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Prospects for Peace in South Asia

Edited by Rafiq Dossani and
Henry S. Rowen

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Prospects for Peace in South Asia





Introduction

Rafiq Dossani and Henry S. Rowen

Ever since 1998, the year of India's and Pakistan's nuclear tests, an increasingly common conclusion is that the two nations, which have long been contending over Kashmir, will get into a nuclear conflict.¹ The United States has not involved itself very much in this conflict. It has influence on this dispute largely through its support of President Musharraf of Pakistan, who is regarded as an essential supporter of America's anti-terrorist operations in Afghanistan. His domestic situation is a difficult one, especially regarding the forces of religious radicalism that are the source of Pakistan's actions in Kashmir. The situation is compounded by older problems of ethnic tensions and a poorly performing economy, and the more recent crisis regarding its role in spreading nuclear-weapon-related technology and materials. Further, continuing Pakistani support for the Kashmir insurgency may no longer be tolerated by a newly resurgent India. These developments have implications for U.S. policy: American support for Pakistan is viewed as critical and includes bolstering its weak economy and supporting a Kashmir solution that is consistent with Pakistani ambitions. At this writing, it is encouraging to observe that high-level discussions are taking place between the two countries on their differences. However, we do not know what the outcome will be.

It is the objective of this book to examine the assumptions underlying the above arguments and to reevaluate the inference of likely conflict. Three key forces are analyzed: religion and its influence on civil society and politics; the role of the army as a political force, a factor relevant for Pakistan; and

both countries' nuclear weapons capabilities. Following is a summary of the findings of the book's authors with respect to these assumptions.

Pakistan

Islamic radicalism in Pakistan was seeded by the army in the 1960s and has played a major role in fomenting and sustaining the Kashmir problem. Pakistan's rulers, both civilian and military, have not only sent terrorists across the Line of Control but have used them to support a domestic insurgency in Indian Kashmir that might otherwise have remained small and easily contained. Using survey data, Chris Fair and Karthik Vaidyanathan show, however, that Pakistan's urban elite—from whom the ranks of the political and military classes are drawn—is not attracted to Islamic radicalism. Despite the importance of religion in daily life, urban Pakistanis overwhelmingly support the secularization of politics, the curbing of extremism, the reforms of *madrasahs*, and the building of relations with the West. Further, in national votes, extremist parties have tended to receive negligible support.

Elections in 2002 marked a rise in support for religious parties, particularly the alliance Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), but Fair and Vaidyanathan suggest that this may be for reasons unrelated to MMA's radical agenda. First, the MMA succeeded because it capitalized on anti-U.S. sentiment in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Baluchistan, the regions closest to Afghanistan. Further, the MMA was one of the few groups to oppose Musharraf on several issues of democracy and good governance. The MMA was also lucky: a baccalaureate was required (from this election on) in order to enter the contest, and the MMA had several *madrasah* graduates who qualified.

This does not mean that Islamic radicalism has no future in Pakistan. It relies (and has always relied) primarily on the army to survive, being insufficiently popular to influence state policy through political parties or popular agitation. The army has supported it when it needed a tool to wedge its way into power but has suppressed it otherwise. In doing so, an unmanageable monster may have been created. In his chapter, Vali Nasr describes the rise of Islamic radicalism, concluding that

[Until 9/11,] Islamization justified and supported Pakistan's regional strategic objectives and, increasingly, the ebbs and flows of its domestic politics. The failure to

create a tenable structure for the role that Islam played in Pakistan led to the gradual unraveling of the concordat between Islamism and the state, just as it pushed Islamism in the direction of greater radicalism. The coup of 1999 underscored this problem. But it was the events of September 11 that placed the greatest pressure on the arrangement that had first come about in the Zia years. . . . The regional justifications for Islamization are no longer there.

The future of Islam in Pakistani politics can no longer be predicted, especially since Musharraf appears to be the most secular leader that the country has ever had. Equally, the regional and domestic politics that made Islam central to realizing Pakistan's state interests cannot be dismissed. Further, economic failures, with the resulting poverty, have made problems worse by providing a social context in which radicalism can flourish.²

The army has come to occupy the central role as the guarantor of Pakistan's territorial and social integrity in crises (despite some important past failures). This role will continue, primarily because of popular support. Outside of crises, army rule has been unsustainable, raising the question of how it manages so frequently to retake power. The answer, as described by Kennedy in his chapter, is that it has developed a sophisticated playbook for reentry and legitimation that has served it well over the decades. Kennedy argues that the army's inability to hold on to power suggests that what Pakistan needs is a stable constitutional system that accommodates both military and civilian leadership. He argues that the framework for such a system exists in the modified 1973 Constitution under which civilians ruled Pakistan from 1988 to 1997.

A third key factor is Pakistan's nuclear weapons capability. Little is known or declared about this capability—its extent, command mechanisms and controls, and strategic objectives—but its acquisition apparently fulfils objectives beyond deterrence, including to support insurgency in Kashmir, nation-building, and regional leadership in the Islamic world. In his chapter, Peter Lavoy discusses these objectives. Within Pakistan, nuclearization is already considered a great success, most recently in defusing the 2002 stand-off with India. Given the domestic popularity of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program—to the extent that the population seems willing to bear the costs involved—the program will grow with time. The growth will occasionally occur covertly and occasionally more openly, and at varying speeds, depending on the state of relations with India and the West, on what India does with its own nuclear weapons program, and on relations between Pakistan's army and its civilian politicians.³

India

For the past two decades, India has seen rising popular support for Hindu radicalism. This has led to increasing intolerance of Pakistan's use of Islamic radicalism in Kashmir and to less central government support for autonomy for Kashmir—as harsher reprisals (that have earned the federal government the ill will of most of Indian Kashmir's residents) to local uprisings show. How did Hindu radicalism gain prominence in a country as pluralistic—in religion, culture, and ethnicity—as India? Much has been written about its rise.⁴ In his chapter, Ainslie Embree considers the role of Hindu radicalism in the evolving definition of Indian nationalism. At independence, the Congress Party, with its stress on territorial integrity combined with religious neutrality, won the opening battle for identity over its principal opponent, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and its affiliates (which now includes the Bharatiya Janata Party, the leading party of the ruling coalition up to 2004), which saw independence as an opportunity to reconstruct the Hindu nation.⁵ The identity war has not yet been lost by the RSS, however, as the 2003 riots in Gujarat showed. As Embree notes:

There is no question that there are many groups and individuals in civil society speaking for India, giving assurance of the reality of a national project affirming such a plural society, with special concern for secularism, with at least the minimum meaning that the nation's commitment to religious freedom, with no particular religion being privileged, represents a consensus. Looking at modern India's historic experience, however, there is no avoiding the conclusion that within civil society there is really no such consensus, and that very powerful groups are not enthusiasts for a pluralistic society but insist that a valid nationalist project be framed in terms of an Indian culture that is synonymous with Hindu culture.

As Robert Hardgrave shows in his chapter, the rise of Hindu radicalism has been accompanied by a softening of its ambitions, representing a political compromise. In 1939, the president-elect of the Hindu Mahasabha (a key RSS affiliate), M. S. Golwalkar, could write that, within India, “the foreign races must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no ideas but those of glorification of the Hindu race and culture . . . or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment—not even citizens' rights.” Even the 1958 election manifesto of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh (BJS),

the precursor of today's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), sought unity by "nationalizing all non-Hindus by inculcating in them the ideal of Bharatiya (Indian) culture." Since then, the BJS / BJP has experimented with a variety of strategies that could help it achieve power, including favoring socialism (in the early 1980s). It appears to have found a winning formula in building coalitions with secular parties that unite in their opposition to the Congress Party and in deflecting the more extreme elements of Hindu radicalism to the states where it rules on its own. Thus, while its own election manifesto favors the construction of a temple at the disputed site of Ayodhya, the manifesto agreed to with its coalition partners does not mention Ayodhya. As the country's ruler (in coalition) from 1998–2004, the BJP at the center was more moderate than was expected from its earlier record in the states. However, in all state elections, including those after 1998, it has invariably propounded and, when elected, practiced a radical Hindu agenda consistent with its early roots. At the very least the BJP has succeeded in bringing Hindu radicalism into the mainstream of Indian politics, thus fulfilling RSS founder Savarkar's dream of "politicizing Hinduism." "Hinduism," Hardgrave observes, "is being transformed, and, albeit slowly, Hindu nationalists are the likely beneficiary."

In her chapter, Barbara Metcalfe analyzes the declining role of Muslim Indians as a potentially countervailing socioeconomic and political force. She argues that two factors underlie this decline, which were in evidence prior to independence but have accelerated since. The first is that the general body politic's commitment to secularism has turned out to be a struggle against the widely held assumption that the real citizen in India is a Hindu. The second is the focus on moral jihad (i.e., nonviolent commitment to the ideals of Islam), which has been propagated by Muslim leaders since independence as a tactic to survive in a hostile environment. This focus has served to reinforce perceptions of Muslims as culturally defensive, inward-looking, and unable to contribute to India's socioeconomic progress. Reversing the decline will not be easy. Metcalfe notes that "until the larger society in India undertakes its own 'jihad' against anti-Muslim prejudice and the conditions that underlie it ... the moral jihad of the minority and the secularism of the entire polity will continue in uneasy tension."

The second factor in India is its nuclear capability. Protecting India's territorial integrity is a key objective of nuclearization. Rajesh Basrur's chapter discusses a recent test of this objective. In 2002, triggered by an attack on India's Parliament on December 13, 2001, blamed on Pakistan, India initiated

a massive military buildup at its borders and deployed submarines and missiles in an effort to coerce Pakistan into halting support for terrorism, but underlying this was the unstated threat of nuclear war. India also hoped that the United States would view this buildup as a sign of its seriousness and would intervene to prevent Pakistan from supporting terrorism. This costly strategy ended in near failure when the initiative was withdrawn in October 2002 without its goals being achieved.

The Indian strategy of coercive diplomacy failed because the threshold for retaliation was not—and could not be—spelled out. Second, the strategy wrongly assumed that Pakistan would have to cap its costs. India knew that the cost of its own buildup would be high, but hoped that the cost of response would be more than Pakistan was willing to bear. This turned out to be untrue because Pakistan believes that its claims over Kashmir are legitimate, are related to Pakistan's very existence as a state, and, therefore, are worth a high price. Finally, Washington's intervention to defuse the situation allowed Pakistan to continue its behavior, now shielded by a powerful ally.

As a strategy to contain Pakistan, especially its support for the Kashmir insurgency, India's acquisition of a nuclear capability appears to have been a strategic blunder. Pakistan was sure to follow India's lead. However, India had other reasons for developing its bomb, primarily as a long-delayed response to China's testing of nuclear weapons since 1964, but also as part of its long-held ambition to achieve great-power status.

Meanwhile, India's improved economic growth prospects have enabled a serious consideration—for the first time, perhaps—that its ambitions to join the global elite may be realizable in the medium term. India now realizes that it must solve the Kashmir problem, by accommodation with Pakistan if necessary.

United States

The third important player is the United States. Howard Schaffer argues that the United States is largely uninterested in South Asia, with limited independent enthusiasm for resolving the Kashmir problem. With nuclearization of the subcontinent, the United States is keen to prevent a war and will intervene only as needed to avoid that outcome. The United States has also

developed a strong interest in the fate of Afghanistan, which is closely linked to that of Pakistan. These factors are likely to cause South Asia to be high on the American agenda.

As Schaffer shows, U.S. disinterest is not new, the superpower having generally been a reluctant participant in South Asian affairs. Over the years, Washington's assessment of U.S. interests in South Asia has changed more markedly and taken more different directions than in almost any other region. In the 1960s, the subcontinent's preoccupation with its own problems led Washington to conclude that neither Pakistan nor India would further U.S. interests in containing the Cold War, which led to a long period of neglect of the region. Interest was rekindled with the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, only to recede again when the Soviet occupation ended. Similarly, interest has recently been rekindled with nuclearization and Pakistan's frontline role in the battle against terrorism.

Kashmir

Kashmir is a natural locus for Indo-Pak hostility, given its location as a border state, its Muslim majority, and a history of non-Kashmiri Hindu rule that was considered oppressive by its Muslim subjects. At the time of partition, and facing an armed Muslim insurrection supported by Pakistan, its Maharaja acceded Kashmir to India on special terms. Kashmir would have its own constitution and governance, except for foreign policy, defense, and communications. It was further stipulated that Kashmir's future status as part of the Indian Union would be mutually determined by both the Indian and Kashmir sides. A war ensued between India and Pakistan over this issue, which ended with the establishment of a cease-fire line⁶ brokered by the U.N. Both sides agreed that a future plebiscite by the Kashmiri people would decide their fate. None of these undertakings have been carried out.

Today, Kashmir is a divided state that reflects the outcome of the 1947 war: one-third of its area is controlled by Pakistan, and India controls most of the rest. China also owns a small stake, ceded to it by Pakistan. Both sides of Kashmir have a Muslim majority, although the Kashmiri language predominates only in the Kashmir Valley on the Indian side (among both Muslims and Hindus), while Pakistan-controlled Kashmir is mostly Punjabi-speaking. This difference between ethnicity and religion poses a problem for any attempted future unification between the two halves.

Little is known on the outside about Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, or Azad (“Independent”) Kashmir. In his chapter, Rifaat Hussain discusses the origins and status of Azad Kashmir and its relationship with Pakistan. He shows that the region nominally has greater autonomy than Indian Kashmir but is in reality a satrapy of Pakistan.⁷ He concludes, however, that Pakistan has been able to manage its relations with Azad Kashmir better than India has managed its relations with Indian Kashmir. Further, owing to India–Pakistan conflicts, Azad Kashmir is an important part of the calculation of the militants in the Kashmir Valley.

Indian-controlled Kashmir has gone through several phases in its relationship with India, as discussed by Chandrashekhar Dasgupta. Beginning with a period of high autonomy, the state has successively been brought closer to the Indian Union, sometimes by popular will and sometimes at Delhi’s will. A key breakdown in the process was the local elections of 1987, widely believed to have been rigged, that seeded the insurgency. Pakistan quickly supported the insurgency, which had some early successes. But the army crackdown that followed the unrest was at times brutal and indiscriminate, and destroyed any popular support that might have remained for the Indian government and the idea of permanent union with India. At the same time, local support for militant activities was limited, and had ebbed by the mid-1990s, although the armed insurgency continues to the present. In 2002, the first fair elections in fifteen years were held and brought the People’s Democratic Party—led by an erstwhile congressman and Kashmiri, M. M. Sayeed—to power.

India’s readiness to negotiate Kashmir’s future reflects recent changes in Kashmir and in Pakistan’s attitude. Delhi has constantly struggled to integrate Kashmir into the Indian Union. But authoritarian governance by duly elected politicians in the early days, rigged elections, and the army’s misbehavior have combined to convince most Kashmiris that India will never negotiate a fair plebiscite on Kashmir’s future. This will continue to make Kashmir a difficult area to govern, even without Pakistan’s support for armed insurgency and even if Delhi allows Srinagar to govern without interference. However, there is reason for hope, primarily because the populace in the Kashmir Valley has shown itself tremendously and repeatedly willing to participate in a democratic political process, rigged or otherwise. This faith may finally rebound to India’s favor. The elections of 2002 were popularly believed to have been fair and have brought into power a group of

politicians that is trusted by local people. The local government has asked the people of Kashmir to be patient while it works to restore peace, restart economic growth, rid the valley of armed militants, and bring Delhi to agree to begin discussions of autonomy. The Indian government's readiness to negotiate over Kashmir is also linked to its great-power ambition, as earlier noted. Further, the government believes that over the longer term, India's superior economic progress is likely to make it a more desirable partner for Kashmir than Pakistan.

Although Pakistan has declared its support for a plebiscite, certain events—such as the partial success of the 1989 armed insurgency supported by Islamist militants and Pakistan's successful management of its relations with Azad Kashmir—have convinced it that the people of both sides of Kashmir do not want to be part of the Indian Union. In its view, a plebiscite would probably lead to independence, with a preference for closer relations to Pakistan than to India. In our view, this is not a realistic perspective in the absence of economic and political reform in Pakistan. The Kashmiris in the valley would face a hard choice between a democratic, politically stable, and increasingly prosperous India and a religiously compatible Pakistan that looks both poor and unstable. If the Indian government behaves better toward the Kashmiris, including granting them more control over local matters, they might come to believe that being part of India is better than being part of Pakistan, or even being independent. Second, the Indian government is most unlikely to permit a plebiscite it judges would lead to independence. Of course, this is conjectural, but our main point is that one should not assume that present attitudes will remain frozen forever.

Now that Indian Kashmir has its first fairly elected government in fifteen years, both the Indian and Kashmir governments have onerous and delicate responsibilities ahead, even if Pakistan stays out of the picture. The Kashmir government first needs to convince the local people that it is firmly on their side and that, in return, they should not resort to armed militancy. For this, it will need the support of the Indian government, through administrative action that transfers administrative and legal powers back to local government, perhaps leading to a return to the levels of autonomy under the 1952 Delhi agreement. The Indian and Kashmir governments will also need to cooperate on a calibrated withdrawal of the army from Kashmir in synchronicity with the hoped-for reduction in insurgency. This entails significant risk, since the reduced possibility of an army crackdown might spur

militancy. Both governments need to agree on a timetable for discussions on autonomy, one that is benchmarked by peace-linked milestones so that the Kashmiri people are assured that their wishes will be heeded once enough peace returns.⁸ Delhi will also need (perhaps surreptitiously) to surrender its five-decade-long strategy of whittling away at the concept of Kashmiri independence through administrative and legal actions.⁹

Nuclear Weapons

The advent of nuclear weapons on the subcontinent introduced a potentially catastrophic factor. Although various reasons can be constructed as to why nuclear war will not happen, or why such a war might not produce huge damage, the capacity for war is now present.

India, Pakistan, and China share (along with Russia and—presumably—North Korea) the distinction of having three-way nuclear-weapon borders. This pattern makes for complications that are poorly understood, certainly for outsiders and perhaps also for the participants. India's weapon program doubtless received much impetus from the sequence of India having been defeated by China in the Himalayas in 1962, which was followed by the first Chinese atomic test two years later. India effectively announced its nuclear weapon status in 1974 when it tested a "peaceful device," a.k.a. a "bomb." Pakistan was sure to follow suit. The only surprise is that it took from 1974 until 1998 for India to resume testing and to declare the "devices" bombs.

India's public nuclear doctrine is unclear, including who is the main enemy: China, Pakistan, or even the United States. There has been no official pronouncement, but its National Security Advisory Board calls for, among other things, forces designed for "punitive retaliation": a triad of aircraft, mobile land-based missiles, and sea-based assets; a robust command-and-control system controlled by the Prime Minister; a no-first-use pledge; and having a strong conventional force. The operational implication of some of these concepts is not clear. In any case, the development of short-range weapons, which implies being able to use them on the battlefield, suggests a focus on Pakistan rather than China.

Although there is a question about the primary orientation of India's nuclear program, this is not true of Pakistan's. It is designed to deter or defend

against a stronger India. Unsurprisingly, Pakistan has not adopted a no-first-use pledge. There remain many important questions about the Pakistan program, including the control of the weapons today and, even more, in an uncertain future. The military has been in charge of the program, not heads of government. There are also questions about who might get hold of these weapons in a period of turmoil.

Michael Krepon argues in his chapter that the combination of harsh rhetoric, provocative action, and the absence of trust and channels of communication (especially in the early stages of nuclearization) invite destabilizing actions and escalation. In the early stages of these programs, the size and disposition of each side's nuclear deterrent tends to be opaque to the other, which can prompt worst-case assessments. Secure second-strike capabilities, in particular, might not exist and are difficult to assess during the early days. One side may believe that the other side is racing ahead in this respect, and so may be tempted to use nuclear weapons sooner rather than later. Finally, behavior might not be rational during moments of intense crisis arising from a miscalculation on the effect of, say, insurgency. Both sides might misread the extent of outside support. For example, India and Pakistan have engaged in brinkmanship—ratcheting up support for insurgency in Kashmir in the case of Pakistan, or coercive diplomacy on the part of India—on the assumption that the United States will intervene to prevent nuclear war anywhere in the globe. If the United States does not intervene as expected, nor does China, especially with Pakistan, the situation could escalate out of control.

One might hope that at least the possession of nuclear weapons would cause Pakistan to be more cautious about supporting terrorists in India and that both sides would think twice about engaging in conventional military operations. The caution with which the United States and the Soviet Union dealt with their confrontation in Europe over many decades supports that inference. But it is no guarantee.

Prospects for Peace

A conclusion of the above analysis is that the causes of India's and Pakistan's largely hostile relations toward one other originate not in religious radicalism but in other domestic concerns: a concern with territorial integrity in India, and the interaction of the military with civilian politicians in Pak-

TABLE 1.1

Share of the Vote in National Elections for BJP and Congress, 1951–2004

	BJP vote share	Congress vote share
1951	3.1	45.0
1957	6.0	47.8
1962	6.4	44.0
1967	9.3	40.8
1971	7.4	43.7
1977	n/a ^a	34.5
1980	n/a	42.7
1984	7.8	49.1
1989	11.4	39.5
1991	20.0	36.7
1996	20.2 ^b	28.8
1998	25.6 ^b	25.8
1999	23.8 ^b	28.3
2004	22.16	26.69

SOURCE: http://www.eci.gov.in/infoeci/key_stat/keystat_fs.htm (accessed October 21, 2003).

NOTES: a. For the 1977 elections, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (earlier name of the BJP) merged with other parties to form the Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLD) or Janta party. The BLD contested in the national elections after the Emergency as a single party, and took 41.3 percent of the vote. The Janta Party split after its failure in the 1980 elections, when it received 18.9% of the vote. Its BJS elements regrouped to form the BJP.

b. BJP-led coalition formed the government.

istan. Religious radicalism has been invoked to support these concerns. Despite the continuing risk that both countries may have created monsters that they cannot tame, the likelihood of war remains low. As Table 1.1 shows, in India, although the Ayodhya agitation of 1989 seems to have benefited the BJP, the destruction of the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya in 1992 and the wildly popular nuclear tests of 1998 have had diminishing electoral returns.

The BJP's largely centrist, mainstream approach in power and its aggressive pursuance of economic reforms suggested that it had found the formula for success and that it would continue with the combination of the soft-central and hard-state approaches that paid off in Gujarat and subsequent local elections in 2003 and 2004. However, having unexpectedly lost the national elections in 2004, the BJP may reexamine this strategy—even though the election results do not imply anything about which of the two approaches failed it at the polls. It is possible that the party may remain in no hurry to

disturb the status quo in its agenda of mainstreaming radical Hinduism, at least until it can work out a strategy of coming to power on its own in the center. Alternatively, it may turn to a more hardline stance, although the electoral arithmetic argues against such an approach. At the very least, it is likely to experiment with different approaches in local elections in the interregnum to the next round of national elections, scheduled for 2009.

In Pakistan, too, religious radicalism faces long-term decline in popular support (while managing to survive on the support of the army and civilian leaders). The religious parties' vote share peaked at 20 percent in the 1970 elections and remained below 5 percent for subsequent elections up to 2002. In 2002, the MMA improved on the performance of religious parties in the 1997 elections, when they had won only 2 percent of the votes. The MMA won 11.3 percent of the vote but took 15 percent of the seats in the National Assembly.¹⁰ It also came to power in the NWFP and shares power (with the army-backed Pakistan Muslim League [Quaid-i-Azam]) in Baluchistan. Nationally, the PML-Q leads the government.

Although the 2002 national elections in Pakistan saw renewed support for religious parties, the conclusion that this reflects a swing toward radicalism by Pakistan's population, as portrayed in the Western press,¹¹ is probably inaccurate, as already noted above in our discussion of Fair and Vaidyanathan's work. For one thing, the still modest vote share of the religious parties and the electoral failure of its most orthodox constituents makes such a conclusion suspect.¹² For the 2002 elections, the religious parties fought under a common front, termed the United Council for Action (the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, or MMA). Its constituent parties included all the main religious parties: the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), two factions from the Deobandi Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), the Brelvi Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan (JUP), the Shiite Islami Tehrik Pakistan (ITP), and the Wahhabi Jamiat Ahle Hadith (JAH). Despite severe doctrinal differences,¹³ the MMA has held together subsequently, under pressure from the army.¹⁴ The MMA's performance could also be viewed, as Fair and Vaidyanathan show in their chapter in this book, as a vote against state support for U.S. actions among Pakhtoon populations, due to ethnicity shared by the Pakhtoons of NWFP and Baluchistan with the majority Afghan population. This inference may be justified by looking at where the religious parties did well. All the MMA's seats in Baluchistan, where it won 14 out of 51 seats, were in Pashto-speaking areas.¹⁵ By contrast, in Sindh, whose capital, Karachi, is considered to be the "emerging epicenter of extremist organizations,"¹⁶ the MMA won only

11 of the 130 provincial seats. Overall, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP)¹⁷—which openly supported Pakistan's alliance with the United States—received the most votes.

While the Western press has tended to portray the election results as a challenge to Musharraf's ability to keep religious forces at bay, the reality is that it was Musharraf who managed to create a most improbable combination of doctrinally opposed religious parties that contested the elections on a common platform and that have subsequently held together. The MMA has also obliged the army by participating in governing alliances constructed by the army with secular parties such as the PML-Q. The 2002 elections thus once again illustrated the dependency of the religious parties on the army¹⁸ and the latter's willingness to use them as a counterweight to feudal parties—though, once again, with limited success.

The election results were thus much better for Musharraf than commonly perceived. To wit: (1) the civilian population is pleased (as are Pakistan's Western allies) that democracy (albeit an imperfect one) is being reestablished in Pakistan; (2) the feudally oriented PPP and the Nawaz Sharif faction of the Pakistan Muslim League (the PML-N) are counterbalanced by the constitutional supremacy of the presidency and the alliance between the religious parties and the ruling PML-Q (even though this party is composed of feudal interests similar to those of the PML-N); (3) the domination of religious parties in the areas bordering Afghanistan is the best possible outcome to tackle the difficult issue of rebuilding Pak-Afghan relations that have been adversely affected by Pakistan's previous support to the Taliban; and (4) India faces a Pakistan ruled by persons close to the Pakistani army, thereby presenting as close to a united front as possible.

How will this post-election situation affect Pakistan's actions in Kashmir? This partly depends on the army's future role in Pakistan, partly on Pakistan's perceptions and ambitions on Kashmir (which differ from India's), and partly on the Indian threat.

The army's perception of its role has not changed since the time of Ayub and has perpetuated a vicious political cycle: given its perception of the immaturity of civilian politics, the army will voluntarily stay "in the barracks" only during normal times, returning to a prominent stabilizing role during crises.¹⁹ In the past, Pakistan was considered by the army to be precipitously close to some type of crisis at all times.²⁰ Hence, the army stayed at or near the center of power at all times; that is, it was never in the barracks. By do-

ing so, it fostered the immaturity of civilian politics since, at the very least, civilian politics takes a few uninterrupted electoral cycles to mature. Each time the army withdrew from power, it observed that corrupt, feudal parties came to power.²¹ The army then invariably tried to delegitimize civilian rule, including using religious parties,²² or by supporting sectarian disturbances as preludes to a coup d'état. As a longer term strategy, it tried to create anti-feudal forces through the religious parties.

Nuclearization and its successful test in defusing the Indian threat in 2002, combined with Indian Kashmir's local elections, have changed the environment to the point that there is now no domestic or external prospect of imminent crisis and, hence, no reason for the army to sponsor a revival of Islamic radicalism. The vicious cycle can finally be broken, a fact reflected in Indo-Pakistani negotiations since 2003. The focus of the army will now be on fostering and participating in a process of civilian–military engagement—currently informal and covert, but this could soon become formalized—to find common ground between popular will and the army's aspirations.

Although the latter has been the key domestic challenge that every civilian government since Bhutto has had to face, the difference this time is the removal of both the external threat and the external opportunity. The challenge for civilian parties is now to buy time from the army. They will need to make concessions on several fronts: the management of foreign policy will have to be shared, for example. They also need to steer the economy to a higher growth path in order to lessen the possibility of internal crises and to keep the army fully provisioned. The latter is needed to reassure the army that civilian politicians are friendly to the army's vision of the country's future as one ruled by politicians who will not weaken the army's ability to respond in a crisis.

These are difficult tasks, given the poor levels of economic and social development and the failure consistently to pursue pro-growth policies. The incentive for the participants is that both will gain long-term popular credibility. The side-benefits are the suppression of religious radicalism and that Pakistan will stay out of Indian Kashmir.

Despite the complexity, some important conclusions may be drawn. First, Pakistan is likely to become a less important actor in the near term in Kashmir. Instead, as we have suggested above, Kashmir will revert to a struggle for autonomy, at least initially nonviolent, between the Kashmiris and

the Indian government. However, given the recent history of this struggle, a return to high levels of violence in the future cannot be ruled out. Much will depend on the willingness of both sides to perform on key issues: the Kashmiri government on the promotion of stability and growth, and Delhi on long-expected concessions on autonomy. Second, and despite a smaller role for Pakistan in Kashmir and the reopening of negotiations in early 2004, relations between India and Pakistan are likely to remain volatile. This will be due to both India's ongoing identity battle and the likely tortuous state of relations between the army and civilian politicians in Pakistan. Given their nuclear weapons capabilities and the strategic options that these afford both countries, the possibility of a nuclear conflict remains a serious worry.

U.S. interests in South Asia are closely tied to preventing a nuclear war while protecting Pakistan so that it may continue to play an effective role in helping U.S. forces operate in Afghanistan. Having accepted the subcontinent's nuclearization, U.S. interests in South Asia are likely to remain in the background, preserving the status quo and preventing the spread of a nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan and its spread via Pakistan to North Korea and possibly elsewhere—an aspect on which Pakistan appears to be vulnerable. Its independent interest in solving the Kashmir problem remains limited, despite India's appeals for U.S. pressure on Pakistan to reduce its support for insurgents in Kashmir and despite Pakistan's appeals for U.S. involvement in obtaining proper status for the region. The United States—at least while Pakistan remains a frontline state in the war against terrorism—will work actively to prevent conventional war between the two states, as well as the escalation of any conflict into a nuclear confrontation. The growing economic ties that the United States has developed with India are likely to outstrip those with Pakistan; in the long term, political relations between India and the United States will become closer.