

Chapter 10

South Asia

South Asia is a region of startling strategic contradictions, at once the locus of booming high-tech economies and crushing poverty, of vibrant multireligious, multiethnic democracy and bitter insurgencies fueled by ethnic, economic, tribal, and sectarian grievances. The most daunting transnational threats converge in the South Asian zone: narcotics trafficking, human trafficking, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and terrorism. With the populations of China and Russia combined in an area the size of the contiguous United States west of the Mississippi, South Asia presents strategic challenges of unparalleled diversity, ranging from the preservation of a stable balance between nuclear- and missile-armed rivals to the conduct of irregular mountain warfare. In one part of South Asia, the principal policy challenge is how to create the most rudimentary capacity for effective governance, while elsewhere it is managing the process by which an

emerging India takes its place among the leading powers of the world.

Afghanistan: The Quest for Stability and Legitimacy

In the months following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the international community seemed to have learned not to underestimate the stake it had in Afghanistan. Chronically too poor to afford to govern itself or meet the basic needs of its scattered and ethnically diverse population, the Afghan state has always been vulnerable to conflicts exacerbated or triggered by foreign powers. The most recent of these conflicts, which began with the 1978 coup d'état by Soviet-trained army officers, had finally left most of the country under the rule of the Taliban. This movement of rural clergy imposed a harsh version of Islamic sharia law on a society badly damaged by uncontrolled violence. The Taliban's parochial



U.S. Navy (John Gay)

Afghan villagers meet with joint team investigating allegations of civilian casualties in Tagab

leadership, which lacked all experience with the international system, became increasingly dependent upon both the Pakistani intelligence agency, the Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), and Osama bin Laden, who reestablished his global terrorist operation on Afghan soil when he was expelled from Sudan in May 1996.

Once the United States and the Afghan forces it armed and funded ousted the Taliban regime in late 2001, the international community set out under the framework of the Bonn Agreement (December 2001) and later of the Afghanistan Compact (January 2006) to rebuild the institutions of governance that seemed to hold the key to preventing yet another violent cycle of Afghan history. Since the adoption of the compact, however, the limited progress it symbolized has badly unraveled. Both the leadership of al Qaeda and a diverse, locally rooted insurgency have exploited the strategic mistakes of the United States, the weakness of Afghanistan's shattered institutions, and the contested and loosely governed status of the areas in Pakistan's frontier with Afghanistan to reconstitute their leadership infrastructure and carry out insurgencies in both countries.

Creating a stable and peaceful Afghanistan requires an integrated strategy that incorporates political and developmental, counterterrorist, and counterinsurgency components. Moreover, it

requires recognition that the Afghan government's ability to prevent its own territory from being used as a base for international terrorism depends on the integrity and democratic development not only of Afghanistan itself but of Pakistan as well.

Background

The problem of Afghanistan ultimately goes back to the power vacuum left by the collapse of Safavid and Moghul power in the area between Persia and India in the 18th century. Unable to extract sufficient resources from the barren terrain to govern the area's diverse and fractious population, the newly formed Afghan empire turned to conquering its wealthier and more fertile neighbors as its main source of revenue. It was partly to stop such depredations against its Indian empire and partly to prevent Russia from advancing toward India from central Asia that Britain created the multi-tiered security structure whose lines continue to define the geopolitics of Afghanistan and Pakistan to this day.

The independence and partition of India in 1947 altered the strategic stakes in the region. Afghanistan promptly repudiated the validity of the line separating itself from the tribal areas of the former Indian empire. When the United States refused the government's request for aid, it turned to Moscow to build its national army. An April 1978 coup by communist

U.S. Army (Russell Lee Klitka)



Afghan National Army commandos return to base after air assault mission to capture suspected insurgents in Khowst Province, March 2009

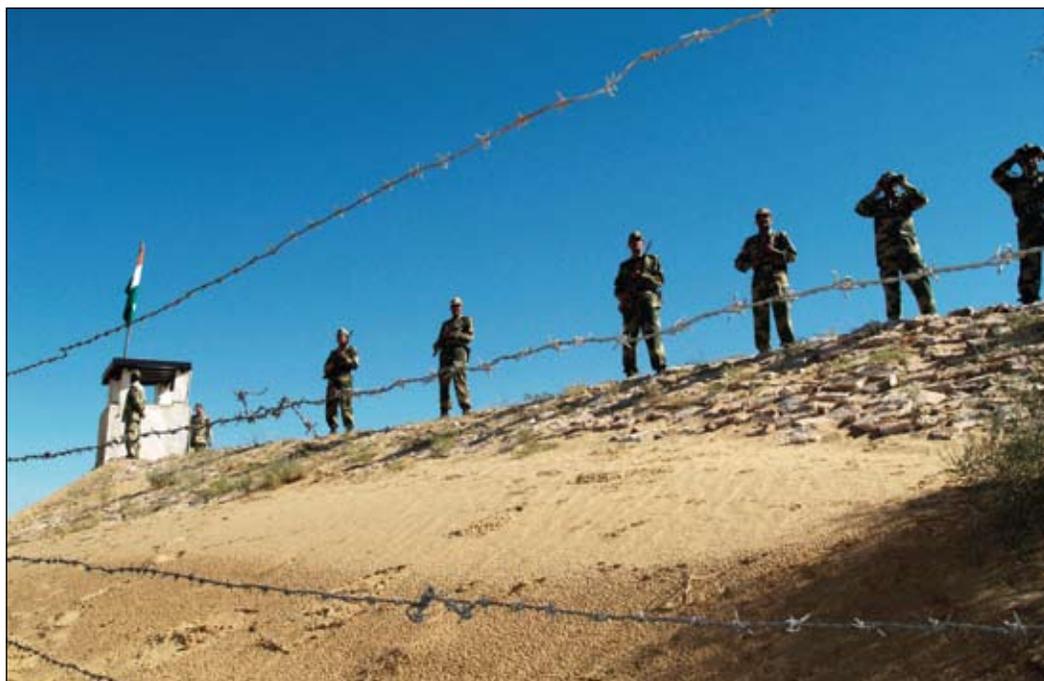
military officers led to a massive Soviet invasion in 1979; in response, the United States, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and others began spending billions of dollars to back the anticommunist Afghan mujahideen and their Arab auxiliaries—and thereby laid the foundations for an infrastructure of regional and global jihad. The result has been some 30 years of almost uninterrupted fighting that has left Afghanistan devastated.

The United States treated Afghanistan's collapse into warring chiefdoms—many of them allied with neighboring states or other external forces—as a matter of little concern once Soviet forces departed in 1988. Washington saw no potential benefit from involvement in Afghanistan's politics; Afghans and Pakistanis saw that the United States had no permanent interest in and took no consistent responsibility for the region. It took 9/11 to force Washington to recognize that a global terrorist opposition had created a base for itself among the ruins of Afghanistan, using the very human and physical capital that the United States and its allies had armed and supplied, through Pakistan's intelligence services, in pursuit of a Cold War agenda over a decade before. It was this recognition, not the immense humanitarian emergency in Afghanistan, that led the United States and others to send tens of thousands of troops and spend billions of dollars to establish internationally recognized institutions in the country.

The Afghan Environment Today

The United States had a doctrine and capacity for overthrowing hostile regimes; neither it nor international institutions has adequate doctrine or capacity to rebuild states and societies. The U.S. administration originally declined to finance reconstruction or to participate in any part of the security sector except for training the army, which it saw chiefly as a partner in counterterrorism. The Afghan National Army has been a relative success. As of June 2009 some 86,000 recruits were on the books and it was set to expand to 134,000. It depends heavily, however, on embedded U.S. trainers as well as on U.S. financial, logistical, airlift, and medical support. It cannot undertake independent operations. The police are in far worse condition than the army, as the United States did not become involved in their rebuilding until 2006. The justice system, necessary for the police to do their job, is so corrupt as to be nonfunctional.

Failures in security have undermined gains in political legitimacy. Under the process outlined in the Bonn Agreement of December 2001, an interim government chosen at the Bonn talks presided over a transition that gradually restored the institutions of the Afghan state, but in a more democratic framework. A constitution adopted in January 2004 provided for a presidential system and a bicameral



AP Images (Vinay Joshi)

Indian Border Security Forces man western sector of India-Pakistan international border after November 2008 attack in Mumbai

legislature, as well as provincial and district councils in accord with Afghanistan's system of centralized, unitary government. The process culminated in the inauguration of both houses of the National Assembly in December 2005.

The Bonn Agreement was then followed by the Afghanistan Compact, adopted in London in January 2006, which provided for a program of state-building (security, governance, and development) to enable the government to meet its obligations. The combination of a rising security threat and the departure of some senior reformist ministers from the cabinet, however, meant that institution-building has largely stalled. Instead, corruption fed by currency inflows from drug exports and foreign aid threatens to engulf the government, which Washington estimates controls fewer than 20 percent of Afghanistan's 365 districts. The insurgents control slightly fewer districts, while most are contested or ungoverned by any organized entity.

Economic development has led to some successes, notably the enrollment of half of all school-age children in school, and a decrease in infant and child mortality. Nevertheless, while the total licit gross domestic product has grown robustly, the living standards of much of the population have declined in the face of increasing prices of food and fuel. Unemployment is estimated at about 60 percent. While poppy cultivation is restricted to the most conflict-affected provinces for now, the drug industry, accounting for one-quarter to one-third of the total licit plus illicit economy, continues to expand throughout the country, as discussed in greater detail in the next section.

After the expulsion of the Taliban and al Qaeda leadership from Afghanistan in 2002, U.S. counterterrorism policy impeded reintegration of the many former Taliban who would have stayed in Afghanistan, as the Afghan government could not guarantee they would not be detained. Consequently, the Taliban regime shifted wholesale to Pakistan, as did al Qaeda. While Pakistan captured hundreds of al Qaeda members, losing many troops in the process, it quietly welcomed the Afghan Taliban. The U.S. administration, focused on the upcoming conflict in Iraq, moved intelligence and military assets to the Persian Gulf, devoting few to surveillance of the Taliban's activities.

As a result, since the fall of 2005 there has been a steady annual increase in the tempo, sophistication, and effectiveness of attacks by insurgents and terrorists in Afghanistan. Increasingly sophisticated tactics have included suicide bombing, modeled on

techniques used in Iraq. The timing of the escalation of the insurgency may be due to the time required to reorganize; it may also be due to a political decision made by Pakistan in response to the handover of military command from the U.S.-led coalition to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the increasing Indian presence in Afghanistan. U.S. intelligence finds continuing links between the Pakistani ISI and the Afghan Taliban and other insurgents; the Afghan and Indian governments charge that Pakistan directs their activities.

The link between Pakistan and the insurgency in Afghanistan has now become the most serious obstacle to the stabilization of Afghanistan. The al Qaeda safe haven in Pakistan is protected by the umbrella organization *Tehrik-i Taliban-i Pakistan* (TTP, Taliban Movement of Pakistan). The TTP collaborates with militant groups that have fought in Kashmir, as well as with Uzbeks and Chechens. It has built a support base among the local population using a combination of money (funds from al Qaeda, Persian Gulf donors, and drug and other trafficking), force (death threats against tribal elders), and the provision of public services such as justice. The Afghan Taliban's *Shura* (council), located in Quetta, capital of Pakistan's Balochistan Province, directs insurgent operations in southern Afghanistan and loosely oversees the rest of the movement. An officially subordinate but largely autonomous center of Afghan Taliban leadership based in Pakistan's North Waziristan Agency is the network commanded by Jalaluddin Haqqani and his son, Sirajuddin. The Haqqanis collaborate closely with al Qaeda and the TTP. Another center of Afghan insurgency is Gulbuddin Hikmatyar's faction of *Hezb-i Islami*, based in northwest Pakistan and northeast Afghanistan.

All of these Afghan groups were closely supported and monitored by Pakistan's ISI and had bases and logistical structures in Pakistan for many years before 9/11. Afghan and Indian intelligence have long charged that ISI directly organizes the most spectacular attacks and acts through these groups—charges that gained credence when U.S. intelligence sources claimed to have evidence of an ISI role in the July 7, 2008, suicide bombing of the Indian embassy in Kabul.

Strategic Imperatives

The core challenge now faced collectively by the United States, NATO, other troop contributors and donors, and the Afghan government is the existence of a transnational movement of terrorists and

insurgents, spanning the Durand line (the tenuous border established by the British between Pakistan and Afghanistan in 1893) and providing a safe haven from which al Qaeda and its allies can plan, train for, and potentially carry out renewed terrorist attacks comparable to 9/11. This movement is fueled by the lack of legitimacy and capacity of the Afghan state, the Pakistan military's perception of the post-9/11 political arrangement there as a security threat, the political conflict between the two states over the status and management of the border region, and turmoil in the governance of Pakistan itself.

In the coming months, the U.S. administration will confront an urgent task affecting the political legitimacy of the Afghan government: the presidential elections of August 2009. Hamid Karzai remained the frontrunner, though much of Afghan and international opinion has concluded that he had serious shortcomings as a leader. Furthermore, under current security conditions, it was going to hold a contested election in all parts of the country whose results would be accepted as legitimate. Failure to elect a legitimate president will undermine the foundational legitimacy of the government. Whatever the process, the maintenance of some degree of stability will require urgent political, financial, and security assistance from the Obama administration and global community.

Legitimacy will also require a thorough cleansing of the Afghan administrative apparatus of criminal elements. As many of those who will have to be dismissed lead armed groups, the Afghan president will require strong backing from the international community. Making the government work better with less corruption requires an urgent effort to establish a nationwide computerized payments system for the government payroll, which still does not exist after 7 years.

The Afghan government and its international partners are discussing the possibility of a negotiated political solution with insurgents. The international coalition's current red lines are no participation by al Qaeda or those associated with it; no sharing of control over the territory or government; and no safe areas or ceasefires before reaching a political agreement.

There is currently no adequate plan to sustain the Afghan National Security Forces. The current cost structure requires foreign funding for the foreseeable future, and that funding is largely dependent on supplemental appropriations from the U.S. Congress. One proposal is to put the security forces on the U.S.

recurring budget; another is to finance them through an international trust fund. The creation of well-armed but unsustainable security forces could pose a threat to the future of the country.

Counternarcotics and economic development have to be considered together, as narcotics production is the largest industry in the country. Afghanistan has become a monetized economy, and farmers will not return to subsistence agriculture. As discussed in greater detail elsewhere in this volume, the economic alternative to the drug industry is not another "crop," but jobs. Such jobs need not be in rural areas or even in Afghanistan. Rural communities need money, not plants.

No amount of reform in Afghanistan can resolve the insurgency and the terrorist safe haven that it provides, however, unless cross-border support from Pakistan is also addressed. The festering problems of transnational insurgency and al Qaeda's presence in the tribal agencies are so closely related to the deterioration of security and governance throughout Pakistan, the strategic posture of Pakistan's security establishment (including its nuclear deterrent), and the weakness of civilian institutions in Pakistan that they cannot be addressed without a comprehensive strategy that deals with both Afghanistan and Pakistan in their entirety, as well as with the broader region beyond. For example, unilateral military action by the United States may, in exceptional cases, target the top leadership of al Qaeda in Pakistan or TTP support to insurgents in Afghanistan, but such action cannot address the expansion of Taliban control in Pakistan itself and may trigger a backlash that aggravates rather than mitigates the strategic challenge. A sustainable political solution in Afghanistan depends on a sustainable political solution in Pakistan, one that makes cross-border cooperation and the operation of international forces there much more feasible.

A regional strategic perspective on Afghanistan, however, must go beyond Pakistan. For one thing, it must address Pakistan's concerns about Indian paramilitary and intelligence activities in Afghanistan. The new U.S. administration might also do well to reconsider engaging Iran on cooperation in Afghanistan, as well as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Afghanistan: The Challenge of Narcotics

According to a recent United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) report, 157,000 hectares of opium poppies were cultivated in Afghanistan in 2008, a reduction of nearly 19 percent from the

previous year and slightly below the 165,000 hectares cultivated in 2006. Thanks to higher crop yields, however, at 7,700 metric tons, the amount of opium produced from this crop remains more than one-third higher than in 2006. Despite recent progress, Afghanistan still supplies some 90 percent of the global opiate market; as the UNODC stated in 2007, “No other country in the world has ever produced narcotics on such a deadly scale.” The explosion of illicit drug production makes defeating the insurgency and building a viable state in Afghanistan more difficult. The drug trade finances illegal armed groups, empowers nonstatutory power holders, sustains criminal networks, and corrupts government, all of which undermine the establishment of stability, good governance, and rule of law in the country.

The weak Afghan state, together with endemic violence and poverty, contributes to the growth of the country’s illicit drug industry. Therefore, all of Afghanistan’s stakeholders must cooperate to find a solution that brings together the development of security, governance, rule of law, and the economy—the same elements that must comprise a comprehensive strategy for defeating the insurgency that afflicts the country. Massive eradication of opium poppies alone will help in neither reducing the illicit drug industry nor defeating the insurgency.

Background

Afghanistan has a relatively short history of opium production. Before 1978, the country produced only 100 tons of opium a year, though production had increased tenfold by 1992. The growth of the illicit drug industry was caused by decades of continuing violent conflict and a long drought cycle that destroyed the rural economy. The country, according to journalist Pierre-Arnaud Chouvy, was on the verge of attaining food self-sufficiency at the time of the Soviet invasion but has since seen its irrigated farmland halved. During the 1990s, the amount of arable land—only 12 percent of the total territory to begin with—declined by more than a third. As a result, farmers began to view the production of a high-value, easily marketable commodity such as opium as the only way to survive in an unpredictable and dangerous environment. Opium is nearly 10 times more lucrative to produce than any practicable alternative crop, such as wheat (\$5,200 per hectare versus \$545 per hectare). Even factoring in bribes and rake-offs by traffickers, Afghans see opium as sufficiently profitable that 14 percent of the population grows the crop. Many farmers claim that they

would prefer a licit income but see no alternative to growing opium in order to support their families.

The market incentives to grow opium poppies were established as part of a drug-based political economy that developed during the 1992–2001 civil war and the fighting that followed the 2001 U.S.-led intervention. Western support to the various Afghan factions dried up in the early 1990s in the aftermath of the communist regime’s collapse, and as a result some groups turned to the illicit drug industry to mobilize new sources of financing to fuel their continuing power struggle. This reliance on drug revenue created not only a ready number of poppy producers but also a vast supporting network of financiers, protectors, traffickers, and political patrons who became vested in the industry. The situation persisted during the post-Taliban period, as the U.S.-led coalition co-opted the local militias and warlords, who controlled the drug trade, into ousting the Taliban and fighting terrorism. The absence of an international peacekeeping force or a viable central authority allowed these powerbrokers to dominate local administrations and resist counternarcotic efforts. Militia leaders, warlords, insurgents, and drug traffickers flourished in such an environment.

Current Challenges

The struggle against Afghanistan’s illicit drug industry exhibits three key characteristics: the prevailing insecurity in the area where opium production is concentrated; the consolidation of the drug trade by a network of politicians and traffickers; and disagreements over counternarcotics strategy among members of the international community.

Opium cultivation in Afghanistan is concentrated in areas of the country where security is poor, access is difficult, and economic development is sluggish. In 2007, 70 percent of Afghan opium was produced in the five southern provinces where the insurgency is strongest. In contrast, a significant reduction in poppy cultivation was seen in more stable and accessible areas in the north. It is thus clear that the suppression of the drug trade is intimately linked to the provision of security.

The consolidation of the drug trade by a network of traffickers and politicians has spawned a parallel polity that provides financial and marketing services, security, and conflict resolution more effectively than the Afghan government. Filling a void created by poverty, violence, and lawlessness, the network influences every aspect of political,

economic, and social life. It influences farmers, wage laborers, small district-level traders who collect opium resin from the farm gate or small shops, refiners and wholesalers who run labs and trade in large quantities, smugglers who transport drugs across international borders, local commanders and power holders who provide protection and sponsor processing facilities, and government officials who give favors through misuse of the law enforcement system. Everyone affected by the network, from ordinary people to complicit government officials, has an interest in the trade's survival. Therefore, dealing with the problem requires targeting all the elements in a comprehensive way.

Unfortunately, counternarcotic efforts in Afghanistan have been plagued by the lack of a strategic vision shared by the Afghan government and the international community. Attempts have been made to mimic other countries' counternarcotic successes, but many of these lessons are not applicable to the current situation in war-ravaged Afghanistan. Furthermore, many donors have tended to push simple fixes, such as eradication, that are politically appealing at home but disconnected from the realities of Afghanistan.

Responding to the Challenges

A sustainable counternarcotics strategy must be comprehensive and holistic. It must address not only poppy eradication but also the factors that have allowed the illicit drug industry to grow so substantially during the past 30 years. In effect, one-third of the country's economy must be destroyed and rebuilt in a way that does not destabilize the state in the process. Such an undertaking will require time, resources, and the integration of law enforcement, interdiction, alternative crop development, security, and diplomatic efforts. Above all, it requires building the Afghan government's capacity to crack down on traffickers and corrupt officials. The international community must help the Afghan government build such a capacity and coordinate support for efforts in the region and beyond.

The Afghanistan National Drug Control Strategy is based on four priorities: disrupting production and trafficking networks; providing alternative livelihoods for farmers; reducing demand; and building institutions. It serves as a useful starting framework for Afghan counternarcotics efforts. Donor countries have endorsed it, but they consistently disagree about priorities. The most visible disagreement involves the



UN (Nasim Fekrat)

Over 400,000 vehicles are on the streets of Kabul

disruption component and centers on whether priority should be given to trafficking interdiction or crop eradication. In the past, the United States favored the aerial spraying of herbicide on poppy fields, but the Afghan government feared that such a tactic would drive farmers into supporting the Taliban. Meanwhile, NATO refused until late 2008 to involve itself in either fighting traffickers or destroying drug labs and markets, further demonstrating the international community's lack of cohesion.

For 6 years, an emphasis on eradication has overshadowed all other aspects of counternarcotics efforts. Eradication is not sustainable unless it is paired with the development of alternative livelihoods for farmers, and it can even be counterproductive, by driving the population into the arms of insurgents and further aggravating an already insecure environment. Moreover, the laws of supply and demand dictate that a reduction in opium production will not necessarily lead to a reduction in the amount of money that the industry generates. For instance, the Taliban cut opium production in 2001 from 3,276 tons to 185 tons but, because of a rise in the price of opium, saw income grow from \$1.1 billion to \$7.3 billion.

A second option for disrupting the illicit drug industry involves the interdiction of resin and processed opium after the crop leaves the farm. Such interdiction can lower the farm-gate price of opium and thus discourage farmers from growing poppies. Since 70 to 80 percent of the money from the illicit drug industry goes to traffickers—who are far fewer in number than farmers—the targeting of traffickers has fewer negative consequences than simple eradication. Unfortunately, the Afghan government's interdiction capacity is limited, and the criminal justice sector responsible for processing drug-related crime is weak. Thus, international forces are needed to enhance interdiction capacity. For years the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) exhibited a reluctance to involve itself in drug interdiction. NATO finally recognized in October 2008 that counternarcotics operations are an appropriate part of ISAF's mission, although it left each force-providing country free to decide whether its personnel would participate in such operations. A more robust ISAF initiative in targeting opium stockpiles, drug laboratories, and trafficking routes would not only aid Afghan counternarcotics and counterinsurgency efforts, but also help curtail the flow of Afghan opium to Europe.

Afghanistan's neighbors have an important role to play in drug interdiction. Drugs are trafficked

through Central Asia to Russia and through Pakistan and Iran to Europe. Corrupt border guards in Russia and the Central Asian states facilitate rather than impede traffic along the first route. The Afghan government is unable to exercise effective control on its border with Pakistan, particularly in the insurgency-ridden Nangarhar, Khowst, and Paktia Provinces adjoining Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas, where al Qaeda has found a safe haven. Iran has stepped up interdiction efforts because of its own domestic addiction problem, but the Afghan-Iranian border remains hard to control in the face of stiff resistance by groups operating in the area.

Not only has the Afghan government been unable to control narcotics trafficking in the country's insecure areas, but it has also failed to prevent the drug network's formation of a narco-state within the country. Efforts to disrupt this incipient narco-state have been stymied by the protection of traffickers by government officials; corruption within the police and judicial systems; the lack of investigative capacity; and a general absence of political will. Sources inside the Afghan government admit that they have lists of high-ranking officials suspected of links to the drug trade, but such lists are of no use unless the Afghan government can develop an investigative capacity and working courts and demonstrate the political will to use them. Otherwise, law enforcement agencies will continue to arrest and prosecute foot soldiers without bringing the kingpins to justice.

Some groups have suggested that the illicit drug industry's demise can be achieved by legalizing some opium poppy production. For example, the Senlis Council, an international policy think tank, has proposed legalizing poppy crops that are put toward the production of legal opiate drugs such as morphine and codeine. The organization announced that a licensing system would be able to regulate between licit and illicit production. In practice, however, it would be extremely difficult to implement such a system in the country's insecure areas. Afghan authorities do not currently possess the ability to control the country's poppy production and would not have the resources to regulate a dual system of licit and illicit production. Rampant corruption would only exacerbate the problem, as officials would be pressured to determine who could and could not produce opium poppies legally. The authorities would be better served in attempting to wean farmers from opium poppy production and provide them with alternative livelihoods.

As for alternative livelihoods for farmers, efforts to implement substitute crops will succeed only as part of a comprehensive strategy that includes assistance in processing, transporting, and marketing new products. Over the past several years, some farmers in Herat have successfully made the transition to growing saffron, which has the potential to earn up to \$2,000 more per hectare than opium, taking into account crop yields and price differentials. The lack of adequate processing capability, a reliable transportation infrastructure, and marketing skills, however, prevents farmers from receiving full market value for the crops. But with the recent worldwide rise in food prices, a temporary subsidy for licit crop production, particularly in the more stable areas, followed by a gradual removal of the subsidies may prove to be an attractive way for the Afghan government to help farmers shift to alternative livelihoods.

The illicit drug industry in Afghanistan will disappear only when a functioning, stable, and effective Afghan state emerges. To this end, Afghanistan must focus on development as the way to rid itself of poppy cultivation. The Afghan government must work to increase security, rule of law, good governance, and economic growth. There are no quick and simple solutions. Reorienting a full one-third of Afghanistan's economy without destabilizing the country requires an enormous amount of resources, a large administrative capacity, and plenty of time. Only a comprehensive and holistic approach is appropriate to Afghanistan's unique and fragile situation.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan: An Enduring Innovation

Modern counterinsurgency was born on December 7, 2001, in the grey, windswept desert of southern Afghanistan. On that day, Kandahar, the last Taliban stronghold, fell to the combined forces of indigenous Afghan fighters, precision American airpower, and a few intelligence and unconventional warfare teams following a 7-week campaign. With only 110 Central Intelligence Agency officers and 400 special forces operators directly engaged, the coalition found itself responsible for a war-wrecked, barely administered, almost totally undeveloped country of 32 million. This sudden victory thus posed a forbidding stabilization challenge. As the Taliban and al Qaeda reasserted themselves, the mission evolved from postconflict reconstruction (envisaged in the December 2001 Bonn Agreement) into counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, counternarcotics, and contested or "in-conflict" reconstruction.

The Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), an early innovation of this new era, has endured in Afghanistan and been copied in Iraq. PRTs were devised in late 2002 to replace the ad hoc Joint Regional Teams and Coalition Humanitarian Liaison Teams. The first PRTs deployed in late 2002 and early 2003 into the Afghan provinces of Gardez, Kunduz, and Bamiyan. Initially, PRTs were controlled directly by coalition contributors, but some, and eventually all, later came under the operational control of the ISAF as it assumed responsibility for all of Afghanistan in late 2006. As of 2008, there were 26 PRTs in Afghanistan, 14 provided by the United States and 12 by its allies.

A PRT is a self-protecting, self-deploying civil-military team that, as described in the original draft PRT handbook developed by ISAF, is "able to penetrate the more unstable and insecure areas because of its military component and . . . stabilize these areas because of the combined capabilities of its diplomacy, military, and economic components." In their initial conception, therefore, PRTs were intended as an interagency early entry capability, allowing the delivery of governance and development assistance to the population before security was fully established. This notion of PRTs as postconflict reconstruction assets (criticized by some in the aid community as "small-scale reconstruction agencies, but with overheads off the charts"¹) has, however, evolved with the campaign. PRTs now perform an integrating task that synchronizes both governance and development aspects of counterinsurgency and stabilization: an in-conflict rather than a postconflict role, and a "security support" rather than a "reconstruction support" function. Because of changing functions and the dangerous environment, most PRTs now operate in close partnership with maneuver units.

Composition, Variants, and Operating Methods

Early PRTs had 50 to 100 people comprising a military protection force, logistics and communications support, an integrated military-civilian headquarters, and civilian development and governance specialists. Some included specialists in humanitarian assistance, policing, finance, agriculture, engineering, water supply, education, or public health. More recently, "human terrain" teams, composed of anthropologists who deploy with combat brigades to help military commanders in the field understand local cultures, have worked alongside PRTs, and some PRTs (such as the Asadabad PRT in Kunar) have developed their own organic human terrain-mapping capability.

In theory, a U.S. PRT is led by a co-equal command team comprising a military officer (usually an Army or Air Force lieutenant colonel or Navy commander), a State Department Foreign Service Officer, and a Foreign Service Officer or personal services contractor from the U.S. Agency for International Development. In contrast to the American “integrated team” model, non-U.S. PRTs tend to have military and civilian components that operate separately and coordinate their activities loosely. Over time, as the insurgency spread and the environment became more dangerous, PRTs grew with the addition of security and intelligence personnel, giving the military a greater role in their operations. Most U.S. PRTs now number 80 to 100 people, of whom 90 to 95 percent are military. Due to the Army’s heavy commitment in Iraq, the other U.S. Services have provided many personnel for PRTs in Afghanistan, six of which are commanded by Navy and at least another six by Air Force officers.

Some countries have fielded powerful reconstruction task forces that regularly engage in combat and provide advisory teams to Afghan security forces. The Australian force, for example, which operates under the Netherlands PRT in Uruzgan, has over 400 personnel based on a combat engineer battalion. It cooperates with its own Special Operations Task Group and fields heavy mortars, armored vehicles, unmanned aircraft systems, and heavy construction equipment. The Canadian PRT in Kandahar province numbers 330 and includes diplomats, corrections officers, development specialists, police, and military personnel. At the other end of the spectrum, the Turkish PRT in Wardak is civilian-led, operates strictly within its local area, and focuses on education, health, literacy, training programs (including police training), and construction projects. The Spanish (Baghdis) and German (Faizabad) PRTs take a similar approach, conducting parallel military and civilian efforts, while the British, who lead the PRT in Helmand, have stated their belief that “civilian effects should be delivered by civilian agencies,” and accordingly staff their PRT predominantly with civilians.

How PRTs Operate

Two operational examples illustrate the field methods of U.S.-led Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

Operation *al Hasn* was conducted during November 2006 in the Tagab Valley, east of Bagram, by the U.S. Special Operations Task Force 33, the United Arab Emirates Task Force 8, and the U.S.-led

Bagram PRT. The operation included engagement with communities, focused information operations, and cooperation with civil officials. Abdur Sattar Murad, governor of Kapisa, and Afghan army, police, intelligence, and provincial government officials were closely involved from the outset. Afghan officials vetted and approved all targets in advance, and the governor was forward deployed to the tactical operations center from the third day. Information operations (based on local radio stations, with Governor Murad as the central player) generated popular support, while Afghan army and police and coalition units, including the Bagram PRT, created a 2-week “surge” of presence to clear enemy mobile forces and marginalize local guerrilla cadres. Afghan forces then garrisoned these secured areas, intending to create a permanent presence once coalition operations began to wind down. This operation featured advance purchasing, prepositioning, and rapid distribution of humanitarian assistance by the PRT, using the U.S. commander’s emergency response program funds, and the rapid exploitation of maneuver success through a combination of development assistance and governance. Unfortunately, coalition maneuver units subsequently moved on to other tasks and the PRT lacked the capacity to sustain a permanent presence in the area, leading to a gradual return of the enemy as Afghan units operating without coalition partners were co-opted or forced out.

In another example, Combined Joint Task Force 76 (CJTF-76) conducted Operation *Big North Wind* in Kunar during autumn 2006. The operation aimed initially to exacerbate divisions within the population of the Korengal Valley as leverage to separate the population from the enemy. Units focused on improving conditions in the northern sector of the valley only, ignoring the tribally and ethnically distinct southern sector. U.S. and Afghan forces established a persistent presence in the village of Omar, constructing a footbridge, a school, and a water scheme, refurbishing a mosque, and building a bridge across the Pech River, with close cooperation from the Asadabad PRT. Meanwhile, coalition forces mounted combat operations against Taliban fighters in the southern part of the valley. Simultaneously, the Afghan government administrator of Manogai district, Mohammed Rahman, applied strict resource and population control measures, preventing anyone except people needing medical assistance from entering or leaving the area, until local Korengali leaders would negotiate with him about government access to the population. This was the governor’s decision,

not that of coalition commanders, which helps to emphasize the fact that the key aspect of this operation was an Afghan-led political maneuver. U.S. forces combined kinetic operations with PRT-led engineering activity, civil development, route and population control, and humanitarian and economic assistance, in cooperation with Afghan officials applying political negotiations and civil population control measures, to support a political strategy to extend government control into an enemy-dominated area. This operation was more successful than Operation *al Hasn* in bringing government access to the Safi peoples of Omar and Kandigal because development infrastructure and a permanent presence prevented Taliban insurgents from returning to their previous strongholds.

Evaluating Effectiveness

Numerous assessments have been made of PRT effectiveness, including academic studies, articles in military journals, studies by the United States Institute of Peace and the Congressional Research Service, as well as by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and aid organizations. Conclusions naturally vary, but these diverse studies generally suggest that PRTs are more effective when they:

- are brought into maneuver commanders' planning processes fully and early
- develop an extremely detailed understanding of social, tribal, ethnic, and religious groupings and networks, and communicate this knowledge effectively to maneuver commanders
- work in close partnership with maneuver units and synchronize their development efforts with combat operations to support an integrated political strategy
- are complemented by a robust and well-staffed Embassy PRT section, including "PRT plus" staff with specialist expertise that can be called upon in response to the needs of the teams
- are supported by integrated command and control arrangements that ensure common interagency guidance to team members
- support effective local government officials and community leaders, put Afghan officials publicly in the lead, and work to give communities a sense of ownership over projects
- maintain close oversight of projects and contractors via permanent presence or frequent visits
- coordinate short- and medium-term reconstruction and security with longer term development

programs under the Afghan National Development Strategy

- see themselves as operating in a "support to stabilization operations" framework rather than competing with aid agencies or NGOs
- enable local economies and government officials by helping locals set priorities and assisting them, rather than providing for them.

The term *PRT* has evolved over time and now means different things in different contexts. At one end of the spectrum, in Afghanistan, the Uruzgan PRT described above is basically a combat unit with organic reconstruction and governance components. Conversely, embedded PRTs in Iraq comprise eight people only, function as a brigade reconstruction staff, and have no independent operational capability. Likewise, the name suggests that the PRT is responsible for a province and provides equal coverage across it; this is often not the case.

While some NGOs initially criticized the PRT program for blurring the line between military and humanitarian assistance, over time the emerging consensus is that PRTs fill a critical niche in the array of stabilization, reconstruction, and counterinsurgency missions. But PRTs are not a panacea: they provide a specific stabilization-support function for the nonkinetic aspects of counterinsurgency and reconstruction, but they are not a comprehensive solution to development or governance challenges.

Counterinsurgencies since 9/11 have been conducted in tribal societies, under extremely tight resource constraints, with force levels traditionally considered hopelessly inadequate for classical counterinsurgency, and where host-nation governments are simultaneously being built from almost nothing. Innovative approaches to reconstruction and governance in insecure, undeveloped, and infrastructure-free environments have therefore been essential. PRTs, an early innovation of this new era, have proven effective and are therefore likely to be an enduring feature of the counterinsurgency repertoire.

Pakistan: Moving Away from the Brink

Pakistan is a state that has stood on the brink of chaos for years, is now at the epicenter of jihadi terrorism, and has enabled nuclear proliferation. Nevertheless, there is room for cautious optimism. Pakistan has had its second free election, moderate forces (including a civilian president) are nominally in power, and all of the major states with which Pakistan has important relationships—the United

States, India, China, and Saudi Arabia—do not want to see it collapse.

After stripping away the rhetorical excess so common in discussions on Pakistan, three questions are dominant. First, what are Pakistan's long-term interests, and how can Islamabad alter its actions and its relations with other actors in the region? Second, what are the areas of concern for others regarding Pakistan? And third, what would a stable Pakistan look like in the long term?

Pakistan's Interests and Foreign Policy

The past is only one guide to the future, but it offers some lessons regarding Pakistan's long-term interests and foreign policy.

First, the U.S.-Pakistan relationship has been episodic and discontinuous, driven on the American side entirely by larger strategic calculations during

the Cold War, and more recently by the need for military allies in the ill-named 'war on terror'. On the Pakistani side, the purpose of the alliance was to obtain resources and political support for Pakistan's contest with India. This dynamic, which informed the Pakistani army's circumspection regarding American support, was epitomized by General Muhammad Zia ul-Haq, president from 1977 to 1988, who compared it to living on the banks of a river: "The soil is wonderfully fertile . . . but every four or eight years the river changes course, and you may find yourself alone in a desert."²² At the same time, anti-Americanism grew among Pakistani civilians, who saw the U.S. alliances to be perpetuating the army's hold over Pakistani society.

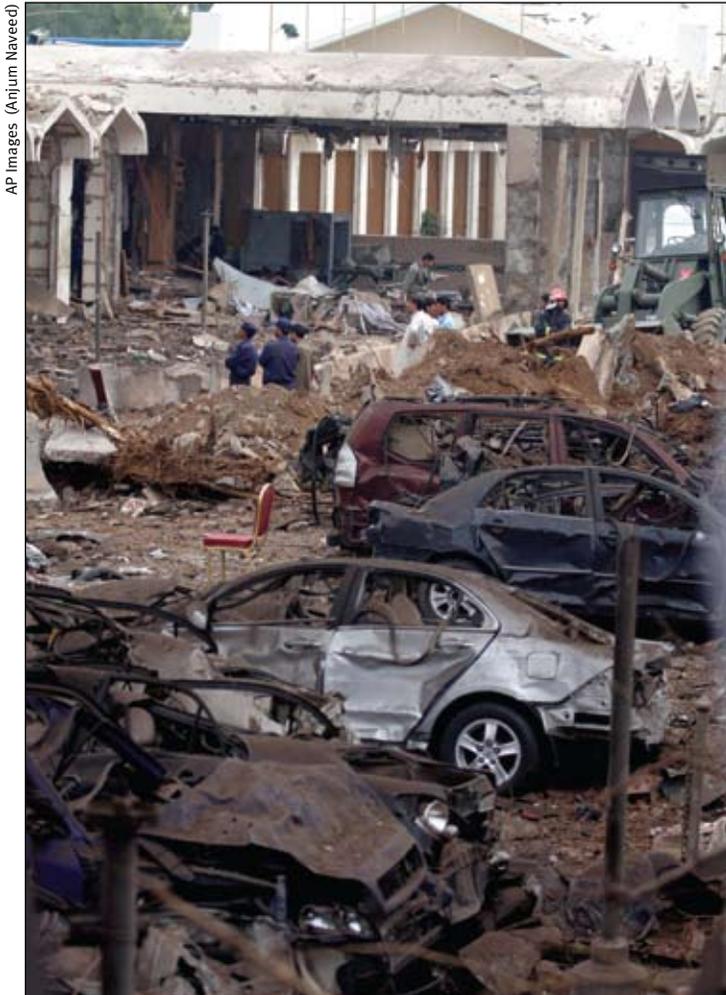
Second, Pakistan's role during the Cold War and the subsequent U.S.-led war in Afghanistan made its economy dangerously reliant on foreign aid, primarily from the United States but also from other countries. This aid, however, was never made contingent upon any set of policies, including economic and social reform. Pakistan has consequently failed to adjust to a new, globalizing economy, despite growth rates of over 6 percent.

Third, relations with India have improved gradually, following a border confrontation in 2002 that threatened to turn into full-fledged war. But despite the continuance of a wide-ranging "composite dialogue" and the advent of various confidence-building measures, the peace process still remains on shaky ground. Indian apprehensions about Pakistani-sponsored terrorism and latent Pakistani fears concerning Indian military superiority mean that a single dramatic event has the capability to erase 4 years of efforts.

Fourth, Pakistan's failures to adequately address the problems on its western border cannot be blamed solely on Pakistani decisionmaking. Certainly, Pakistan is somewhat restrained by its natural affinity for the Taliban and its fears that a pro-Indian government will consolidate itself in Kabul. The Pakistani army, however, is also ill equipped to fight a counterinsurgency war in the tribal areas in support of American efforts, and cooperation with the U.S. Government in this regard has not been adequate. Moreover, continued squabbling with the Karzai government, particularly over the unsettled Pakistan-Afghanistan border, has not helped.

Fifth, China and Saudi Arabia remain the principal foreign influences in Pakistan other than the United States. Both have their own interests and

▼ *Continued on p. 229*



Rescue workers search through rubble of Marriott Hotel in Islamabad, Pakistan, after truck bomb killed 44 people, September 2008

Pakistan's Troubled Borders

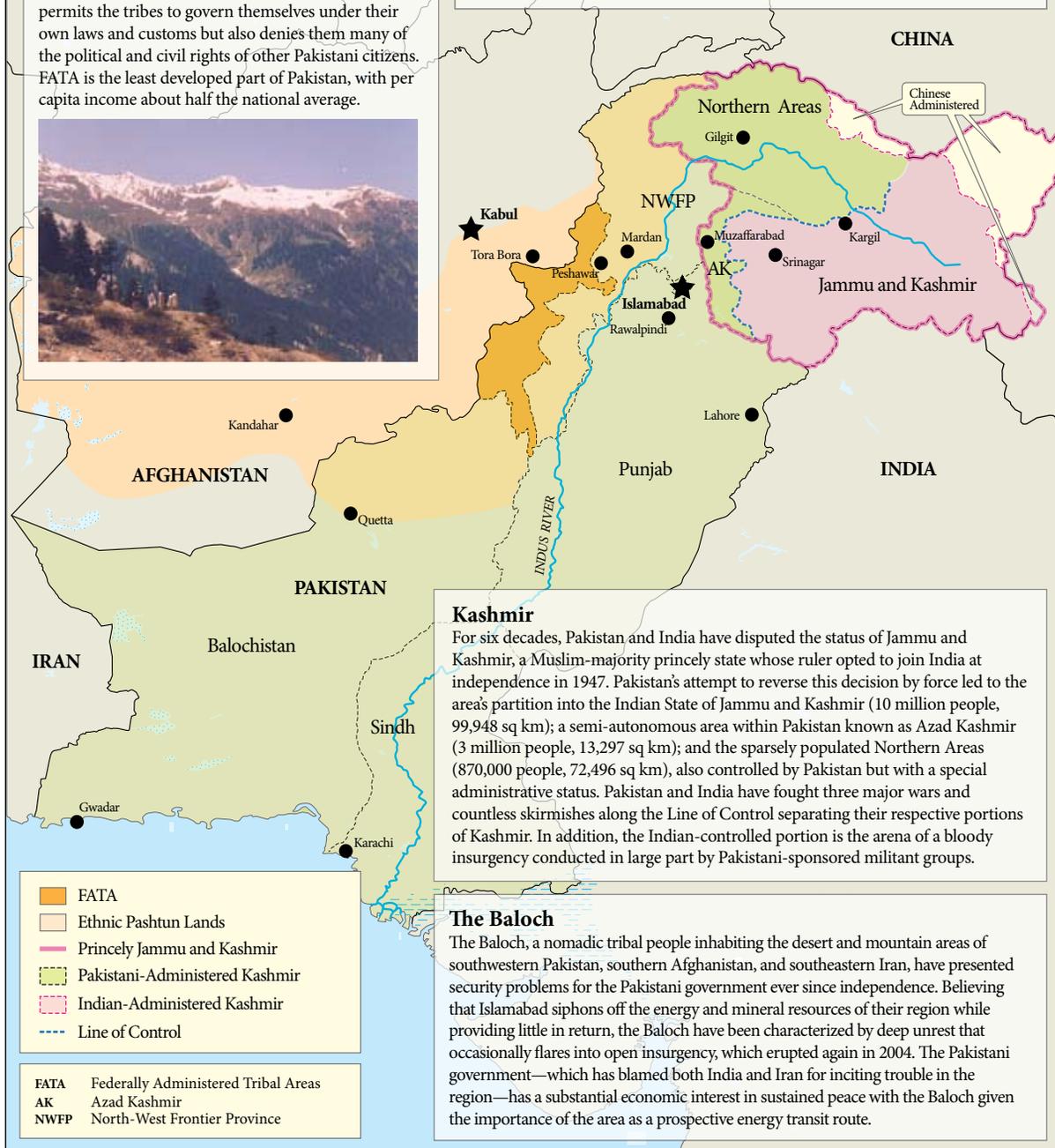
FATA

Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) comprise a quasi-autonomous mountain region along the Afghan border in which lack of central government control has permitted the development of a safe haven for terrorists and insurgents. Established during the 19th century as one of several tiers of progressively diminishing British control along the northwest frontier of India, the seven agencies of FATA are subject to an administrative regime that not only permits the tribes to govern themselves under their own laws and customs but also denies them many of the political and civil rights of other Pakistani citizens. FATA is the least developed part of Pakistan, with per capita income about half the national average.



The Pashtuns

Some 45 million Pashtuns live in Afghanistan and Pakistan, divided by the so-called Durand Line that was drawn by the British in 1893 to separate their Indian Empire from the Kingdom of Afghanistan. Of these, fewer than 20 percent reside in the remote mountain areas of FATA and the adjacent Afghan provinces. Pashtun culture is heavily influenced by the tribal social norms known as *Pashtunwali*, which emphasize such traditional values as honor, hospitality, and reciprocity. However, Pashtun life has not been immune from the effects of war, migration, and globalization, and millions of Pashtuns today live and work in quite different conditions than those of their forefathers.



Kashmir

For six decades, Pakistan and India have disputed the status of Jammu and Kashmir, a Muslim-majority princely state whose ruler opted to join India at independence in 1947. Pakistan's attempt to reverse this decision by force led to the area's partition into the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir (10 million people, 99,948 sq km); a semi-autonomous area within Pakistan known as Azad Kashmir (3 million people, 13,297 sq km); and the sparsely populated Northern Areas (870,000 people, 72,496 sq km), also controlled by Pakistan but with a special administrative status. Pakistan and India have fought three major wars and countless skirmishes along the Line of Control separating their respective portions of Kashmir. In addition, the Indian-controlled portion is the arena of a bloody insurgency conducted in large part by Pakistani-sponsored militant groups.

The Baloch

The Baloch, a nomadic tribal people inhabiting the desert and mountain areas of southwestern Pakistan, southern Afghanistan, and southeastern Iran, have presented security problems for the Pakistani government ever since independence. Believing that Islamabad siphons off the energy and mineral resources of their region while providing little in return, the Baloch have been characterized by deep unrest that occasionally flares into open insurgency, which erupted again in 2004. The Pakistani government—which has blamed both India and Iran for inciting trouble in the region—has a substantial economic interest in sustained peace with the Baloch given the importance of the area as a prospective energy transit route.

FATA Federally Administered Tribal Areas
 AK Azad Kashmir
 NWFP North-West Frontier Province

Twenty-first Century Pashtuns: Change amid Continuity

At least 40 million and perhaps as many as 50 million Pashtuns live in Afghanistan and Pakistan. They constitute 40 to 50 percent of Afghanistan's people and in Pakistan are the largest minority group, making up 15 to 20 percent of the population. Although their original homeland is situated between the Hindu Kush in central Afghanistan and the Indus River bisecting Pakistan, Pashtun communities are now scattered over a vast territory, from the Amu Darya River on Afghanistan's northern border with Central Asia, to the southern Pakistani port city of Karachi on the Arabian Sea, which has one of the largest urban Pashtun populations.

With war, invasion, and endemic civil violence as constant features of Pashtun history, the group has never been fully integrated into a single empire, state, or political system. This historic pattern of political instability also preserved and reinforced the tribal nature of Pashtun society. While some writers have tried to understand Pashtun society by tracing the genealogies of tribes, clans, and lineages, it is best understood by looking not only at its internal structure but at its wider environment as well.

Today, the Pashtun live under various political arrangements and engage in a wide variety of economic activities, some involving a high degree of globalization. The social makeup of Pashtun communities varies according to whether they are rural or urban, the degree of their inclusion or seclusion from the surrounding societies, and the extent of their absorption by modernity and development. All of them, however, are characterized by the prevalence of what anthropologists call "segmentary lineages." Such a system conceives of societies in hereditary tree-like hierarchies. In the Pashtun case, the smaller lineages, or *zais* and *khels*—male descent groups—merge into larger tribes and tribal confederations.

Most Pashtuns speak Pashto, an Indo-European language related to Persian, as their mother tongue. But bilingualism is now common in urban areas and regions with mixed ethnic populations. Some small groups still identify themselves as Pashtuns despite speaking a different first language because of their ethnic heritage; the former ruling family of Afghanistan is a case in point. Nevertheless, Pashto still remains a key identity marker of Pashtuns because use of the language is closely tied to the notion of observing the code of *Pashtunwali*.

Rooted in the tribal organization of the society, *Pashtunwali* embraces a number of values that it

shares with surrounding Muslim societies, but it also includes a set of fundamental ideals of individual and collective behavior seen as specific to Pashtuns. *Pashtunwali* includes the handful of norms to which it is frequently reduced by Western writers—honor, hospitality, and reciprocity (often confused with revenge)—but the whole is much more complex than that. *Pashtunwali* also includes the values of forgiveness, equality, egalitarianism, and chivalry, as well as the institution of the *jirga* or council of elders, which is summoned for the resolution of disputes and to deliberate on new threats and challenges. Over centuries, some Pashtun tribes have developed their own peculiar *narkh*, or sets of unwritten customary laws to implement the principles of *Pashtunwali*.

The overwhelming majority of Pashtuns are Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi school, although the Turi tribe in the Kurram Valley of Pakistan, some clans of the neighboring Bangash tribe, and small communities in Afghanistan are Twelver Shia. Some sufi orders, too, have a considerable following among Pashtun tribes. Over the past three decades, however, the Pashtun regions in Afghanistan and Pakistan have become home to a brand of political Islam that now manifests itself primarily in the form of global jihadism.

Pashtuns were not the chief actors in bringing this change to their society. The transformations began when the Cold War boiled into a hot war after the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. What began as an indigenous nationalist resistance to the communist occupation of Afghanistan was swiftly transformed into a religious struggle, partly because of Pakistani fears that the perpetuation of Afghan nationalism might lead to the strengthening of Afghan irredentist claims to Pakistani territory and boost domestic Pashtun ethno-nationalism within Pakistan itself.

Three decades of war in the Pashtun borderlands created new classes, alliances, and leaderships at the expense of the old ones. For the first time in history, networks of puritanical Sunni clerics and Islamist militant commanders became more powerful than the traditional secular tribal and political leadership. This transformation of the Pashtun social fabric, accomplished over the course of years through external patronage and billions of dollars of covert and overt funding from outside for armed factions, culminated in the rise of the Taliban in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. By default, this enabled al Qaeda (the lead-

ership and core of which is largely Arab) to use the Pashtun regions in both states as safe havens.

Pashtuns themselves are the people most affected by the violence wracking their homeland in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Over the past 30 years, the conflict has taken more than a million Pashtun lives. In addition, Pashtuns now have one of the world's largest displaced populations. Most of their social and political institutions have been undermined or destroyed. While tremendous sums of money have been invested over the years in the warfare (estimates range from \$50 billion to \$100 billion), there has been little investment in human development and economic prosperity.

As a result, Pashtuns today are among the most underdeveloped people in the world. The key indicators of quality of life—life expectancy, literacy, employment, food security, and rule of law—invariably place Pashtuns living in their ancestral lands alongside the nations of sub-Saharan Africa at the bottom of global rankings.

Thirty years of war have done much to undermine the rule of law and promote a huge criminal economy based on opium cultivation, from which Pashtun farmers realize only a tiny fraction of the proceeds. Meanwhile, globalization has touched Pashtun society primarily through the millions of Pashtun workers who form a large share of the expatriate underclass in the oil-rich Gulf states. While remittances from the diaspora serve as one of the few sources of wealth for the community remaining in the Pashtun homeland, the money is a mixed blessing, often altering traditional village power relationships while simultaneously providing the wherewithal to resolve by force the inevitable ensuing feuds. Few of the funds sent home from Dubai and Kuwait are funneled into the generation of further wealth, let alone into meeting social needs (such as building schools and clinics).

Despite the stereotype of Pashtuns as culturally disposed to violence and disorder, elections and the *jirgas* held in both Pakistan and Afghanistan over the past decade demonstrate that Pashtuns are tired of wars and conflicts on their land and are looking forward to a peaceful and emancipated future. But the realization of that dream will need patience, the sustained cooperation and assistance of the international community, and commitments by both Pakistan and Afghanistan to invest in the political and economic development these groups need.

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influences. Saudi Arabia, for example, remains closest to the faction of the Pakistan Muslim League led by Nawaz Sharif. China's influence has been seen mostly in military matters. It has long been a supplier of conventional weaponry and had a key role in Pakistan's nuclear development, but it could possibly distance itself from Pakistan as it crafts its own new relationship with India.



U.S. Army (Ann Marie Schutt)

U.S. troops and Afghan army commandos conduct operations to disrupt Taliban activity in eastern Afghanistan

Lastly, Pakistan's nuclear status remains paradoxically an enabler of and an impediment to its foreign policy objectives. The government's decision to retain a level of opacity surrounding the A.Q. Khan proliferation network has hurt its international standing and ensured that it is unlikely to receive concessions from the international community similar to those recently offered to India. At the same time, a nuclear deterrent gives Pakistan a stronger hand in its dealings with India. Pakistan's nuclear arsenal also complicates its relationships with China (its one-time nuclear benefactor), Saudi Arabia (a potential recipient of nuclear supplies or weaponry), and Iran (a former recipient of technology and a possible regional competitor).

Concerns and Priorities

Notably, many of the central issues dominating the discourse concerning Pakistan today are carried over from the 1980s: Pakistan's uneven alliance with the United States against an overarching threat (then the Soviet Union, now al Qaeda), nuclear proliferation, democratization (or the lack thereof), and a frail India-Pakistan peace process. In the 1980s, the United States clearly prioritized its proxy war against

the Soviets in Afghanistan over all other considerations, including democracy and nonproliferation. Today, the one-dimensionality of that relationship is only slightly less evident.

At the same time, several important trends have been overlooked by the Pakistani government, as well as its external supporters. These include Pakistan's unbalanced economic development, its crumbling educational system, and the growth of Islamic radicalism. When drawing up a list of major concerns for the present and future, the following five issues seem to be critically important.

Containing Terrorism. The existence and actions of violent groups that target Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, and the United States and its NATO allies have become a central concern. Pakistan, which has witnessed a sudden rise in domestic terrorism over the past few years, now shares a similar perspective on terrorism as other victims in the region. Pakistan needs to acknowledge that past policies to use terrorist groups for strategic purposes had serious negative side effects. The government should also recognize that terrorism can only be dealt with through long-term preventative policies and therefore should address its deeper ideological and social roots. Of paramount concern are Pakistan's weak educational infrastructure and the lack of adequate employment opportunities, which together increase the allure of Islamic extremism.

Nuclear Weapons. Islamabad is certainly envious of the generous offer to India by the United States to accommodate its nuclear weapons program and resume the supply of civilian nuclear fuel, equipment, and technology. Pakistan would likely have received similar treatment had it not been for the A.Q. Khan proliferation network. The network has been publicly revealed, some measures have been taken to staunch proliferation activities, and light punitive action has been taken against Khan. Pakistani officials bristle at suggestions of nuclear irresponsibility, but serious problems evidently remain. Most importantly, Pakistan's nuclear export control system is inadequate. Looking ahead, the prospect of an Iranian nuclear weapon and the subsequent spread of such technology to other Gulf states will refocus attention on Pakistan's role as a potential proliferator. Should the domestic political situation improve and a more transparent policy toward the A.Q. Khan network prevail, Pakistan's admission to a nuclear "halfway house" should be considered.

Democratization. Pakistan's democratization is in both its own interests and those of the United States,

India, and Afghanistan. The Pervez Musharraf government and its supporters argued that democratization would bring incompetent politicians or radical Islamic groups to power. The latter argument has been disproved by the recent election. The former may be true, but Pakistan needs to give its politicians a fair chance to fail. In 1999, Musharraf, then chief of army staff, asserted incorrectly that the army could run Pakistan more efficiently than civilians. Events of recent years have made clear that this was not the case. It remains to be seen whether Pakistan's civilian institutions (both bureaucratic and political) are strong enough to revive themselves, but it is clear that a return to military rule is not a viable solution.

Relations with Neighbors. For the first time, India is not a primary factor in Pakistani domestic politics, while Pakistan's rocky relationship with the Karzai government in Afghanistan has taken center stage. Pakistan's engagement in Afghanistan is largely shaped by the belief that the Karzai government—although ridiculed in Islamabad—is dangerously sympathetic to India. Indian influence in Afghanistan may even expand in the vacuum left by any future American and NATO withdrawal. To a lesser extent, there is a similar Pakistani concern regarding the intentions of Iran. As there is a Pakistan-India-China strategic triangle, there is an evolving Pakistan-Saudi Arabia-Iran one, although it has not yet been nuclearized.

Pakistan's Identity. Finally, there is real concern over the very future and identity of Pakistan. To a degree verging on hysteria, foreign observers have argued that Pakistan is, or will become, a failed state and that it is, or could become, a radical Islamic country. Until recently, these concerns were largely dismissed by many Pakistanis, but even they now know that there is a real threat to Pakistan from ideas and movements that have been nurtured or ignored over the years. The Pakistani army itself has become the target of ridicule and armed attack, and Pakistan is now the main training ground for European Muslim terrorists.

Future Prospects

Over the last 7 years, Pakistan has squandered the opportunity to correct many of its old mistakes. Yet regional and domestic political developments could benefit Pakistan in coming years.

The regional developments that suggest optimism are largely to be found in the changing India-Pakistan relationship. The introduction of nuclear weapons, plus the failure of either side to alter the status

quo by conventional means or diplomacy, could mean the end of 60 years of outright conflict over Kashmir. Former President Musharraf can be faulted for many things he did during his time in office, but he did ultimately accept the present line of control in Kashmir as permanent after trying to change it by both force and diplomacy. This does not mean the end of the conflict by any means, and the present and future governments may stumble into yet another crisis, but both states are thinking about expanding the benefits of peace: trade, cultural links, the ability to deal with water and population issues. Pakistan's internal threat now exceeds that of the threat from India, and the Pakistani army must redeploy and retrain to meet this threat, although this will take considerable time and resources.

There are also domestic sources of change that give reason to be confident about the future. The election that brought the current government to power—an election that was more or less free and fair—demonstrates that Pakistan is the “moderate Muslim state” that its leaders have claimed, but not allowed, it to be. The coming months and years will test the maturity of Pakistan's civilian political leadership. They will certainly need help from the army, which in turn badly needs their support to deal with domestic security threats.

Pakistan's unique set of weaknesses and contradictions means that its long-term stability should be a priority not just for its own government, but also for other regional actors, including the United States, India, China, and Saudi Arabia, all of whom can exert different levels and kinds of influences. While many of the problems facing Pakistan today are grave, domestic and regional developments provide a window of opportunity for improvement. By working on the range of issues outlined above in conjunction with other influential governments, the Pakistani leadership can perhaps avert long-term instability and turn the country from a “failed state” into a moderate, peaceful, and economically vibrant nation.

India: The Confounding Power

India presents a confounding profile of national power. Its rapid economic growth rates of recent years, increasing international trade and investment, accumulation of huge foreign exchange reserves, growing energy consumption, and more activist diplomacy could make India a rising power of potentially global consequence. At the same time, however, its enormous poverty, unresolved disputes

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The South Asian Nuclear Balance and Strategic Stability

India and Pakistan maintain a relatively stable nuclear environment. This may come as a surprise, given the history of nuclear-related crises between the two countries—as many as six between 1983 and 2002, according to some accounts. Nevertheless, both states have adopted policies and doctrines to ensure the physical security of their nuclear forces and components and to maintain those nuclear forces at reassuringly low levels of operability and alert (except in crisis).

This does not mean, of course, that the danger of nuclear war in the subcontinent is negligible. Emerging trends in both conventional and nuclear balances may prompt potentially destabilizing changes in doctrine and posture on one or both sides. Domestic politics, in Pakistan in particular, may lead to changes in civil-military relations and nuclear decisionmaking that could alter perceptions of the threat environment. Furthermore, the abundance of nonstate militant groups in the region, many with transnational or revolutionary agendas, raises the risks to the physical security of both nations' nuclear weapons and components to a much greater degree than in most other nuclear states.

India

India has adopted a policy of minimum nuclear deterrence. Indian doctrine calls for assured, but not necessarily immediate, retaliation in response to weapons of mass destruction attacks on its territory or armed forces, and India remains committed to a policy of no first use. This approach lessens requirements for sophisticated command and control or high levels of readiness in the force structure. Authorization to employ nuclear weapons is exclusively in the hands of the political council of the Nuclear Command Authority, headed by the prime minister. Although the doctrine calls for eventual deployment of a nuclear triad (land, sea, and air delivery), India's current arsenal remains small: dozens, rather than hundreds, of weapons, delivered by land-based missiles and aircraft. The existing missiles—Prithvi and Agni 1 and 2—are mobile systems with enough range to cover many Pakistani targets but not ones in northeastern China.

India's capabilities will increase with time. It has tested the Agni 3 missile, which will cover a wider range of Chinese targets, as well as the K-15 submarine-launched missile. Press reports state that India will soon take possession of one or two Akula-class submarines under lease from Russia and that a domestically produced nuclear submarine is in the advanced stages of design. These will form the basis for a seabased leg to the nuclear triad, equipped either with the K-15 or a nuclear-armed cruise missile. The development of new warheads for seabased delivery systems, however, may increase pressure for an additional round of nuclear tests to verify not only the new systems but also the thermonuclear design of 1998. Additional tests would complicate Indo-U.S. relations and might compromise the U.S.-India civil nuclear agreement, which will provide India with a unique opportunity

(as a nonsignatory of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty) to acquire commercial nuclear technology and nuclear fuel on the international market.

Pakistan

Pakistan also remains committed to minimum nuclear deterrence, but Pakistani deterrence is based on the principle of the threat of nuclear first use: in the event of war with India, Pakistan will use nuclear weapons as necessary for the survival of the state. Pakistani authorities have articulated four broad red lines that, if crossed or threatened, might prompt nuclear response. These are the destruction of significant portions of the Pakistani armed forces; occupation of significant amounts of Pakistani territory; actions that impose unacceptable economic costs to Pakistan (perhaps including naval blockade or shutting off access to the Indus River waters); or deliberate attempts to split Pakistan along ethnic lines.

Pakistan is also pursuing nuclear modernization and has recently tested both the Ghaznavi medium-range missile and the Babur cruise missile. The former has sufficient range to cover most targets in India. The latter eventually may be deployed in ground, air, or sea-launched versions. Recent revelations suggest A.Q. Khan's proliferation network offered foreign customers both a Chinese fission weapon design and a more sophisticated, presumably Pakistani, design. Each is therefore likely present in the Pakistani inventory. Pakistan's nuclear arsenal probably numbers in the dozens and can be delivered by aircraft and mobile missiles. Nuclear components are separated, and physical control of both nuclear materials and delivery systems is in the hands of the military. Unlike India, Pakistan's nuclear planning, procurement, and decisionmaking bodies are dominated by the military, although the decision to use nuclear weapons is in the hands of a combined civilian-military national command authority, with the president having the final say.

Long-term Trends

Although the regional nuclear balance appears relatively stable, three long-term trends may undermine this apparent stability and lead to a more dangerous nuclear environment. The first is the presence of other nuclear actors on the borders of South Asia. India's nuclear doctrine envisions China as a potential adversary. Pakistan, although focused primarily on India, may have to adjust to the presence of a nuclear-

capable Iran on its western border. Both states, therefore, will feel pressure to build new forces in response to multiple adversaries, and also to counter their primary regional foe's improvements, generating an arms "creep," if not an arms race.

The second trend is related to India's economic growth, which allows it to modernize its military and obtain substantial conventional advantage, over time, against Pakistan. This gives India the options to rapidly penetrate Pakistani territory or locally destroy Pakistani conventional forces—the objective of the Indian Army's new "Cold Start" doctrine—and also the possibility to conduct conventional air attacks on Pakistan's nuclear forces and command and control system. Indian military leaders, analysts, and experts regularly question Pakistan's nuclear doctrine or its ability to use nuclear weapons. Changing Indian capabilities and intentions may force Pakistan to adopt less relaxed levels of readiness and deployment in the nuclear force, which will increase the risks of nuclear use either through accident or through misperception in crisis.

The third trend is related to domestic politics in both countries, where democratic elections must accommodate ethnic and regional parties as well as respond to radical religious and nationalist movements. Domestic politics therefore exacerbates unpredictability in relations between India and Pakistan, as radical parties seek to capitalize on perceptions of threat or hostile intent or to utilize irredentism as a political mobilizing force. Both states suffer from significant internal political violence generated by a multiplicity of groups. These groups pursue a range of aims, but at least some of them—particularly those linked with al Qaeda and the Taliban—have expressed interest in obtaining nuclear weapons. In the case of Pakistan, members of the nuclear community are known to have consulted with al Qaeda and other groups, which prompted substantial upgrades in Pakistani physical security and chains of custody. The physical control of nuclear components becomes much more complicated in crisis, when both states might consider moving either components—in order to assemble devices or mate them with delivery systems—or nuclear-armed missiles themselves via road or rail. Nuclear components and weapons are much more vulnerable to seizure by hostile groups once they have left the safety of their storage areas—a matter of concern to the entire international community, in the event of regional crisis.

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with neighbors, and internal ethnic, social, and environmental cleavages and challenges also constrain it. Even if in absolute terms and by a range of conventional indices India today remains a limited power, its trends, scale, and comparative potential raise questions about its structural role in the emerging international system.

Too often, debate over whether India is a rising global power obscures the implications of the *simultaneous* strengths and weaknesses of the country's power as they are manifested in its external interests. This combination of strengths and weaknesses, combined with India's own perceptions of its interests and the instruments of power available to it, will shape its actions in the world. It is with this combination that the international community must contend.

From Independence through the Cold War

During the 60 years of its independence, India has had diffuse and diverse relations with the international community. India's closest security ties were for a long time with the Soviet Union; its economic ties were relatively evenly spread among the West (North America and Europe), the former communist bloc, and the Middle East; and its principal political links have been with the "South" or lesser developed

countries. Meanwhile, India's closest educational, cultural, and personal ties have been with the West, especially the United States and Britain.

Notwithstanding this rich diversity of interactions, however, India was less thoroughly integrated into the broad international system than it might have seemed, to its own disadvantage. It was overly dependent upon one country, the Soviet Union, for military hardware and political support on key issues. Conversely, it was estranged from the United States and isolated from other key countries and regions of increasing importance to the post-World War II international order, including China, Japan, and much of Asia. It was unable to exert a "pull of attraction" as a partner for trade, investment, or other commercial opportunities, and by the end of the Cold War found itself remarkably isolated from international relations considering its geographical position, large size, and ambitions of its political and diplomatic elite.

Since the end of the Cold War, India's international role has steadily evolved. With the disappearance of its main Cold War partner, economic reforms were launched and policy decisions taken that shifted India's place in the world. These ranged from the detonation of nuclear weapons to the initiation of a "Look East" policy that sought enhanced ties with the rest of Asia as a way to compensate for the loss



AP Images (Rafiq Macqbool)

Soldier destroys opium poppies while on patrol with Afghan police

of political, economic, and military support from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries, and to escape isolation and marginalization in a U.S.-led “new world order.” Some two decades later, India’s policy adjustments have created new interactions between it and the international community and potentially augur further change in the years ahead.

Exercising Indian Power

India’s external power and interests can essentially be divided into two categories, economic and politico-security, with the latter encompassing India’s involvement in multilateralism.

Economics is a growing factor in India’s international strength and interests, an important shift from the last six decades during which India had an essentially closed economy. This shift in orientation is the main factor accounting for predictions of India’s rise in the international system. Its increasing integration into the international economy has been primarily in the areas of trade (especially service exports and energy imports), borrowing, and remittances from the Indian diaspora. Of lesser but growing importance are investment (both inward and outward) and outward foreign aid.

There are two broad constraints on the impact these elements will have on India’s external interests and power. The first is a set of domestic consider-

ations, particularly the need for equitable growth that will both reduce overall poverty levels and provide employment for India’s large population of underemployed young people. The second is the low base, relative to the size of its population, from which India’s economic rise is starting. For example, India accounts for only about 1 percent of global trade and worldwide foreign direct investment. Moreover, while economic interaction with certain countries such as the United States and China and regions such as the European Union (EU) is critical to India, the opposite is not true. Hence, India accounts for only about 1 percent of U.S. two-way trade, while the United States accounts for more than 10 percent of India’s. Similarly, India accounts for only about 1.4 percent of China’s, 0.6 percent of Japan’s, and 1.7 percent of the European Union’s trade.

This mixed and asymmetrical profile of Indian economic power and interests suggests that India’s international role and behavior will likely follow certain consistent patterns.

First, the United States will remain critical to India’s economic interests because it is India’s largest export market (though China is catching up fast), its largest source of private commercial borrowing, and the key to its access to multilateral aid, and because it hosts a large Indian diaspora that not only accounts for an estimated 50 percent of remittances but also creates nonmonetary wealth such as networks and influence useful to India’s global engagement. The United States is also emerging as the largest destination of India’s own foreign direct investment (FDI).

Second, in terms of regions, Europe and the Persian Gulf are critical to India in different ways. The EU accounts for the largest share of India’s trade, excluding petroleum. Including petroleum, the Persian Gulf is India’s largest regional trade partner. The EU, however, remains the largest regional source of FDI, though Gulf and Middle East investments in India are increasing. Other regions have risen or declined in importance. Eastern Europe and Russia (the one-time members of the Soviet-era Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) no longer account for much of India’s trade or other economic interactions. On the other hand, East and Southeast Asia’s increasing importance to India is especially notable, and the growth rates of Indian economic interaction with Africa and Latin America are higher than other regions, albeit from a considerably lower base. Africa is emerging as an important source of Indian energy supplies and as a destination for Indian aid and proj-



AP Images (Rahmat Gul)

Afghan security guard stands watch as opium is destroyed outside Kabul

ect exports—which partly explains India’s hosting of the first India-Africa summit this year. A third feature of India’s external economic power and interest profile is the degree of its diversification; roughly 50 percent of trade (both exports and imports) is with countries other than its top 10 partners.

The implications of the above contours of India’s external economic power and interests for India’s international engagement more generally are as follows:

Given that no single region is overwhelmingly important to India’s external economy, and that nearly 50 percent of its trade is with non-top 10 bilateral partners, India must pursue overlapping global, bilateral, and regional efforts to achieve its trade objectives. India will be active everywhere, from Latin America to Africa, because marginal gains matter when the absolute amounts of its trade are so low. (India’s total world exports in 2007 were only \$100 billion, less than half the value of the U.S. trade deficit with China alone.)

The diversity and diffusion of countries and regions that contribute to its economic interests will complicate India’s ability to maintain coherence in its external economic strategy. It will seek to shape the outcome of global trade talks on the one hand (not least because of the need to address domestic agricultural interests), while pursuing free trade-type agreements (for example, with the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and new multilateral arrangements (for example, India-Brazil-South Africa [IBSA]) on the other, to garner absolute and incremental trade gains as well as to leverage its negotiating power with competing partners. Bilateral deals will be especially important, and so will engaging the Indian diaspora, which is strongly present in five of the eight “nodal” countries that account for almost half of India’s trade.

Finally, nothing India can do economically vis-à-vis a foreign country or region matters more than what it must do at home to reform and develop its economy to attract the world. Moreover, the social and political, not to mention economic, demands for poverty alleviation, equitable growth, and more employment mean that India’s external economic engagement and negotiations will reflect a carefully considered calibration of what is possible in domestic terms for an elected government to sustain and stay in power.

As with economics, India’s political and security interests and the power it has available to pursue them are diverse and diffuse across regions and

countries. India’s main international diplomatic and security interests revolve around the following objectives:

- strategic autonomy, attained through a combination of multipolarity and national strength
- international acceptance of the status quo in Kashmir, or at least reduced pressure to change it
- wider and deeper access to defense and high-tech imports
- de facto and de jure recognition as a nuclear weapons state
- a permanent seat on the United Nations (UN) Security Council
- a leading role in international and regional organizations.

Because of the limits of Indian power and the nature of the objectives themselves, pursuing them requires wide-ranging, overlapping, and often inconsistent engagement on diverse bilateral and multilateral tracks. For example:

- The quest for strategic autonomy under conditions of limited national capacity requires persistent efforts to broaden options by fostering multipolar relationships, from IBSA to the recently formed BRIC (Brazil-Russia-India-China) nexus.

AP Images (Mohammad Sajjad)



Pakistani paramilitary soldiers protect supply route to U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan from militant attack

- Realizing the benefits of a far-flung Indian diaspora requires engagement with countries from North America through Australasia.

- Attaining a permanent UN Security Council seat mandates coordination with other countries also seeking reform of the council's structure, such as Japan, Brazil, and Germany. Gaining other memberships, such as in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), requires even wider outreach.

- Gaining support for policies regarding Kashmir and Pakistan requires cultivating interlocutors such as the United States, Russia, Japan, and key members of the EU and GCC.

India's evolving power profile and interests also indicate a likely shift in its approach to multilateral institutions. It is noteworthy that, for the most part, India is either not a member or at most an observer in the multilateral groupings, such as the Group of Eight, that are most important to achieving its economic and political objectives, while it is a full or even founding member of organizations that are either underfunctioning (such the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multisectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) or have outlived their usefulness and relevance (such as the Non-aligned Movement and G-77). While domestic political pressures will continue to require a certain level of commitment to groups symbolizing the solidarity of the global "South," economic and security realities are increasingly leading India to pursue its own version of ad hoc multilateralism. Such an approach is leading India to promote new multilateral arrangements in which it is a full member (such as IBSA and BRIC), to seek an increased role in others (for example, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and APEC), and to participate actively in the debates of those groupings such as the World Trade Organization that can provide (or deny) benefits to Indian interests.

Future Prospects for Indian Strategy

This complex picture of India's power is unlikely to change in the next 4 to 8 years. By most indices and analyses, India will continue to increase its economic and politico-security profile incrementally and steadily, but certainly at a much faster pace than during the first half-century of independence. Only an unlikely major disruption such as war or domestic crisis is liable to interfere with this prognosis.

Therefore, the combination of weaknesses and strengths in India's power and consequent interests

suggests an international approach that will be characterized by:

- An increasing emphasis on key bilateral relationships, in contrast to India's traditional focus on region-wide and multilateral organizations. Apart from pursuing a concrete set of calculated interests, this approach is consistent with India's own self-image and ambitions as a major power. The specific countries to be engaged will vary according to the interest affected, but Russia will remain important for weapons and spare parts, China for trade, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for oil, and the United States for everything.

- To the extent that it continues to follow regional approaches, India's future focus is likely to remain on Asia and the Persian Gulf. The relative importance of the EU will ebb while Africa probably will continue to grow in importance.

- India will be active everywhere, using a mixed kit of diplomatic and economic tools, because the strengths and weaknesses of its power profile dictate a search for marginal and incremental gains at every opportunity. As a result, India cannot be "assigned" by other countries to a region where cooperation is to be pursued.

In essence, India will persist in a revised version of its post-independence policies that seek to make the best of its strengths and weaknesses by being active everywhere and through varying mechanisms. What is perhaps the most fundamental difference between now and the past is that India will go forward from a base of new strengths, including its attractiveness as an economic partner, as a cash-paying arms purchaser, as a high-demand energy consumer, and as a diplomatic partner whose decisions—whether on trade talks or climate change—will have increasingly important implications for the international community. **gsa**

NOTES

¹ Larry Thompson and Michelle Brown, *Security on the Cheap: PRTs in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Refugees International, July 8, 2003), available at <www.interaction.org/newswire/detail.php?id=1816>.

² Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: Penguin, 2004), 100.

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