

*Afghanistan and Pakistan:
Past Mistakes, Future Directions?*

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AHMED RASHID is “Pakistan’s best and bravest reporter” (Christopher Hitchens). His unique knowledge of this vast and complex region allows him a panoramic vision and nuance that no Western writer can emulate.

His book *Taliban* first introduced American readers to the brutal regime that hijacked Afghanistan and harbored the terrorist group responsible for the 9/11 attacks. Now, Rashid examines the region and the corridors of power in Washington and Europe to see how the promised nation building in these countries has progressed. His conclusions are devastating: an unstable and nuclear-armed Pakistan, a renewed al-Qaeda profiting from a booming opium trade, and a Taliban resurgence and reconquest. While Iraq continues to attract most of American media and military might, Rashid argues that Pakistan and Afghanistan are where the conflict will finally be played out and that these failing states pose a graver threat to global security than the Middle East.

LECTURE I. AFGHANISTAN

The war in Afghanistan is now the longest war in living memory. It has been a thirty-year war for the Afghan people and a nine-year war for the West. And there is enormous reluctance to go on indefinitely. One conclusion of the London conference that was held a few weeks ago with sixty countries participating was that all the countries agreed that they would start talking to the Taliban. Countries that were very reluctant even six months ago now agree that there is no other way to bring about a conclusion to the conflict. This change in stance follows President Barack Obama's deadline of June 2011 for the start of an American withdrawal from Afghanistan and for the handing over of responsibility to the Afghan government.

However, this new approach raises the concern that the West is once again preparing to abandon the region and, thus, abandon the achievements of the last nine years in areas such as women's rights and education. The question being asked is "Does talking to the Taliban mean the West would tolerate a return to the Taliban's vision of Islamic law in Afghanistan?" Furthermore, what are these developments going to do to the image of American preeminence in the world? In the following discussion I will consider these questions, as they relate to the present situation in Afghanistan.

So what is the present situation? First, there is the resurgence of the Taliban. As is well known, the Taliban were rapidly defeated militarily in 2001. While up to fifteen thousand Taliban were killed at this time, most leaders managed to escape into Pakistan. Over the next two years the survivors rebuilt the movement, which became active again in 2003. Taliban membership is predominately drawn from the Pashtun ethnic group, which primarily lives in the South and the East of Afghanistan. However, today they are a countrywide movement; there are also Taliban groups in the North and in the West of the country. Further, the Taliban have become more than just an Afghan phenomenon; they are now a regional phenomenon, with Taliban groups active in Pakistan and a number of areas throughout central Asia.

This period of Taliban resurgence has been coupled with the development of links with al-Qaeda. As is well known, al-Qaeda has become in the years since 9/11 an organization with a global reach. Current estimates

suggest al-Qaeda has contacts in almost every European country as well as extensive networks throughout the Middle East—particularly Iraq, Jordan, and Yemen—and North Africa. Importantly, al-Qaeda's leadership lives along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, and therefore has maintained an alliance with the Pakistani Taliban and the Afghan Taliban. This relationship poses a very serious security problem in the region.

Second, there is the issue of the Afghan government and the role of President Hamid Karzai. Elections have been held and a constitution put in place, but despite these developments there is enormous disillusionment in Western foreign-policy circles about Karzai's leadership. In particular, there is concern regarding his ability to institute better-governance practices, to curb corruption, or to halt the production of drugs in the country. The 2009 presidential election revealed the scale of the failure, with the final result being widely perceived as fraudulent. The election outcome and the resulting public outcry seemingly caught many of the Western diplomatic community by surprise and have substantially undermined the credibility of Afghan government institutions.

Third, there is the regional problem. There has been an increasing acknowledgment in the past two years that the conflict in Afghanistan cannot be treated in isolation. Afghanistan is a landlocked country with six direct neighbors and a half-dozen near neighbors that are very influential. It is now commonly understood that peace in Afghanistan will come only with a regional agreement restraining foreign intervention. This conclusion has its basis in the experience of the 1990s when the United States withdrew its influence from Afghanistan after the Soviet military withdrawal, which led to increased intervention from other regional powers, particularly Pakistan. A continuation of this kind of interference in Afghanistan has contributed to the ongoing instability of the country and the region.

Despite this very depressing picture of the current situation, recent polling data on Afghans' political preferences conducted by the BBC indicates that only 6 percent of Afghans want the Taliban back. Although it is extremely difficult to conduct polls in the middle of a war, there is no reason to presume this figure to be inaccurate. It is certainly clear that a majority of Afghans do not want the Taliban to return to power, since they know that the Taliban cannot provide development, jobs, education—anything that would develop an Afghan economy. They also know that the return of the Taliban would invariably lead to a renewal of the civil war with the Northern Alliance.

The population's lack of support for the Taliban is tempered with frustration with the West for failing to provide sufficient resources for development in Afghanistan. What support remains for the Taliban is due, at least in part, to anger and frustration at American and Western policies. But that does not mean that Taliban are popular. This resentment at Western policies has not translated into a popular uprising against the presence of foreign troops, as it did in Iraq in 2005–6. It is still a widely held view among the Afghan people that the presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan is the only guarantee that the Taliban will not return and that there will be the prospect of foreign investment in the economy. So, in Afghanistan there is currently a dire military situation, a quite dire Afghan government situation, both set within a very dire regional situation, but also enormous hope (I dare use the word) that things can improve.

How did Afghanistan get to this terrible position after the events of 2001? The answer can be summarized in one word: *Iraq*. Iraq has been a huge diversion of Western resources and focus since 2003. Not only has the Iraq war drained resources that could have aided Afghanistan, but the conduct of the war has created tensions between the Muslim world and the West, while increasing the status and profile of al-Qaeda and related militant groups. These developments led to the deprioritization of Afghanistan in Western strategic policy, which resulted in a failure to make the required investments in the infrastructure of the country that are needed to advance the development and well-being of the Afghan people.

This problem was exacerbated by the policies of a U.S. administration that had a limited vision for progress in Afghanistan. There effectively was no strategic vision or plan for “nation building.” Afghanistan is a poor country, so a rebuilding plan is not going to turn it into a European-style nation, but there was not even a plan to attempt to rebuild the country to its level before 1979, prior to the Soviet invasion. Before the past thirty years of conflict, Afghanistan had a functioning economy; it was self-sufficient, it had a basic infrastructure such as electricity in the cities, and it had a thriving agricultural sector that provided export revenues. However, in the nine years since the defeat of the Taliban, Western investment has not been able to raise development conditions even to their pre-1979 levels. Given the level of expenditure of Western forces and the lives of the soldiers that have been lost, the failure is a sad indictment of the West's policy.

Rather than focusing on development, there has been an obsession, particularly from the Americans, with the Afghan electoral process. The concept of nation building and the idea of building up the economy, social institutions, and infrastructure have largely come second in order of priority to the institution of an electoral process. In hindsight, the emphasis on making Afghanistan appear to be a democracy was set far too early, before there were enough solid building blocks inside the country that could have sustained this political process. For example, when presidential elections were held in 2004, half the population did not even know what an election was, given that they were not alive when the last election was held, in the 1960s. But despite these obvious limitations, there has been continued pressure to hold elections. Thus, we had the recent presidential election, which in retrospect should not have been conducted at that time. Given the military situation, the idea that a successful election could be held in the midst of an insurgency, with an urban bombing campaign and suicide attacks, was extremely far-fetched. It seems, therefore, that political strategy in Afghanistan has been hampered by a poor ordering of priorities, leading to the commitment of resources to supporting a superficial political structure in a country that has not yet come out of war.

Finally, there has been the issue of intervention of NATO in 2005–6 and the lack of foresight that appears to have gone into the planning and execution of that mission. Again, this failure has been influenced by events in Iraq. Countries that were reluctant to commit military support to the Coalition in Iraq generally showed more willingness to become involved in Afghanistan. But the lack of adequate intelligence, combined with insufficient preparation, has severely compromised the effectiveness of the countries involved in the operation. The British, for example, deployed to Helmand Province with little local knowledge and without expecting the kind of resistance that they have subsequently encountered.

These difficulties have been coupled with reluctance to provide sufficient resources for the building of Afghan institutions, in particular the army, the police, and the justice system. It is only in the past two to three years that we have seen substantive investment in building up the army and police. However, this shift in strategy regarding the development of institutions is being rushed. For example, the target for training a new Afghan army from scratch is eighteen months. This timetable faces considerable challenges. The army is currently approximately one hundred thousand strong, but only some 10 percent or 15 percent of those

recruits are literate. Moreover, there is widespread drug usage by soldiers and police due to the preeminence of drug cultivation in the national economy. Developing an effective and disciplined military under these conditions is extremely difficult, if not unrealistic, given the proposed time frame.

There has, however, been considerable success in the development of the education and health sectors. Afghanistan in 1979 did not have an educational system, but now nearly six million Afghan children attend school. Approximately 40 percent of these children are girls. However, the educational infrastructure remains incomplete. Since there is no Afghan economy that can sustain an educated group of three to five million children, the first cohort of these children, who have been in education for eight years now, are finishing their education with no prospect of either attending university or finding suitable employment. So again we are looking at problems ahead that will be very detrimental.

These problems have dominated the situation in Afghanistan over the past nine years. However, there have been some changes since the election of President Obama. Principally, we have seen over the past year the development of a regional strategy. The NATO countries have recognized that they need to bring the neighboring countries together to create a coherent strategy for the development of a stable Afghanistan. This new approach has become a major plank for Obama, as indicated in a speech he made in March 2009 when he announced the deployment of a further twenty thousand troops. This increase in troop numbers has been coupled with a substantial increase in investment aimed at building up Afghan institutions.

Alongside increased troop numbers, there has also apparently been recognition among Western governments that a viable economy, not a donor-driven economy, is a key to future stability. And the key to developing a functioning economy is investment in agriculture. This is a policy that I have personally advocated since 2001. It is important to recognize that Afghanistan is 70 percent to 80 percent rural, and, therefore, the most effective way to undercut the power of the Taliban and the local warlords is to develop an agriculture sector that will encourage fighters (along with the five million refugees of the war) to return to the land. The delay in adopting a strong plan for agricultural development has been a serious deficiency in the Western plan for the country. Only 12 percent of Afghanistan's territory is arable; the rest is desert or mountainous. Therefore, agricultural production is concentrated in the river valleys. It is an

oasis economy, which means that it is comparatively easy to develop a basic level of sustainable agricultural production because resources can be effectively focused on the small number of areas where intensive agricultural production is possible. Helmand Valley is an example of one such region. It is only in the past year that the first serious investment in agriculture has begun.

There has been in the past year, then, recognition of three key issues: the regional problem, the lack of functioning institutions, and the underinvestment in economic development. Recognition of these three problems has come alongside public acknowledgment—long denied by George W. Bush and Tony Blair—that the Taliban and al-Qaeda leaders are living in Pakistan. This point has long been obscured, at least in part due to the relationship that existed between Bush and Pakistan's former president Gen. Pervez Musharraf. The availability of a sanctuary for the insurgency leadership has been a major impediment to implementing an effective counterinsurgency campaign. The safe havens in Pakistan have enabled the Taliban to maintain a supply of recruits, food, and weapons that has fueled the insurgency over the past seven years. A similar problem was apparent during the Vietnam War: the ability of insurgents to maintain a sanctuary enabled effective resistance to U.S. military force.

However, despite recognition of these issues, the problems are for the most part *worse* than they were at the start of Obama's presidency. The current poor state of progress in Afghanistan is due to the negative impact of a number of factors. These include the rise in tension between India and Pakistan in the wake of the attacks in Mumbai, the deterioration in relations between the United States and Iran, the increasing tension between China and the United States, and also the poor state of the relationship between Russia and NATO after the conflict in Georgia. In summation, the regional problem has not been addressed, and has in fact become substantially more complicated in the past year.

A further complicating factor has been the growing use of suicide bombers as a tactic in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. This is a concerning development. Afghans never previously used suicide bombers. It is a tactic that has developed under al-Qaeda guidance, using experience gained in other Middle Eastern countries and only recently employed in Afghanistan. This tactic was never employed against the Soviets and was never used during the subsequent civil war.

In response, the U.S. military, building on its experience in Iraq, has developed a "people-centric" counterinsurgency strategy. The strategy

attempts to clear population centers of insurgents and then hold those areas with troops to provide security and stability. This, in turn, is supposed to enable the relevant government agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to provide services to the Afghan population. This is a sensible strategic approach. However, despite the recent surge in troop numbers of 30,000 additional American troops and 7,000 NATO troops, taking the total NATO and American contingent up to 160,000 by the middle of this year, troop numbers are not sufficient to secure the whole of Afghanistan. Furthermore, the eighteen-month time frame for implementing this strategy raises doubts about whether this new approach will have sufficient time or resources to be successful. There is also a perception among Afghans and other countries in the region that NATO interest in the conflict is waning and that a Western withdrawal from Afghanistan may be imminent. This perception persists despite Obama's stating very clearly that America is committed to a military role in Afghanistan and that there will not be a sudden withdrawal of American troops in June 2011. What reinforces the perception of Western fatigue is the clear decline in domestic support for the war in many of the countries with troops deployed in Afghanistan. In most European countries, 60 percent to 70 percent of their publics now believe that their troops should come home. For example, in Germany, a key country with 4,500 troops in Afghanistan, 77 percent of the public believes that their troops should come home. Even in the United States support has declined sharply. For the first time in the nine-year war, American polls are showing that more than 50 percent of Americans believe that their troops should come home. This level of negativity to the war will likely make long-term deployment of troops unsustainable for European governments seeking reelection.

These views are, of course, relayed back to the Afghan people and the Taliban. Some among the Taliban believe that, given declining public support in the West for the war, the Americans and NATO will leave, and therefore all that is required for military success is to wait the Western forces out. This strategy requires only that the Taliban survive while continuing to inflict sufficient casualties to maintain the unpopular perception of the war among the domestic populations of the key Western nations.

Given these factors, there is now considerable impetus to elaborate a plan that involves direct talks with representatives of the Taliban. This approach recognizes that any future peace will have to acknowledge that,

although the Taliban are a marginal element in relation to the Afghan population as a whole, they are representative of a section of the Pashtun people, which with approximately 38 percent of the population form the largest ethnic group in the country. The Pashtuns have, to date, felt largely alienated by Western policies since 2001, and this situation will need to be addressed in any future settlement.

The Taliban established themselves in the early 1990s on the basis of a three-point agenda. They sought to end the civil war that was going on at that time, disarm the population, and impose Sharia law based on an extreme interpretation of Islam, developed from the teachings of the Deobandi sect of Sunni Islam. These initiatives were initially extremely popular. However, after their early success the limitations of their vision for the future of the country became apparent. The Taliban had no economic or social vision; they insisted that bringing in Sharia would resolve all of the people's problems. They had no concept of what a functioning economy or educational system required. These limitations are understandable, given that the Taliban at that time were essentially a peasant army, fighting a peasant insurgency. Their principal appeal lay in the fact that the Afghan population was fed up with the status quo. The details of the Taliban's policies mattered little under these circumstances; what mattered was ending the instability caused by the civil war.

Since the Taliban's defeat in 2001 and their reconstitution in 2003, they have developed little from their origin as a peasant army with limited policy vision. The one area they have advanced in is in their military capabilities. The organization has received training from al-Qaeda, including training for some members in Iraq, which has vastly increased the efficiency and effectiveness of the insurgency. We have seen the consequences of this through the effective use of IEDs and the increased sophistication of the Taliban's tactics in conducting ambushes, suicide bombings, and acts of urban terrorism. However, the Taliban still cannot face Western forces directly in conventional combat. They are not able to take cities, and they are not able to mobilize masses of population against Western occupation and Western forces, so militarily they appear to have reached their zenith. They are extremely capable at their current form of insurgency; they can harass the population and harass Western forces to a considerable degree, but they cannot achieve a decisive military victory.

In sum, the Taliban are a militarily sophisticated organization but an extremely unsophisticated social and political entity. This combination poses a conundrum for the solution to the conflict. Their relative military

sophistication means that the Taliban—as Western forces are increasingly acknowledging—cannot be militarily defeated. So the Taliban cannot win, but it also cannot be defeated. This recognition has provided impetus to the move to engage the Taliban in talks. However, if we look at other similar movements elsewhere in the world, such as Somalia, Yemen, and Sudan, the respective Islamic militant groups in these countries are actually providing the people with social services alongside the security they attempt to impose militarily. The Taliban in contrast provide nothing in the way of social services and only a very limited form of “justice,” which they derive from their conception of Sharia law. Therefore, the political and social limitations of the Taliban make the political aims of engagement with the Taliban extremely unclear. As such, the Taliban are both an important component of a future peace and an apparent impediment to a coherent political vision for Afghanistan’s future.

The Afghan government recently met with Taliban representatives in Saudi Arabia. These talks, however, were conducted among only a small group of Afghans representing a very narrow range of views on Afghanistan’s future. Karzai relied on loyalists drawn from his own family to present the government’s position at these talks, thereby inherently limiting the diversity of views that would be expressed. To be successful, and to avoid alienating substantial sectors of the Afghan population, future talks must be broadened to include non-Pashtuns, particularly as Karzai is himself a Pashtun. Any perception of the development of a Pashtun hegemony in Afghanistan would be extremely dangerous and likely spark an ethnic conflict rather than establish a stable peace.

There are other segments of Afghan society that also require consideration. In the nine years since the Taliban were defeated, a small but influential middle class has developed in Kabul and some of the major cities. This middle class is composed of many of the professional workers of Afghan society and includes a substantial number of women, who are the majority of teachers and health workers in the country. It is also supported by a strong group of NGOs that operate in the country. These elements now constitute a small but important movement toward a modern, developed Afghanistan that contrasts starkly with the vision presented by the Taliban. Naturally, these groups are fearful of moves to incorporate what they consider to be fundamentalist views into the political future of the country. In particular, there is a strident women’s movement that is raising questions about the West’s support for the protection of women’s rights and continued access to education for all Afghan children. The

gains made in these areas over the past nine years are fragile, and there is justified concern that the West's withdrawal from Afghanistan could see even these few advances destroyed.

To incorporate the interests of all of these groups into the peace process is going to be a very complex process. This is even more evident when we consider the regional situation. Pakistan, which has supported the Taliban, will want to be involved in brokering any peace deal to ensure that the Taliban's interests are adequately represented in the eventual makeup of the Afghan government, even if they are not returned to their pre-2001 power. For Pakistan, this consideration is critical for dealing with what they view as the threat of expanding Indian influence in Afghanistan.

There is also the issue of the Taliban's influence on Afghanistan's neighbors. For example, tensions between Iran and the Taliban remain high. Iran nearly invaded Afghanistan in the 1990s to remove the Taliban. Part of the tension lies in the fact that the Taliban are Sunni extremists, while the Iranian government is Shia. Iran has a large Sunni population that they fear could be influenced by the Taliban. These tensions have been exacerbated in recent months through Iran's increasing isolation from the West due to its nuclear policies. The fear of Taliban influence is prominent throughout central Asia, with many states sharing ethnic affinities with the ethnic groups of northern Afghanistan, such as the Tajiks, the Uzbeks, and the Turkmens. These groups would resist a deal that they perceived as giving undue influence to the Pashtuns and potentially reinstating Taliban influence on their borders.

India has been resisting engagement with the Taliban due to the latter's relationship with Pakistan and to India's belief that Afghanistan has been used as a training ground for militants who have subsequently conducted attacks in Kashmir. Kabul has become, in effect, the new Kashmir, with the real conflict between India and Pakistan now actually being conducted inside Afghanistan. Considerable effort is required by the West to bring India and Pakistan together to assist with the peace process. There are bitter rivalries being played out between the two nations that, unless this is concluded, will likely obstruct a stable peace agreement.

In conclusion, since 2001, there has been an integration of many extremist elements into the Afghan government system. Many of the country's warlords have participated in elections and are now sitting in Parliament. This includes ex-Taliban commanders. These people are integrated at all levels of central and regional government. This reality comes from the

fact that Afghanistan is a tribal community, a clan community. Many in the West may view this as a negative, but I will end this discussion with a positive point that arises from this feature of Afghan society. As a tribal society, Afghanistan has an enormous absorptive capacity for forgiveness. The example of the Afghan government shows that, if done in the right way and in accordance with Afghan custom, the enemy can be brought into the peace process. The West is going to have to pursue a process of reintegration that will involve bringing Taliban commanders and foot soldiers into the fold, using incentives such as money, vocational training, and economic development. It is inevitable that we will have to seek some kind of dialogue with the Taliban and some kind of compromise in Afghanistan if we are to marginalize al-Qaeda. Afghanistan's history shows that such a rapprochement is possible. There is, therefore, hope that a sustainable peace is achievable; people with deep histories of conflict can work together.

QUESTION-AND-ANSWER SESSION TO AFGHANISTAN LECTURE

QUESTION 1: I have one question regarding the early part of your lecture. You say that for thirty years the Afghan war has been going on, and for the past nine years, the West had been engaged, but surely the West was involved in the 1980s as well?

AHMED RASHID: I think the very big difference with the 1980s was that Western troops were not on the ground. This was a proxy war that was being fought with Western arms being given to the mujahideen through Pakistan, but Western forces were not on the ground. Second, you did not have al-Qaeda. You did not have a global terrorism network that was threatening the security of the West. So I think it is a different situation in important respects. It was very easy in 1989 after the Soviet collapse for the West to pull out and say, "We have no stake here; Afghanistan has no oil, no resources, and we have no interests here. Let the Afghans fight each other." There was no Western stake. I think the Western stake now is enormous, but it is not oil or resources but security and stability. The West cannot see this region fall into the hands of quasi-extremist Islamists; the resulting impact of that in Pakistan would be devastating.

I think the situation in the nineties was that there was simply no presence from the West. Actually, what happened in 1989, when America withdrew from Afghanistan, was that they left the Pakistanis and the Saudis to handle Afghanistan. When the Taliban emerged in 1993, there

was even less interest by America, which left the Pakistan army and intelligence to deal with the situation. At that time the Americans were satisfied with this arrangement because there was enormous tension between the United States and Iran, and the Taliban were seen as a Sunni extremist force that would block Iranian expansion in the region. The Taliban were actually seen by the Americans in the early '90s as a good thing, and they encouraged Pakistan and the Saudis to back them.

This situation changed in 1996 when Bin Laden arrived in Afghanistan and conducted the bombing campaign in Kenya and the attack on the USS *Cole*. Then the Taliban became a threat because they were hosting Bin Laden. The United States now has a huge stake in Afghanistan. They cannot just walk away now and tell the Pakistani and Saudi intelligence services to handle it because they do not trust the Pakistani intelligence service—no Western country does—and they do not trust the Saudi intelligence service, either.

So the West has a huge security stake now in making sure that any settlement that comes about is going to be a settlement that the West can live with but one that is not going to further destabilize the region.

QUESTION 2: Do you think the Taliban would be willing to talk? If they do not talk, and if the regional picture deteriorates and if the West continues to get weary and pulls out, then what happens?

QUESTION 3: Do you think the renewed emphasis on talking with the Taliban vindicates the official Pakistani position in the '90s?

AHMED RASHID: With regard to the question of the Taliban responding to approaches to talk, first of all, we are not going to know until we try. I think the indicators are not bad. The Taliban have already engaged in surreptitious talks. In their last four or five public statements they have obliquely talked about the major Western demand, which is that they break ties with al-Qaeda. They have also talked about giving guarantees to neighboring countries that they will not interfere in their internal affairs or support terrorist groups in Iran, Pakistan, or central Asia. This week, I have seen a statement of theirs that condemned the recent London conference on Afghanistan, but while also stating Taliban support for education for all Afghan children, boys and girls. I have never before seen such a statement. What exactly that translates into, we really do not know. But I think the indication is that the Taliban, like everyone else, are tired of the

conflict. There are other developments that support this conclusion. The Taliban have increasingly become dependent on Pakistani and central Asian fighters to continue the war. They have maybe twenty to twenty-five thousand people in the field but are unable to expand further, as they are having difficulty finding Afghan recruits. The Taliban have been forced to resort to forced recruitment in the Pashtun areas inside Afghanistan. The same occurred in 1998–99 when they resorted to forced recruitment, which was a sign that their popularity was diminishing enormously.

I think they are also tired of being manipulated. They are tired of being manipulated by Pakistan and the intelligence agencies, they are tired of being manipulated by some of their other backers, and they are tired of being manipulated by extremist groups like al-Qaeda. The Taliban are Afghans, after all; they want to fight and live in Afghanistan, not bomb New York or London. Al-Qaeda, of course, is going to try to sabotage any dialogue between the West and the Taliban or between Karzai and the Taliban. The question is “Could al-Qaeda prompt a war between India and Pakistan?” There is a very serious danger that there could be another attack like the one in Mumbai in 2008. If there is, the Indians have said very clearly, they will go to war. Indian leaders have said that they will not tolerate another two hundred civilians being killed by extremists. So al-Qaeda and its allies have many ways of potentially sabotaging things.

But I think that the Taliban are very tired, and ultimately they see themselves as Afghan nationalists. They see themselves not as al-Qaeda extremists or global jihadists, but as fighters for Afghanistan. They want to drive out the foreigners, and then they will be at peace. But we can judge the actual situation only when we actually engage with them.

QUESTION 4: *Does Afghanistan being a nonsecular country mean that development plans will necessarily fail?*

QUESTION 5: *Is it realistic that the West could drive a wedge between the Taliban and al-Qaeda?*

AHMED RASHID: If we compare Afghanistan to Pakistan we see a very different set of problems. Pakistan currently faces a dangerous indigenous Taliban movement, ethnic and religious tension (Pakistan is the only Muslim country in which *every* Islamic sect is present), and a major economic crisis, whereas in Afghanistan these tensions, particularly those based on religion, are not as prevalent. The conflict in Afghanistan is

not about differing understandings of Islam; it is about political power. Afghanistan is a very backward country, but backwardness can sometimes be an enormous advantage. The country is dominated by tribal and clan structures that have stayed together for nearly three hundred years, despite numerous efforts in colonial and modern times to split up the country into separate ethnic groups. Afghanistan has never fallen apart; it has held together. What has kept the country together has been a sense of Afghan nationalism and nationhood. Afghanistan is a largely illiterate and underdeveloped country, but despite this (and largely because of its tribal structures and affiliations) Afghan society has a capacity to bring people together and to reconcile differences. The key question is “Do you have the leadership in Kabul capable of managing this process?”

There is much more religious hatred in Pakistan, which is truly fragmented and has little of Afghanistan’s absorptive capacity to deal with conflict. Among Pashtuns a blood feud can exist for two hundred years where families will kill one another for generations, but at the end they can still sit down and work it out. I can only give you that answer as my cause for hope. It is not a cause for hope that depends on modern frameworks of conflict resolution or Western theories. It is really about knowing Afghanistan and what works there and what does not, and no one knows that better than the Afghans.

LECTURE II. PAKISTAN

In my first lecture I focused on Afghanistan. Afghanistan is, I argued, a fairly black-and-white issue; it is a complicated situation, but we know in broad terms what is going on there. Pakistan, however, is a much more complex state, and is currently extremely fragile. There are three factors that, I think, have prevented Pakistan from stabilizing since its formation sixty years ago. The first factor has been the failure to establish a coherent national identity. This is a subject of constant debate: is Pakistan an Islamic state or alternatively a state for Muslims along with other religions and ethnic minorities? Are we Muslims first, Pakistanis second, and Sindhis or Punjabis third? Or are we Pakistanis first and foremost? The issue of national identity has plagued Pakistan and continues to be a significant source of confusion and conflict. It is exacerbated by Islamic extremists in the country who call for the establishment of a Sharia state and a caliphate that joins Pakistan with other Muslim states, thus dissolving Pakistan into a supranational identity beyond its current geographical boundaries.

The second factor that has divided the country, particularly the army and civilian politicians, is the question of national security. What is Pakistan's national security paradigm? There are two conflicting views on this issue, and the tension between them contributes to the military's habit of taking over the government, which has prevented the consolidation of civilian power in Pakistan. The conception of national security that currently maintains influence over Pakistani politics is founded in the military's views of security. This view is that Pakistan is primarily a national security state; it is a country constantly threatened by outside enemies, in particular by India but at times also by Afghanistan, Iran, or America. In order to defend Pakistan against these foreign threats, according to this paradigm, the country must maintain an army of one million men and also channel approximately 30 percent to 40 percent of government expenditure to the military. Of course, this interpretation of Pakistan's security situation serves the military's interests of preserving power and domination of the allocation of resources within the state.

One result of this conception of Pakistan as a national security state is that it has allowed the army to define itself as the guarantor of Pakistan's borders. This has in turn led to an expansionist military policy. An expansionist policy, it is reasoned, allows Pakistan to keep India off-balance and on the defensive. This is seen as strategically important, given Pakistan's

considerable disadvantage in manpower, outnumbered as it is by India seven to one. A direct consequence of this strategy is that the state has pursued a policy of sponsoring extremism and terrorism for the past thirty years. It is possible to trace this strategy back further in the history of Pakistan—some would suggest this has been the policy of the military since the 1950s—but the clearest emergence of the strategy came with the arming of the mujahideen in Afghanistan in 1981. The Pakistani military, working with American operatives, used this process to gain influence in Afghanistan. This strategy and viewpoint were then applied to the development of the insurgency in Kashmir. Then again, in the 1990s, the Pakistan military backed the Taliban, which led to the creation of extremist groups within Pakistan to facilitate the development of this policy.

The third factor in Pakistan's fragility is the question of ethnicity. Punjab is the second-largest province in the country in terms of geography, but contains 60 percent of the country's population. Seventy percent of the army is drawn from Punjab, along with a substantial proportion of the government bureaucracy. As a result of this dominance there is enormous resentment from the smaller provinces, particularly Sindh and Balochistan, against Punjab. This shows itself in various forms of political resistance, unrest, and terrorism, such as the current insurgency in Balochistan against Punjab and the central government.

The idea of a shared national ethnicity and language remains a long-running unresolved issue in Pakistan. There have been attempts in the past by some of the previous military regimes to institute a national ethnicity and language by fiat, but there has been no progress on developing a consensus on how to resolve this issue.

Having identified these three factors that have contributed to Pakistan's history of instability, I now turn to the present situation in the country. There are four ongoing crises in Pakistan. The first is the continuing political crisis between the military and the central government. Second, there is the problem of terrorism and the development of Pakistani Taliban. This is a new phenomenon linked to the issue of control of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). These regions are not legally part of Pakistan; they are semiautonomous, with distinct identities, and they operate their own legal systems. The debate about the future of the FATA is a critical issue for the future of Afghanistan and also for the future of Pakistan. Third, there is the insurgency in Balochistan. And, finally, there is the economic crisis. The current economic recession is the worst economic crisis in the country's history.

Let's start by considering the first of these crises, the conflict over the governance of the country between the civilian politicians and the military. Over the past decades we have had a cyclical pattern of military rule followed by its collapse and replacement by civilian government. However, as a residue of military rule, during which many civilian leaders would have been exiled or executed, the incoming civilian government has invariably faced considerable difficulties. The civilian leadership has usually lacked the political experience or knowledge to manage the country toward a full-fledged democracy. Their governments have then faced a crisis of support and pressure from the military for a return to military rule. This process happened in the 1970s and again in the 1990s. And it is happening again now in the wake of the death of Benazir Bhutto. We have seen, after the departure of the military regime of Gen. Pervez Musharraf, that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), led by Asif Ali Zardari, has stitched together an alliance that, for the first time, has actually brought together many of the competing ethnic groups and political parties in Pakistan.

The PPP suffers from a number of problems, most notably corruption and general incompetence. However, it remains the only national party in Pakistan that has support in all four provinces. All the other parties, including the main opposition party, the Pakistan Muslim League, have become regional parties, representing ethnic groups or regional territory rather than national parties. Zardari's alliance included the main moderate party in the North-West Frontier Province, the Pashtun Party, the Awami National Party, the MQM (which is predominantly the party of the Urdu-speaking population), and also groups in Balochistan. This was the first time when you had a national government that had support from the Pashtuns, the Muhajirs, the Sindhis, and elements in Balochistan. For the first time, this raised the prospect of a stable government under whose leadership ethnicity would not be a major point of conflict.

Following their election, this PPP-led alliance sought to reform the military and foreign policies of the Musharraf era. The reforms included attempts to improve relations with the Afghan government, which had been poor under Musharraf, and an outreach to India. However, India strongly rebuffed the approach, and shortly after Pakistan's change in approach the Mumbai attack occurred and any prospect of an improvement in the relationship with India passed. These overtures by Zardari to Pakistan's neighbors, which were made independently of the military, were viewed by the military as a threat. The military had effectively

dictated foreign policy for the previous thirty years and did not respond well to Zardari's initiatives.

The political situation has also been complicated by a domestic crisis involving the judiciary. This crisis was initiated by the removal of several senior members of the judiciary by Musharraf at the end of his tenure. This prompted a very strong reaction from the Pakistani legal community and civil society, which sought the reinstatement of the ousted jurists. However, Zardari was very hesitant to do this, as he feared that the reinstated judiciary would then revisit claims of corruption against the PPP dating from the 1990s and perhaps even challenge the legitimacy of his election as president. The judiciary members were subsequently restored after considerable pressure from the army. This created the perception within the PPP (accurate or not) that the army and the judiciary were working in alliance to remove Zardari from office. Zardari feels threatened by these developments, as he has a history of corruption allegations stemming from his activities during his wife's term as prime minister in the 1990s. These problems have raised doubts about the viability of Zardari's survival as president.

This political instability is precisely what Pakistan does not need. The country requires a sustained period of democracy under civilian governance. This is so even if it is a bad, poorly functioning democracy. If Zardari is unpopular or ineffective, then he should be removed from office through elections. The country does not benefit from the army removing a civilian government, even if it is a poorly functioning one, as this only exacerbates Pakistan's problems. The army does not offer political solutions for the country, and, in particular, the army provides no solution to the country's economic problems. Indeed, the history of military regimes in Pakistan shows that they deepen economic problems because under military rule, the flow of international investment aid stops.

The second crisis in Pakistan is terrorism. This issue is linked to the previous lecture that focused on Afghanistan. To understand the prevalence of terrorism in Pakistan we must first consider the question "Who are the Pakistani Taliban, and where do they come from?" First, as I noted above, the army has supported extremist groups both in Afghanistan and in India for the past thirty years. This support has, in turn, led to a process of radicalization within Pakistani society. During the 1990s many of the militant Punjabi and Kashmiri groups preparing to fight in India and Kashmir received training from the Pakistani military and intelligence services. These same groups are now conducting terrorist attacks in Pakistani cities.

This support for militant groups in Pakistan has led to a contradictory situation. In 2001, after the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan, the leadership of al-Qaeda and the Taliban escaped into Pakistan (settling in Balochistan and the FATA), where they have continued to reside, largely untroubled, ever since. This situation has persisted, while the Pakistan military has continued to provide support to the U.S. military operations in Afghanistan. In exchange for sanctuary, the Taliban and al-Qaeda have brought money and more military resources and have also enhanced the process of radicalization in the Pashtun-dominated border regions of the country. Pakistani Pashtuns have been fighting in Afghanistan alongside the Taliban since the 1990s, so the integration of the Taliban and al-Qaeda into Pakistan has built on an existing relationship. However, this relationship has now increased the strength and depth of the radicalization process of the populations of these provinces.

The Pakistani Taliban differ in important respects from the Afghan Taliban. As I noted in my previous lecture, the Afghan Taliban are predominantly an army made up of illiterate or semiliterate rural farmers and laborers. They are largely nonideological and nonradical. They fight for a range of reasons that have little, if anything, to do with global jihad. In contrast, the Pakistani Taliban are much more radicalized. They have developed a strong youth element, drawn from young Pashtuns who have been radicalized in madrassas or religious schools established in the FATA and frontier regions of Pakistan. The madrassas teach a particular strain of Sunni Islam that presents a very narrow interpretation of Islam.

The FATA and frontier regions have been particularly receptive to this radicalization process because of a history of poverty and underdevelopment. The FATA region's population is just 3.5 million people, with very rugged terrain and little in the way of a modern economy or prospects for its youth. Forty-six percent of the population, even before 9/11, worked outside the FATA. Literacy rates in the FATA for women are among the lowest in the world, at approximately 3 percent. The rate is little better for men, at around 12 percent to 15 percent, which is far lower than the national average of approximately 50 percent. The influx of al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban into this region has consequentially acted like a kind of economic engine that has sustained and enhanced the process of radicalization in Pakistan.

This development of the Pakistani Taliban has gone along with the development of a terrorism campaign that has seen the introduction of suicide bombing. Suicide bombing in South Asia started in Kashmir in the 1990s when some of the Pakistani groups introduced the tactic in an

attempt to inflict higher casualties on Indian civilians and soldiers. The entry of al-Qaeda into Pakistan in 2001 saw the tactic developed and employed more widely in Pakistan itself. Al-Qaeda has promoted suicide bombing despite the fact that suicide is strictly forbidden by Islam. And they have been very successful at developing suicide bombing into a form of “industry” in the border regions of Pakistan. Hundreds of suicide bombers are now turned out annually. Last year we had in Pakistan eighty-seven suicide attacks, which killed approximately three thousand people, including civilians, police, and members of the military. This “industry” has also spread the tactic to Afghanistan, which did not have suicide bombing until two or three years ago.

With the influx of money, contact with radicalized Islamists, and the training and deployment of the suicide-bombing campaign, the Pakistani Taliban have developed rapidly since 2001. Having initially acted merely as hosts for al-Qaeda, and then as guards and soldiers for the leaders of these groups, the Pakistani Taliban have now entered a third phase of development where they are pursuing a political agenda aimed at liberating the FATA and creating an independent emirate. The recent alliance of all Pakistani Taliban groups in the FATA has developed the independence movement’s goal toward seeking to create an emirate throughout Pakistan, very similar to what the Taliban in Afghanistan have pledged to do.

What has been the reaction of the state to these developments? From 2004 until 2007–8 the army showed very little interest in the Pakistani Taliban. The belief of the army high command was that as long as the Pakistani Taliban were going across the border into Afghanistan and helping the Afghan Taliban attack Americans, there was no requirement for the army to act. There was no apparent concern from the army about the Taliban insurgency against NATO forces in Afghanistan. The realization that Pakistani Taliban were active within Pakistan and were mounting an increasingly violent campaign against that state seems to have taken a long time to register. This was despite numerous indicators of the change in the motivation and tactics of the radicalized groups in the FATA, most notably the Red Mosque Siege in 2007, during which approximately one thousand militants took over the Red Mosque in Islamabad and held it for six months. The army was eventually forced to storm the mosque to end the occupation.

These indicators showed that the radicalized groups were galvanizing their resistance against both the Pakistani state and the army. The militants were starting to attack the very entities that had helped create them.

In the past year these attacks have continued, with direct attacks on the general headquarters of the Pakistan army, on the headquarters of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), and on many senior generals. However, what appears to have finally changed the army's position on these groups was the situation in Swat. Since 2003 the Pakistani Taliban have extended their operations beyond the FATA, with the intent of securing the Swat Valley, just north of Islamabad. The Taliban's success in Swat drew the West's attention to the fact that the militants controlled land on the edge of Islamabad, a situation that was deemed unacceptable. The army was therefore pressured by Western governments to militarily engage the militants. At the same time public opinion in Pakistan began to turn against the Pakistani Taliban, as the domestic threat to Pakistan became clear. As a result of this combined pressure, the government and military finally began to confront the militias both in Swat and in the FATA.

Despite this growing awareness of the threat posed by the Taliban, there are several factors vital to achieving a real solution to the presence of these radical groups that remain unresolved. The first is the failure to recognize the association between the Pakistani Taliban and the militant groups in Punjab that have been fighting India in Kashmir and the threat that these groups pose. Many of these Punjabi groups have joined the Pakistani Taliban and have of course brought with them all of their training provided by the Pakistani army. These groups are well armed and experienced in conducting urban terrorist campaigns. The addition of these groups has brought a degree of sophistication to the operations of the Pakistani Taliban that has allowed them to expand outside the FATA. The army's focus on the military threat from India prevents the army from acknowledging the domestic threat posed by these Punjabi groups. The army still views these militant groups as strategic assets that would operate behind the lines to disrupt India's military in the event of a conflict with Pakistan. India has countered Pakistan's preparations for such a conflict by developing a "cold start" strategy, which means that India could launch an attack in seventy-two hours, without needing extensive time to mobilize. India could, therefore, strike almost immediately if there was sufficient provocation. The terror attack on Mumbai very nearly promoted such a response. Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh exerted considerable influence to restrain the hawkish elements of the Indian government and military in the wake of the attacks in 2008. India views the Punjabi militant groups as a significant threat and, consequently, has demanded that they be dismantled as a condition for

improving relations with Pakistan. Pakistan's position in response is that it will not dismantle these groups until India begins serious talks on the future of Kashmir. Pakistan's relationship with India remains a significant factor in prolonging the difficulties that Pakistan and the region face.

Pakistan's continued support for radical militant groups in Punjab acts as an impediment to investment, which in turn retards economic development and impedes relations with its neighbors. As the army now seems to have come to recognize through the activities of the Pakistani Taliban in the Pashtun regions, militant groups present a significant threat to the internal stability of the country. But there remains a reluctance to see the Punjabi groups as a similar threat.

There is also the complicating issue of Pakistan's relationship with the Afghan Taliban. For nine years Musharraf and the government denied that the Afghan Taliban were in Pakistan. This was widely known to be false; Mullah Omar was (and remains) in the country, along with numerous other senior leaders of the Afghan Taliban. In the past year or so there has, however, been a change in this stance. The military, but not the government, has apparently acknowledged to the Americans that the Taliban leadership is living in Pakistan. The stipulation that has accompanied this recognition is that if the Americans wish to hold talks with the Afghan Taliban, it is the Pakistani military that will broker them. Pakistan, therefore, now appears to be trying to position itself as the main mediator between the Karzai government, the Americans, the British, and the Afghan Taliban, on the subject of reconciliation and the formation of a transitional coalition or government in Afghanistan.

Pakistan's attempts to influence the outcome of talks with the Afghan Taliban significantly complicate the process of negotiation for a range of reasons. The Pakistan army and the ISI have been heavily involved in the conflict in Afghanistan since the 1980s and, consequently, have alienated many of the non-Pashtun Afghan groups, particularly in northern Afghanistan. But, perhaps more important, Pakistan is seeking to exclude Indian influence from Afghanistan. This sets up a tension in negotiations that makes Pakistan's brokerage of a successful settlement between the interested parties unlikely. Perhaps Pakistan's demand to exclude India was feasible during the 1990s when there was little international interest in Afghanistan. However, the events of the past decade have fundamentally altered the picture. Afghanistan as a sovereign nation now has a foreign policy plan that includes regional partners such as India. Pakistan has an important role to play in Afghanistan's future, but until there

is recognition of Indian influence, Pakistan's involvement will likely just complicate any peace process.

Let me turn briefly to the Pakistani economic crisis, which was catalyzed by events predating the current global recession. Between 2001 and 2007, Pakistan received US\$12 billion in aid from America, and about half that sum again in aid from other countries. Under Musharraf's rule, 80 percent of that money went to the military. But while this was known to the United States, there was no attempt by the Bush administration, or by any other foreign government, to attempt to link this aid to the development of Pakistan's economy. As a result of the economic neglect under Musharraf, Pakistan has fallen into a very deep recession. The national economy has in the past two years experienced high inflation, joblessness, and an ongoing energy crisis. For example, in Lahore, where I live, there is no electricity for sixteen hours per day. Under these conditions schools have ceased to operate, as have factories and workshops. In rural areas the energy crisis is even more acute, with some regions going without power for up to twenty hours a day.

The energy crisis stems from a failure to invest in infrastructure. There has been no recent development, despite the pressing need, for gas pipelines from central Asia or Iran to address substantial gas shortages for the country's power stations. The energy crisis is part of a wider crisis of spiraling debt, whereby industries that have insufficient electricity to operate productively fail to pay their debts, which in turn reduces investment in infrastructure, which in turn continues to limit productivity. This is a situation that is very difficult to escape from, particularly as the country struggles with the ongoing insurgencies in the FATA and Balochistan and the resulting refugee problem that has further strained the country's resources.

A year ago, after the election of the civilian government led by Zardari, the West formed a group of nations called the "Friends of Pakistan" that sought to address this economic crisis. The group included America, Japan, Canada, Australia, and the EU. However, to date little money has been provided by this group, in part because of the impact of the global recession, but also in part because of tension over Pakistan's continued association with radical groups and the lack of transparency in how the funds would be handled. There is doubt about Zardari's government, which is viewed in some quarters as wasteful and corrupt.

The failure of the "Friends of Pakistan" to agree on an aid package is contributing to anti-Western sentiment in the country. Even the existing

aid program from the United States, a package of US\$1.5 billion for the next five years directed at civil and economic development, has been delayed in the U.S. Congress. This aid is conditional on the maintenance of a democratically elected government in Pakistan, which includes government control of the military. This has, of course, increased tensions between the government and the military that resulted in some of the conditions of the aid package being watered down. These difficulties have meant that much-needed money has not arrived in sufficient quantities to arrest the economic decline in Pakistan.

Another important difficulty with the provision of aid for economic development is targeting it to the areas that need it most. The United States has recognized that the FATA and northern border regions should be targeted for aid; however, the NGOs that would facilitate the distribution of aid have been driven out of these regions. Only the Pakistani military maintains a presence in the FATA. So even if the money were available, it is not clear how to distribute it to the areas where it is most needed.

It seems clear that the Obama administration genuinely wants to help Pakistan, but at the same time the United States wants to see improvements in the government's control of extremist groups and in the relationship with India. Pakistan has managed to maintain an excellent relationship with the United States despite these reservations, as the recent drone attacks conducted from Pakistani territory indicate. But in general there is a lack of clarity over the direction of U.S.-Pakistan relations, which mirrors the lack of clarity in Pakistan over its dealings with the militant groups within its borders.

Having presented this bleak picture of Pakistan's current situation, I want to conclude by pointing to some extremely hopeful signs for the future. First, over the past eighteen months, I believe greater awareness has developed among Pakistanis that extremism is a real threat to the country. There is also a growing association in the public's mind between this extremism and the economic, social, and political crises. As evidenced by the siege in Islamabad and the attacks in Mumbai, extremist groups pose such a sufficient threat that the country is now effectively being held hostage by them. If there were to be another attack like the one in Mumbai in 2008, India has clearly stated that it will attack Pakistan. Another terrorist attack by one of these militant groups then could derail any hope of peace between India and Pakistan. The perception of being held hostage

by militant groups has, for the first time in recent memory, unified the population behind both the army and the government.

Second, for the first time, we are seeing the emergence of a vocal middle class in the country. The middle class constitutes only a small proportion, perhaps as little as 5 percent, of the total population of 160 million people. However, despite its comparative smallness, this emergent middle class has contributed to the development of a stronger and more active civil society. The growing influence of this sector of the population (which includes individuals from the media, lawyers, businesspeople, NGOs, and women's groups) was exhibited by the ousting of Musharraf, which largely resulted from the resistance to his presidency led by this group. It is the first time in Pakistan's history that people from this class background have come out in the streets and successfully demanded a change in the government. Notwithstanding the success in ousting Musharraf, this group is not yet strong enough to exert real pressure on either the government or the army to change policy, but I still take its emergence as a positive development for Pakistan's future political stability.

Third, the media have become very influential and very powerful in Pakistan. The media are divided in their approach to the political landscape of the country; some elements are antigovernment and anti-Zardari, whereas other sectors are supportive of the government. There are still other elements that are proarmy and apparently working closely with the intelligence services or with religious extremist groups. However, the fact that there is an active media acting as a "fourth estate" has had an influential impact on political debate and awareness in Pakistan.

These three developments have helped to begin to counter the previous absence in Pakistan of an effective political system, with functioning political parties acting in a modern, cosmopolitan, and democratic environment. There has not been the evolution of a political system as there has been in India, where there is a history of relative stability, enabling consistent and peaceful transitions between successive civilian governments. Pakistan has a history of civilian governments being overthrown by the army, which has degraded the political process to such a degree that Pakistan has largely lacked the capable civilian leadership to govern when it was required.

So, what is required given the current situation in Pakistan? First, there must be recognition that the country will not become a Western-style democracy, at least not in the short term. The country requires a period of stability, which in turn requires a long-term partnership between

the army and civilian leadership. But that partnership needs to operate under certain restrictions and guidelines, key among which is that the army must allow the development of a new national security paradigm. Pakistan can no longer live in a permanent state of hostility with India or any other neighboring country. The new paradigm must instead be built on an expressly civilian understanding of national security that privileges nonmilitary aims such as economic development, trade, public education, and health care. The development of a new national security paradigm will require a significant shift in policy by the army. Unfortunately, this shift is not currently occurring.

India must recognize that it needs to shift its policy relating to Kashmir. For most of India's population Kashmir is an insignificant issue. However, in Pakistan it remains a major issue that dominates the country's foreign and domestic policies. If India wants to help Pakistan deal with the extremist threat, it has to open up negotiations on Kashmir and be more flexible in dealing with the other major disputes, such as that over water, which have been a source of conflict between the countries. Only if there is substantial movement on these deadlocked conflicts will there be motivation for the Pakistani military to change its approach to national security.

Last, what we need is a comprehensive program of state building in Pakistan. The educational system is in a pitiful state, with illiteracy rates of approximately 50 percent, the lowest literacy rate in the region. In sixty years, the country has never conducted a nationwide literacy campaign. Even Afghanistan has managed to conduct a literacy campaign. In 2002, despite thirty years of almost constant war, Afghanistan (with support from UNICEF) was able to put three million children back into school in one day. Pakistan has never tried anything like this. An educated population is of critical importance for the building of a stable state. This is of particular importance as the civil administration structure that Pakistan inherited from the British is now largely in a state of collapse. Without an educated population, efforts to achieve effective administration and good governance are unlikely to be successful.

QUESTION-AND-ANSWER SESSION TO PAKISTAN LECTURE

QUESTION 1: I was very interested in what you had to say about political parties and the need to create political parties. It is my understanding that a lot of political scientists believe that the era of old-style political parties is finished, that we have moved to an era of politics that is beyond

ideology where what you need is a charismatic leader and attention to presentation. Do you think that Pakistan is still capable of generating old-style political parties, or do you think that, on the contrary, what are needed are new-style political parties?

QUESTION 2: *You said that there is a civilian paradigm and a military paradigm about development. However, most of Pakistan's civilian leaders are also obsessed with Kashmir. Maybe the interests are different, but they have a view of Kashmir that is very similar to the army's view. How can that change?*

QUESTION 3: *How do we build liberal, progressive communities within Afghanistan and Pakistan?*

AHMED RASHID: The problem in South Asia has been that politics has been run by dynasties. This is true of India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and, of course, Pakistan. India is perhaps the most mature democracy in the region, but it too has not been able to avoid political dynasties. There is an Italian lady who is the de facto ruler of India, who sits on the sidelines and tells the prime minister what to do.

Pakistan has the same problem. Nawaz Sharif and Zardari are grooming their families for political power. I am not saying that that is necessarily a bad thing; however, this is the political reality we have to deal with. I think many young educated Pakistanis would like to see the growth of modern political parties. However, none of the political parties in Pakistan are internally democratic. Does the Pakistan People's Party want Zardari to be its president? This has not been tested in internal elections. All I can say is that this is the reality that we are faced with, and we have to deal with that reality. I hope there are people, including President Zardari, who will encourage young and educated people to join the party and bring them up through the ranks. But there is enormous reluctance on the part of young people to join political parties. They do not go into politics because they know the history of the army interfering in Pakistan's political system, imprisoning people or sending them into exile. There are, therefore, few incentives to create a modern political system. That is the problem we face. And it is a problem that is shared by much of South Asia, not just Pakistan.

With regard to civilian leaders being obsessed with Kashmir: you are certainly right historically. But I think now public opinion has shifted

dramatically. People are no longer—even in Punjab itself—as interested in the Kashmir issue. The proof of this shift came during the Kargil War in 1999 when the army infiltrated soldiers and militants into Kargil and tried to whip up a war fever in Pakistan and completely failed. People were not interested in going to war with India. I think this change is also true among many civilian politicians also. If you look at Pakistan's history, three generals (ruling generals, administrators) went to war with India, in 1965, 1971, and 1999. Civilians may have aided and abetted in these conflicts, but the rulers who took the decisions were military rulers. No democratic leader of Pakistan has gone to war with India. If civilian politicians still try to cozy up to the military, a lot of them are doing it because they see that their interest or political motives are best served by being close to the military or repeating the military's rhetoric. But I think public opinion has shifted dramatically from wanting war with India.

As far as a liberal society is concerned, there is a liberal center being created in the middle class, through the media, civil society, and the political parties, including the People's Party, to some extent. But that liberal center is not a power base at the moment. It is an influence, it is a voice, but it has not developed a power base. Will it? Can this liberal center produce a political party? Can the middle class produce a political party that is genuinely able to reflect middle-class views about economic development, democracy, and so forth? We are yet to see if that can happen.

QUESTION 4: One thing you have not mentioned is the opium production in Afghanistan and its distribution to Pakistan and the rest of the world. What can we expect from this crisis, and how can we deal with the drug dealers?

QUESTION 5: I want to come back to the point you were making about what sounds like the Western notion of a comprehensive approach to stabilization in Pakistan. Would you have any advice to give to the new stabilization units in the United States and the UK for how they should engage with Pakistan to help in a productive way to get this agenda off the ground?

QUESTION 6: I have two questions. One is about the Taliban establishment. Benazir Bhutto said that the planning for the Taliban establishment came from the UK and the money from Saudi Arabia, with the Pakistani government or ISI implementing this project. Is this true? The

other question is about peace with the Afghani Taliban. When the West invaded in 2001 they called the Taliban terrorists and accused them of crimes against women and against humanity. Now in 2010 the West says that it must make peace with the very same people. How can the West now just remove the Taliban from the black list?

AHMED RASHID: I didn't focus very much on drugs yesterday, but the drug phenomenon is really a result of the failure to have invested in agriculture. The West could have dealt with this problem back then if there had been effective aid to those areas in which poppies are traditionally grown, such as in southern Afghanistan. But this never happened. The Pashtun were for several years treated by American troops as all being Taliban suspects, with the consequence that southern Afghanistan was treated as a free-fire zone for American aircraft. No attempt was made to reach out to the Pashtuns who were not Taliban but who in fact celebrated the defeat of the Taliban. Since then, drugs have become one of the mainstays of the finances of these groups—al-Qaeda, the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban, and the Chechens. Drugs are very much a source of financing for the region's conflicts.

Dealing with drugs is part of the counterterrorism campaign. It has to be dealt with effectively, but it cannot be dealt with by force; it has to be dealt with by incentives being given to the farmers to grow crops that will yield benefits. There may be a need to subsidize what the farmers are growing in these critical areas so that farmers get more or less the same return that they are getting from opium.

With regard to the stabilization campaign in Pakistan, what has been critically missing from the Pakistani process is a vision for DDR (demobilize, disarm, reintegrate). There are several problems here. There is a military campaign going on in the FATA and against the Pakistani Taliban. But for those fighting against the government, there is currently no alternative to resistance; there is no effective option to surrender. During these campaigns, over the course of the past eighteen months, the army has captured four hundred suicide bombers under age eighteen. The youngest is eight years old. There is currently an effort to try to reeducate these kids, but it is not being done on a national basis. An effective DDR must not be conducted in piecemeal manner. It will not work if the DDR is conducted for Pakistani Taliban in the frontier but not for the groups in Punjab or the groups who are fighting in India. If you want to do DDR, it has to be comprehensive and long term, and you have to tell the people

in Pakistan that they have a choice: either you get killed because you are a militant and we come after you, or you come in for some kind of rehabilitation program. I think that is one of the big things that is missing, because at the moment the army does not give militants a choice. The militants in the FATA either fight and die or withdraw into Afghanistan and join the Taliban insurgency against American occupation. There is currently no choice to surrender and seek rehabilitation as a member of society. I think that is equally true for Afghanistan for attempts to reintegrate the Taliban. To be effective, the process requires the provision of jobs, education, investment in the communities, and respect for tribal elders and leaders who are leading this process. So you need a bigger package than what is presently offered. I think the West and everybody in Afghanistan understand this, but Pakistan currently does not.

There was a question about the creation of the Taliban. I made it clear in my book that the Taliban were not the creation of Pakistan, or of Afghanistan, but a transnational phenomenon. They were created in both places at the same time. The fact is that the Taliban were Afghan, but many of these Afghans were living in Pakistan and had been radicalized first of all by Pakistani religious parties. But they had also been radicalized by the terrible civil war that was going on in Afghanistan. So what you had with the Taliban was a transnational group that was influenced by horrible events that were happening in Kandahar and inside Afghanistan but was given certain pushes by Pakistani intelligence and by Pakistani religious parties for their own various reasons. So I think even today we divide the Pakistani Taliban and Afghan Taliban, but in fact the Taliban today remain a transnational movement. The Pakistani Taliban go and fight for the Afghans, and the Afghan Taliban fight for their Pakistani neighbors. So the division is still quite artificial. It still remains a transnational movement, with the added fillip now of al-Qaeda, which brings with it the idea of global jihad—that the Taliban are not only fighting for an emirate of Afghanistan or an emirate of Pakistan but at war with all Westerners. And that of course makes this transnational movement much more dangerous.

QUESTION 7: How do you see the role of Nawaz Sharif in Pakistani politics, and what is his relationship with the military?

QUESTION 8: With regard to the DDR, that sounds like the practical thing to do and for it to have sustainable effect it should not be done piecemeal, but is it possible to have a nationwide drive on this?

QUESTION 9: *A rift seems to be developing between Zardari and the judiciary. Do you think the military establishment is capitalizing on that, or is it just judicial atavism?*

QUESTION 10: *This question is about Pakistan's relationship with China. Is that relationship positive, negative, or neutral for Pakistan? And how does the relationship affect the tensions with India and Afghanistan?*

AHMED RASHID: Unfortunately, all these military campaigns that Pakistan is carrying out in the FATA lack a political vision. There is still no consensus between the civilians and the army. The civilians still want to bring FATA into the mainstream, that is, to make FATA either part of the North-West Frontier Province or make it a separate fifth province of Pakistan. I do not believe that there can be a successful military campaign against the extremists in the FATA without first of all laying out some kind of vision for the future, but there is currently none of that, unfortunately. The reluctance to do that is coming from the military. The military does not want to talk about that for the time being. I describe this in some detail in my book, and one of the reasons for it is that FATA has been very useful as a “no-man’s-land” for the military where they train Kashmiri militants and Afghan militants. The FATA also provides a region where al-Qaeda can reside, and when the world questions why they are allowed to remain, the military says, “FATA is not part of Pakistan. It is autonomous and separate, and we don’t control it.” So for thirty years it has become a convenient dumping ground for all the ills that we carry out.

As far as Sharif is concerned, his party controls Punjab Province, which, of course, is the largest and wealthiest in the country. There have been growing tensions between Zardari and Sharif. However, I think Sharif knows full well that if he supports the army in trying to oust Zardari, he will be next. The army would not necessarily support his coming into power, because don’t forget that Sharif and the army have very bitter relations because Sharif tried to sack Musharraf, an action that led to the coup in 1999 that removed Sharif from office. So the army has not fully accepted Sharif as a potential leader in the future.

Second, I think there is an awareness now for the first time—in fact, I would say it is the most positive thing that has happened—that every military coup that we have had in Pakistan has taken place because the opposition has invariably enlisted the support of the army to throw out

the government, but these alliances have not led to the opposition coming into power; they have instead led to a series of military coups. As a result, and as I say for the first time, no political party is willing to support the army in ousting Zardari. I think that is a very important and positive development. While some parties hate Zardari or the Pakistan People's Party, they realize that when they enlist the army to oust them, the army does not bring them into power; they throw everybody out and impose martial law. Sharif has seemingly realized this, as have other politicians. This is a positive harbinger for the future of Pakistan in which political parties do not enlist the support of the ISI or the army to throw out political opponents.

Also, Sharif's Muslim League, after he started off with a national party in the 1990s, has split into three factions. His faction is now confined to Punjab. His party therefore cannot be called a national party; there is very little support for that.

With regard to Zardari, as I explained, part of the reason the Friends of Pakistan group did not give money for aid was because they did not know how this money would be spent. There was very little faith that Zardari and his government would spend the money in the right way. The international community has still not been given assurances, despite some very good, solid economic managers in government, that Zardari and his cronies will not disrupt the distribution of the funds. I think that is one of the reasons money has not appeared. It is not the major reason—there are multiple reasons, including the global recession—groups have not given money, but I think it is one of the reasons.

On DDR, I think it is very feasible. But, as I said, you cannot do it piecemeal. There is growing awareness among the civilian politicians, including the PPP and Zardari, that we need some kind of DDR program. But we need backing, money, and infrastructure, and it must be civilian run. The problem is that the army would probably want to run it, and the army would be the worst people to run it, because in a DDR program you need therapists, psychoanalysts, and economists. The army does not have all these resources. You need the civilian government to run an effective DDR program. You do not want the army or the ISI running the DDR program. Perhaps you need them to vet the people who will be coming into the program, but they must not manage the program. So, one of the big problems is trying to get the civil government to get involved in this and getting the army to back off.

The relationship between China and Pakistan is a hugely important issue that I did not mention in my lecture. China has been Pakistan's

mainstay for decades. It has helped provide Pakistan's nuclear technology, it has helped it militarily against India, and it has been a bulwark of support to Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. But I think the relationship has changed quite dramatically in recent years. First of all, China has reached out to India in a major way and has dropped its support for Pakistan's position on Kashmir, taking a more neutral stance on the issue. China is currently trying to settle its border issues with India while also developing a trading relationship. There is even talk of China providing the hardware and India the software for taking over the whole technology world.

The relationship with Pakistan has altered due to a number of tensions between the countries. Perhaps, central among these is the issue of extremism. Chinese Muslims have been fighting and training with the Pakistani Taliban, the Afghan Taliban, and al-Qaeda. This has been a growing concern for China since the 1990s. I remember covering in 1994 the first six Uygur Muslims studying with the Jamaat-e-Islami Party, one of Pakistan's religious parties. The Uygurs, after receiving their training in Pakistan, then wanted to go to Afghanistan to fight with the Taliban. After publishing my article the entire Pakistani establishment came down on me, saying, "How dare you do this? It is going to jeopardize the Chinese relationship with Pakistan." I replied, "Why the hell are you allowing these Uygurs to come and train and fight in Pakistan?"

Since 9/11 there have been Uygurs detained in Guantánamo—some of them innocent, some of them perhaps not so innocent—but I do not believe that the movement in Xinjiang Province is actually a fundamentalist Islamist movement led by al-Qaeda. My understanding is that it is still very much a nationalist movement. The Uygur resistance is based on a tradition of anti-Chinese nationalism, much like the resistance in Tibet. But the Chinese have been very heavy-handed in the way they have treated their Muslim minorities. It is very reminiscent of Stalin and the way Stalin treated the Muslim minorities back in the 1930s. This has riled the Uygurs and the Pakistani groups that want to support the Chinese Muslim minority. While the Pakistani military is not supporting these Chinese militants being trained in Pakistan, it is having a very difficult time keeping them out of Pakistan, because Pakistan has become the gateway for militant access to madrassas and the Muslim resistance in the region. Nationalist Uygurs therefore are using Pakistan as a base to support the struggle in Xinjiang. This is a key source of tension between Pakistan and China.

This American administration has tried very hard to get China to play a more direct and up-front role with Pakistan. In particular, the United

States has tried to convince China to exert influence on Pakistan not to support the Taliban. Richard Holbrooke has been to Beijing several times to try to convince the Chinese to assist in this project. China has, to date, been very reluctant to become politically involved in these problems. But that may change if the Chinese see a real threat, a transnational threat, coming from within Pakistan. So there is no question that China is a major player in the region.

Finally, with regard to the Pakistani judiciary and the military, the military does not have the support of the political opposition to topple the government. But the military does have the support of some judges who do not like Zardari because he kept them out of office for a long time even after he came to power. And the judiciary is certainly pushing the issue of investigations into political corruption cases from the 1990s. Most important, there is an issue now about the fact that in the constitution there are several clauses about how the president has to be a good Muslim and a clean man, raising the possibility that the judiciary could remove Zardari as president on the basis of these clauses. The judiciary claim is that he is not a clean man; he has been shown to be corrupt. The PPP is seemingly convinced that the army and the ISI are fueling the judiciary in pursuing this issue. How true that is, I really do not know, but certainly that is the perception within the governing party. So naturally, that has increased tension between the military and the government.

QUESTION 11: You mentioned all kinds of divisions in Pakistan between civilians and the military and between the various provinces. However, you did not mention the urban-rural division. Is it important for your argument? Is it relevant for the party system? And, above all, is it relevant to the crisis in the political economy?

QUESTION 12: I was very intrigued by the way you were creating two parallel political centers. You kept saying the army and the civilians or the government. Throughout, this has been one of the key problems—we treat the army as an alternative, a political power worthy of making decisions. If we need to have a solution, it needs to come from the civilians, who need to create a political solution. And this applies to the West also. During Musharraf's time the West dealt directly with the army as if it had the political power.

The other thing, in these political discourses it is very convenient to stereotype politicians as "corrupt." I think it is very important to also go

into the complexities of political life and the political struggles in Pakistan. So Pakistan needs to confront the West about dealing with these two issues, but are we getting the space to do that?

QUESTION 13: *I have a question concerning Pakistan's nuclear capability. One of America's concerns, certainly after 9/11, was the ability of the radicals—al-Qaeda and the Taliban—to secure nuclear capability. What do you think about the security of that capability in Pakistan?*

QUESTION 14: *Assume a scenario that after 9/11 the Americans would have decided to withdraw completely from Asia, so no intervention in Afghanistan, no intervention in Iraq. Would you make a guess at what would be the present state of affairs in Afghanistan and Pakistan in that case? What would the region look like if America has completely withdrawn from global politics as a reaction to 9/11?*

AHMED RASHID: The rural-urban divide is absolutely critical. There has been a huge influx from rural areas into the cities. Pakistan now has a much more urbanized population, and that is a result of the failure to invest in agriculture. There has been insufficient investment in water, in new seeds, in agriculture in general. Second, we have not carried out land reform. In sixty years there has not been an effective land reform. Land management is extremely corrupt and still largely rooted in the nineteenth century under the system that the British left. These problems have led to a huge migration into the cities that are totally incapable of coping with this influx. They do not have the water, the infrastructure, or the roads to deal with this population shift. Karachi now has a population of eighteen to nineteen million, Lahore twelve to thirteen million: these are megacities, which are still growing but are cities where there are no jobs and no infrastructure. This tension is a source of recruitment into drugs and into militancy. The key to solving this problem is investment in agriculture with the aim of keeping people on the land.

On the issue of treating the military as a political entity and the problem of corruption: resolving the roles of the government and the military is absolutely critical for Pakistan. For example, I do not like the way that at the moment the military has continued to usurp the foreign policy between India and Pakistan. Civilian institutions, like the Foreign Ministry, have become appendages of the military and intelligence services, rather than being reflections of civilian perspectives on foreign policy. To

be frank, civilians today cannot make foreign policy on India or Afghanistan; it is the army that is forming policy on those issues. This state of affairs of course presents a problem for America and the West that see that, if they have to discuss Afghanistan, there is no point in dealing with the president or the prime minister, so they might as well go directly to the chief of the army. However, to do this would be a huge mistake; it would just be a repetition of the past, and it would allow the army to continue to control the politics of the country and reaffirm that the civilians are useless and that there is no point in even consulting them.

I think on the corruption issue there is unfortunately a reputation that persists from two PPP governments. But I think that the primary thing today, for all Pakistanis, is to sustain the present civilian government until the next election. The primary issue is not to figure out if Zardari is a good or a bad Muslim, or if he was involved in corruption fifteen years ago; it is that we need a sustaining democracy so that for the first time we can have power transferred through an electoral process rather than a military coup.

I think the other very important thing, which I mentioned earlier, is that the present alliance that the PPP created between all these ethnic groups and parties is at risk of collapse. In Karachi ten people are being killed every day because of conflict between political groups; the PPP and the Muslim League are at loggerheads. If this alliance was to unravel, especially at this stage when Pakistan has this threat of terrorism alongside a severe economic crisis, it would be extremely dangerous for Pakistan.

With regard to nuclear security: the army controls the nuclear weapons systems; the civilians do not. So as long as the army holds together, these nuclear weapons are safe. Looking into the future, will the kind of rifts and extremism that we see emerging in the civilian part of Pakistan also emerge in the army? There have been a lot of instances where these suicide attacks, especially against military targets, have actually taken place because they have been inside jobs by soldiers inside these establishments who have guided the terrorists in. This is clearly a very dangerous phenomenon, and the army is aware of it and is dealing with it by trying to root out extremists within its own ranks. God forbid, if this increases and we get greater instability within the army, then of course the nuclear weapons are under threat. But I think that for the time being, this is a very small minority within the army that can be rooted out and dealt with. As long as that happens, I do not see a threat to Pakistan's nuclear facilities as such.

On the actions of the United States after 9/11: with three thousand Americans killed, the United States could not have done nothing. It was unfortunately a given that the United States would take revenge and invade Afghanistan. What I question is what it did after moving into Afghanistan.

However, I think that if America had withdrawn, we would have seen a much faster expansion and radicalization of al-Qaeda and the Taliban. The Taliban were not going to be overthrown by local Afghan opposition groups, the Northern Alliance in particular. For the Taliban to be overthrown, there had to be much greater external support. I think that if the war had not happened, al-Qaeda would have solidified its bases in Afghanistan and in Pakistan and gone on to carry out very serious attacks. We know that they were looking into nuclear and biological warfare. They, therefore, would probably have expanded their worldwide operations much faster than they have.

The issue of sanctuary and bases is terribly important for extremists. These extremists have prospered in this region because they had sanctuaries and bases, first in Afghanistan and then in Pakistan. Until the countries in this region deal with these issues, we are not going to be rid of these problems. So, I think if the Americans had retreated into their shell, I think we would have had a much stronger Taliban regime in Afghanistan, interfering in the Middle East, in Iran, in Pakistan. This expansion of the Taliban would have happened much sooner and would be a rapidly developing phenomenon.