



# Meeting the Challenges in Pakistan

Trip report and recommendations for U.S. policy

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Lawrence J. Korb, Brian Katulis, and Colin Cookman May 2009

Center for American Progress



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# Introduction and summary

During the Obama administration's first four months in office, Pakistan has reemerged as a top national security concern. Internal instability and violence in Pakistan has escalated, with a Taliban insurgency seizing more territory and militant groups undermining a weak Pakistani state. Divisions among Pakistan's political leaders, which came to a head in a battle between Pakistan's two leading political parties in March, have impeded a national consensus on addressing the long list of Pakistan's problems. Furthermore, a volatile regional security environment has deteriorated, with the Mumbai terrorist attacks in late November escalating tensions between India and Pakistan, and the war in Afghanistan having a direct impact on Pakistan's security. The United States is now transitioning from formulating a new strategy on Pakistan to the more difficult task of policy implementation and execution.

President Barack Obama, in his March 27, 2009 speech outlining the preliminary results of his administration's review of U.S. policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan, embraced the concept of building a long-term partnership with Pakistan, which the Center for American Progress outlined in last November's "[Partnership for Progress](#)" report on the country. This general concept of partnership has also informed a number of legislative proposals introduced in both houses of Congress in attempts to implement a shift in strategy on Pakistan.

At this pivotal juncture, the Center for American Progress sent a delegation to Pakistan in April 2009 to examine the dynamic situation in the country and gain a better understanding of the challenges facing the United States as it adjusts its bilateral policy toward Pakistan. The Center's analysts met with more than 100 individuals in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Karachi, and Lahore, including representatives of the Pakistani civilian government, civil society, and non-governmental actors; serving and retired members of the Pakistani security services and diplomatic corps; scholars and local and international press observers; and United States embassy staff. The following observations and recommendations are a result of those conversations and our research.

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## Observations

The delegation assessed the situation in Pakistan and developed recommendations for advancing U.S. policy in Pakistan. The team found that:

- **The U.S.-Pakistan bilateral relationship remains plagued by a mutual trust deficit.** Both countries still need to take significant steps to enhance trust and cooperation in order to build a lasting bilateral partnership and overcome the “transactional” legacy of the relationship.
- **Weak governance remains an endemic challenge throughout Pakistan.** The challenges that the Pakistani government faces in delivering basic services, setting policy priorities, carrying out long-term planning, and implementing reforms has crucial implications for the country’s security as well as its economic development. In parts of the country where the state has failed to provide law and order and does not meet the basic needs of the people, extremist groups work to exploit the situation by filling the gap. Improvement will ultimately depend on Pakistan’s civilian leadership and the ability of its public to hold them accountable for their actions. Still, the United States needs to place an even greater priority on these issues in its own bilateral relationship with Pakistan.
- **Pakistan’s willingness and capacity to conduct comprehensive counterinsurgency and counterterrorist operations remains limited.** Pakistan’s military establishment remains focused on conventional conflict with its neighbor India, and cooperation between civilian and military leaders on counterterrorism action remains mixed, despite increasing domestic anxiety about the actions of militants in the country’s northwest.

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## Ten key recommendations

As the Obama administration moves to implement key policy initiatives on Pakistan in the coming years, it should work to advance a comprehensive and integrated diplomatic, security, economic, and governance agenda aimed at building a long-term partnership with Pakistan. Based on our trip, our 10 key recommendations for U.S. policy are:

1. **Build on recent regional and international diplomatic initiatives such as the trilateral U.S.-Pakistan-Afghanistan talks and the Friends of Pakistan forum.** In addition to continuing to participate in international efforts to enhance regional security and increase economic development in Pakistan, the Obama administration should also reengage in regional diplomacy that seeks to revive dialogue between Pakistan and India, including a discussion of Kashmir. Pakistan’s threat perceptions are a factor in advancing stability in the country and broader region. Other key neighbors and global powers must also be included in discussions, including Russia, China, and Iran.

- 2. Initiate a comprehensive diplomatic engagement with a broad range of Pakistani institutions and actors.** The military in Pakistan retains considerable influence and must also be included in any partnership, but the history of relations under former President Pervez Musharraf shows that it is insufficient for any U.S. policy to rely on an exclusive partnership with army chiefs or particular leaders to advance U.S. interests in the country. The administration should initiate an expansive plan to establish broad contacts and cooperation between Pakistani and American civilian institutions, including think tanks, lawyers groups, civil society organizations, and the general public.
- 3. Formulate and sign a bilateral strategic framework agreement with Pakistan.** Formalizing the goals for cooperation in a bilateral strategic framework agreement can help both countries engage in strategic planning on a range of fronts—and it can help both the United States and Pakistan break the cycle of transactional and reactive policymaking that has plagued the bilateral relationship for decades.
- 4. Strengthen the police and judicial component of counterterrorism assistance.** A top priority for U.S. counterterrorism assistance should be providing professional training, equipment, and manpower to the courts, the Federal Investigation Agency, the Intelligence Bureau, and provincial police forces—which serve on the front lines of Pakistani counterterrorism operations—in order to conduct successful investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of suspected terrorists. The military has an important role in stabilizing key parts of the country, but in the long run, a well-functioning police and judicial sector are more effective weapons in countering terrorist networks.
- 5. Increase assistance for internally displaced persons.** The Obama administration's May 2009 announcement of \$110 million in assistance for internally displaced persons fleeing conflict areas is a good start. But much more assistance will be needed given the size of displacements resulting from internal violence in Swat and other parts of the country. The quick response to the devastating 2005 earthquake in Pakistan helped the United States improve its standing with the Pakistani people and marginalize militant groups, and the growing IDP crisis is a moment when the United States can stand with the Pakistani people and address their basic needs.
- 6. Enhance efforts to keep Pakistan's nuclear arsenal safe and secure.** Increased cooperation on the nuclear front will help prevent the illegal transfer of nuclear technology and expertise and safeguard the arsenal from unauthorized access. Broader diplomatic efforts will be necessary to reduce the regional tensions that contribute to the argument for an arsenal expansion.
- 7. Launch a comprehensive effort to advance Pakistani civilian government capacity and expertise in coordination with proposed bilateral development assistance increases.** To the greatest extent possible, the Obama administration should work with the institutions of the Pakistani government and key non-governmental organiza-

tions to conduct long-term economic and social development planning for the country, identify key projects for new assistance money, and build habits of transparency with their Pakistani partner ministries. Making an increased U.S. development assistance program effective will require greater coordination with other bilateral assistance programs and international and multilateral initiatives by the International Monetary Fund, or IMF, World Bank, and the Friends of Pakistan group.

8. **Include careful oversight and accounting mechanisms in assistance legislation.** The U.S. administration should work through a bilateral framework to gain input from the Pakistani government to the greatest extent possible on which projects new assistance money should fund.
9. **Reform the leading institutions of U.S. diplomacy and foreign development assistance.** For decades, the United States has underinvested in its own civilian institutions of diplomacy and economic development. Pakistan will likely be the greatest test case of whether the Obama administration can reform these institutions to meet the challenges of the 21st century.
10. **Engage with Congress and the American people on the importance of Pakistan policy.** Broad consensus currently exists within the foreign policy community about the need to shift greater attention to Pakistan. Yet the Obama administration needs to do a better job in engaging members of Congress and the American public to garner support for a policy aimed at building a long-term partnership with Pakistan. The American public needs to hear a stronger rationale for its policy and specific plans for implementation of the expanded commitment toward Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The observations and recommendations in this report build on CAP's body of work on the situation in the broader region—including Afghanistan. Our previous strategy report, the November 2008 "[Partnership for Progress: Advancing a New Strategy for Prosperity and Stability in Pakistan](#)," discussed Pakistan's multiple and interrelated challenges of internal and regional insecurity, political instability, and economic underdevelopment in greater detail. That report concluded that the U.S.-Pakistan relationship needs to shift away from the short-term, transactional pattern that has characterized much of the two nations' relations for decades.

Replacing that relationship with a proactive long-term bilateral engagement will serve as a bulwark against regional and global instability. This report aims to offer practical steps for making this necessary shift in the strategic relationship a reality, while taking into account the dynamic landscape in Pakistan and the United States.

## Developments in Pakistan: 2008–April 2009

The six months since the Center released its Partnership for Progress report on Pakistan were a tumultuous period for Pakistan and the broader region, coinciding with the transition in U.S. administrations. In this period, four key events and dynamics have served to make the situation in Pakistan and the broader region even more complicated than it was last year.

### Growing instability and insurgency inside Pakistan

The dynamic situation in Northwest Frontier Province, or NWFP, district of Swat erupted onto the front pages of U.S. newspapers this April, coinciding with the CAP trip and perpetuating the “crisis mode” that has dominated U.S.-Pakistan relations. The NWFP provincial government has been under constant attack from the local affiliate of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, the umbrella terror organization led by Baitullah Mehsud, and faced persistent criticism for the slow provision of justice and other services in the area. As the situation worsened, the NWFP government sought to use recently freed cleric Maulana Sufi Mohammad’s Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-Mohammadi party, or TNSM, as an interlocutor with militants as part of a deal that would have instituted a form of sharia courts in the Malakand Division—which encompasses Swat—in exchange for peace.

Earlier this year, the agreement was endorsed by parliament and signed into law by President Asif Ali Zardari as the Nizam-e-Adl Regulation, or NAR, yet the provincial government failed to enforce provisions to disarm Taliban forces. The militants’ subsequent armed expansion into adjacent districts raised concerns in the United States and Pakistan that the agreement represented a government capitulation to militant demands, reinforcing persistent U.S. worries about the willingness of its ally to seriously confront militant and terrorist groups. The military response to the deal’s disintegration, which has relied heavily on artillery and aerial bombardment, has resulted in a growing crisis of more than 2.4 million internally displaced persons.

### Power struggles and divisions among Pakistan’s political leadership

Pakistan’s successful parliamentary elections in February 2008 were a cause for celebration, yet the country’s leadership remains divided. The two major parties—the Pakistan People’s Party, or PPP, led by President Zardari, the husband of the late Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto; and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, or PML-N, of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who led the country from 1997 to 1999—are still unwilling to share power with one another. These tensions boiled over in March 2009, when the Supreme Court of Pakistan issued an edict blocking Sharif and his brother Shahbaz, chief minister of the Punjab parliament, from holding office. This decision led to mass protests and a planned march on Islamabad that threatened to topple the government. The government’s concessions and reinstatement of deposed Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry helped prevent a complete political breakdown, but the prospects now look remote for a national unity government capable of mobilizing the majority of Pakistanis to confront the country’s many challenges.

Red border indicates areas where the Pakistan government is currently engaged in fighting insurgent groups and the Taliban in Swat and neighboring areas.

### Escalating tensions with India and the Mumbai terror attacks

Regional tensions also continue to present a challenge for advancing stability in Pakistan. Lashkar-e-Taiba, a group based in Pakistan, killed more than 170 people in a vicious terrorist attack in the Indian city of Mumbai in November 2008. This attack derailed a nascent rapprochement between Pakistan and India called the “composite dialogue” process, which began in 2004. The process had successfully negotiated the opening of commercial ties across the Line of Control in Kashmir the month prior to Mumbai for the first time in 60 years. Long-standing mutual suspicions between the two countries remain high, although U.S. and other international intelligence and investigative services have offered assistance to the two countries in the ongoing investigation and prosecution of those responsible.

### Ongoing challenges from Afghanistan

The porous border between Pakistan and Afghanistan poses a challenge for both countries. It is widely known that militant groups have used lawless parts of western Pakistan to stage attacks in Afghanistan, but the situation in Afghanistan also threatens Pakistani security as well. An estimated 2 million refugees who fled the war in Afghanistan remain inside of Pakistan, adding considerable stress to Pakistan’s already strained infrastructure and social services capacity. Terrorist and militant groups that once operated out of Afghan territory are now in Pakistan, and these groups have increasingly targeted the Pakistani people and security forces with their operations. The annual terrorism report released by the State Department in late April 2009 reported that terrorist attacks inside of Pakistan have quadrupled since 2006.



# Key observations from April 2009

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## The U.S.-Pakistan bilateral relationship remains plagued by a mutual trust deficit

Despite leadership transitions in both the United States and Pakistan during the past year, the U.S.-Pakistan relationship remains plagued by mutual mistrust of each other's intentions. Both countries need to take significant steps to enhance trust and cooperation in order to build a lasting bilateral partnership on several issues, including security, military, intelligence, diplomatic, economic, educational, and cultural affairs. Top officials in the Obama administration and Congress have publicly expressed a lack of confidence in Pakistan's leaders on security and intelligence matters. Pakistani leaders express worries that the United States, despite its stated intentions, is not taking steps to move beyond the "transactional" history of the relationship and continues to view Pakistan as a disposable ally.

During the trip, we saw the lingering effects of the Bush administration's "war on terror" framework, combined with persistent misinformation and outright conspiracy theories about the Obama administration's intentions, as a major impediment to building this partnership. A more vigorous public diplomacy effort is necessary in order to build a stronger U.S.-Pakistan partnership.

Many Pakistanis welcomed President Obama's outreach efforts to the Muslim world, including his April speech in Turkey. President Obama's stated intention to bring assistance directly to the Pakistani people also receives broad support. Nevertheless, Pakistani public opinion is not supportive of the United States' counterterrorism goals in the region. Recent polling conducted by the International Republican Institute in March 2009 and released in early May confirms these sentiments: Only 10 percent of those polled indicated terrorism was the most important issue facing the country, compared to inflation (identified by 46 percent) and unemployment (22 percent). Even though the increased frequency of terrorist attacks inside Pakistan during the past two years has heightened concerns among Pakistanis, a strong majority (61 percent) oppose cooperating with the United States to combat terrorism.





We heard several concerns on our trip about the impact of the unmanned aerial drone attacks conducted by the United States in Pakistani territories, including anger about the rising civilian toll of these attacks. Yet at the same time, a number of Pakistani government officials we met with acknowledged privately that these attacks had some utility in addressing threats to the Pakistani state and global security, an acknowledgment echoed in the public requests by Pakistani leaders to transfer the drone technology to Pakistan.

Supporters of a peace committee protest against suspected U.S. drone missile strikes in Pakistani tribal areas at a rally in Peshawar.

Multiple visits by Obama administration military and diplomatic officials and recent high-profile U.S. statements on the security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal and its willingness and ability to confront the Taliban and Al Qaeda dominated the public discourse during our time in the country. There was a strong perception across multiple segments of Pakistani society that the United States makes excessive demands on Pakistan based on America's own security needs without serious concern for Pakistan's own regional threat perceptions.

Some Pakistani analysts acknowledged the need for better monitoring and oversight mechanisms on U.S. assistance to their country. Still, many interpreted discussions of conditionality on U.S. aid as a perpetuation of the relationship in which the United

States was perceived to rent the services of Pakistan's military against Al Qaeda-affiliated militants in exchange for expanded aid. Very few in Pakistan see the relationship with the United States as one of genuine partnership. One analyst described the United States as pursuing a series of "one-shot" policies with little concern for their effect on the long-term future of the country or the relationship.

Pakistani concern for the spillover effects of U.S. military operations in neighboring Afghanistan was also high. Several serving and retired representatives of the Pakistani security services interpreted Taliban military successes in Afghanistan to be the result of a marginalization of the Afghan Pashtun population in the Kabul government, and saw themselves as suffering the consequences of the Bush administration's mishandling of "America's war."

Several Pakistanis we met with questioned America's staying power in Afghanistan or the region, citing the U.S. history of disengagement from the region following the end of the anti-Soviet jihad in the 1980s. They worried about the effects of another withdrawal of interest from their country. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton acknowledged the U.S. role in the anti-Soviet jihad and some of its elements' maturation into existing Pakistani militant groups in remarks on April 25, 2009, and many Pakistanis looking to the United States for some sense of shared responsibility for the situation their country faces today embraced her statements.

Many of those within Pakistan's civil society highlighted the need for greater outreach efforts between the people of the United States and Pakistan to overcome some of these trust gaps. Fulbright grants, International Military Education and Training programs, and Track II dialogue programs—which remain particularly limited for Pakistan—offer invaluable opportunities to bridge the divide between the two countries. Their expansion and development will likely have a far greater impact on chances for forging a genuine partnership over the long term than top-level diplomatic pledges or more military aid.

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## Weak governance remains an endemic challenge throughout Pakistan

The challenge of governance as the crucial and central issue facing Pakistan was highlighted in nearly every meeting the Center's delegation held. The Pakistani government's inability to deliver services, determine priorities, and carry out long-term planning has obvious and serious implications for the country's economic development and ability to improve its human intellectual capital reserves. But it is also a core security issue. The state's failure to provide for the basic needs of its people effectively and efficiently has contributed to the rise of the Taliban and other insurgent groups—when the state fails to deliver, militant groups step in to fill the gap.

The threat of physical violence against government officials and the public played an important role in Taliban advances in Swat, Buner, Dir, and Shangla districts in the Northwest Frontier Provinces, as it has in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. But the Taliban

insurgency movement's claim to popular appeal rests heavily on the absence of an effective and equitable justice system in the region. The sluggish pace of justice since the former princely state of Swat formally entered the civil administration of Pakistan in 1987 contributed directly to the government's failure and the Taliban's advance in this part of Pakistan.

One analyst estimated that 80 percent of all court cases brought during this twenty-year period have yet to reach either provincial or federal-level appeals; this failure to provide timely justice has been a major rallying cry for a Taliban insurgency seeking to institute its own vision of law for the country. Additionally, the failure of the government to provide consistent security for those opposed to the Taliban or economic reconstruction in the area following previous military operations diminished public support for the state, allowing greater Taliban consolidation in the months leading up to Nizam-e-Adl deal's breakdown.

Many Pakistan analysts we met with worried about the government's ability to conduct effective economic planning and to prioritize development that reaches the people as opposed to the distribution of patronage. Several contributing factors to the governance gap are underinvestment in education for incoming civil servants, years of military rule that weakened civilian officials charged with conducting the day-to-day operations of government, and the lingering politicization and corruption of the state apparatus.

Tensions over the dispersal of revenues between the federal center and the provincial and local governments also complicate plans to increase U.S. assistance to the country. Local government representatives make a strong case for their ability to respond most directly to the needs of their constituencies, but disbursing assistance in the absence of a broader provincial and national plan raises concerns that such an initiative might contribute to the further political fragmentation of the country.

Ultimately, overcoming these difficulties will depend to a much greater degree on the actions of Pakistan's leaders and the ability of its public to hold them accountable for their actions than any offers of assistance or pressures from the United States or any other outside actor. Many contemporary media reports paint a generally dire picture of the country, but Pakistan does have strong emerging civil society, active media, and educated political and legal class. While institutions often function poorly, they do exist, and the opportunities for genuine partnership and programs of support are considerable.

U.S. policymakers should not assume the country has reached or will soon reach the level of state failure seen in post-invasion Afghanistan or some parts of sub-Saharan Africa despite recent negative trends. America's role as a major donor and key ally to Pakistan suggests that it does retain at least some leverage on the governance issue. U.S. policymakers must use that influence in conjunction with indigenous demands for greater accountability to make effective representative governance an even higher priority for Pakistan's political leaders.

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## Pakistan's willingness and capacity to conduct comprehensive counterinsurgency and counterterrorist operations remains limited

Closely linked to the issue of governance is the ability of the Pakistani state to confront the militant insurgency it currently faces in the country's northwest. Pakistan has a powerful military establishment with an educated professional core that has resisted attempts by the Pakistani civilian government to exercise greater oversight and control over its operations, the country's nuclear arsenal, and its lucrative economic holdings. Pakistan's military is one of the largest fighting forces in the world, but its focus has largely been on conventional warfare and preparations for battles with other nation-states, such as India. In order to achieve greater stability, the Pakistani people will need to support efforts by the civilian-elected government to convince the military to work more cooperatively with other elements of Pakistan's government.

Pakistan's ability to address the deeper political challenge posed by forces such as the Taliban is directly tied to its government having the ability to govern effectively. Many news reports during the April 2009 trip warned of an incipient Taliban takeover of the country, as fighters seized control of district offices in Swat, Buner, Dir, and Shangla. The real problem, however, is the potential spread of Taliban influence as a result of the absence of effective governance, rather than outright force of arms. Pakistan must work to fill the law-and-order-and-governance vacuum if it wants to avoid a repeat of Swat in six months or a year.

The unwillingness of Swat Taliban fighters to disarm and public statements by prominent militant ideologues, including Swat peace broker Maulana Sufi Mohammad, alienated and alarmed many Pakistanis, prompting condemnation even from some Islamist parties. During our trip, many observers cited the statements by Sufi Mohammed challenging the writ of the Pakistani Constitution and rejecting the practice of democracy as un-Islamic. These actions have been a major wake-up call to segments of Pakistani society that have previously discounted the seriousness of the threat.

The Pakistan military has been reluctant to take ownership of operations against its own population without cover from the civilian political establishment. A high-profile statement by Prime Minister Gillani announcing military action in Swat in late April, the endorsement of military action by members of parliament, and an All-Parties conference in mid-May provided the political backing for the latest Swat operation. The army's exclusive purview over national security policy has long marginalized Pakistani civilian politicians, and the civilian-military division that has prevented the development of an effective, coordinated counterinsurgency strategy across the Pakistani politico-military establishment.

As of this writing, over 2.4 million internally displaced persons have fled the Swat area since operations began in early May, and the Pakistani government is appealing for international assistance to meet the refugee crisis in the NWFP. When coupled with more than a half million people who fled previous operations in Bajaur and other parts of

### Pakistan's displaced by the numbers

Based on UN High Commissioner for Refugees estimates

**100,000**

Number of internally displaced people registering daily with UNHCR in Mardan, Swabi, Nowshera, Peshawar, Kohat, and Charsadda districts.

**2.4 million**

Total number of newly displaced people fleeing Swat, Lower Dir, and Buner in May alone.

**500,000**

Estimated number of refugees from operations in Bajaur and Mohmand, FATA.

**Over 2 million**

Number of Afghan war refugees.

**Over 5.4 million**

Total number of external and internal refugees in northwest Pakistan.

the FATA, the IDP number is approaching 3 million people. Addressing this immediate crisis and laying the groundwork for a long-term government presence in Swat and other areas must be a priority for both United States policy toward Pakistan and the Pakistani government's own leadership.

The threat of violent extremism in Pakistan is not confined to Swat and the country's northwestern borderlands, whose semigoverned status causes many Pakistanis to view them as distinct from Pakistan "proper." The provincial police forces, Federal Investigation Agency, or FIA, and Intelligence Bureau, or IB, serve as the front line against terrorists operating throughout the country. Together with the army and other paramilitary security forces, they have suffered a string of targeted terror attacks in the past year. These agencies are underresourced, lack sufficient training, and are increasingly demoralized, increasing the dangers as Pakistan itself becomes a target for Al Qaeda and other affiliated regional terror groups. The effective prosecution of those who threaten the state and people of Pakistan will require additional political will on the part of the political and military establishment, and the United States and other friends of Pakistan cannot impose this will externally. But they can and should increase basic technical and funding assistance to partners best positioned to improve the provision of security and justice within the country.

Military operations in Swat have continued through May. The firepower and combat capacity of the Pakistani military is likely to result in a Taliban defeat on that particular battlefield. However, the real challenge for combating nonstate actors such as the Taliban and international terrorist networks is much broader than the conventional military battles. It requires a comprehensive approach of sustainable security that enhances the capacity of the Pakistani state to provide law and order, justice, and basic governance and services to its citizens after the military action ends.

# Recommendations for the Obama administration

A little more than four months into its first term in office, the Obama administration has set the framework for a comprehensive regional approach to Pakistan, Afghanistan, and neighboring countries. To achieve gains in Pakistan during the next year, the administration should build on its impressive start and undertake specific policy initiatives on the diplomatic, security, and governance fronts in Pakistan. While not exhaustive, the following recommendations, derived from our meetings and observations, represent key starting points for achieving stability and prosperity in Pakistan and the region.

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## Diplomacy

### Build on recent regional and international diplomatic initiatives

In its first four months in office, the Obama administration has embarked on a range of diplomatic initiatives related to the broader South Asia region. The administration conducted a policy review that included numerous high-level visits to Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India, and it invited leaders from Afghanistan and Pakistan for meetings and consultations in Washington two times in the last four months. The Obama administration was also an instrumental actor at the April 2009 Ministerial Meeting of the Friends of Democratic Pakistan conference in Tokyo.

This diplomacy and series of meetings have set the framework for a comprehensive approach to the region. One key element that needs to be on the agenda is addressing long-standing India-Pakistan tensions. Following the conclusion of the Indian general election cycle in mid-May and the subsequent formation of a government, the Obama administration and its international allies should engage in regional diplomacy that seeks to restart the composite dialogue process between Pakistan and India.

Any agreement on peace can only come with support from both populations and their leaders, and the United States, both through international forums and independently, should leverage its ties with both India and Pakistan to restart the dialogue on multiple tracks. Many U.S. policymakers express frustration with the Pakistani fixation on India. But Pakistan's regional threat perceptions are not likely to change without a sustained regional security and

diplomatic effort that includes steps toward ending the tensions between India and Pakistan. Ultimately, this process will require some joint resolution of the Kashmir question, and the cessation of assistance to nonstate actors operating against each state's interests.

### Initiate a comprehensive diplomatic engagement with a broad range of Pakistani institutions

With Pakistan still in the early and fragile stages of a democratic transition, the United States now must establish relations with a much broader range of interests and players. Pakistani perceptions of America's role in manipulating its internal political system make any such engagement a delicate issue. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, was correct to emphasize in recent testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee that the United States supports the current democratically elected government against any prospect of extra-constitutional sabotage, while keeping dialogue open with the democratic opposition. The military in Pakistan retains considerable influence and must also be included in any partnership, but the history of relations under Musharraf shows that U.S. policy cannot rely on an exclusive partnership with army chiefs or particular leaders to advance U.S. interests in the country. The U.S. government must proceed without picking favorites or endorsing one leader or political party over another. And it must engage with civilian institutions and agencies to support the ongoing democratic transition of power.

The United States should also initiate an expansive plan to establish broad contacts and cooperation between Pakistani and American institutions. This should include a comprehensive plan for cooperation between think tanks, lawyers groups, civil society organizations, and the general public. Educational and cultural exchanges are vital to building stronger ties between the two nations.

### Formulate and sign a bilateral strategic framework agreement with Pakistan

The recent and regularly scheduled trilateral sessions between Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the United States offer a valuable forum in which to discuss security and diplomatic concerns shared by the three countries. Yet transforming the United States' critical relationship with Pakistan will ultimately require a far deeper and better-coordinated bilateral structure for coordination and discussion. In recent years, the United States has signed comprehensive bilateral agreements with a range of countries aimed at establishing a framework for broad-based cooperation.

The Obama administration should apply the model of recent strategic framework agreements to Pakistan. The administration should work with a range of Pakistani leaders to agree on common goals for cooperating on military, intelligence, and security matters, as well as diplomatic, political, cultural, and economic cooperation. Working with Pakistani

partners to set an official strategic framework agreement would help set the right context for cooperation on a broad range of issues of common concern to both countries. Formalizing the goals for cooperation in a bilateral strategic framework agreement can help facilitate strategic planning on a range of fronts—and it can help both the United States and Pakistan break the cycle of transactional and reactive policymaking that has plagued the bilateral relationship for decades.

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## Security policy

### Strengthen the police and judicial component of counterterrorism assistance

Investment in training, equipping, and expanding Pakistan's police force and judicial system will have the greatest impact on Pakistan's capacity to marginalize and eliminate extremist and terrorist groups. The establishment of the proposed Pakistani Counterinsurgency Capabilities Fund to provide additional training and equipment to the Pakistani military will also play a key role in improving the state's ability to confront the Taliban insurgency. But the Taliban insurgency's ability to take advantage of the official justice system's weaknesses and instead offer their own swift and transparent system remains one of its strongest sources of support, and aid focused solely on military and paramilitary sources will be insufficient.

Providing the courts, the FIA, provincial police forces, and the IB with the professional training, equipment, and manpower to conduct successful investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of suspected terrorists should be a top priority for U.S. counterterrorism assistance. As the United States is learning in its attempt to shut down the military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, extrajudicial efforts to confront terrorism are ultimately unsustainable in a democratic country where the rule of law applies. A sizable amount—\$100 million—is specifically earmarked for police training purposes in the current language of the Kerry-Lugar Advanced Partnership for Pakistan Act legislation. But this amount may not be sufficient to help Pakistan meet its substantial law and order challenges.

In using this assistance, the United States and the Pakistani government should work to strengthen the civilian government's oversight of Pakistan's security apparatus and decrease the role that organizations like the Pakistan Rangers, a paramilitary force, play in providing internal security and policing. In particular, they should work to increase the capacity of the counterterrorist operations in the FIA and the IB and resist the temptation to create too many new, specialized antiterrorism structures that marginalize the country's already-existing institutions. Counterterrorism investigations require a degree of specialized training, but broader assistance for basic police work training, increased salaries to combat corruption, and an expanded judiciary to address the country's massive case backlog at the district and provincial levels will have a greater impact on the provision of justice in the country and the legitimacy of continued democratic governance.



## Increase assistance for internally displaced persons

Recent fighting between Pakistani security forces and the Taliban is creating major humanitarian, economic, and security challenges. Crisis relief operations to bring aid and shelter to the massive population of refugees displaced by fighting in Swat and other areas are not a substitute for longer-term investments. But relief for internally displaced persons offers an immediate opportunity for the United States and other donor countries to demonstrate their commitment to the people of Pakistan. The quick response to the devastating 2005 earthquake in Pakistan helped the United States improve its standing with the Pakistani people and marginalize militant groups. The growing IDP crisis provides another moment when the United States can stand with the Pakistani people and address their basic needs.

As of late May, over 2.4 million registered refugees have fled the Swat region; coupled with internally displaced persons from previous operations in Bajaur Agency and other parts of the FATA, almost 3 million people have been displaced from their homes. A \$543 million flash appeal from the UN High Commission on Refugees for greater humanitarian aid must be met with a stepped-up response from the international community.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's May 19, 2009 announcement of \$110 million in initial American aid for relief represents a strong start, and Congress should augment this further with supplemental funding language as the situation warrants. Private relief fund efforts also offer American nongovernmental and civil society groups the opportunity to build people-to-people relations by showing a commitment to helping Pakistan's distressed communities.

Displaced Pakistani men line up as they wait for donated food during a distribution at the Chota Lahore refugee camp.



AP PHOTO/EMILIO MORENATTI

## Enhance efforts to keep Pakistan's nuclear arsenal safe and secure

Pakistan currently has a sizable nuclear arsenal that experts estimate consists of 50 to 100 weapons, and the nuclear stockpile is reportedly growing. Admiral Michael Mullen, the U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staffs, who warned of its expansion also noted that the United States has worked with Pakistan's security establishment to safeguard its nuclear arsenal. Cooperation on screening programs and facility security should be increased to prevent the illegal transfer of nuclear technology and expertise and to safeguard the arsenal from unauthorized access. Given its strategic threat perceptions, Pakistan is unlikely to respond to U.S. pressure to reduce the size of its nuclear arsenal, even at the risk of substantial aid cuts, making regional and international diplomacy the top priority for forestalling a regional arms race.

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## Advancing governance and democracy

### Launch a comprehensive effort to advance Pakistani civilian government capacity and expertise

The Obama administration and Congress are correct to emphasize civilian economic and social development and support for Pakistan's democratic institutions in the proposed U.S. assistance package for Pakistan. But any increases in nonmilitary assistance will require substantial governance reforms in Pakistan to ensure that the money is not wasted.

Two key steps are necessary. First, the government of Pakistan will need to undertake serious reforms and prioritize the needs of its citizenry. The United States and other allies should contribute to this process by providing expanded training and educational opportunities for civilian bureaucrats, parliamentary committees, and civil society groups in the United States and other countries. The Obama administration should work with Pakistani government institutions to conduct long-term economic and social development planning for the country, identify key projects for new assistance money, and build transparency habits with Pakistani partner ministries.

In particular, the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development should expand their programs to provide training and advisors for a broad range of government employees in Pakistan in national and provincial ministries, as well as local government. The focus of this training and advisory support should be on helping the Pakistani government at all levels become more capable in planning, budgeting, and implementing its programs. Funding for the National Endowment for Democracy, which supports nongovernmental groups who increase public accountability and transparency, should increase.

Second, U.S. bilateral development assistance should be delivered as one component of an overall international strategy to help Pakistan create a more sustainable economic system. This will require greater coordination with other bilateral assistance programs and international and multilateral initiatives by the International Monetary Fund, World

Bank, and the Friends of Pakistan group. Pakistan has already benefited from substantial increases in assistance, loans, and donor pledges. Donors pledged more than \$5 billion of assistance at the April conference in Tokyo, and last year the IMF provided a standby loan of \$7.6 billion. The World Bank gave Pakistan an interest-free \$500 million International Development Association credit in March 2009.

All of these efforts, along with sizable assistance to Pakistan from countries such as China, Japan, Britain, and Saudi Arabia, among others, and assistance from the Asian Development Bank, require a coordinated effort. Pakistan's civilian government needs to develop a strategy based on a comprehensive needs assessment that ensures aid and loans are a bridge to advance fundamental reforms that help Pakistan achieve a sustainable economic position. Other mechanisms such as proposed reconstruction opportunity zones can help facilitate growth, but they are not a panacea to Pakistan's substantial economic problems.

### Include careful oversight and accounting mechanisms in assistance legislation

Requiring transparency and oversight in aid programs is good public policy. What's more, the misuse of millions of reconstruction dollars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the lack of transparency in the Coalition Support Funds program for Pakistan make these tenets a political requirement for any legislation using U.S. taxpayer money. As part of these additional oversight and reporting requirements, the U.S. administration should work through a bilateral framework to gain input from the Pakistani government on which projects this money will be spent. Presidential certifications of Pakistan's continuing efforts against militant and terrorist organizations within its territory and of effective civilian rule within the country are appropriate. But legislators should refrain from imposing strict conditions that reinforce Pakistani perceptions that their government is being bribed to carry out a U.S. counterterrorism agenda. These provisions could wreck the spirit of partnership central to the increased aid program.

Clear metrics for progress and success must be established for any expanded U.S. aid program in Pakistan. These metrics should focus on outcome and results, rather than inputs such as money spent on particular sectors or projects. Establishing the right metrics will require a focused development assistance program that helps Pakistan meet a need unfulfilled by other development programs by other countries and multilateral institutions.

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## Policy reforms for the U.S. government

### Reform leading institutions of U.S. diplomacy and foreign development assistance

As the United States prepares to dramatically expand its annual assistance budget to Pakistan, many concerns remain about the capacity not just of the Pakistani government, but also the U.S. government's own institutions. The United States has many talented and dedicated civil servants working hard in Pakistan and other countries around the world.

But decades of underinvestment in State and USAID have reduced the size, experience, and effectiveness of our diplomatic corps and aid administrators at a time in which its efforts are most critical to our success in shoring up the Pakistani state. Pakistan will likely be the greatest test case of whether the Obama administration can increase the capacity of these institutions to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The proposed personnel expansion of these services is a necessary step toward correcting the imbalance in U.S. powers and implementing a strategy of sustainable security that addresses stability concerns in Pakistan on the diplomatic, security, and development levels. Yet the critical need for on-the-ground experience means that the shortage of mid- and high-level officers will persist for years. Altering State and USAID hiring rules to ease the mid-career entry into the services offers one means to overcome this lag, but is not a substitute for the broader long-term enlargement of the foreign service. In the interim the United States may need to employ private firms with expertise in administering the grants, but this is not a long-term solution to the capacity gap within the U.S. government.

The increased presence of U.S. personnel in Pakistan will require the State Department, other agencies, and nongovernmental groups to manage substantial security risks in Pakistan. In order for the proposed expansion in bilateral development assistance programs to have maximum impact and to ensure transparency and accountability of these efforts, the Obama administration will need to implement new measures that ensure the safety of increased U.S. personnel in Pakistan while also allowing the flexibility aid administrators need to get out of diplomatic green zones and carry out first-hand inspections of U.S.-funded projects.

### Engage with Congress and the American people on the importance of Pakistan policy

Broad consensus currently exists within the foreign policy community about the need to shift greater attention to Pakistan. But the administration will need to do more to engage with members of Congress and the general public about the rationale for its actions and specific plans for implementation of the expanded commitment toward Pakistan and Afghanistan. This will not be easy as Congress and the public are already battered by multiple domestic challenges and two wars.

Reporting requirements in proposed legislation for Pakistan assistance may require additional resources for the administration to carry out. But the focus on transparency and accountability is a necessary one to win public support for a potentially costly and long-term engagement with Pakistan's many challenges. As the president makes the case to lawmakers and the American public for an expansive agenda on health care, energy, and economic reform, the argument for a reorientation of the way America conducts its foreign and national security policy must also be at the top of the agenda. He must make clear that while the total investment in Afghanistan and Pakistan will not rival that of Iraq, it will be expensive and enduring, lasting years and perhaps decades.

# Conclusion

Our trip's findings offer several concrete recommendations to help the Obama administration make the transition from the reformulation of policy outlined in previous CAP work on Pakistan to raising additional questions of how to implement a proactive strategic relationship with both the leadership and the people of Pakistan. Overcoming the crisis-of-the-moment mentality that prevents both U.S. and Pakistani leaders from tackling core challenges on a long-term sustainable basis remains one of the top challenges facing the Obama administration, Congress, and our partners in Pakistan. We hope to continue to contribute to overcoming those challenges through this visit, future trips, policy research, and continued interaction with Pakistani counterparts.

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His previous experience includes work on the Policy Planning Staff at the State Department from 1999 to 2000, a graduate fellowship at the National Security Council's Near East and South Asian Affairs Directorate in 1998, and work in the Department of Defense during his undergraduate studies. From 1995 to 1998, he lived and worked in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and Egypt for the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs.

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