanistan-based terrorists would also have continued access to a lucrative drug trade, hampering U.S. efforts to dry up an important source of funding for terrorists and their international networks.

Although Pakistan can exercise considerable influence in Afghanistan to promote U.S. diplomatic and military goals, U.S. interests in Southwest Asia do not necessarily coincide with those of the Pakistani military regime. Since the 1990s Pakistan has pursued interventionist policies in Afghanistan to promote a wide range of objectives: to counter Afghan claims on Pakistan's Pashtun-majority areas, to gain access to the oil and gas resources of Central Asia via Afghan territory, to undermine Iran's influence in Southwest and Central Asia, to gain strategic depth against India, and to recruit Afghan religious extremists as well as Taliban-trained Kashmiri and Pakistani militants for the insurgency in Kashmir.<sup>20</sup> To advance these objectives, Pakistan had supported the Taliban against their internal rivals and espoused their cause at international forums. Indeed this support continued even after the September 11 at-

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20. Hasan Askari-Rizvi, "Pakistan in 1998: The Policy under Pressure," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (January/February 1999), p. 184.

tacks, changing only after the United States pressured Pakistan to distance itself from Mullah Omar and his associates.

The Pakistani regime's decision to withdraw support from Mullah Omar reflects past Pakistani practices of abandoning Afghan allies who have lost their military or political utility.<sup>21</sup> In his public pronouncements, Pakistan's military ruler favors the formation of a broad-based, multiethnic administration supported by all major Afghan factions.<sup>22</sup> Pakistani decisionmakers are anxious, however, to ensure that any post-Taliban arrangement promotes Pakistan's objectives, even at the cost of regional peace.

The Bush administration has taken Pakistani concerns about the Northern Alliance into consideration in its plans for a post-Taliban Afghanistan. Secretary of State Powell endorsed a broad-based transitional arrangement but rejected a direct Pakistani role in its formation. He also opposed a Northern Alliance-dominated government in Kabul and tacitly supported Pakistan's stance on including so-called moderate Taliban elements: "You cannot export them, you cannot send them to any other country, or you cannot ethnically cleanse Afghanistan after this is over," stated Powell.<sup>23</sup> A continued Pakistani role in Afghanistan's internal affairs that is condoned by the United States would, however, fuel interethnic tensions and tribal rivalries and undermine the prospects for internal reconciliation. Moreover, the Northern Alliance would strongly oppose Pakistani preferences, and Pakistan's regional rivals—Iran and India—would be encouraged to intervene in Afghanistan, thus heightening regional tensions.

A revived U.S. alliance with Pakistan is already a source of tension in the region. On the eve of the September 11 attacks, the Bush administration had been moving toward the establishment of a close strategic relationship with India, pledging to remove all U.S. nuclear-specific sanctions. In the first week of September, the United States had imposed sanctions on Pakistan for its import of Chinese missile-related technology. And to demonstrate its opposition to Paki-

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21. Pakistan withdrew its support for Peshawar-based Pashtun parties when they failed to dislodge Rabbani's regime from Kabul, and subsequently created and supported the Taliban militia against long-standing allies such as Hezb-e-Islami's Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

22. "We agree," said Musharraf during Secretary of State Powell's visit to Islamabad in October 2001, that "durable peace in Afghanistan would only be possible through the establishment of a broad-based, multiethnic government representing the demographic contours of Afghanistan, freely chosen by Afghans without outside interference." "Support to Continue until Military Targets Achieved: CE," *Dawn*, October 17, 2001, <http://www.dawn.com/2001/10/17/top2.html>.

23. Quoted in Faraz Hashmi, "Agreement on Afghan Set-up: Powell-Musharraf Talks," *Dawn*, October 17, 2001, <http://www.dawn.com/2001/10/17/top1.html>.

stani intervention in Indian Kashmir, the United States had designated a Pakistani-backed Kashmiri party, the Harakat-ul-Mujaheddin, as a terrorist organization.<sup>24</sup>

Antagonized by the revived U.S.-Pakistan alliance, key Indian officials have stressed that like the United States, India has been a victim of terror and hence also has the right to use military force to protect itself. "Our fight against terrorism did not start on September 11," stated Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh, "We have been fighting this battle alone for years now. Pakistan has spawned, encouraged and sustained terrorist activities in Kashmir."<sup>25</sup> Hoping to retain the goodwill of Pakistan (its new military ally) and India (a potential strategic partner), the Bush administration has urged both states to exercise restraint and to peacefully resolve their differences, including their dispute over Kashmir. In a display of its antipathy toward Kashmiri militancy, the Bush administration placed a Pakistan-backed Kashmiri organization, Jaish-e-Mohammed, on the U.S. terrorist watch-list following the October 1 attack on Kashmir's legislature.<sup>26</sup> Averse to any external (including U.S.) role in the Kashmir dispute, India has reacted strongly, however, to Secretary Powell's statement that the Kashmir dispute is "central" to the India-Pakistan relationship, an assertion that Pakistan depicts as evidence of Washington's support for its position on Kashmir.<sup>27</sup>

Although India resumed artillery clashes along the Line of Control in Kashmir in mid-October 2001, key Indian policymakers, hoping to retain U.S. goodwill, have stressed that despite constant Pakistani provocation, India would not extend military operations against Kashmiri insurgents into Pakistani territory.<sup>28</sup> India could ignore U.S. calls for restraint, however, if civilian and military casualties continue to mount in Kashmir. The Pakistan military is equally unlikely to end its long-standing support for the Kashmiri insurgency. Re-

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24. Designated a terrorist organization by the United States in 1999, the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen appears on President Bush's list of terrorist groups and individuals with suspected links to the al-Qaeda network.

25. Quoted in Rama Lakshmi, "Pakistan's New Role Riles Indian Leaders: Actions in Kashmir Called 'Terrorist,'" *Washington Post*, September 27, 2001, p. A15.

26. Jaish-e-Mohammed had claimed responsibility for the October suicide attack on the Kashmir state assembly building. "Pak Is Trying Our Patience, PM Tells Bush," *Hindustan Times*, October 2, 2001, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/nonfram/021001/dlnat38.asp>.

27. U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, press conference in Islamabad, as reported in "Pakistan Stance on Kashmir Endorsed," *Dawn*, October 17, 2001, <http://www.dawn.com/2001/10/17/top9.html>.

28. Detractors include Jammu and Kashmir's Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah, who has urged the Indian government to "smash terrorist camps" in Pakistan, stressing that there was no alternative to crossing the Line of Control. "Smash Terrorist Camps in Pakistan, Reiterates Farooq," *Indian Express*, October 29, 2001, <http://www.expressindia.com/index.html>.

ferring to Kashmiri insurgents as freedom fighters waging a *jihad* against Indian aggression, the Musharraf regime has urged the international community to recognize the threat of “state terrorism . . . especially in Indian-occupied Kashmir.”<sup>29</sup> Pakistan’s new alliance with the United States could even encourage the regime to increase its support of Kashmiri insurgents in the belief that U.S. pressure would prevent India from retaliating militarily. Continued Pakistani support for the Kashmiri insurgency, however, would increase the risk of war with India. And ongoing state patronage of the Islamic parties that provide recruits for the Kashmiri insurgency would strengthen the ranks and internal standing of religious extremists in Pakistan.

Musharraf and his military colleagues seem to have convinced the Bush administration and influential U.S. allies that the threat of Islamic extremism has increased in Pakistan because of the regime’s principled support for U.S. anti-terrorist goals and that the regime alone can prevent the “Talibanization” of a nuclear-armed Pakistan. Pakistani religious parties have held widespread demonstrations against the regime for its support of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and have called for Musharraf’s ouster. It is through the Pakistani military’s patronage, however, that religious extremists have gained ground in Afghanistan and in Pakistan itself. The most vocal religious opponents of the military regime’s pro-U.S., anti-Taliban stance—Jamiat-Ulema-e-Islam (led by Samiul Haq) and Jamiat-Ulema-e-Islam (led by Fazlur Rehman)—were once the military’s partners of choice, helping it to create and sustain the Taliban.

Because of the military’s backing, these and other Pakistani religious extremists are well organized, well armed, and well trained. But they have a limited base of support and as such pose no real threat to the military’s political dominance. Had mainstream Pakistani political parties such as the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP), factions of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML), or the National Awami Party (ANP) joined hands with the Pakistani religious right, the regime would have found it far more difficult to contain domestic dissent against its military collaboration with the United States. These parties have supported Musharraf’s pro-U.S. policy, however, because they believe that Pakistan’s only other option was international isolation. Moderate and secular parties such as the PPP and the ANP are also opposed to the Taliban’s brand of Islamic orthodoxy and the extremism of their Pakistani allies.<sup>30</sup>

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29. “Inter-Services Public Relations Seeks World Attention on State Terrorism,” *Dawn*, October 4, 2001, <http://www.dawn.com/2001/10/4/top6.html>.

30. Denouncing its brand of religious extremism, PPP Chairperson Benazir Bhutto called upon the Musharraf regime to sever ties with the Taliban. The ANP not only is critical of the Taliban’s political ideology but also has demanded a ban on all *jihadi* organizations in Pakistan. “Concerns of

Although they support the Musharraf regime's collaboration with the United States, moderate Pakistani political leaders have warned the international community that political stability in multiethnic Pakistan is contingent on a return to democratic rule, a claim substantiated by Pakistan's political history. A decade of Punjabi-dominated military rule led to Pakistan's disintegration in 1971, when the majority Bengali population opted for secession. During the 1980s ethnic-state conflict became endemic, as alienated and excluded ethnic minorities rejected Zia's military rule.<sup>31</sup> Ethnic-state and intra-ethnic tensions are once again increasing under Pakistan's current and fourth military dictatorship.

Recommending the waiver of democracy sanctions on Pakistan on October 5, 2001, the chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Joseph Biden (D-Delaware), warned the Pakistani regime that the waiver should not be viewed as a "green light" to cancel national elections.<sup>32</sup> Despite official disclaimers, the Bush administration could extend unconditional support to the Musharraf regime if it believes that such a step would be in U.S. national interests. U.S. acquiescence would encourage the Pakistani military to retain power or to rule from behind the scenes. If military rule is prolonged, political alienation will inevitably increase and destabilize an already fragile polity. U.S. identification with the military regime will also be used by Pakistani religious extremists to exploit anti-U.S. sentiments and to thereby gain support at the cost of their moderate secular opponents. As religious extremism grows in Pakistan, it will pose new threats to Pakistani security as well as to the security of the United States.

### *The United States and Terrorism in Southwest Asia: The Road Ahead*

As the United States pursues its campaign against terrorism in Southwest Asia, the Bush administration can best further U.S. objectives by using a carrot-and-stick approach, basing U.S. policies on nonintervention, economic devel-

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Muslims Should Be Addressed," *News*, September 23, 2001, <http://jang-group.com/thenews/index.html>; "Pakistan Should Distance Itself from Taliban: PPP," *Dawn*, September 14, 2001, <http://www.dawn.com/2001/09/14/nat2.html>; and "ANP for Ban on Jihadi Outfits," *Dawn*, September 12, 2001, <http://www.dawn.com/2001/09/12/nat14.html>.

31. Samina Ahmed, "The Fragile Base of Democracy in Pakistan," in Amita Shastri and A. Jeyaratnam Wilson, eds., *The Post-Colonial States of South Asia: Democracy, Identity, Development, and Security* (London: Curzon, 2001), pp. 45–46, 49.

32. Congress waived democracy sanctions for fiscal year 2001 and could waive them for 2002 if the president determined that such action would facilitate the restoration of democracy in Pakistan. "Military Aid Likely As U.S. Senate Passes Bill," *Dawn*, October 6, 2001, <http://www.dawn.com/2001/06/top3.html>.

opment, and democratization. Proxy wars undermine the security of intervening actors, while proxy regimes lack domestic legitimacy and ultimately become a liability for their external sponsors. Economic development strengthens the capacity of governments to deliver services, redresses domestic grievances, and deprives terrorists of potential recruits. Representative governance minimizes internal alienation and enhances political stability, reducing the domestic appeal of terrorist organizations and causes.

The United States and its allies should use targeted carrots and sticks to counter potential threats of terrorism from Pakistan. Financial incentives can promote antiterrorist goals, but only if economic inducements are focused and monitored to ensure that they are put to optimal use. Other carrots could include economic measures to stabilize the Pakistani economy and substantial assistance for vital services such as education and health care.<sup>33</sup> In the absence of public schooling, nearly a million Pakistanis are being educated in *madrasas*, where they are indoctrinated and trained by religious extremists.<sup>34</sup>

The United States should accompany its incentives to the Pakistani regime with sticks—for example, pressuring its military leaders to end their policy of exporting *jihad* to Indian Kashmir and to persuade them to transfer power to civilian hands through free and fair national elections by the October 2002 deadline set by Pakistan's Supreme Court. International ostracism and sanctions played a major role in pressuring the Musharraf regime to pledge a return of power to civilians. Continued international pressure will force the regime to hold elections. The international community must monitor the electoral process, however, and revert to diplomatic pressure and targeted sanctions should the military attempt to manipulate the electoral results or retain power indirectly by distorting the spirit of Pakistan's 1977 constitution.<sup>35</sup>

International support for democracy will strengthen forces of moderation in Pakistan and ease internal tensions. Although religious extremists have a limited base of support, they have benefited from curbs placed on mainstream, moderate parties by the military regime. Internal alienation has also grown in

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33. The United States should follow Canada's example. Canada converted its \$285 million loan to Pakistan into social-sector funding for poverty alleviation and health care.

34. Sixty thousand Pakistanis educated at *madrasas* have fought on behalf of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Ahmed Rashid, "Pakistan, the Taliban and the U.S.," *Nation*, October 8, 2001, <http://www.nation.com.pk/archives.html>.

35. Article 245 of the constitution makes the military subservient to civilian authority and power, stating that the military's sole function is to "defend Pakistan against external aggression or threat of war, and, subject to law, act in aid of civil power when called upon to do so" by the federal government. Quoted in Hasan Askari Rizvi, *The Military and Politics in Pakistan*, 2d. ed. (Lahore: Progressive Publishers, 1976), pp. 263–264.

the absence of functioning participatory institutions. The restoration of democratic rule will therefore promote political stability in Pakistan and undermine the support base of anti-U.S. religious extremists. In the long term, a moderate, democratic Pakistan will prove a far more reliable partner for the United States in its efforts to eradicate terrorism from Southwest Asia than will any alliance of expediency with an unrepresentative military regime.

In Afghanistan, continued reliance on force is far less likely to promote U.S. antiterrorism objectives in the long run than is humanitarian assistance for the economic reconstruction of that war-ravaged country. Massive international assistance is urgently needed to avert a looming humanitarian crisis—the result of civil war, famine, and drought—that U.S. military operations have exacerbated. Because humanitarian assistance was disrupted by U.S. military strikes, millions of Afghans are at grave risk of starvation. As the number of internally displaced persons grows, neighboring Pakistan and Iran, already hosts to more than 3 million Afghan refugees, could face yet another massive refugee influx.<sup>36</sup> If the United States fails to avert this humanitarian crisis, anti-U.S. sentiment will increase in Afghanistan, while anti-U.S. forces could use the crisis to manipulate public opinion in neighboring Pakistan and in other parts of the Muslim world.

U.S. support for Afghanistan's economic reconstruction would serve multiple goals. International assistance would help to resettle more than a million Afghans, displaced because of war and a devastated economy. Economic reconstruction would also promote internal stability and create an environment conducive to the return of millions of refugees from Iran and Pakistan. These refugees, among them moderate politicians, doctors, engineers, educators, entrepreneurs, and administrators, would in turn help to rebuild Afghanistan's economy and polity.

The removal of the Taliban regime was in the interests of the United States and the Afghan people. International terrorism was funded by their drug economy. Anti-U.S. terrorists received the Taliban's sanctuary and support, while their distorted brand of Islamic orthodoxy deprived the Afghan people of their civil rights. A stable post-Taliban Afghanistan would ease the refugee burden and undermine potential support for terrorists in neighboring Pakistan. The United States should resist the temptation, however, of creating a proxy Afghan government, and it should not allow its Pakistani ally to intervene in a post-Taliban Afghanistan. U.S. political and military interests in Afghanistan

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36. "UNHCR Expresses Frustration over Afghan Aid Obstacles," United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, press release, October 11, 2001.

would in fact be best served by an incremental and sustained carrot-and-stick strategy.

In addition to continued military and diplomatic pressure, the United States should offer economic reconstruction and humanitarian assistance to Pashtun commanders and tribal chiefs in southern and eastern Afghanistan in return for demonstrated progress toward peace. In northern and western Afghanistan, where the populations are most at risk because of famine and drought, the United States should provide economic (as opposed to military) incentives in return for the Northern Alliance's support for a mediated peace and political reconciliation. Economic reconstruction in these and other zones of peace could then proceed alongside an internal and incremental process for the reconstruction of state authority in Afghanistan.

President Bush has supported a role for the United Nations in the "stabilization of a future government (in Afghanistan) after our military mission has ended."<sup>37</sup> But a U.S.-supported, UN-led political process must be guided by the wishes of the Afghan people if it is to have both domestic support and international acceptance. If this political process is accepted by all Afghan stakeholders and conducted under the aegis of the UN, a post-Taliban transitional administration will have internal legitimacy and could thus overcome the multiple challenges it will confront. Such a transitional arrangement could then pave the way for the creation of a viable and representative political order in Afghanistan. If U.S. diplomacy helps to promote political reconciliation and a sustainable peace in Afghanistan, the United States will have reached a major milestone in its war against terrorism in Southwest Asia.

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37. Quoted in Patrick E. Tyler and Elisabeth Bumiller, "President Hints He Will Halt the War If bin Laden Is Handed Over," *New York Times*, October 12, 2001, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/12/international/12PREX.html>.