ORF OCCASIONAL PAPER #21
JUNE 2011

Nationalism in Pakistan: Dimensions of Failure

Ashok Kumar Singh

OBSERVER RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Nationalism in Pakistan: Dimensions of Failure

Ashok Kumar Singh

OBSERVER RESEARCH FOUNDATION
NEW DELHI

About the Author

Ashok Kumar Singh is Programme Co-ordinator at the Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi. A graduate from St. Stephen's College, Delhi, Singh did his LLB from the Faculty of Law, Delhi University. He has been a software developer, multimedia programmer and has developed country and regional data bases.

Nationalism in Pakistan: Dimensions of Failure

Pakistan has for long been grappling with several fundamental problems without any visible signs of overcoming them. Its economic, social and political indicators are amongst the lowest in the world. In its conflicts with India, which it perceives as its sworn enemy, all its tactics have proven to be of insignificant success, as has its intrusive attempts to control Kabul so as to gain strategic depth in Afghanistan. The successive governments' much vaunted Islamisation agenda seems to have back-fired. All nations have their ups and downs, but Pakistan seems to have entered into a never-ending downward spiral. As things stand, it would be difficult to deny that today, Pakistan is a fragmented nation at war with itself, with little or no hope of rising out of the quagmire, at least in the foreseeable future.

India can ill afford to ignore—or find shallow pleasure in, as some do—the plight of her next–door neighbour. Any event or occurrence of consequence that happens in that ever–troubled country has had and will continue to have its fallout on the rest of the subcontinent, majorly India. Throughout its history, disorder and political vacuum in this extreme north western region have proved to be an open invitation to the adversarial forces to cross the Khyber Pass, run across the larger South Asian region to kill, plunder and loot. Today, Pakistan itself is generating many of the forces of disorder that are keeping that country and the region in a state of instability. The point is, whatever damage Pakistan is causing to itself, the problem inevitably overflows into India and, eventually, the rest of the world.

Pakistan has mostly been studied as a Nation State with various studies looking at some of the institutions and groups that comprise Pakistan. This is quite natural in an international system which is, by default, a pro-state system.

However, the more recent studies that deal with its current predicament have shifted the discourse to a 'failed state' matrix, putting the blame for Pakistan's current problems on the failure of democratic institutions, the dominating role of its army in politics and the rise of religious radicalism. Accordingly, the solutions that are being mooted are cause specific: reform and strengthen the army so that it can deal with the terrorists; strengthen the democratic structures so that they are able to keep the army in leash and, speedily spread modern education so that it minimises the sectarian effect of the all too pervasive madrassahs (religious schools).

The thesis of this paper will revolve around the fact that, though Pakistan was created with a vision of becoming a modern nation state, to date, it has failed to achieve that status—both in its own eyes and in the eyes of the world. The core reason for this failure was the inability of the leaders of the new country to chart an identity, or rather their distorted sense of identity that sent them on a desperate search and manoeuvrings for various alternative identities that had no credence in a modern world. It is this that has brought about Pakistan's current predicament wherein the socio-economic and political development, the imperatives of any nation, have been sacrificed in the scramble to create a 'strong' nation—which itself was never realised.

Pakistan could well have aimed at becoming a modern Muslim nation or even just an 'Islamic' nation; either way, it would probably have emerged as a stable state. Unfortunately, it chose to try a bit of both–without even preparing a blueprint to see what such a nation would really be on the

ground, or whether it would be viable and functional. Pakistan has to resolve this clash between retrogressive traditionalism and the modern way of life before it can find the path to stability and progress.

Historical developments in Pakistan have resulted in the normal political processes of the state being set aside to be replaced by a range of sub-state actors (or groups), such as the army, ethnic-provincial parties and the various religious, sectarian and Jihadi groups—all of whom alternating between negotiating or fighting amongst themselves. Of course, sub-national groups and identities exist in all countries, but in a state where a positive, secular national ideal is missing, it leads to a situation where the lower identities begin to clash for control. Given the tepid nationalistic sentiments in Pakistan, perceived religious commonality was sought to be made the unifying factor. This led various sectarian groups with their own interpretations of the written word in the holy book to fight amongst themselves to take control of the right to interpret and define the religious tenets.

This paper will seek to understand some of the factors that have contributed to the gradual distortion of the idea of 'National' identity and its degeneration into 'Religious' , 'Sectarian' and 'Jihadi' identities. We will also look at how this unravelling of national identity ran parallel with the marginalisation of the state polity. These two trends have led to the emergence of Pakistan as a "non-nation non-state". The imperative now is to understand and come to grips with these structural weaknesses so as to enable the people to re-invent the Pakistan its founding fathers (read Jinnah) envisioned.

Nation, Nationalism and the State in Pakistan

Expounding on the reason for the creating Pakistan, its founding father Mohammad Ali Jinnah said: *"...it was not merely a government which came*

into existence; it meant the birth of a great State and a great Nation[1]*."* Unfortunately, no part of this vision of hope has been realised.

Nationalism can be thought of as being a positive identity, a common association of the people focussed on the nation. In other words, it is the shared pride of being members of that particular nation.

The basic and modern ideas of Nationhood and of Nationalism rose in Europe when it moved from Feudalism-Imperialism towards sovereign ethno-linguistic states. In time, this movement came to coincide with the emergence of a strong middle class and political thinkers developed the idea of democratic and secular governance of a state.

While Nationalism, per se, must conform to the broader constructs, in the post-colonial context (specifically the South Asian Muslim context), nationalism will exhibit certain peculiarities of its own. This tension could have been seen as extending the definitional boundaries (of nationalism) or it could be seen as a dichotomy between the ideas of Western and Islamic Nationalism. However, as we proceed, it is important to remember that, at the time when the movement for the creation of Pakistan Movement had started, there were few extant models of Muslim nationhood to be used as a template. Therefore, at the very time that Indian Muslims began to conceive the idea of an existence as a separate community free of British rule, they had also to navigate their way through the clashing ideas of 'Indianness' and 'Secular' nationalism on the one hand and, on the other, the notions of Islamic nation and Muslim state.

At the same time, it was clear that while a section of Indian Muslims thought of themselves as constituting a nascent 'Pakistani' nation, this vision was neither shared by all Indian Muslims nor was it shared by all the people who eventually became citizens of Pakistan.

Pre-independence situation

Under the Raj, India was made up of 'British' India and the Princely States. British India comprised 17 provinces: Ajmer-Merwara-Kekri, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Assam, Baluchistan, Bengal Province, Bihar, Bombay Province, Central Provinces and Berar, Coorg, Delhi Province, Madras Province, North-West Frontier Province, Panth-Piploda, Orissa, Punjab, Sindh, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. Of these, Sindh, Balochistan and NWFP were Muslim majority provinces. Muslims were also distributed widely in the other provinces—the most substantial concentrations being in Bengal, Punjab and the United Provinces.

It was amongst the Muslims living in British India—primarily the United Provinces and Bengal—that the idea of Pakistan had found its most avid supporters. This was primarily because this group of Muslims shared the political space with the larger non-Muslim population. The people in the majority Muslim provinces that eventually became Pakistan dominated the political space. This gave them enough confidence about their future to stay content with gaining varying degrees of autonomy.

Religion as identity

In its attempt to bring almost all of British India's Muslims under one umbrella, the Muslim League under Jinnah put forward a rather amorphous vision of a 'Muslim' state. A wide range of conflicting demands from differently circumstanced Muslims living in various parts of British India were sought to be woven into one single uniform pattern and this was possible only through the unifying force of Islam. *"Yet Jinnah's resort to religion was not an ideology to which he was ever committed or even a device to use against rival communities; it was simply a way of giving a semblance of unity and solidity to his divided Muslim constituents*[2]*."*

A large segment of Muslims strongly contested the Muslim League's claim to represent the entire community and, more importantly, its advocacy of a separate homeland for Muslims. They rallied under the Maulana Madudi faction of the League with the aim of uniting the Muslims under a re-invigorated Muslim identity so as to be able to more strongly negotiate their place in the new polity.

Paradoxically, Jinnah's resort to religion (whatever its cause) mirrored Maududi's methodology. Modernity and Tradition were now using the same rallying cry ('Muslims in danger') and were appealing to the same constituency, though their objectives were completely different. This tension between modern objectives and traditional means was to have a far reaching effect on the history of nascent Pakistan.

At the same time, the very fact of competing for the same constituency meant that both groups tended to aggravate the danger to the community. The 'Others' (the Hindus) began to appear increasingly more threatening. This perceived threat has been, over the years, playing such a powerful role in Pakistan's polity that its very identity has come to be constructed predominantly in opposition to (Hindu) India.

The 'Hindu India vs Muslim Pakistan' formulation conceals many a nuance within the Pakistan movement and the evolution of that movement into quasi nationalism–or, as has been argued, into an 'ideological' nationalism as against a sociologically spontaneous nationalism.

More importantly, once the 'Self' is defined in such terms, a perennially adversarial relationship with the 'Other'–whoever that might be–is the logical consequence.

Alternative Identities

The people who entered the new state did not do so as Pakistanis aspiring to be citizens of a modern country but rather as Muslims looking for a homeland. They had their ethno-linguistic identities long before even the thought of Pakistan had come to mind. In a context where modern economy was marginal, it was natural for social aggregation to continue to be based on traditional means. Thus, the traditional ethno-linguistic identities continued to be more immediate and relevant to the individual than any 'national' identity.

The leaders of India's freedom struggle and the Pakistan movement had not kept in mind the fact that a society in a post-colonial, traditional and under-developed nation state would necessarily evolve differently from the European model. Given the basic multi-ethnic structures, there was a need to actively nurture a positive National identity—especially since it could not be taken for granted that such an identity would emerge from a shared religious identity. The failure of secularism and federalism in Pakistan polity was the direct consequence of this oversight and precluded the emergence of a positive, consensual 'Pakistani' nationhood.

It is widely acknowledged that Jinnah, though a 'Muslim' leader, was essentially a secularist–modernist and the vision that he outlined for Pakistan must surely be one of the most refined enunciations of the secular spirit ever...

> *"You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place or worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the State. ... We are starting in the days where there is no discrimination, no distinction between one community and*

> *another, no discrimination between one caste or creed and another. We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State*[3]*."*

If, indeed, Pakistan had adopted and implemented this credo in its true spirit, it might have been one of the most progressive (and perhaps developed) nations in the world today. Why then, did the people of Pakistan move in a completely opposite direction? Was it that they did not believe in Jinnah? On the contrary, Pakistan became what it has come to be precisely because a large number of people believed Jinnah...but they believed in him not as the man who advocated secular modernism, but as the leader who, long before, had propounded the two-nation theory.

Nation

Of the various definitions of the word 'nation' two suit the purpose of this study. Ben Anderson thought of a Nation in somewhat neutral terms, calling it *"an imagined community"*[4]. The implication here was that a 'nation' was not necessarily predicated upon socio-economic or cultural factors and could simply be *"imagined into existence"*[5].

Going by this thought, we can see that the Pakistan Movement represents a gradual process of 'imagining' the nation into existence. Elements in the sub-continent's Muslim population (who formed the Muslim League) began to visualise their community living separately from the majority Hindus who, they feared, would marginalise them after the British left.

This process of 'imagining', however, failed to grow out of the initial negative phase of *'Othering'* the Hindus, thereby never entering the subsequent phase of defining the Muslim (or Pakistani) 'Self' in positive terms.

Much earlier, Stalin had been credited with postulating that: *"A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture"*[6].

When we look at Pakistan's current predicament through the lens of its history, it becomes apparent that the country, as it emerged into independent existence, was lacking in all of the prerequisites listed in Stalin's definition of a nation.

It is not our case that, in the absence of these prerequisites, Pakistan's nationhood was unviable. Our contention is simply that in their absence, the movement for nationhood veered or resorted to religion as the unifying factor. That this was not the only course available had already been demonstrated much earlier by Turkey where the Kemalist elite 'imagined' Turkey as a modern, secular state. The vast and the far reaching effect of the opportunity Pakistan missed becomes all too visible when looked at from a retrospective point of view.

In 1947, with the British giving up the sovereignty over India, twelve of British India's seventeen provinces became provinces within India, and three (Baluchistan, North-West Frontier, and Sindh) within Pakistan. Two provinces, Bengal and Punjab) were bifurcated between India and Pakistan. Around the same time many of the princely states also joined either of the two nations. The most disputed of these 'accessions' were those of Junagadh and Kashmir. Independent Pakistan was thus made up of Punjab, NWFP, Balochistan, Sindh and East Bengal (East Pakistan). Soon after, the Northern Areas and 'Azad' Kashmir also came under the influence of the new nation. All these areas had predominantly Muslim populations.

Kashmir

Right from the very beginning, Kashmir has been the core issue of contention and conflict between India and Pakistan and has played a major role in the latter's subsequent development. The Pakistani elite felt that, being a Muslim majority state, Jammu and Kashmir could not be allowed to accede to India and mobilised tribal lashkars with active participation from the Pakistan Army to invade the state.

Though essentially a territorial dispute at best, Pakistan put its entire effort to take over J&K, labelling it as a 'jihad'. This religio-ideological colouring given to this dispute was aimed at confirming Pakistan's existential hostility towards India. This confrontation in 1948 also marked the beginning of the Pakistan Army's involvement with religion and its use of proxies.

Of the two provinces that were partitioned, Punjab and Bengal, West Punjab was more agriculturally developed and the province's northern districts were the main recruiting ground for the Pakistan Army. The southern side had a predominance of Shia landlords and Sunni peasantry. The eastern wing of Pakistan (East Bengal) took great pride in its language (Bengali) and culture, which was totally different from the cultures that prevailed in West Pakistan.

The bulk of the roughly six million Muslims who migrated to the new country during the Partition were Muslims from East Punjab and were easily absorbed into the West Punjabi milieu.

Another one million migrated to Pakistan from areas deep within India–UP, Bombay, Hyderabad etc. Many of these migrants belonged

either to the intellectual or commercial classes and, by and large, spoke some variant of Urdu. A large segment of this population was educated and was absorbed into the state services, while the others got engaged in trade related activities. They thus became part of the educated, urbanised constituency.

Inter-province differences.

Behind these numbers, however, lay the nature and circumstance of the Muslim populations and it was these circumstances that were to condition the varying responses to Independence and to Pakistani Nationalism.

The Muslim majority provinces, Baluchistan, NWFP and Sindh, were situated at the periphery of the British Empire and the penetration of British influence had been restricted. The socio-economic and political structures, therefore, remained traditional. Culturally too, there were significant differences (particularly ethno-linguistic) among the provinces. Additionally, the Pathans and Balochis spread across international borders and spilled over into Afghanistan and Iran, respectively.

Inequitable distribution of economic resources

Ethnic differences were not the only reason that divided the people. At a more fundamental level, there was the hugely inequitable distribution of economic resources.

In 1947, Jinnah had held out the following promise to Balochistan, *"...it is Pakistan alone that can help them in their educational, social, economic and political uplift...I can assure the people of Baluchistan that in Pakistan all classes*

and interests will get even justice and fair play..."[7] A similar vision had been held out to all the smaller provinces.

The ground reality was very different indeed: no attempts were made to re-distribute assets and no largescale developmental activities were undertaken in any of these provinces.

The extent of how uneven economic distribution in Pakistan was can be gauged from the following table drawn up by Hafeez Malik...

Approximate Percentage of Industrial Assets by Community, 1959[8]

Community	Pvt. Muslim Firms only	All Firms	Share of Population
Minor Muslim communities	74.5	50.5	0.5
Pathans, Bengalis and other Muslims	25.5	16.5	87.5
Bengali Hindu	-	8.5	10.0
British		7.5	
Private Non-Muslims		5.0	2.0
Public enterprises		12.0	

The table clearly shows that industrial assets were owned by small groups of people of certain communities. A spatial overview of the data also reveals that there was an extreme imbalance in the economic distribution among the provinces, with commercial and industrial activity being limited to a very few centres in Sindh and Punjab.

This uneven distribution was not limited to the commercial-industrial domain. In the agricultural sector, which was the mainstay of the nation's economy, the bulk of the farmlands were owned by a handful of feudal landlords, such as the Wadheras of Sindh and the Shias of Southern Punjab.

Provincialism

Given such economic and cultural differences, it was but natural that the peoples of the various provinces would react differently to the hard facts of life in a new country, resulting in conflict of interests. In the initial phase, these tensions manifested themselves mainly in the form of regional and provincial demands particularly when the people in the provinces felt they were being forced to give way to the immigrants (or Mujahids, as they were called).

Early on, Jinnah had seen this problem coming and had warned: *"I want the Muslims to get rid of the disease of provincialism. A nation can never make progress unless it marches in one formation."*[9]

In actual fact, it was not a case of provincialism challenging nationalism; provincialism and the concomitant cultural differences had been in existence for a long time and these differences had been given an impetus by the grievances thrown up by the changes that Partition brought with it. It was nationalism that was the outsider.

State Response

Thus confronted with the challenges to the very idea of a unified new nation, the Pakistani elite responded by deciding to propagate religion as the 'national identity' to keep the nation united. *"...They defined Pakistani national identity through religious symbolism... ...Islam, hostility to India, and the Urdu language were identified as the cornerstones of this new national ideology. Emphasis on Islamic unity was seen as a barrier against the potential tide of ethnic nationalism, which could undermine Pakistan's integrity."*[10]

The imposition of Urdu as the national language was deeply resented by one and all in East Pakistan, where Bengali was and had always been the language of the land, its people and had historically shaped its culture. The Bengalis reacted to the imposition with widespread riots.

Amongst the West Pakistanis in general and the Punjabi-Pashtun elite in particular, there was a deep seated contempt for the 'Bengalis' which manifested itself in myriads of ways. When Gen. Ayub Khan resigned in 1969, for example, he chose to go against his own Constitution, as it would have meant handing over power to a Bengali, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Justice Abdul Jabbar Khan. He chose Gen. Yahya Khan instead. As economic and political grievances peaked in East Pakistan, the Awami League came to the forefront of the Bengali struggle, which led to the call for autonomy and, finally, the demand for Independence.

The Pakistani State/Army responded by cynically manipulating the political processes in its Eastern wing by shoring up the Islamist parties (opposed to the Awami League). Part of this effort also involved the creation of non-Bengali paramilitary forces. Since this exercise was mediated through the Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing, the Islami Jamiat-i-Talaba, these paramilitary units tended to be fanatical and ended up becoming Pakistan Army's proxy death squads. “The experience of language riots by Bengalis in East Pakistan had pointed out the difficulty of subsuming ethnic identities into a new Pakistani identity. Religion was an easier tool of mobilisation.”[11]

It is here that we see the firming up of Pakistan Army's strategy of deploying proxy actors for tasks for which it did not want to take responsibility. For the religious groups, it opened up a host of interesting possibilities.

Punjabisation of Pakistan

Pakistan's Census provides the following basic data about the provinces. The most striking fact is the huge population of Punjabis as compared to the populations in the other provinces.

Pakistan provinces[12]

Province / Region	Area (SQ KM)	Population 1951	1998
PAKISTAN	796096	33,740,167	132,352,279
N.W.F.P.	74521	4,556,545	17,743,645
FATA	27220	1,332,005	3,176,331
PUNJAB	205345	20,540,762	73,621,290
SINDH	140914	6,047,748	30,439,893
BALOCHISTAN	347190	1,167,167	6,565,885
ISLAMABAD	906	95,940	805,235

The predominance of Punjabis in both the civilian and the military realm allowed them to swiftly appropriate the 'nationhood agenda', so much so that it was derogatively called the 'Punjabisation' of Pakistan. This process must not be seen as being 'bad' in itself, since it was the natural outcome of a situation where the Punjabis, extroverts by nature, dominated the rest in sheer numbers.

The problem started when other provinces—each with a distinct culture—began to be marginalised from the socio-economic and political mainstream of the country. In all fields Punjab began benefitting at the expense of the other provinces. Effectively, the Punjabis were now doing to the rest of the Pakistani population what some Muslims had feared the Hindus would do to them in an undivided India.

Thus, the unfolding of events and the State's response to them gradually led to the consolidation of certain trends that were to intensify with time. Firstly, the Army emerged as the primary actor in Pakistan's polity and as the custodian of the undefined "National Interest". Secondly, expressions of sub-national identity came to be viewed with profound suspicion by the governing elite. Thirdly, due to their numerical preponderance, Punjabis tended to appropriate state benefits at the cost of the other provinces. This naturally aggravated the already strong resentment amongst the other ethnicities, giving a boost to the ethnic mobilisation process.

The net effect was that divisive forces of sub-national actors and identities gained strength, undermining the nation's integrity.

The Army

Since the British Colonial Army recruited heavily from NWFP and West Punjab populace, under the notion that they were the 'martial race', on Partition, a large chunk of the region's soldiers, being Muslims, opted to join the Pakistan Army.

Pakistan was thus, from the very beginning, burdened by an inordinately large Army comprising mainly of soldiers from a narrow geographical territory of the new country. Further, the Army as a disciplined, organised institution was in total contrast to the endemically corrupt and inefficient polity. It therefore had to perforce arrogate to itself the political role of deciding and doing what it perceived as best for Pakistan.

Religious/Sectarian Groups

Though the religious parties had initially opposed the creation of Pakistan, once the new state came into existence, they quickly re-aligned themselves.

Given the fact that Pakistan had been created on a religious basis, these parties began positioning themselves as the interpreters of Islam. Initially, their efforts did not result in much success. especially in elections. But, as the years past, a number of factors combined to boost their strength. Thus, from the very beginning, there were a number of challenges to nurturing and bolstering the nascent nationhood of Pakistan and the manner in which the powers that ruled the country went about trying to confront these challenges only exacerbated the problem. Thus the question: *"Pakistan...has a state, but does it have a nation"?*[13]

The problem went deeper, given the fact that the various ethnic and provincial constituents were working to give space to their own individual identities and interests that were at cross purposes with the interests of Pakistan as a whole. Quite predictably, these tensions soon entered a conflictual mode and began to wear away the very structures and institutions that made Pakistan a State.

What is relevant here is that this conflict of interests laid the basis for the emergence of several semi-autonomous groups which soon started to compete with each other in their bid to gain power over the State itself.

State

The term 'State' here refers to the politically legitimised management enterprise of a defined territory. A state will generally represent what Max Weber famously termed *"a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory".*

At the broadest level, a State is the manifest entity that represents the 'supra' identity, which transcends the lower levels of identity. A failed

state or, more pertinently, a 'Non-state' will obviously represent the converse of what a State represents.

From countless examples of modern nation states, we can extrapolate that in the normal course, the state internally attempts to maximise the constituency co-opted for the national enterprise, its focus being on development with emphasis on enhancing eco-social equitability. The State structures would aim at moving away from arbitrariness towards codified, predictable forms of justice. Externally, the state would normally be cautious but co-operative—working towards stability in the regional systems.

The Pakistan State trajectory

The evolution and development of Pakistan has been contradictory to our understanding of how a normal State should develop. Since its inception, it has meandered through several Constitutions—shifting from a Parliamentary Democracy to a Presidential system and then back to Parliamentary Democracy, punctuated with long periods of military rule. The Judiciary too has been systematically subverted and intimidated. A large part of the State's revenue and even economic activity has been diverted into 'Defence' expenditure, much of the rest being siphoned off by corrupt politicians and bureaucrats. The normal state activities of Development, Infrastructure and Education have virtually been starved out of existence.

The main reason has been that, once the Pakistan state came into being and pre-existing stresses came to the fore, a range of contests emerged that were variously *with* and *for* Pakistani Nationalism. These contests and the challenges for Pakistan today arise from two sources. In the initial phases,

the tussle was essentially an ethnic–regional demand for provincial autonomy, but in the more recent phase, the new element, sectarianism, has come to the fore as a part of the Islamic resurgence in which the sectarian groups are contesting among themselves for the right to define what constitutes an Islamic nation. *"Pakistan as an idea was successful enough to command respect from many, but not all, of India's Muslims; as a blueprint for a state, it was to founder on the rocks of these different interests."*[14]

At another level, these two developments form part of a larger process of elite re-constitution within the contested Pakistani nation. The existing elite (the Army, Bureaucracy and Feudal landholders) began to see a useful role for Islamic identity. Much of this is the fallout of the degeneration of the Pakistan Army from a secular-modernist institution to a cynical, radicalised organisation.

Post-1971, Bhutto *"cleverly managed to use the failure of pan-Pakistani nationalism to create a new state ideology in which the Islamic public would play a prominent part....Pakistan's civil law was largely adapted to the Islamic discourse...[and]... by Islamisizing the 'colonial' sector's social code, tried to prevent the 'traditional' urban sectors from breaking away from the control of the state."*[15] Bhutto's policy thus targeted the urban nationalists by under scoring the socialist component of Pakistan's national culture and simultaneously addressing the traditional sector through a predominantly Islamic discourse. *"This strategy preserved the dual structure of the political public with its 'European' and 'Islamic' discourse."*[16]

Later, in 1983, came the upheaval in Southern Sindh and Balochistan under the banner of the eight-party Movement for the Restoration of Democracy. These protests were crushed by the Gen. Zia-ul Haq's military regime, which justified the use of force by maintaining that *"as*

long as the head of state followed the injunctions of Allah and his Prophet, obedience became mandatory for his subjects... those who opposed or demonstrated against his government could be accused of waging war against an Islamic government and therefore indulging in anti-Islamic activities."[17]

Mohajir identity

As we have seen, the Mohajirs (migrants) were generally more educated, commercially active and urbanised and, therefore, upon migration most of them headed for the towns and cities, mainly Karachi. The Mohajirs thus came to constitute a fifth of the Sindh population and 57 percent of Karachi's population. The native Sindhis began to feel marginalised in their own province, particularly in the cities.

As it happened, due to their educational advantage, their earlier vocations and their more intense participation in the struggle against colonialism, the Muslims from minority provinces in India ended up providing the bulk of the Muslim League leadership and also the senior military and civil officers in Pakistan. Naturally this caused serious resentment amongst the native populations.

Adding to the native people's resentment was the fact that Urdu, which happened to be the language the Mohajirs spoke, was made the national language, giving them an advantage in the job market.

But it was not to stay a one way street for long. With Z. A. Bhutto giving concessions to the natives of Sindh, the Mohajir community began to develop its own narrative of victimisation.

Recourse to Religion

Given this diversity of ethnicities and interests, the Pakistani state repeatedly chose religion rather than secular politics as the bonding force for the nation. This choice was not because religion was the easier option, but more because the ruling class, whose foremost aim was to preserve their status and position, had an inborn distrust for democracy and secularism. Provincial/Ethnic Diversity was the challenge and Religion and Sectarianism were the response.

The Pakistan Movement had been predicated on the "two-nation" theory which cast Muslims as a single nation distinct from the rest of India. So, quite logically, Pakistan based its post-independence national ideology on the same premise: but then, it went on to interpret sub-national identity as being a fundamental challenge to the Pakistani nationhood. The *"creation of Pakistan in 1947 saddled the new entity with an ideology of Muslim nationhood which could not plausibly be squared with the territorial contours of its truncated statehood."*[18]

Religious identity, therefore, was repeatedly adopted as a convenient means of political expression and mobilisation. It is natural then, that distortions in the political process would be reflected in distortions of religious/sectarian identity.

But within this exploitation of religion were concealed the seeds of Islamisation of the Pakistani state and of sectarian strife.

The consolidation of sub-national identities and groups

In the absence of a strong nationhood, an inclusive polity and an expanding economy, groups that might otherwise have subsumed themselves into the

larger collective doggedly stuck to their untenable identities and entered into a convoluted series of manipulations and competition for resources, which well nigh put an end to Pakistan's chances of emerging as a strong modern state.

Terms used to label groups of people are usually very broad and rarely make clear distinctions. The label 'Pashtun' is a case in point. It captures certain linguistic and ethnic features, but occludes the very vital distinction between the Ghilzais and Ahmedzais. There was a similar problem with the term 'Muslim' in the Pakistani context, because 'Muslim' identity carried a lower premium in a country that was predominantly Muslim any way; what came to the fore were the lower level identities i.e., the sectarian identities.

Sectarian identity formation

In the narrative of various sects that have existed within the Muslim society from the very early stages, the salient example is the unstoppable Shia-Sunni conflicts. These have, however, till recently remained mainly at the theological level with violence erupting sporadically in response to local 'offences', such as those that occur during the Muharram procession. The trend (as seen in Pakistan) of organised militias targeting adherents of the opposing sect for no other reason than their beliefs is a relatively new phenomenon. A number of factors have contributed to this development.

The Army's effort to monopolise power

At the root of this problem is the predominance of the army over civilian governance, leading to the marginalisation of the nation's polity. Recognising that this is in direct opposition to democratic rule, the

military has found it necessary to diminish its opponents and legitimise its own position on the pretext that the nation needs a strong Army, particularly in the context of the larger, conflict-ridden Cold War background. The Pakistani elite found that sectarianism provided the solution to many of these problems. Thus, *'...while colonialism's legacy to Pakistan was the vice-regal tradition of an over-developed and authoritarian state, this legacy gained new life from the Cold war and contributed to the rise of virulent sectarianism in the country.'*[19]

Various Pakistani governments have deployed Islamist groups to serve their political ends. *"Since the country's inception, Pakistan's leaders have played upon religious sentiment as an instrument of strengthening Pakistan's identity....Such rulers have attempted to 'manage' militant Islamism, trying to calibrate it so that it serves its nation building function without destabilizing internal politics or relations with Western countries."*[20]

Equally important, each 'reversal' in its frequent contests with India, was followed by a phase focussed on buttressing its Islamic identity as it was found "not Islamic enough".

Jostling for Primacy—the Army versus the Jihadi Groups

When Pakistan became a state in 1947, its elite—the Army and the bureaucracy—got the rare opportunity to nurture, nourish and shape a new nation. But, as has been put forth above, while Turkey had earlier succeeded in a similar endeavour, Pakistan failed. What we are seeing today may well be a contest for Pakistan—the primary dynamic of which is the struggle for control/legitimacy and, externally, the conflict with the 'other' (represented variously by India, America, Israel and Afghanistan).

However, this may well be only one of the contests between the Islamabad's elite and the sectarian groups.

By the time the Jihad against Soviet Union ended, *"many of these groups had developed independent channels of financing, giving them increased manoeuvrability. This was the beginning of a shift in the power equation away from the army and towards the jihadi groups."*[21]

A recent development has seemingly led to a strain in the much vaunted close ties between Islamabd and Beijing, with the advantage going to religious groups. The Communist Party of China entered into an informal agreement with Pakistan's main Islamic party, the Jamaat-e-Islami, in which the latter has reportedly given assurances that it would do nothing to encourage Islamic separatists in China's border region, the Xinjiang province.

The mushrooming of these radicalised sectarian identities runs parallel with several other problems that are plaguing the country and are likely to act as a catalysis to the creation and radicalisation of sub-national identities.

Self versus Other

A more serious implication of trying to create a negative identity of the 'Self' is that one perforce has to demonise the image of the 'Other'. The stronger the need to rally support, the stronger the need to paint the perceived opponent black and engineer a conflict with it. This 'Other' could be anyone–externally, it could be India, Afghanistan, the US, or Israel and, internally, it could be Bangla nationalists, Baloch or Sindhi nationalists, language groups like the Seraiki movement, rival denominations like Shia or Ahmadi or other religions like Christians.

Virulent posture and the violence unleashed against them came to be seen as strategic actions to keep secure one's own high seat in the society.

An obvious by-product of this state of affairs was that the various groups began to manipulate and negotiate for small gains. Thus, the Army instigated the Bihari JI activists in their murderous campaigns against the Bangla nationalists. Similarly, the Army supported groups of political parties against parties considered inimical to Army interests. It was precisely this line of reasoning that has led to the Pakistan Army's support for Jihadi campaigns against India and Afghanistan.

Apparent Modernity versus Apparent Tradition

Once the premium came to be placed upon the membership of a 'group' rather than individual merit or democratic processes, ethnic and sectarian identities began to gather strength. This trend had the obvious effect of precluding a smooth transition from tradition to modernity. Conflict became the political currency and things like cooperation or understanding went straight to the dust bin.

It is interesting to look at the different ways in which Turkey and Pakistan dealt with the tension between modernity and tradition. In both countries the founders (Kemal Pasha and Mohammad Ali Jinnah, respectively) set out with a modernist, secular vision of the state in a Muslim context, but the process of creating their national identities took completely different courses.

In Turkey, the idea of a secular nationalism was nurtured in the context of Kemal's ruthless westernisation campaign–which included changing the script of the scripture, banning traditional headgear and dress, a separation

of religion from politics and a radical transformation of the education system. If there was a challenge, it came from two sources—Islamism and Kurdish nationalism. On their own, these forces were locked in a stalemated position vis-a-vis the overwhelming power of the Turkish state and Army. But today, the pressure to 'Europeanise' its laws to gain entry into the EU has, paradoxically, liberalised the state's security apparatus, giving greater freedom of expression and action to the Islamist parties.

Here we come to the crucial difference between the trajectories of Islamic politics in Turkey and Pakistan. In Turkey, Islamic resurgence has not led to obscurantism. Instead, *"the reform process has led to a miraculous synthesis of modernity and Islam, what some have termed 'Islamic Calvinism'. This form of Islam-... is liberal, pro-Western, Europhile, and pro-capitalist".*[22]

Pakistan right from the beginning dealt with the identity dilemma very differently from Turkey. The elite (read the Pakistan Army) sought its legitimacy based on Islamic identity and not on the Western premise of modernism. In an extension of this choice, it began to incite and play the religious groups against the political parties—thus giving them a role and reach far beyond what they could legitimately claim. Once the army put into action this strategy of exploiting the sectarian groups, there was no going back and it snowballed into progressive hardening of the tension between Tradition and Modernity.

External Dimension

Another reason for the difference between the trajectories of the two countries was the postures adopted by external powers. In Turkey, the Islamist parties and the State were able to work out the dynamic on their own with hardly any interference from outside. The EU's pressure on the

accession issue (arguably the major cause for the rise of the Islamists) was not in favour of or against the Islamists. It was merely an insistence that Turkey abide by a set of principles and ideals, which meant traditionalism would need to negotiate its own place within modernity. However, in the case of Pakistan, external powers have persistently favoured one or the other actor, thereby perpetuating the conflict between the forces of tradition and modernity.

Erin Jenne argues that an ethnic minority group would "radicalise" its demands if it believes it has external support for its cause, or even if it believes that the state or the dominant group will commit itself to its agreements. Jenne argues that minority demands and actions are not just a result of ethnic fear, but are also a rational choice based on the amount of support they perceive they will get if they enter into conflict.[23]

Jaffrelot, tracing the relationship between the growth of sectarian groups and external powers, sees sectarianism in Pakistan as *"an extension of the Persian Gulf conflicts into Pakistan."* Further, he believes that it was the differences in and competition between Zia's Islamisation programme and Iran's Islamic revolution that *"lay at the heart of Iran's posturing to Pakistan".*[24]

On the ground too, this conflict of interests is self evident: *"If you look at where the most [Sunni] madrasas were constructed you will realise that they form a wall blocking Iran off from Pakistan."*[25]

Geo-political posturing

Sectarianism can also gain ground from the State's efforts for a stronger position on the geo-political stage. The 1974 anti-Ahmadi riots led the

Government to concede to Islamists demands and a Constitutional amendment was issued declaring Ahmadis to be non-Muslims. This infamous action was part of a larger design to present Pakistan as a leading 'Muslim' nation which, in turn, was the Zia Government's strategy for gaining support from the Middle East countries.

Once Gen. Zia assumed power, Islamisation began in real earnest. *"Zia-ul-Haq made it possible for the Islamists to feel empowered by the Islamic state of Pakistan. Members of the Pakistani civil and military elite, too, were now more accepting of Islamic clerics and Islamist ideologues."*[26]

Thus empowered, Islamist parties, particularly the Jamaat-i-Islami, intensified the call for implementing the Sharia rule in the country. As a part of this process, the Zakat Ordinance was enforced in 1980 which sparked off Shia protests. The ensuing concession to the Shias in turn caused Sunni attitudes to harden further.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan resulted in a massive influx of refugees into Pakistan territory, mainly into NWFP and Northern Balochistan. The Islamist parties, funded by Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries moved into the vast refugee camps and consolidated their position.

An alternative to Nationalism

"Sectarianism must, however, be understood as a form of 'ethnic' posturing, one that combines Islamist and ethnic discourses of power. ... The Islamist veneer should not obfuscate the fact that, at its core, sectarianism is a form of religio-political nationalism".[27]

In Pakistan, the age-old Shia-Sunni conflicts worked together with secular rivalries (like different relationships in land holding) to transform these differences into dichotomies.

Thus, sectarianism is often strongly under-pinned by ethnic identity. *'The JUI, for example, has a strong Pashtun ethnic component as well as close ties to the Taliban."*[28]

Then again, in the domain of street-level politics, sectarianism *"has metamorphosed from religious schism into political conflict around mobilisation of communal identity. It has found political function, and the militant forces that represent it operate in the political rather than religious arena."*[29]

Increasingly then, as Cohen has pointed out: *"In the NWFP and northern Baluchistan, radical Islamic groups are becoming the vehicle for Pashtun dissent and anger, displacing the region's traditional Pashtun political party."*[30]

Competing interpretations of Islam in a Global context

In the larger global context, we see a massive jump in prices of crude oil from around 1.42 dollars per barrel in 1970 to around 31 dollars per barrel in 1980. Saudi oil revenues shot up from $1,214 million dollars in 1970 to around 102 million in 1981. This spurt in available wealth in the Gulf countries created a huge job market for migratory labour from Muslim countries. This initially generated large remittances which dislocated social structures in the home countries, provided a channel for Saudi funding and also, over time, resulted in the infusion of Saudi thinking into Pakistan, brought back by the newly rich migrant workers coming home.

At the popular level, however, Islam as it was practised in Pakistan remained within the broadly Barelvi mould and there remained a level of scepticism about the foreign influenced sects. Drawing a vivid picture of his observations in a particular locality in Karachi, Verkaaik narrates: *"Four out of the five mosques within the neighbourhood were said to be Barelwi mosques, the fifth a Sh'ia mosque. A large mosque of the Ahl-i-Hadis–a radical purist form of reformist Islam–stood just outside the citadel, impressing the nearby residents with a muezzin whose Arabic pronunciation was said to sound like the real thing. The mosque was recently built - ... –with gifts from abroad, mainly Saudi Arabia. Whether true or not, the message was that the ahl-i-hadis were a foreign phenomenon. Although impressively elegant, the mosque attracted few believers. Within the neighbourhood it had the unfavourable reputation of being "fundamentalist", "Taliban" or "Wahabi"–the latter meaning "foreign" in the popular idiom."*[31]

This street sentiment of Pakistanis is an indicator to why most religious parties perform badly in elections. However, it was precisely this lack of popular support that forced these groups to compete for a constituency. Support from the Gulf States came in handy in this enterprise. *"The flow of funds from the Persian Gulf radicalized the Sunni Groups as they sought to outdo one another in their use of vitriol and violence in order to get a larger share of the funding."*[32]

Sectarian strife in Pakistan was the outcome of the cynical manipulation of sectarian identity by various governments and one discerns its growth through the following progression:

Governments exploit sectarian identities to create a parallel force and to reinforce its own ideology of nationalism.
Rewards are offered for adopting a sectarian identity.

Finally, the sects or groups compete with each other to monopolise the right to decide on the form of nationalism for Pakistan.

The growth of sectarian identities thus became a self-propelled cycle feeding into the structural weaknesses of the democratic process.

The recourse to sectarian identity by the 'majority' group is often reflected in the actions of 'minority' groups–*"without democracy and pluralism, separatism and Islamic fundamentalism will become increasingly attractive to repressed minorities."*[33]

Provincialism and sectarianism were not the only problems. The ground realities of Independence, as they unfolded, brought with them several associated problems and challenges which, in turn, gave rise to trends that continued to weaken Pakistan as a Nation and as a State.

As a result of the huge influx of people post 1947, the already over populated urban areas experienced a veritable population explosion. This phenomenon of rapid urbanisation took a different trajectory from the European experience. There, the cities were the economic focal points that attracted the people, whereas in Pakistan, these new cities were flooded by displaced people who came looking for shelter and sustenance. Apart from the absence of significant economic activity, there was a complete lack of civic infrastructure to support such massive increases in population.

Karachi's population increased from 3, 60,000 in 1941 to around 9,376,000 by 1988. There was no way that such an explosive growth could be matched by any attempt to develop the civic infrastructure or increase employment avenues. The cities rapidly degenerated and crime and disorder became the rule of the day in the vast urban sprawl.

Resource shortages forced the government to abandon large areas of civic work. Non-governmental organisations attempted to fill in some of these gaps, but these were feeble efforts in the face of the magnitude of the problems. It should be noted that following a wave of riots and clashes, dead bodies would be left lying on the streets: It was the Edhi Foundation which moved in with vans and set about the task of removing the bodies and giving them a decent burial.

A large part of this growth can be attributed to two phases–first the Mohajir and then the Pathan influxes, both of which were closely followed by waves of violent clashes between the various communities.

Another factor at play is the nature and character of the urban population itself. The so called urbanites in Pakistan are, in many ways, a rural people placed in an urban setting. Schulze highlights the tension between traditional and the modern way of life when he refers to the constant need for *'social code switching'*, in which the factory workers would daily move out of their tradition based private world into factories to produce goods for a modern world—goods meant for a world they themselves would never be part of—whatever be the promises made to them in the earlier years. This created a tension between the two ways of life and gradually they drifted apart into parallel worlds.[34]

We see yet another aspect of the conflictual world of Pakistan's cities when we overlay class onto sectarian divides. Here, a more complex operation becomes visible. *"Whereas nationally the Sipah-e Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) fought for an Islamist cause, in Jhang it was posing as the vanguard force for the frustrated urban Sunni middle classes, which could see in sectarianism a powerful tool with which to break the hold of the Shia landed elite over local politics".*[35]

Perhaps a larger problem is that Pakistan's demographic profile currently displays a major youth bulge—a sizeable 60% of Pakistan's population is below 24 years of age.[36] The ominous implications of such a large population of male youth for social stability are well known. Technically, of course, a youthful pyramid can represent a demographic opportunity as much as a threat. In Pakistan, it is the negative aspects that are dominating the scenario because of the virtual absence of modern education and the lack of any wide-based socio-economic development. The problems have been compounded by the second wave of migration—refugees from Afghanistan.

Extended periods of turmoil in Afghanistan sent hordes of Afghans fleeing into Pakistan, many of whom found their way into NWFP and Sindh (particularly Karachi). Whole generations of these people grew up never having known Afghanistan and never being integrated into the host society. They form a huge 'rootless' population—aliens living in Pakistan with no stake in the well being of, the nation or its communities. As can be expected, a large number of these youth find their comfort zone in the world of 'anti-social' activities.

Demographic Indicators: Pakistan – 1998 Census.

Indicators	Pakistan	NWFP*	FATA #	Punjab	Sindh	Balochistan	Islamabad
Area (Sq. K.Ms)	796096	74521	27220	205345	140914	347190	906
Population in thousand)	132352	17744	3176	73621	30440	6566	805
Urban Proportion	32.5	16.87	2.7	31.27	48.75	23.9	65.7
(Person per Sq. K.M.)	166.3	238.1	116.7	358.52	216.02	18.9	880.8
Age Dependency ratio	88.34	100.83	114	87.07	83.58	96.79	68.4
Literacy Ratio (10+)	43.92	35.41	17.42	46.56	47.29	24.83	72.4
Male	54.81	51.39	29.51	57.2	54.5	34.03	80.64
Female	32.02	18.82	3	35.1	34.78	14.09	62.39
Un-employment Rate	19.68	26.83	-	19.1	14.43	33.48	15.7

** NWFP stands for North West Frontier Province*
 # FATA stands for Federally Administrated Tribal Areas
Extracted from the table at
http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pco/statistics/demographic_indicators98/demographic_indicators.html

That the given scenario is primed to send the entire country into an abyss of turmoil for years to come can be seen easily enough by overlaying the provincial demographics onto the insurgency map of the region.

When we add the component of relative growth, we see an inordinately large growth in the urban populations of Sindh and Balochistan—the latter having exploded 10 times between 1951 and 1998 because of the repeated waves of refugees fleeing from Afghanistan.

It is not a coincidence that the areas of maximum turmoil in Pakistan today are precisely the areas with the most youthful, illiterate and unemployed population. While this is obviously a generalisation, the caveat is that these figures pertain to 1998. Between then and now a host of changes would

have taken place. Our guess would be that not many of these changes will have been of a positive nature.

If it is a solution we are looking for, it primarily lies in this area. Pakistan has to find its way out of the demographic quagmire it has landed itself in because it has long ignored investing in the social infrastructure—education, healthcare and economic opportunities.

This neglect of socio-economic development and inequitable distribution (of the fruits of whatever little growth there has been) appears all the more pitiful because, for quite a few years, Pakistan's average growth rate was as high as 6%—well above the rate in the rest of the region.

S. Akbar Zaidi, comparing the Human Development Index performance of Pakistan with a handful of Asian and African countries between 1993 and 2003, finds that, *"(r)ather than be part of the dynamic growth trends of East Asia which are now being mirrored amongst the countries of South Asia, Pakistan is increasingly looking like a poor and underdeveloped country."*[37]

The lack of social development compounded by the historical imbalances and inequities in Pakistan are now visibly impacting its growth potential.

It is an obvious fact that weak economic growth intensifies poverty. The mushrooming pockets of poverty are fallow ground for the growth of obscurantism in society which, in turn, creates a sizeable constituency highly vulnerable to radicalisation.

Perhaps the largest single challenge is the pitiful state of the education system in Pakistan; military expenditure has always been given the priority at the cost of social expenditure.

"Pakistan's educational anomaly lies not in the macro-level education statistics or access to education, but in the polarization of the education system. The education sector consists of three parallel systems stratified along socio-economic classes."[38]

Pakistan: Number of students and various types educational institutions.[39]

	Number of Schools	%	Enrolment	%
Public	151,740	62.5	21,258,180	62.6
Private	76,040	31.5	12,121,390	35.7
Madrassahs	14,680	6.0	586,600	1.7
Total	242,460		24,829,380	
Unschooled			6,43,000	

The above are official figures. The real estimates of the Madrassah numbers are much higher. The huge difference between the kind of education imparted in public schools and the Madrassahs is common knowledge. A number of studies have drawn a link between the Madrassah education and terrorism. While this may be true as far as it goes, it represents only a part of the problem. The public school system, while it does offer a broader based curriculum, has also been shown to contribute to radicalisation. This becomes quite clear when, on examining the textbooks, one comes across several passages that teach hatred of the 'other'—Indian, Western and Jewish people. Apart from this, the teachings in these books have systematically undermined Pakistan's potential for progress. As one extensive survey of Pakistan's official school textbooks points out, *"...for over two decades the curricula and the officially mandated textbooks in these subjects have contained material that is directly contrary to the goals and values of a progressive, moderate and democratic Pakistan"*.[40] The real problem, therefore, is the curriculum of hate and what drives this is the competition between various power groups to prove their credentials.

Given this all round weakness of the civic domain, it is no wonder that Pakistani society is characterised by one remarkable feature—the virtual non-existence of an autonomous middle class. Pre-existing feudal structures have stayed intact in the absence of any new economic activity strong enough to break them.

The only 'middle class' that exists is the weak entity called the 'salariat'—the segment that exists on Government salary and, therefore, has a stake in status quo. This fact had the most immediate effect—political aggregation was skewed and continued to be based on older familial and social networks. Understandably then, the political parties remained structurally weak and, one of the only two parties which at some point appeared capable of evolving robust, secular and democratic structures, the Communist Party of Pakistan, was virtually wiped out at a very early stage. The other major party, the Pakistan Peoples Party, soon degenerated into the conventional Pakistani mix of semi-feudal politics and corruption.

The Orientalist discourse has long argued that Islam and democracy are not compatible. (Paradoxically, the Islamists have consistently argued much the same thing, albeit from a different perspective altogether.) Positioned at what is now the periphery of the Islamic world, Gündüz Aktan, a Turkish columnist has argued that democracy is impossible in a non-secularized Islamic country.[41] However, Islam's compatibility with democracy (in the western, liberal framework) becomes an entirely different issue of debate. The fact that democracy never really took off in Pakistan owes itself not so much to a fundamental lack of democratic aspirations, but to the cynical manipulations of the country's ruling class. Thus, the need to contain provincial sentiments and the obsessive desire of the Punjabi-Pashtun combine to retain power threw up situations where the ruling elite did not think twice about tampering with and distorting the

operation of normal political processes—the salient example being the East Bengal affair.

The downward spiral and the Emergence of the "Non-State" of Pakistan

Going by all that has happened and is happening one can surmise that Pakistan is spiralling down a vicious cycle of its own making into chaos. While any number of external circumstances may (or may not) have worked against Pakistan, the primary reasons for its current predicament can be traced back to the fractionalisation of the nation's search for a unifying identity into competition/conflict amongst smaller group identities.

Emergence of semi-autonomous actors

The Army has been and is the most dominant power in Pakistan. It has traditionally positioned itself as the custodian of the nation's interests. Two factors have contributed to give the army this status. The first is its huge size and its indubitable capability; the second is, due to the ideological shade it has acquired, the Pakistan Army has metamorphosed from being just another state institution to being an 'ethnic entity' in itself, as one commentator has observed.[42] If we begin viewing the Pakistan Army as a quasi-ethnic entity rather than as a state institution, its behaviour becomes more understandable.

We have already seen how a large number of religious and sectarian groups emerged, consolidated and have come to occupy the centrestage in the nation's polity.

While Afghanistan's emergence as the worlds' largest supplier of narcotics has hogged the limelight, of equal importance is the fact that the country has spawned crime networks that have formed deep links with and penetrated the corridors of power in Islamabad. The farmers in Afghanistan are induced/coerced to grow opium by networks that finance, gather, process and smuggle it out of the country. These networks have, among other places, established themselves in the port city of Karachi, using it as an asylum from where they carry out their nefarious activities. Since such networks thrive best in conditions of power vacuum, they have taken to spreading disorder (as a cover for spreading the area of operation) not just in Karachi, but all over Pakistan and the adjoining countries.

All of these groups are distinct, yet they co-operate amongst themselves as much as they conflict. Their various strategies are designed to help them capture more and more of the nation's space; as such, they conflict with the interests of Pakistan as a whole.

There are two distinct groupings that seek to control Pakistan. The first is the existing/erstwhile elite (the Army, the Bureaucracy and the Feudalists) and second is the emerging religious/'jihadi' elite. Bridging the two is the ISI. Their degrees of success may vary but, both the Army and the sectarian groups, in their efforts to grow and perpetuate themselves, end up competing for resources. Quite naturally, there is fierce competition to capture or retain power and, more importantly, since the route to power for them lies outside the democratic norm, there is a constant search for ways to legitimise their claim to power. Since it is predicated against secular modernity, their rivalry escalates into a competition for extreme positions– exemplified by their hostility to outsiders–be it India or the US.

When compounded by the captive 'education' and media institutions controlled by these groups, the culture of violence and the advocacy of pre-modern social structures becomes a self-fuelled downward spiral. Given this scenario of their own making, it becomes obvious that all these groups function optimally in conditions of political instability in Pakistan and in the entire neighbouring region.

In this perennial manoeuvring between elites and potential elites, we find a chaotic mix of competition and cooperation; what has emerged as a result is a veritable 'phalanx' of destruction.
The current trends that point to a bleak future are:

- Pakistan will continue to be underdeveloped, burdened with a large, growing population of unemployed youth and the ill-educated.
- The Army, together with a small elite, will continue to dominate the scene and, in seeking to consolidate its position, it will try to leverage the power of religion and will continue to nurture radical elements that have gradually been gaining strength and capabilities. This will be an ongoing threat.
- Externally, the Islamabad establishment will continue to deploy 'pressure' tactics and intermittently wage proxy wars.
- It will also seek to 'strengthen' its bargaining position by leveraging its own 'weaknesses'—"strategic weakness" with regard to India and Afghanistan, "security weaknesses" in the face of terrorism and Administrative and Economic weaknesses.
- In foreign affairs it will continue the pattern of dependant relationships, wherein it will try to project its own utility to the potential buyer.

As important as the steady growth of Pakistan's problems is the context in which they are occurring. Globally, the big drivers are climatic shifts and geopolitical transitions. The Pakistan specific drivers are its unwieldy demographic structure and the short supply of water and energy.

The Way Forward

To find viable solutions to Pakistan's problems we need first to pinpoint the causes. They can be traced to:

1. The absence of a positive national identity combined with the suppression of sub-national identities;
2. An overbearing Army that dominates not just militarily but also economically and politically. Two factors have driven the Pakistan Army–the need to legitimise their claim to be the deciding voice in the country's policies and its need to justify the inordinately large budgetary allocation (as well as its non—budgetary activities). These factors have caused the army to actively nurture the spectre of a range of existential threats to Pakistan and thereby to project itself as the only possible saviour;
3. A weak middle class and significant under-development;
4. A lack of democratic political processes.

The possible solutions that come to mind are the following.

1. The Pakistani people need the opportunity to clarify their identity issues by working towards a central constitutional enunciation of what Pakistani nationhood means and stands for. Without this being undertaken, the identity confusion which lies at the heart of Pakistan's many crises will continue.

2. Thereafter, there needs to be a well defined structure that converts the constitutional vision into good governance. Pakistan has experimented with party politics and has had a reasonably articulate judiciary. However, the constant interference in politics by the Army and the intimidation of the judiciary (by the intelligence agencies and now the religious groups) must be curbed.

2. Pakistan has always had a number of distinct ethno-linguistic groups. Their identities and sub-national expressions need to be protected by re-ordering and formalising provincial autonomy and a federal structure that protects the interests of the numerically smaller provinces without necessarily weakening the Centre.

3. The military, through its constant interference, has commandeered the functions of civil governance and the imperative now is to curb *"the generals' obsession with adventurist and ultimately debilitating foreign policy goals..."*.[43] *A round table on this issue in March 2009 reached the following conclusion: "The military in Pakistan is bloated beyond all reason. Curbing its influence and inducing it to become a professional army focused on legitimate threats should not in any way compromise its viability. It is time that the United States uses its still considerable leverage within Pakistan to trim the extraordinary privileges of the army, induce it to shed its extracurricular activities, and end its support to jihadis of every stripe."*[44]

The Pakistan Government could normalise its military's functioning by creating provincial forces and hiving off a dedicated police force as also an anti terrorist force from the Army itself. Simultaneously, the national budget needs to be rationalised by pegging Defence expenditure to a percentage of the gross Budget: this would lead to a larger amount of funds

being made available for the more critically needed Developmental expenditure.

Directly linked to the Army issue is the inability of the judiciary and the media to function independently. A re-structuring of the Army can provide the necessary civilian infrastructure to support Law and Order, once and for all freeing the judiciary and the media from Army diktats and jihadi threats.

The critical step needs to be in the economy. It goes without saying that any effort by Pakistan to move itself out of the current downward cycle must necessarily be predicated upon lifting its people out of poverty. Given the massive population growth, the tasks listed below need to be undertaken.

- Massive increase in food production. This will require a transformation of land-holding patterns and commercialisation of agriculture. A rationalisation of water use patterns will also need to be undertaken. If found necessary, role of cash crops like cotton will need to be given a fresh look.

- Generation of employment avenues for the huge population, particularly the urban and rural poor. Given the current profile of Pakistan's economy and of its manpower, the right step forward would be to set up agro-based industries.

- Rapid upgrading of the skills available, as also improving the overall quality of the employable population.

In the education domain, a number of solutions have been put forward to regulate the Madrassahs. The most discussed one among them was to

register them, but it failed to take off. The real problem, as we are aware, lies elsewhere and the cure perhaps would be to disallow all direct funding (especially from abroad). The effect will be to substantially temper the most vicious aspects of the curriculum, which are the result of grand-standing (by the sectarian groups) in search of support. It will also facilitate the removal of offensive texts from the school books. When we take an analytic look at the problems that ail Pakistan's education system, we see in the table above that roughly 30–35 per cent of the of the students in the private schools come from non-elite families—the elite being numerically very small in the country. These students that fill up the vacant seats are the children of relatively rich commoners and by sheer number indicates the huge pent-up demand for quality education. Whatever the quality of the education imparted by these institutions, the important point is that the attitude of their students is consistently more positive and modern than those of any other student groups. Most importantly, therefore, these students are the glimmer of hope for the nation, and represent the youth segment that can most easily be leveraged towards positive modernism.

For those outside Pakistan, it is important to realise that the imbalances caused by the Gulf funding of some segments of the nation's educational institutions system are simply a pointer to the fact that the educational domain must be kept free of outside influence. Given an indomitable will, a well thought out plan and a modicum of funding, significantly positive interventions can be made to complement the efforts of the Pakistani government. Several decades ago, India's experiences with satellite based education demonstrated that distances or borders are but minor impediments when there is a will to act.

At the same time, regional imbalances within Pakistan need to be redressed. The Punjabis of Pakistan have has always prospered at the cost

of the people of all other provinces, mainly because they out-number by a big margin all other provincial/ethnic groups and have worked the system to their own advantage. This imbalance not only led to provincial unrest, but also caused the virtual economic strangulation of all other growth centres. To come out of this predicament, the government must put in place the mechanisms for an economic growth that evenly covers the entire country: this would entail the re-invigoration of provincial development. Sindh stands out as an example where, given the Federal will and allocated the necessary resources, economic growth can truly take off in a relatively short span of time.

The most straightforward way to deal with this situation of unrest would be to focus on those areas that are most critically unstable, such as NWFP, FATA or Punjab, in the main. But such a strategy is almost certain to get bogged down in futile fire-fighting exercises that would suck out the will of the army men to keep fighting the insurrectionist forces.

Another equally important step would be to lay focus on the socio-economic development of the southern regions that are seething with discontent: this hopefully would insulate the region and stem the tide of turmoil spilling in from the northern regions. These areas have the advantages of a more educated populace, an abundance of raw materials, and access to the sea through a well developed port, as also a healthy distaste for the chaotic state of affairs witnessed in the Punjabi-Pashtun regions. These factors can become the basis for a developmental strategy that includes manufacture, service industry and transport/transit corridors in the South which, hopefully, can be made to percolate northwards.

Throughout its history, its western border with Afghanistan to its eastern front with Kashmir have been the main issues of security concern for Pakistan. The elite in Islamabad have always viewed Kabul with hostility because of the latter's persistent demand for the dismantling of the Durand Line which divides the Pashtun people on both sides of the border. To their East, they see a hostile India with the Line of Control dividing the Kashmiris. Much of the conflict in South Asia has revolved around these two disputes.

Several attempts have been made to solve the two conflictual issues but to no avail. The way out for all parties concerned is to first recognise the given socio-political realities, but such political maturity is hard to come by.

The Durand Line, drawn by the British has ever been the issue of contention between Kabul and Islamabad. The latter tried to find a way out of this stalemate by installing and supporting the Taliban government in Kabul. However, the real, long term dynamic of the region soon came to the fore when "the Taliban refused to accept a client position".[45] A significant segment of the Pashtun population has been, and will remain, amenable to manipulation by the Pakistan Army, Intelligence groups and Jihadi outfits. However, it is important to recognise that these alliances are purely of convenience and that the longer term aggregation will continue to be based upon age old tribal and ethnic patterns. As long as Pashtun identity remains split, segments within it (particularly the disenfranchised ones like the Ghilzai) will continue to become tools for Pakistan, but a consolidated and confident Pashtun identity will shun any manipulative overtures from Islamabad. Such a Pashtun consolidation, if it ever happens, will have serious repercussions on the entire region and the question then will be: which will go first—Afghanistan or Pakistan?

Consolidating and developing the ethno-linguistic entities within a framework of political autonomy (with a loosely federal structure) might help resolve many of the problems between Pakistan, Afghanistan and India. Incidentally, one of the more significant experiments undertaken by India has been the re-organisation of the boundaries of the larger, historical states that comprised the Indian Union on a linguistic basis. A well thought federal design might well contribute to a process whereby sub-national groups feel less threatened and therefore more willing to accept the larger national unit.

At the end of the day, until Pakistan is able to resolve these conflicts at the heart of its identity, there will be no peace in the region

Endnote:

1. Jinnah, Speech at a public reception in Chittagong on 26 March, 1948
2. Ayesha Jalal, The State of Martial Rule, p. 16 quoted in Hussain Haqqani, Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military.
3. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Presidential address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, August 11, 1947
4. Partha Chatterjee : Whose Imagined Community in The New social Theory Reader ed, Seidman and Alexander
5. Partha Chatterjee : Whose Imagined Community in The New social Theory Reader ed, Seidman and Alexander
6. Joseph Stalin, "Marxism and the National Question," First published in Prosveshcheniye, Nos. 3-5, March-May 1913; online text available at http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1913/03.htm
7. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Statement of 25 June 1947
8. Hafeez Malik, Nationalism and the Quest for Ideology in Pakistan : the Long View (ed. Lawrence Ziring)
9. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Address to the Bar Association, Karachi 25 January, 1948
10. Hussain Haqqani, Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military. pp.14-15
11. Hussain Haqqani, Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military. p.19
12. Derived from data at http://www.statpak.gov.pk
13. Khalid bin Sayeed,
14. Stephen Cohen, The Idea of Pakistan.
15. Reinhard Schulze A Modern History of the Islamic World
16. Reinhard Schulze A Modern History of the Islamic World
17. Khalid bin Sayeed – quoted in Husain Haqqani, Pakistan : Between Mosque and Military p. 154
18. Ayesha Jalal, Self and Sovereignty : Individual and Community in South Asian Islam since 1850 p.xvii
19. Yogesh Chandrani...The Selected Writings of Eqbal Ahmad. P.389
20. Husain Haqqani, Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military. p.2
21. Hassan Abbas, Pakistan's Drift into Extremism
22. Matan Chorev and Mehmet Tarzi, Turkey's Delta Paradox, NIMEP Insights
23. Jenne, Erin. (2004) 'A Bargaining Theory of Minority Demands', International Studies Quarterly, Vol. 48, p. 729.Quoted in C. M. Bleuer, Uzbeks Versus The Center: Mobilization As An Ethnic Minority In The Tajikistan And Afghanistan Civil Wars [http://afghanistan-analyst.org/Documents/Uzbeks.pdf]

24. S.V.R Nasr, Islam, the State and the Rise of Sectarian Militancy in Pakistan in Christophe Jaffrelot, Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation?
25. Herald, 1992 quoted in S.V.R Nasr, Islam, the State and the Rise of Sectarian Militancy in Pakistan in Christophe Jaffrelot, Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation?
26. Husain Haqqani, Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military. p.156
27. S.V.R Nasr, Islam, the State and the Rise of Sectarian Militancy in Pakistan in Christophe Jaffrelot, Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation?
28. Stephen Cohen, The Jihadist Threat to Pakistan, The Washington Quarterly 26:3 pp. 7–25.
29. S.V.R Nasr, Islam, the State and the Rise of Sectarian Militancy in Pakistan in Christophe Jaffrelot, Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation?
30. Stephen Cohen, The Jihadist Threat to Pakistan, The Washington Quarterly 26:3 pp. 7–25.
31. Oskar Verkaaik, Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan. P.48
32. S.V.R Nasr, Islam, the State and the Rise of Sectarian Militancy in Pakistan in Christophe Jaffrelot, Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation?
33. Matan Chorev and Mehmet Tarzi, Turkey's Delta Paradox, NIMEP Insights
34. Reinhard Schulze A Modern History of the Islamic World
35. S.V.R Nasr, Islam, the State and the Rise of Sectarian Militancy in Pakistan; Christophe Jaffrelot, Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation?
36. Moeed Yusuf : Prospects of Youth Radicalization in Pakistan : Implications for U.S. Policy
37. S. Akbar Zaidi, Pakistan's Economic and Social Development
38. Moeed Yusuf : Prospects of Youth Radicalization in Pakistan : Implications for U.S. Policy
39. Derived from Moeed Yusuf : Prospects of Youth Radicalization in Pakistan : Implications for U.S. Policy
40. A. H. Nayyar and Ahmad Salim, ed. , The Subtle Subversion : The state of Curricula and Textbooks in Pakistan, SDPI
41. Matan Chorev and Mehmet Tarzi, Turkey's Delta Paradox, NIMEP Insights
42. Daniel Zirker et al. / The Military as a Distinct Ethnic or Quasi-Ethnic Identity in Developing Countries
43. Stephen Cohen, The Jihadist Threat to Pakistan, The Washington Quarterly 26:3 pp. 7–25.
44. Foreign Affairs roundtable discussion titled “What's the Problem With Pakistan?” : Foreign Affairs – March, 2009
45. Zahid Hussain, Frontline Pakistan

ORF PUBLICATIONS:

- South and Southeast Asia:Responding to Changing Geo-Political and Security Challenges Edited by K.V. Kesavan and Daljit Singh ORF-Knowledge World
- India's Nuclear Diplomacy after Pokhran II Ajai. K. Rai, ORF- Pearson-Longman
- The Future of Conflict and Security in India's Emerging Political Environment Neil Padukone, ORF-Knowledge World
- Revisiting the Sino-Indian-border dispute—Prospects for Resolution Mohan Guruswamy, Zorawar Daulet Singh, ORF-Viva
- Occasional Paper: India-Myanmar Relations (1998-2008): A Decade of Redefining Bilateral ties, K. Yhome
- ORF Seminar Series, Implementation of Right to Information Act: Issues and Challenges Wajahat Habibullah
- India and China: The Next Decade Edited by S. D. Muni and Suranjan Das, ORF-Rupa
- Managed Chaos, The Fragility of the Chinese Miracle Prem Shankar Jha, ORF-Sage
- The New Asian Power Dynamic, edited by Maharajakrishna Rasgotra; (ORF- Sage 2007)
- Democracy in Muslim Societies : The Asian Experience (ORF Studies in Contemporary Muslim Societies-IV), edited by Zoya Hasan (ORF-Sage 2007)
- India and Central Asia : Potential for Regional Co-operation, by Ajish P. Joy (ORF-Samskriti 2007)
- The Naxal Challenge: Causes, Linkages and Policy Options, edited by P.V. Ramana (ORF-Pearson Longman 2007)
- Maritime Counter-Terrorism A Pan-Asian Perspective, Edited by Swati Parashar (ORF Pearson Longman 2007)
- Pakistan: Four Scenarios, by Wilson John (ORF-Pentagon Press 2007)
- ORF Policy Brief - Terrorism and Human rights, Wilson John and P.V. Ramana (2007)
- A Nation in Transition:Understanding the Indian Economy, by Jayshree Sengupta; (ORF-Academic Foundation 2007)
- The Politics of Power Sector Reform in India, by Niranjan Sahoo; (ORF- Pentagon Press 2007)
- Extremism and Opposition Movements on the Arabian Peninsula, by Joseph A. Kechichian (ORF 2006)

Observer Research Foundation is a public policy think-tank that aims to influence formulation of policies for building a strong and prosperous India. ORF pursues these goals by providing informed and productive inputs, in-depth research and stimulating discussions. The Foundation is supported in its mission by a cross-section of India's leading public figures, academics and business leaders.

₹ 195/

Observer Research Foundation
20, Rouse Avenue, New Delhi-110 002
Email: orf@orfonline.org
Phone: +91-11-43520020 Fax: +91-11-43520003
www.orfonline.org