

Will Pakistan become the most dangerous country in the world?

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Background+

- This presentation grows out of the “Future Of Pakistan” project supported by several US foundations, Brookings, the US Institute of Peace, and NOREF
- May 2010: American, Pakistani and Indian experts met for a workshop at Bellagio: fourteen papers (on-line)
- December 2001: Monograph sums up participants’ views and analyses variables
- Public event January 31st at USIP
- Edited book volume, including additional papers, to be published By Brookings press in 2011.
- Most of the project online at Brookings website www.Brookings.edu

Methodology: Not quite a Delphi panel

Participants were asked to look at the next five to seven years (2012-2017) and write brief papers that

- 1) set forth important variables or factors when considering Pakistan's future;

- 2) speculate on the most likely outcomes, or futures.

Pakistan's centrality

1. A nuclear weapons state with a very bad record of proliferation.
2. Actively supports jihadist and militants, and has either turned a blind eye or professes incapacity when it comes to opposing their activities abroad.
3. The identity-based dispute with India continues, and it is likely that new crises between the two will take place in the near future.
4. Its economy faces stagnation, complicated by the massive damage due to the recent earthquake (2005) and floods (2010).
5. Demographic indicators look bad—long gone are the days when Pakistan was knocking on the door of middle-income status.
6. Could be a major disruptive force in South, Southwest, and Central Asia, ruining India's peaceful rise and destabilizing the Persian Gulf and Central Asian regions.

Four clusters of variables

Nineteen variables organized into four clusters.

1. Domestic concerns regarding demography, urbanization, the economy, and education.
2. The collective identity of Pakistan's people, as they identify with and act on the basis of their regional, ethnic and state identities.
3. The ability of Pakistanis to work for or against a common goal, or even to determine what the goals might be. (State-s)
4. Policies and attitudes of important foreign states, as well as the processes of globalization; Pakistan's environment.

Cluster I: Demography, Education, Class, and Economics

- Demography
- Education and youth
- The middle class myth
- The economy

Cluster II: Pakistan's identity

- The Still-contested Idea of Pakistan
- Ethnolinguistic ambitions
- Radical Islamists and sectarianism

Cluster III: State coherence

- Leadership and political parties
- The military
- Basic governance
- The Judiciary and the lawyers
- The new media
- Transferring power

Cluster IV: External and Global factors

- Afghanistan
- United States
- China: The New South Asian power
- India
- Globalization and nuclear weapons

Scenarios and Outcomes

1. Another Five Years: more of the same (“muddling through”)
2. Parallel Pakistans
3. Democratic consolidation
4. Breakaway and breakup
5. Civil or Military Authoritarianism
6. An Army-led revolution
7. Post-crisis scenarios

Towards a “Normal Pakistan”?

There are six or seven necessary things to happen before Pakistan can be safely put in the “normal” category. These include:

- normalized relations with India,
- a revived economy,
- repair of the Pakistani state,
- a rebalanced civil-military relationship,
- fighting the domestic insurgencies more effectively,
- allowing a reshaped police force to emerge,
- finding a new role for Pakistan vis-à-vis its neighbors

Six warning signs

These warning signs point to the immediate and urgent, although none alone are sufficient to ensure the normalization of Pakistan.

1. Unwillingness to deal quickly with economic issues
2. Unwillingness/inability to rebuild state institutions
3. Absence of governance at the top
4. The “begging bowl” syndrome
5. Fresh crises with India
6. Further appeasement of Islamists

Policy recommendations

- Current policy for Pakistan primarily derives from American and NATO engagement in Afghanistan.
- Western powers, Japan, and India need a concerted policy, to strengthen reform and democratic forces in Pakistan, encourage the military to adopt a recessed role, and help improve the economy to address vital domestic needs.

Policy alternatives:

1. Encourage India to supplant Pakistan in Afghanistan
2. From balancing to containing “rogue” Pakistan
3. Withdrawal to off-shore balancing, punctual interventions
4. Facilitate India-Pakistan normalization

Pakistan *Could* Become the Most Dangerous State in the world

- Nations are Ideas, states are bureaucracies, Pakistan struggles with both
- A paranoid state with real enemies, including those at home
- The military cannot govern Pakistan, but won't let the civilians do so either
- America is badly organized to deal with Pakistan and South Asia

