

Democratic Prospects in Pakistan: A Quick Overview¹

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Political Parties in Pakistan:

- The principal political parties in Pakistan are the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid-e-Azam (PML-Q), and the religious parties which combine in the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA). Of these, Musharraf's parliamentary base lies in the PML-Q and MMA parties. The PPP and PML-N receive larger shares of the vote but are currently subject to substantial disabilities.
- The PML has generated two offshoots: the PML-Nawaz (<http://www.pmlnpk.org/>) formed by Nawaz Sharif and which met electoral success in 1997, and the PML-Q (Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid-e-Azam) (<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/pakistan/pml-q.htm>), which received broad military support in 2002. In the last legislative elections, PML-Q won 118 out of 342 seats, nearly all from the Punjab province.
- The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) (<http://www.ppp.org.pk/>) was formed by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1967, father of Benazir Bhutto who currently leads the party from exile. The PPP received the largest number of votes in the 2002 election, but was awarded only 81 seats in the National Assembly.
- The PPP, PML-N, and thirteen smaller opposition parties formed the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy. There is also a Pakistan Oppressed Nationalities Movement (PONM), a seven-party alliance of smaller regional political parties calling for restructuring the nation on explicitly ethnic lines.
- The Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA or United Action Forum) (<http://www.mma.org.pk/>) is a loose coalition of six Islamist parties, which formed to contest the 2002 legislative elections. Among the constituent parties is the well-organized and dominant Jamaat-e-Islami (<http://www.jamaat.org/>), along with the smaller Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (S), and Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan (N). The MMA received 20 percent of the total vote, and won 68 seats. See also Global Security (<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/pakistan/mma.htm>), news

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<http://news.google.com/news?q=muttahida+majlis-e-amal&hl=en&lr=&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&c2coff=1&sa=N&tab=wn>

- MMA-army links: According to reports, the ISI has made use of the religious parties frequently for tasks ranging from the promotion of Pakistani influence in Afghanistan to maintaining control of opposition parties at home and fighting Indian rule in Kashmir. This has led to strong ties between the army and the MMA, which have helped solidify the parliamentary base of Musharraf's support in the current MMA-PML-Q coalition.
- MMA leaders: Fazlur Rahman, head of the most significant faction of the Taliban-linked Jamiatul Ulema-i-Islam, has at times been considered an extremist but has proven pliable in the past because of his commercial interests. Qazi Hussain Ahmad, leader of Jamaat-I-Islami, is the MMA's preponderant leader, more moderate but less pliable than Rahman. Other coalition parties include Shi'a and Barelvi sectarian parties which have suffered from attacks from the Deobandi extremists of Rahman's party and its spin-off groups; this suggests a hint of instability within the MMA. The MMA may receive domestic payoffs in its religious agenda to compensate it for the nation's close foreign policy stance to the United States, but this compromise will come at the risk of alienating its core supporters in the next election.

Historical Background of Democracy in Pakistan:

- Pakistan has been under military governance for the majority of its 56 years of existence. All five of the nation's elected governments have been removed by the army, on each occasion with the stated or implicit support of the president. On two of these occasions (1993 and 1996) another civilian government was installed in its place, and in the remaining three (1958, Ayub Khan; 1977, Zia ul-Haq; 1999, Pervez Musharraf), military leaders seized power for themselves outright. Further, of the three elected prime ministers (Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto both served twice), one was executed (Z.A. Bhutto), and the other two were exiled under threat of imprisonment if they return (Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif).
- After the election of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in 1988 to replace military ruler Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq after Zia's death in a plane crash, observers believed that Pakistan had entered a democratic phase of its political history, with the army having made a transition from the role of kingmaker to that of referee.
- Instability returned, however, in August 1990 when President Ishaq Khan invoked a Zia-era constitutional amendment to remove Bhutto from office. Nawaz Sharif became prime minister after elections held in October 1990, with Sharif also being removed in 1993 under the same amendment. Bhutto returned for three years before being dismissed by President Farooq Leghari for nepotism and corruption in November 1996.

- In generally free and fair parliamentary elections held in February 1997, Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League won a substantial victory, and Sharif moved in April 1997 to remove the controversial Eighth Amendment which allowed the president to dismiss the government and appoint military chiefs and provincial governors. Sharif further strengthened his position by replacing the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and pressuring the resignation of President Leghari; he furthermore pressed the Lahore High Court to convict Benazir Bhutto and her husband Asif Ali Zardari of corruption, with a sentence of five years' imprisonment, a fine of \$8.6 million, and a disqualification from public office.
- Assuming power by coup on October 12, 1999, Chief of Army Staff Pervez Musharraf suspended Pakistan's constitution of 1973 (link <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/>) and assumed for himself the additional title of Chief Executive. He appointed a National Security Council of eight members to serve as Pakistan's supreme authority. On May 12, 2000, the Supreme Court unanimously declared the coup valid and granted Musharraf executive and legislative authority through October 2002. On June 20, 2001, he named himself president to replace Mohammad Rafiq Tara.- Musharraf's website is <http://www.pak.gov.pk/New%20Site/President/president%20profile.htm>
- U.S. and International response to coup: The coup was denounced broadly, including by UN Secretary General Annan (<http://www.fas.org/news/pakistan/1999/991013-pak7.htm>). The Commonwealth voted in September 2003 to extend Pakistan's four-year post-coup suspension from the organization for lack of democratic progress. While some nations, including Canada, called immediately for additional sanctions to be imposed on Pakistan, the United States's response was carefully measured, refraining from referring to Sharif's ouster as a coup, and calling only on Musharraf to announce his plans to move Pakistan back to democracy. The Clinton administration was, however, required to impose sanctions by Section 508 (<http://www.mac.doc.gov/sanctions/sect508.htm>) of the Foreign Appropriation Act, which affects countries where democratic governance has been disrupted.
- Effects of the coup: military government was welcomed in many sectors of Pakistani society (including by Benazir Bhutto) and accepted by others. Its support grew rapidly over the first year of control, when army offices successfully restored order to university campuses which had been paralysed by armed Islamist factions and efficiency to bureaucracies which had grown bloated, slow, and corrupt. However, with hundreds of serving and retired army officers assuming top positions in the bureaucracy, public-sector corporations and universities over three years, much of their initial reformist urge has waned, and their public support has diminished as a result.

History of parliamentary elections and constitutional changes under Musharraf:

- Shortly after assuming power, Musharraf's government used tear gas to suppress a rally held in Karachi of opponents of military rule, calling members of the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy "useless politicians."
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/1306202.stm)
- Local government elections were held in 2001, and were generally free and fair although the government intervened in several instances to ensure the election of pro-Musharraf candidates. Opposition leaders Rena Khan (Punjab provincial legislator) was detained and tortured by the security services in March 2000; in October, PML-N leader Javed Hashmi was charged with sedition and criticising Musharraf.
- The National Assembly (website <http://www.na.gov.pk/>) had been dissolved in the wake of the October 1999 coup, and Musharraf had promised to hold elections for a new assembly. Musharraf won an uncontested referendum in April 2002 to remain in office.
- 2002 elections for the Assembly: In October 2002, Pakistan held its first national legislative elections since the coup three years before. (results <http://www.electionworld.org/pakistan.htm>) While observers complained of deep flaws in the elections, the United States summed up the poll as "relatively free and fair," and the pro-military Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid-e-Azam (PML-Q) party won a plurality of seats in the assembly, while the Islamist coalition MMA (United Action Forum) returns a strong showing in the Pakhto-majority western provinces. The MMA also controls provincial assemblies in the North West Frontier Province and the Baluchistan assembly, where it leads a governing coalition. Despite concerns, the MMA have been unable as yet to alter Islamabad's foreign or economic policies. Redeployments were announced by both India and Pakistan after the elections, ending a tense 10-month long military face-off across the border. In November, a fragile coalition of parties supporting Musharraf selected Musharraf's supporter and former Baluchistan chief minister Mir Zafarullah Jamali as Pakistan's prime minister (website <http://www.pak.gov.pk/New%20Site/Prime%20Minister/pm-profile.htm>), the first prime minister since Nawaz Sharif was removed in the 1999 coup. Neither the PPP nor the MMA supported Jamali, but several PPP members were induced to vote for the prime minister by the offer of ministerships.
- Since the 2002 National Assembly elections, the PML-Q has been leading a ruling coalition controlling both houses of Parliament and the Punjab and Sindh provincial assemblies. Because of its record of support for Musharraf, it has earned the appellation of "the king's party."
- Hopes that the 2002 elections would lead to a resurgence of democratic governance in Pakistan were dashed with Musharraf's imposition of restrictive elections laws which prevented two leading politicians from participating in

elections, and his single-handed declaration of constitutional amendments to restore the president's power to dissolve the National Assembly and appoint military chiefs and provincial governors. This was done in a "Legal Framework Order" (<http://www.dawn.com/2002/08/22/top3.htm>)

- Legislative and civilian politics were hamstrung for over a year in a debate over the LFO's legitimacy. In July 2003 all opposition parties issued a collective rejection of the LFO and calling for the president's resignation, and in August, they protested Musharraf's constitutional changes and his continued role as army chief of staff by walking out of Parliament. The MMA joined the opposition parties in September by announcing its refusal to accept the LFO and Musharraf's continuance as Chief of Army Staff. In the entire year, the legislature succeeded in passing only a budget.
- In December 2003, Musharraf and the MMA reached an unexpected accommodation under which the president would resign from the military and his position of army chief of staff before the beginning of 2005 and face an electoral college (comprised of all national and provincial legislators) vote to retain the presidency through 2007, which he won on January 1, 2004 with 60 percent of the vote. As a further part of the bargain, the National Assembly passed a 17th Amendment retrospectively validating all legal actions taken by Musharraf after the coup (though Supreme Court approval within thirty days was now held to be necessary to dismiss the National Assembly). Secular opposition parties rejected the arrangement as undemocratic.

Possible causes of democracy's dismal past record in Pakistan

- Why has democracy always failed in Pakistan? India and Bangladesh, which sharing a number of cultural and demographic traits with Pakistan, have enjoyed a number of subsequent democratic governments chosen through free and fair elections. A Pakistani democracy ngo, Pildat, suggests four explanations: (see <http://www.pildat.org/about.html>)
- Insufficient assertiveness by legislators - The elected representatives were by and large not aware of their rights and responsibilities and no effective system was evolved to make these representatives aware of their responsibilities.
- Cultivation of democratic elites disrupted by military governance - During the periods of military rule, the political process which on its own momentum develops new leadership in the country came to a halt. Whenever democracy was restored, the process did not continue long enough to allow new leadership to emerge.
- Alienation and disengagement of educated middle classes from politics: The educated classes mostly from the middle class remained largely unconcerned about the political process. They were either ignored or got disillusioned because

they saw no prospects for them in the process. The political activity remained largely confined to the moneyed class or the street toughs. The educated middle class, professionals, scholars, minorities and women need to be encouraged to join the political process more actively.

- Lack of active citizenry exercising accountability: There had been no initiative taken by the citizens to monitor the performance of the elected representatives and elected bodies and to hold them accountable to their voters on the basis of their track record.

Liberal freedoms: a mixed record

- Freedom of the press: Though the Office of Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) exercises loose control over the press coverage of military matters, the Government permitted intense and public criticism of President Musharraf in the press. It exercised more stringent controls over access to the internet, and restricted access to the South Asia Tribune and cautioned media against syndicating its stories. It banned an issue of Newsweek magazine in late July which included an article on the Qu'ran which it deemed offensive. Blasphemy laws (under which an accused is subject to immediate arrest and if convicted given a mandatory death sentence) have also been used to suppress the media – although every conviction thus far has been overturned at the appellate level, where levels of judicial professionalism are higher. There has also been concern that three recently adopted ordinances —the Press Council Ordinance, the Registration Ordinance, and the Defamation Ordinance— would further restrict freedom of expression.
- Freedom of assembly: Public political gatherings have been banned since 2000, although the ban has been enforced unevenly. The government has generally allowed all Islamist parties to hold rally and campaign; it has occasionally done so to secular parties as well. Police have used brutal force against opposition demonstrators, and no members of the security forces were, or are likely to be, prosecuted for excessive force against demonstrators. Paramilitary Rangers have also been employed to disperse demonstrations, and killed a protester in Okara on May 11, 2002.
- Religious freedom: Police have fostered a climate of impunity for acts of violence and intimidation against religious minorities. Blasphemy laws are enforced frequently, often to settle scores unrelated to religious activity, and there are 157 documented incidents in the past year of persons being incarcerated for violations of the blasphemy law. Religious extremists generally threaten judges and their families in such cases with violence in the event of an acquittal. On the other hand, no blasphemy conviction has been upheld on appeal, with Pakistan's appellate judiciary being more professional and impervious to pressure. Religious

minorities face considerable discrimination in employment, education, and in the civil and military service, whereas in the country's early years they had often risen to the senior ranks of those services. Also, until January 2002, religious minorities voted from a separate electoral roll, and could only vote for candidates to represent their community.

- **Judicial independence:** Pakistan's judiciary is notoriously corrupt and inefficient, with substantial delays in trials and frequent instances of executive interference in the outcome of litigation.
- **Women's rights:** While one third of local council seats and 60 seats in the National Assembly are set aside for female members, the MMA have declared that families of women voting in the North-West Frontier Province would be fined. With domestic violence and honour killings endemic (generally in "stove deaths"), police generally return battered women to their abusive family members, and the judicial system treats domestic violence as an essentially private matter. Rape, as well as tribally sanctioned gang rape as a way of punishing families, is also endemic, with police often implicated in the attacks, and the threat of adultery punishments discouraging victims from bringing complaints to court. Testimony of female victims and witnesses carries no legal weight.
- **Academic freedom:** while the government did not directly interfere with academic freedom, most of the nation's universities have seen widespread intimidation, threats of mass violence, and interference with examinations, faculty hiring, and admission of new students, by heavily armed radical religious organizations.
- **Slavery:** Bonded labour, essentially slavery, is illegal but common, particularly of Christians and other religious minorities, and especially in rural Sindh province. Conservative estimates place the number of bonded workers in Pakistan at several million.
- **Human rights groups' freedom to act:** human rights organizations and observers from international organisations generally reported they were given good access to police stations and prisons, were permitted to travel freely, and were treated with respect by officials.

State Department, Amnesty International, and Freedom House Ratings:

- Pakistan receives a rating of "not free" from Freedom House in the areas of political rights and civil liberties, and the State Department, in its Country Report on Human Rights Practices, appraises Pakistan's human rights record as "poor." (<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27950.htm>) Pakistan received an upward trend arrow from Freedom House (<http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/freeworld/2003/countryratings/pakistan.htm>) for holding free, but not entirely fair, national elections in October 2002.

- Among the rights violations cited by the State Department in its 2003 report are officially sanctioned (generally by local or lower-level officials) honour killings (of which 631 instances have been documented), rape, and domestic violence against women; the persistence of debt slavery, bonded labour, endemic discrimination against women, and sectarian attacks against Shi'a professionals. Amnesty International estimates 26 persons died from police torture during the past year. Police professionalism is low, with little real control over police by civil authorities, and police officers are generally not punished or briefly suspended for involvement in extrajudicial killings. Freedom House –constitution: In September 2002, Musharraf issued a “Legal Framework Order” which increased the powers of the President and the military. The order granted the president the power to dissolve the National Assembly and appoint the Army Chief and provincial governors, and it established a military-dominated National Security Council appointed with control of the nation’s security policies. The United States expressed concern at the order and the potential for the changes to hinder the country’s democratic evolution

History of U.S.-Pakistan Security Ties:

- The security relationship between the United States and Pakistan dates to 1954 and a mutual defense assistance agreement, motivated by American concerns about Soviet expansion and Pakistani concerns about India. By 1955, Pakistan had joined the South East Asia Treaty Organization and the Central Treaty Organization, and a further bilateral cooperation agreement followed in 1959. The U.S. gave Pakistan \$508 million in military assistance from 1953 to 1961. the u.s. at the same time has sought to strike an equal balance between both partners in the India-Pakistan rivalry, leading to the suspension of assistance to both sides when wars broke out in 1965 and 1971, and cooling feelings toward the united states in islamabad. Soviet expansion into Afghanistan in December 1979 led to a 5-year, \$3.2 billion economic and aid package for Afghanistan in September 1981, and President Reagan treated Pakistan as a key frontline state in the containment of Soviet expansionism.
- Pakistan’s other key security relationship is with China, which is embroiled in a strategic rivalry with India dating to a brief border war in 1962. China has been a major arms supplier for Pakistan since the 1960s, including ballistic missiles and ring magnets used to enrich uranium, and has served as a Chinese bridge both to the Muslim world and to Washington.
- Pakistan’s desire to secure a Pakhto-dominant and friendly government in the guise of the Taliban regime on its western border drove it away from the United States and closer to global Islamists. In September 2003, the DIA declassified documents which suggested ISI support to Al-Qa’ida in the 1990s.

- The then-moribund U.S.-Pakistan security relationship was revived after September 11, 2001, and in August 2002 officials from the Defense Department and Ministry of Defence met in Islamabad for the first Defence Consultative Group session held since 1997. Since then, it has withstood difference - in March 2003, Pakistan expressed disapproval of the coalition's military action against Saddam – and grown stronger, when in March 2004 the United States designated Pakistan as a Major Non-Nato Ally.
- Subordination of democracy rhetoric to security ties: The revised security environment following September 11 led President Bush to waive coup-related sanctions from March 2003 on, as well as the military and economic sanctions imposed on Pakistan in 1990 and 1998 for acquiring nuclear weapons. While American officials continued to call for democratic progress in Pakistan – Assistant Secretary of State (South Asia) Christina Rocca was typical of the administration's rhetoric when in March 2003 she told a House subcommittee that the administration wanted to see “strong Pakistani democratic institutions and practices, including a National Assembly that plays a vigorous and positive role in governance” – the United States's need for an ally while engaging in military action in neighbouring Afghanistan guaranteed that Pakistan's post-coup international isolation had come to an end.
- U.S. assistance to Pakistan increased markedly, from \$3.5 million in FY 2001 to over \$1 billion in the following year. Though aid then decreased to \$494 million in FY 2003, Bush promised Musharraf in June 2003 a 5-year, \$3 billion aid package to begin in FY2005 and be paid in five annual instalments, evenly split between military and economic aid.
- In the last two years, the IMF and World Bank have helped Pakistan to reschedule \$12.5 billion in outstanding debt to western countries, and provided more than \$1 billion in soft loans. Last year the United States wrote off \$1 billion in bilateral debt, and this year President Bush promised Pakistan another \$3 billion in grants over the next five years. Visiting Bush in Washington, Prime Minister Zafarullah Jamali lobbied for the sale of more weapon systems to Pakistan to counter advanced weapons India had bought from Israel.

Current U.S. and international efforts at fostering democracy in Pakistan:

- Democracy promotion expert Thomas Carothers has been sharply critical of the U.S. stance toward democratization in Pakistan, and noted that presidential statements have made clear the relationship between democracy promotion and security interests: in particular, he cites President Bush's response to questions about Musharraf's single-handed implementation of the Legal Framework Order: "My reaction about President Musharraf, he's still tight with us on the war against terror, and that's what I appreciate." About the Pakistani leader's abridgment of human rights and democracy, Bush's response was less than convincing: "To the extent that our friends promote democracy, it's important. We will continue to

work with our friends and allies to promote democracy."
(<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20030501faresponse11226/paula-j-dobriansky-thomas-carothers/democracy-promotion.html>)

- Through USAID, the United States operates a three-year, \$38 million governance aid program together with the Asia Foundation (USAID website http://www.usaid.gov/pk/program_sectors/governance/program_summary.shtml) (Asia Foundation website: http://www.asiafoundation.org/Locations/pakistan_projects.html)
- Responding, perhaps, to limitations imposed by the Pakistani government, the U.S. aid program's principal efforts so far have been extraordinarily modest, consisting principally of interactive theatre and what it calls "mapping" of existing civil society organizations. The Asia Foundation has sponsored an Interactive Resource Centre which promotes citizen's education and advocacy through interactive theatre; also, it supports an Institute of Development Studies and Practice based in Balochistan, which it bills as promoting advocacy for conditions for more effective democratic governance; and it sponsors a National Research and Development Foundation, which supports civil society organizations—including, notably, Islamic organizations—in NWFP. In 2002, USAID and the Asia Foundation also supported a voter education campaign for the parliamentary elections and a orientation programs for legislators.
- U.S. government aid efforts for legal and judicial reform have been somewhat more robust, although rather than directly combating corruption, most programs to date have focused on technical assistance, the provision of computers and other information technology, and pilot court programs which have been intended to demonstrate more efficient courthouse practices.
- A report on democracy aid programs written by the U.S. government's principal contractor, in the aid bureaucracy's inimitable style, is available online http://www.usaid.gov/pk/quarterly_reports/supporting_democratic_development_fourth_quarterly_report.shtml
- A religious charity, World Vision (website <http://www.worldvision.org/worldvision/master.nsf/>) is the U.S. government's principal contractor for a second set of programs designed to encourage Pakistanis to contact and hold accountable their national and provincial legislators. This program has received a \$14 million budget over three years.
- An additional USAID contractor, Internews (its latest report is available online at http://www.usaid.gov/pk/quarterly_reports/Developing_Open_Media_in_Pakistan_second_quartely_report.shtml), is engaged in training local radio journalists in reporting skills. It received a \$1 million, one-year grant. It is not presently meeting many of its targets, according to its most recent report.

- Among international organisations, the World Bank operates a number of projects in Pakistan (<http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=217672&piPK=95916&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=223661&category=regcountries®ioncode=4&countrycode=PK>). While the Bank has taken on projects oriented toward improving education of poor citizens and women, and in bettering government transparency, it is not at present engaged in democracy promotion programs per se (see country brief <http://Inweb18.worldbank.org/SAR/sa.nsf/Countries/Pakistan/E446D9087F72838E85256B02006CBFF4?OpenDocument>).
- A Pakistani democracy activist attended the third assembly of the World Movement for Democracy in Durban in February, sponsored by the National Endowment for Democracy.
- Much more substantial work has been undertaken by democratic organizations within Pakistan. The most noteworthy is the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency, or PILDAT (website <http://www.pildat.org/>) PILDAT's principal programs (website http://www.pildat.org/about_programmes.html) are focused at the moment on building the capacities of individual legislators and the legislatures themselves; monitoring the performance and work of individual legislators, and making that information available to constituents; and on projects geared toward the mentoring of new generations of democratic politicians. PILDAT has broad backing from Pakistan's educated elite, and its programs are in general more professional than those of U.S. aid organizations backed by the U.S. government. PILDAT also has sponsored projects in the areas of voter education, candidate and campaign personnel training, and the monitoring of good governance. PILDAT produces a regular report on the state of democracy in Pakistan, with the most recent being at <http://www.pildat.org/publications/sdr4eng.pdf> .

Scenarios and Options for U.S. policy:

- Pakistan reflects an area of intense disagreement within American foreign policy circles – while there is broad consensus that a democratic, allied Pakistan is a necessary security partner in the long term, there is major disagreement over the extent to which cooperation with Musharraf benefits the United States over the short term. While two political scientists at Rand recently wrote “Democracy Is the Best Weapon Against Terrorists in Pakistan,” <http://www.rand.org/commentary/120603CST.html> , by contrast, shortly after the coup of 1999, a leading Republican foreign policy hand penned a piece with the title “Pakistan: Democracy is Not Everything” (<http://www.brook.edu/dybdocroot/views/op-ed/haass/19991111.htm>)
- What would be the consequences of a withdrawal of U.S. support from Musharraf? If handled ineptly, and if it did not have the consequence of

provoking his downfall, such a move could have the possible effect of prodding Musharraf further into the hands of his Islamist coalition partners in parliament. If, rather, the United States were to be more gentle in nudging the general slowly from power, a subsequent PPP- or PML-N-led Pakistan would most likely bow to strong international incentives and continue the broad directions of current Pakistani foreign policy, with alignments with the United States and China, and a conciliatory policy toward India. On the other hand, if the country's past history is any guide, a Pakistani government led by the PPP or PML-N will be more corrupt and prone to internal division than the current military regime, though more committed than it to democratic governance. Also, compared with a subsequent civilian democratic government, Musharraf's government may represent a window of opportunity with India, as his intense dependence on the United States and fear of his own Islamists, who have tried on two occasions to assassinate him, makes him more likely to seek an accommodation with India. A more legitimate and responsive democratic leader, or one seeking coalition support from the MMA through concessions on foreign policy, may find itself under greater pressure to cultivate insurgency in Kashmir and infiltrations across the line of control.

- Most events in Pakistan's domestic evolution, of course, are out of the United States's hands. The United States should, however, be prepared for several key scenarios. One is the assassination of Musharraf by Islamists, which could in turn lead to one of two consequences: stronger military control, with the likely succession of current deputy chief of the army staff General Mohammed Yusuf to a military presidency, with little effect on U.S. security ties and uncertain effects on democratisation prospects; or a complete withdrawal of the military from power, in favour, most likely, of its parliamentary ally, the PML (Q). If current coalition ties are any indication, the PML-Q would reach to the MMA as a coalition partner, resulting in an accelerated pace of Islamisation at home, a clamping down on democratising progress, and a foreign policy posture considerably more hostile toward India and independent of the U.S.
- In any event, the United States should be ready for an eventual transition of power to one of the two moderate democratic (if, in the past, wracked by corruption) parties, the PPP and the PML-N, after the end of military government. For this inevitability, the United States should ensure that it has laid the groundwork of a stable security and democracy-promotion partnership by quietly reaching out to those parties now while they are in the wilderness, when such gestures will be more meaningful, and will gain the United States greater influence in pushing its agenda of political reform and security cooperation when the time comes that those parties sit across from it at the table.