

# Pakistan Infiltration

by Paul Wolf, 12 October 2003

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Osama bin Laden wearing Afghan pakul and vest.

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## Introduction

I've put a few historical documents about Pakistan and Afghanistan online, dating from 1968-1973, which are the most recent documents available at the US National Archives. They are from the files of the US State Department.

Subjects include the Afghan left (1973), the Pashtoonistan issue, intelligence gathering methods, Nixon's "one time exception" to military aid embargo, and the cross-border Mukti Bahini campaign leading to the independence of Bangladesh.

<http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/pakistan/pakistan.htm>

- Paul

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## **The great Osama bin Laden myth**

by Tom Bower, *The Guardian*, 8 October 2003

One kitchen cupboard is still full of spaghetti, tins of tuna and tomato sauces. Another cupboard is crammed with bottled water. Nearly seven months after I obeyed the Home Office suggestion to stock up with food and batteries in preparation for a terrorist attack on the eve of the Iraqi war, it seems that the government's alarm was somewhat premature.

A month before that March 19 announcement, tanks and armed troops had surrounded Heathrow. The tourists were frightened off and the government announced the all-clear. Tony Blair's justification for mobilisation was the receipt of "intelligence" of an impending attack by al-Qaida terrorists inspired and led by Osama bin Laden, the Saudi mastermind of the 9/11 attack on New York.

The credibility of "intelligence" reports has since plummeted. Sir Richard Dearlove, the chief of MI6, and John Scarlett, the chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, emerged from the shadows into the Hutton inquiry and their reputations for honesty and accuracy are, at best, tarnished. Their certainty, based upon "accurate intelligence," that Iraq possessed WMDs, has been exposed as bogus.

But Dearlove has another question to answer: where on earth is Bin Laden? Why doesn't he talk to us any more? Why does he never appear in a video, holding a recent issue of the *Guardian*, to prove that he is alive? Why did the last tape released in early September of him walking with Ayman al-Zawahri, his deputy, contain the voice of al-Zawahri rather than Bin Laden himself? Is he shy, or is he in fact dead, only "kept alive" by an unholy alliance of the terrorists and a shadowy American intelligence group who perceive some strategic advantage in promoting him in the media?

Ever since 9/11, Dearlove's minions have told those journalists foolish enough to enter MI6's headquarters for a "briefing" that Bin Laden is alive. After the Americans bombed Afghanistan's desert and mountains, MI6 briefers insisted that the videos and tape-recorded messages passed by intermediaries to al-Jazeera with Bin Laden's voice, and irrefutable radio intercepts by GCHQ and others, plus ultra-reliable "humanint", all confirmed his continued existence in this world.

Despite the fact that none of the video pictures or sound messages allegedly received from the terrorist since 2001 are conclusively dated, and although technical queries raised by experts in Europe about the authenticity of the voice tapes remain unanswered, Dearlove's assertion is still believed. Only last August, journalists reliant on MI6 held Bin Laden personally responsible for blowing up the UN headquarters in Baghdad, just as he had personally directed his bombers to Nairobi and Amman. Various journalists reported that he was still directing "thousands" of al-Qaida fighters into Iraq. The last video of him, released in September and showing him walking down a mountainside, was presented as confirmation that he lived.

"We have no reason to believe it is not Bin Laden," said Blair's spokesman, keen to stress the link between al-Qaida and the elusive Saddam Hussein. That alone should raise question marks.

The evidence is improbable. After 9/11, Bin Laden appeared in three videos, reacting to the New York attack and the American retaliation. Since then, not a single video with his synchronised voice referring to recent events has surfaced.

The certainty of his continued existence is becoming as questionable as Martin Bormann's after the Nazi collapse. For nearly 30 years after Hitler's suicide, journalists relying on "intelligence briefings" charted the escape from justice of Hitler's deputy at Nuremberg and his life in South America. Fortunes were earned by enterprising journalists searching for Bormann in jungles and millionaire's estates. Ladislav Farago claimed to have interviewed him and pocketed huge royalties before his "Bormann" was exposed as a fraud. In 1972, his skeleton was finally found - by workers digging near Hitler's bunker in Berlin. Similarly, journalists earned fortunes hunting for Josef Mengele, the "angel of death" in Auschwitz, and the lucrative "sightings" continued long after he was buried in Brazil in 1979.

Why don't we accept that the same folk who invented the "WMDs ready in 45 minutes" and the Iraqi purchase of uranium ore in Niger for a non-existent nuclear programme, have a vested interest in keeping Bin Laden alive? Without the bogeyman, it becomes harder to focus popular anger against the Arabs.

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### **Many Soldiers, Same Letter**

*The Olympian Online*, 11 October 2003

WASHINGTON -- Letters from hometown soldiers describing their successes rebuilding Iraq have been appearing in newspapers across the country as U.S. public opinion on the mission sours. And all the letters are the same.

A Gannett News Service search found identical letters from different soldiers with the 2nd Battalion of the 503rd Airborne Infantry Regiment, also known as "The Rock," in 11 newspapers, including Snohomish, Wash.

The Olympian received two identical letters signed by different hometown soldiers: Spc. Joshua Ackler and Spc. Alex Marois, who is now a sergeant. The paper declined to run either because of a policy not to publish form letters.

The five-paragraph letter talks about the soldiers' efforts to re-establish police and fire departments, and build water and sewer plants in the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk, where the unit is based.

"The quality of life and security for the citizens has been largely restored, and we are a large part of why that has happened," the letter reads.

It describes people waving at passing troops and children running up to shake their hands and say thank you.

It's not clear who wrote the letter or organized sending it to soldiers' hometown papers.

Six soldiers reached by GNS directly or through their families said they agreed with the letter's thrust. But none of the soldiers said he wrote it, and one said he didn't even sign it.

Marois, 23, told his family he signed the letter, said Moya Marois, his stepmother. But she said he was puzzled why it was sent to the newspaper in Olympia. He attended high school in Olympia but no longer considers the city home, she said. Moya Marois and Alex's father, Les, now live near Kooskia, Idaho.

A seventh soldier didn't know about the letter until his father congratulated him for getting it published in the local newspaper in Beckley, W.Va.

"When I told him he wrote such a good letter, he said: 'What letter?'" Timothy Deaconson said Friday, recalling the phone conversation he had with his son, Nick. "This is just not his (writing) style."

He spoke to his son, Pfc. Nick Deaconson, at a hospital where he was recovering from a grenade explosion that left shrapnel in both his legs.

Sgt. Christopher Shelton, who signed a letter that ran in the Snohomish Herald, said Friday that his platoon sergeant had distributed the letter and asked soldiers for the names of their hometown newspapers. Soldiers were asked to sign the letter if they agreed with it, said Shelton, whose shoulder was wounded during an ambush earlier this year.

"Everything it said is dead accurate. We've done a really good job," he said by phone from Italy, where he was preparing to return to Iraq.

Sgt. Todd Oliver, a spokesman for the 173rd Airborne Brigade, which counts the 503rd as one of its units, said he was told a soldier wrote the letter, but he didn't know who. He said the brigade's public affairs unit was not involved.

"When he asked other soldiers in his unit to sign it, they did," Oliver explained in an e-mail response to a GNS inquiry. "Someone, somewhere along the way, took it upon themselves to mail it to the various editors of newspapers across the country."

Lt. Col. Bill MacDonald, a spokesman for the 4th infantry Division that is heading operations in north-central Iraq, said he had not heard about the letter-writing campaign.

Neither had Lt. Cmdr. Nick Balice, a spokesman for U.S. Central Command in Tampa, Fla.

A recent poll suggests that Americans are increasingly skeptical of America's prolonged involvement in Iraq. A USA Today-CNN-Gallup Poll released Sept. 23 found 50 percent believe that the situation in Iraq was worth going to war over, down from 73 percent in April.

The letter talks about the soldiers' mission, saying, "one thousand of my fellow soldiers and I parachuted from ten jumbo jets." It describes Kirkuk as "a hot and dusty city of just over a

million people." It tells about the progress they have made.

"The fruits of all our soldiers' efforts are clearly visible in the streets of Kirkuk today. There is very little trash in the streets, many more people in the markets and shops, and children have returned to school," the letter reads. "I am proud of the work we are doing here in Iraq and I hope all of your readers are as well."

Sgt. Shawn Grueser of Poca, W.Va., said he spoke to a military public affairs officer whose name he couldn't remember about his accomplishments in Iraq for what he thought was a news release to be sent to his hometown paper in Charleston, W.Va. But the 2nd Battalion soldier said he did not sign any letter.

Although Grueser said he agrees with the letter's sentiments, he was uncomfortable that a letter with his signature did not contain his own words or spell out his own accomplishments.

"It makes it look like you cheated on a test, and everybody got the same grade," Grueser said by phone from a base in Italy where he had just arrived from Iraq.

Moya Marois said she is proud of her stepson Alex, the former Olympia resident. But she worries that the letter tries to give legitimacy to a war she doesn't think was justified.

"We're going to support our son," she said. But "there are a lot of Americans that are not in support of this war that would like to see them returned home, and think it's going to get worse."

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### **Afghan president faces possible split in fragile coalition government**

By Daniel Cooney, *Associated Press*, 6 October 2003

KABUL, Afghanistan ( *AP* ) -- Disgruntled factions within Afghanistan's coalition government have held a series of meetings to consider withdrawing their support for President Hamid Karzai in the run-up to elections next year, officials said Monday.

The instability comes as this war-ravaged country's various ethnic and political groups try to agree on a new constitution that will lay the foundation for the first democratic elections in decades, scheduled for June.

The political wrangling also comes as Karzai grapples with a recent upsurge in attacks by Taliban and al-Qaida militants against American forces, aid workers and the U.S.-backed government.

Tuesday marks the second anniversary of the Oct. 7, 2001, launch of Operation Enduring Freedom, the U.S. war that ousted the Taliban. About 11,500 U.S.-led coalition troops are still hunting down holdouts who appear to have regrouped in the past few months.

Leaders of the Northern Alliance -- the mainly ethnic-Tajik grouping of militia leaders, some

of whom are members of the government -- have met several times in the past week to consider various alternative candidates for the elections, said Hafiz Mansour, publisher of a weekly newspaper, Payum-i-Majahid, which represents the Northern Alliance.

"Karzai's government has failed to rebuild this country. We are looking for another candidate to run in his place, he told The Associated Press. "This is a major threat to his government.

He declined to name the leaders involved. He said discussions were ongoing to choose a presidential candidate.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman, Omar Samad, acknowledged that there had been a series of meetings by frustrated coalition members, but said they did not represent a threat to Karzai, a member of the Pashtun ethnic group, the country's largest.

"When a country moves toward a more democratic system you get people disagreeing with each and at certain times they may run against each other," he said. "But it's too early to characterize it as opposition."

He said the members involved in the breakaway talks represented only a small part of the coalition government.

"This is all right so long as things don't turn violent. We need to make sure we keep it within the bounds of civil discourse and don't resort to violence," he added.

One of the most contentious issues in Afghanistan in recent weeks has been the constitution. Karzai is expected to make public a draft copy of it in the next week.

Women's rights and the role of Shariah, or Islamic law, have been the most hotly debated matters. Some of the 35 members of the Constitutional Review Commission have said the document aims to revolutionize the way women are treated in this devoutly Muslim country. It also declares Afghanistan a Muslim state but stops short of imposing Shariah.

A 10-day meeting of a 500-member loya jirga, or grand council, is to convene in December to debate and ratify the document.

However, the government's ability to enforce the constitution is limited as most areas outside the capital, Kabul, are ruled by warlords with private militias.

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### **Taliban again on the offensive, thanks to Pakistan: Report**

MR Narayan Swamy (Indo-Asian News Service), Chiang Mai (Thailand),  
*Hindustan Times*, 12 October 2003

Afghanistan's erstwhile Taliban militia, ousted from power by the US two years ago, is regaining strength with the help of the Pakistani establishment and Islamic groups, says a

reputed newsmagazine.

The Far Eastern Economic Review said in its latest issue that Afghan leaders had complained to the US about the overt and covert assistance being extended to the Taliban from Pakistan.

The report came as Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee wrapped up a week-long visit of Indonesia and Thailand during which he accused Pakistan of continuing to encourage terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir.

In places such as Quetta, capital of the Baluchistan province where a hardline Pakistani Islamist group is in power, Taliban fighters and supporters can be seen on the streets without any fear of the Pakistani authorities, the Review said in a report by its veteran correspondent Ahmed Rashid.

"In Quetta, thousands of Taliban fighters reside in mosques and madrassas with the full support of a provincial ruling party and militant Pakistani groups.

"Afghan leaders accuse the Pakistan's ISI of giving direct support to the Taliban. They cite as evidence the level of organisation the Taliban have acquired in their attacks in recent months," it added.

Pakistani officials routinely deny any links with the renewed offensive of the Taliban in Afghanistan, where the group has killed several Western and Afghan aid workers as well as Afghans considered sympathetic to the regime of Hamid Karzai.

"Many Afghan leaders are convinced that the Bush administration has been muted in its criticism of Pakistan," the Review said.

"We see the Pakistani army posts on the border waving in the Taliban groups and then waving them out again," it quoted a frustrated middle ranking US army official as saying in Afghanistan.

Added Yousuf Pashtun, the governor of Kandahar province, "We are fed up with Pakistan's policy. Do the Americans want to keep quiet about Pakistan's support to the Taliban at the risk of destabilizing Afghanistan?"

The magazine said Pakistan's intelligence agencies covertly backed the Taliban in the 1990s, and Western and Afghan intelligence officials in Kandahar claim they are doing it again.

The magazine added, "Musharraf is playing a deft game, exploiting the leverage over the Americans while doing just enough to curtail overt US criticism."

The Review quoted vehicle dealers in Pakistan as saying that the Taliban had bought 900 motorcycles in the past three months in the Quetta region. These vehicles are apparently meant to give mobility to Taliban fighters.

"Western and Afghan intelligence officials in Kandahar believe that before winter sets in, the Taliban plan to send up to 2,500 fighters in small groups into Kandahar province from the

Pakistan border crossing at Chaman."

It quoted Afghan official Yousuf as saying that the next Taliban escalation would come in the form of widespread urban terrorism in Afghanistan's south and this would include bombings and assassination attempts, primarily in Kandahar.

The Review said the renewed encouragement being given to the Taliban in Pakistan was worrying Islamabad's secular parties.

"The (Pakistan) army has resurrected mullah power in Baluchistan and the Taliban in Afghanistan," Hamed Khan of the Pashtunkhwa National People's party told the magazine.

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### **Pak going 'berserk' in infiltrating terrorists: Gen Vij**

*NDTV.com*, 11 October 2003 (Jammu)

Army Chief General N C Vij said today that Pakistan is going "berserk" in trying to push more and more terrorists into Jammu and Kashmir.

He said that there was "no change of heart" in Pakistan vis-a-vis supporting terror in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Despite all pronouncements and promises made by Pakistan to dismantle its terror support system, there is no change of heart, whatsoever, on its part towards supporting terror in Jammu and Kashmir," he said in Jammu today.

J&K situation looking up

However, the security situation in the state was looking up with the troops registering success on all fronts, including foiling of infiltration bids and interception and at ground level, Vij said.

Indian troops killed 211 terrorists last month in interior areas of the state and eliminated another 78 terrorists while foiling 28 infiltration bids along the Line of Control, he said.

"Due to this, the Pakistani establishment has literally gone berserk and has told its intelligence agencies, including the ISI, to push in as many terrorists as possible," he said.

Besides major successes on counter-insurgency and counter-infiltration fronts, the Amarnath Yatra and the Navratri festival at Vaishnodevi and the Independence Day passed off incident-free, Gen Vij said.

The Army Chief said better coordination among security forces on all fronts, including better intelligence gathering, was the reason for the recent rise in success rate.

All forces, including police and state government, are working in good coordination, he said



complimenting the state government.

Pak terror infrastructure intact

The Army Chief said Pakistani President Gen Pervez Musharraf's anti- terrorism steps were only "cosmetic works done on the ground".

"The terror infrastructure, including 85 training camps and 120 launching pads, is intact and we receive 14,000 to 15,000 intercepts a year," he said.

He said Pakistan has 'amalgamated' terrorist training camps with border villages and army establishment to hoodwink international observers.

He said that three factors have a direct bearing on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

They are the terror infrastructure Pakistan has created which is intact, continuous infiltration and its policy of continued support to terror.

"Till there is an end to these three factors, the situation here will not be completely normal," he said.

On Pakistan President's remark that if six lakh Indian troops cannot stop infiltration, how can his 60 thousand troops do it, he said Musharraf never set up an infrastructure to stop infiltration and instead set up 120 launching pads along the border to pump armed militants into J and K.

"If they can stop people, including Taliban and Al-Qaida members, from coming to Pakistan via Afghan border along with American troops, why can't they do it here?"

Infiltration up

There has been an increase in infiltration bids along the LoC, Gen Vij said.

Seven such attempts were foiled in February, three in March, six each in April and May, eight in June, 11 in July and 13 in August.

"The border situation is well under control," he said. "There were one or two attacks by the Pakistan's Border Action Team on our patrols and posts, which were retaliated."

Referring to the border situation in Kargil and Siachen, he said "infiltration is difficult (in these sectors) particularly after the measures taken by us. But exchanges of heavy shelling are taking place continuously."

"We have demoralised Pak troops in 5353 area of Kargil so much so that they want themselves to get relieved from there. We have inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy troops."

So far this month, nine infiltration bids were foiled and 61 terrorists killed, the Army Chief

said.

#### Al-Qaida among infiltrators

The General said 70 to 80 per cent of militants infiltrating into J&K were foreigners. Locals given training in Pakistani camps were also among the terrorists active in the state.

"There may be presence of Al-Qaida in militant ranks in J and K but I cannot specify its percentage."

The recruitment drive by the militants was going on, he said. Locals were not coming forth but were being taken forcibly for training.

The Army Chief however ruled out any policy of hot pursuit.

He also turned down a suggestion to place the Unified Armed Command Headquarters under the direct control of the Governor instead of the Chief Minister. (With PTI inputs)

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#### **Army warns of ISI infiltration in Bengal, Assam**

by Subhro Niyogi, *Times News Network*, 29 October 2003

HASIMARA: Major general U K Bapat, general officer commanding of Binaguri army base, has expressed concern over the infiltration of Bangladeshis into Bengal, Assam and Tripura.

He and other senior army officers were at the Hasimara air base to attend an Air Force Day programme.

"There are Intelligence reports of infiltration by Pakistani intelligence officials through the porous border," Bapat told TNN.

While Hindu minorities from Bangladesh fled to south Bengal and Tripura to avoid persecution from fundamentalists, a sizeable section of the illegal migrants in north Bengal and Assam were Pakistani agents in the garb of poor Muslim peasants in search of job.

Even deputy prime minister L K Advani has said that an estimated 20 million illegal immigrants from Bangladesh are now in India. Some 10 million of them are in Assam and West Bengal alone.

But Bangladesh has always denied that there were any emigrants from there to India.

India has 4,096 kms border with Bangladesh. On almost the entire border, there is already 5-15 kms deep strip within the Indian side totally populated by Bangladeshi Muslims.

"In the last year or so, over 100 madrasas have sprung up in the border areas of Jalpaiguri district alone. While the defence forces are extremely secular in outlook, the unusually sharp

change in demography is certainly a cause of concern," the major general said.

Located in the critical chicken neck corridor, the 220 km narrow stretch of land that connects North-East with rest of India, the base has seen a flurry in the movement of migrant population in the region.

Even officials at the Hasimara air base, located about 45 km from the army base, is concerned over the development.

"There have been several occasions when our airmen have returned from religious gatherings in and around the region after they found the speeches inflammatory," said air commodore K.K. Nohwar, air officer commanding of Hasimara air base.

Nowhar said the forces suspected the involvement of Pakistan intelligence agency ISI in the spurt in rise in separatist activities by the United Liberation Front of Ahom in Assam and Kamtapur Liberation Organisation in north Bengal.

"We are in close liaison with army, Border Security Force and Indian intelligence agencies to foil any terrorist activity," the air commodore said. Last year, when Operation Parakram was at its height in the western front, the base had received intelligence reports of a possible attack on the base.

"To foil any such activities, we are building a 10-foot concrete wall around the base. Four killer dogs also patrol the perimeter during the night," he said.

Defence experts, however, pointed out that the onus of curbing the settlement of illegal immigrants lay on state governments.

"The politicians must have the will to stop encouraging immigrant vote banks. Identity cards for residents in border areas will be a welcome step. Moreover, the police need to get tough on the sprouting of madrasas," they said.

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### **Pak Army a mercenary of United States: Opposition leaders**

*Hindustan Times*, Asian News International, October 11 2003

Pakistan's opposition leaders have raised the tempo of their protests against the Musharraf-controlled government of Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali by saying that the country's armed forces are acting as a mercenary of the United States.

On Friday, the Daily Times quoted PML(N) Acting President Makhdoom Javed Hashmi as saying that the objective of the entire opposition was to create a "national army" after assuming power.

"Our generals enjoy more perks than US generals. We will not let them serve American interests. We will create a national army," he said.

Regretting last week's "attack in Pakistan's South Waziristan Agency on the dictates of the United States," he said, "They go to Somalia and plan on going to Iraq. Who do they think will fight for our country."

Hashmi also described the country's law and order system as abysmal, and added that the huge expenses of nearly Rs 35 crore incurred on President Musharraf's security was completely unjustified.

He also questioned the absence of Jamali from Pakistan during the important visits of senior American State Department officials like Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Christina Rocca.

"It was planned to keep Jamali away when defence cooperation and action against Pakistanis in FATA was being planned," he observed.

Rauf Mengal, the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD) parliamentary party member from Balochistan, accused the country's intelligence agencies, including the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and the Military Intelligence (MI), of collusion in the murder of senior Sunni leader Maulana Azam Tariq.

"State institutions" were being used for ulterior motives since October 10 last year, claimed the MMA's Liaqat Baloch.

Another MMA leader Hafiz Hussain Ahmed said the Government had violated the privilege of the House by suspending officials of the Islamabad Police.

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## **U.S policy predicaments in Pakistan**

by Subhash Kapila, *The Kashmir Telegraph*, October 2003

**Introduction - The Schisms in United States-Pakistan Relations:** Pakistan has traditionally presented predicaments to the United States in policy formulations specific to Pakistan and more largely to American policies in South Asia arising from schisms in mutual perceptions. The United States has pandered to Pakistan's military needs in the past as a 'quid-pro-quo' for use of Pakistan to serve American national interests on a couple of occasions. But, as Dennis Kux (Author of the book - *The United States and Pakistan 1947-2000: Disenchanted Allies*) puts it : "US-Pakistan ties have lacked a solid underpinning of shared national interests".

The same author further amplifies that the "United States never shared Pakistan's perception of India as an enemy" and that when Pakistan "one of the junior partners refused to play the game of geo-politics according to Washington's rules-as Pakistan did in the 1960s over China-trouble ensued."

Pakistan repeated this pattern of strategic delinquency vis-à-vis the United States, in the 1990s also. Pakistan's relations with the United States in the 1990s can be said to have been

in a state of freeze due to : (1) Pakistan's nuclear weapons and missile build-up with direct Chinese participation (2) Sponsoring anti-Indian Jihad in Kashmir (3) Nuclear weapons tests in 1998 (4) General Musharraf's military coup despite American warnings (5) General Musharraf's military misadventure against India in Kargil in 1999 bypassing the elected civilian government of PM Nawaz Sharif and (6) more importantly emerging as the Mecca of Islamic Jihad by providing sanctuaries, training, consular assistance and free flights to the likes of Osama bin Laden, Al Qaeda and the Taliban-all involved in a 'state of war' against the United States.

Despite these patterns of Pakistani strategic delinquency the United States chose to break this freeze hours after 9/11 when for the first time instead of cajoling Pakistan, General Musharraf was given an ultimatum to submit without delay to American demands, namely (1) Pakistan to provide bases for United States military forces in the war to liquidate the Taliban in Afghanistan (2) Dismantle all Pak terrorist training camps on Pak-Afghan border and (3) Launch military operations to seal Pak-Afghan border to prevent escape of Osama bin Laden and the hierarchy of Al Qaeda and Taliban.

General Musharraf, visibly shaken, complied with the American dictates to a degree, justifying it to his nation on two grounds: (1) Pakistan's survival was at stake, and (2) The holy Koran sanctioned temporizing commitments under pressure but which could be reneged upon at the first opportune moment.

In the two years since 9/11, despite United States pressure, the picture emerging today is : (1) Pakistan Army permitted the escape of Osama bin Laden and the terrorist hierarchy into Pakistan (2) Pakistan selectively handed over top Al Qaeda terrorists to USA at carefully crafted intervals to extract political mileage from USA and (3) General Musharraf has not fulfilled any of the repeated pledges given by him to USA to stop cross-border terrorism whether against India or Afghanistan. Schisms seem to be emerging once again in Pakistan's approach and sensitivity to United States interests and policies.

Pakistan once again presents policy predicaments to United States policy makers. The United States today is facing an Islamic onslaught and Pakistan is the most untrustworthy candidate to combat it on America's behalf having been the spearhead of Islamic Jihad for over a decade. Further, Pakistan itself is divided by internal strife endangering the future of this militarized nation state. Therefore, the United States options in Pakistan today are limited and basic. But before this is analysed, it would best be to take a brief look at the schisms that exist in the United States about perceptions of Pakistan between what is officially articulated by the US Administration (presumably because of political reasons) and the analysis of American think tanks and political analysts as to what events portend about the ongoing situation in Pakistan. The United States Administration officially likes to maintain that Pakistan is in the forefront of the global war on terror and that General Musharraf is a "courageous fighter against terrorism." The United States think tanks think otherwise.

**Perceptions of Pakistan- The Schism Between the United States Administration and American Think Tanks, Journalists, Analysts and Academics:** Within the United States there is a marked schism in the perceptions of Pakistan, between the United States Administration and the American think tanks, journalists, analysts and academia. The prominent ones have serious reservations and concerns about the US Administration's

change in policy in South Asia and the future of Pakistan, as the sampling below would indicate:

### **Selig Harrison.**

Commenting on the US policy change he observed: "It's a tragedy because it will greatly complicate the US role in South Asia as a whole and India in particular, if we have to get back in bed with Pakistan." Further he advocated that Pakistan's cooperation should be obtained by taking a tough line instead of buying them off.

**Gerge Perkovitch.** Advised caution by the United States stating that: "The real concern for the United States should be Pakistan. There is a real potential for civil war". Implicit in the above, that Pakistan was a failed state, unlikely to contribute strategically to the United States, when it itself was on the brink of a civil war.

### **Harold Gould.**

"The question for Pakistan is whether it is too late to draw back from the abyss, its own misguided deeds have opened up. Clearly, General Musharraf is running scared ... and the detention of several of the leading terrorists upon whom his ( General Musharraf's) Government had conferred largesse, coupled with the serious unrest sweeping Pakistan, tells us that a coup is feared and indeed may not be far down the road, no matter what he does to try and prevent it."

Further he adds: "... the next coup will undoubtedly succeed through a marriage between the military and the fundamentalists given the widespread inclination towards fundamentalism in the lower ranks of the Army and among at least a few of the Generals who sit quietly and non-committedly around Musharraf's round table".

With these sorts of perceptions and perspectives on Pakistan, by American analysts it is, intriguing as to what impelled the current United States Administration to edge back towards a permissive relationship with Pakistan and continue with it, when the following factors are considered:

- Pakistan was a failed state upto 9/11.
- Pakistan Army's middle ranking officers and lower echelons have strong fundamentalist leanings.
- Pakistan Army is a highly politicized army in which now both politics and Islamic Jehadi ideology get rolled into one.
- General Musharraf till the morning of 9/11 was reputed to be a leading light of the clique of Pakistan Army Generals with strong Islamic Jehadi leanings and linkages with Islamic Jehadi parties. This also extended to Osama bin Laden, Al Qaeda and Taliban.

**United States Three Options in Pakistan Today:** Since what the United States Administration has done in the years since 9/11 cannot be undone, the next question that needs to be analysed now is as to what are the options open to the United States today in Pakistan in terms of its policy formulations, keeping in mind the prospects of military coup, civil war and fragmentation of Pakistan. These options basically center on the means to achieve stability in Pakistan through:

- **Option I.** Stable General Musharraf
- **Option II.** Stable Pakistan Army.
- **Option III.** Stable Democratic Pakistan Nation State.

All three of the above cannot be considered as synonymous. They carry separate implications for both Pakistan and United States which are analysed below.

**United States Option I - Stable General Musharraf.** United States seems to be presently pursuing this option, convinced because of the following factors:

- Removal of General Musharraf from power by whatever means would bring Islamic fundamentalists into power in Pakistan.
- General Musharraf's opportunistic character would ensure that United States strategic interests would be well served, with his continuance in power.

If this be the United States preferred option for the moment, it carries the following implications:

- General Musharraf's hold on Pakistan and Pakistan Army stands greatly weakened today due to what the mass of the Pakistan Army and the Pakistani nation perceives as his "sell-out to America".
- No amount of US economic assistance, military largesse and vocal American support for General Musharraf, personally, can bolster his continuance in power,
- General Musharraf may be indispensable for current American interests, but he is not indispensable for the Pakistan Army or the masses that throng Pakistan's bazaars and mosques.
- Too much hue and cry and alarm has been raised that the arrival in power of Islamic fundamentalist parties in Pakistan is inherently destabilizing. They could not be more de-stabilising than an Islamic fundamentalist General Musharraf at the helm of affairs (It is juvenile logic to assert that in a photo-session to journalists, carrying two lap dogs in his arms makes General Musharraf a moderate and a liberal).

General Musharraf today is at odds with the Pakistani polity, the Pakistan Army and the Islamic fundamentalists. The more the United States attempts to bolster General Musharraf's perpetuation in power in Pakistan to serve US interests, the more counter-productive are bound to be the results for USA.

The United States, in this connection, should pay heed to historical precedents, as to what happened to the Shah of Iran as a result of such policies. The same could happen in Pakistan. The United States should dispense with this option forth with.

**United States Option II - Stable Pakistan Army:** Seeing the volatile trends in Pakistan today and the mounting opposition to General Musharraf, within the Pakistan Army and without, the United States is likely to be tempted into adopting Option II i.e. Acquiesce to the removal of General Musharraf from power by any combination of forces within Pakistan, but ensuring that Pakistan Army's hold on the Pakistani nation state continues to be stable to deliver on American strategic interests.

United States predilection for this option seems to rest on a number of fallacious assumptions, namely:

- Pakistan's military hierarchy is secular. Pakistan Army military hierarchy today is not of the same mould as General Ayub Khan's tenure holding on to the secular traditions of the old British Indian Army. General Musharraf included, the Pakistan Army hierarchy today is predominantly Islamic fundamentalist in attitudes.
- Pakistan Army is a military effective fighting force ready to serve America's strategic needs. Historically, armies which have tested political power rarely remain military effective.
- Pakistan Army is popular in Pakistan. It is not so. There is widespread resentment in Pakistan not only against military rule but also for the disproportionate perks appropriated by the Pakistan Army hierarchy for its personal gratification.
- Pakistan Army is the glue which holds Pakistan together. Not so, as would the opposition to it in NWFP would indicate and also the resolution in Balochistan Assembly asking for reduction of Pak Army cantonments in Balochistan and also reduction of Pakistan para- military forces there.
- If Pakistan Army was secular and the glue which held Pakistan together and was a popular Islamic Army of Allah, as they like to claim then why the widespread massacre of Shias by the Sunni majority in Pakistan and the atrocities on Christian and other minorities.
- Pakistan Army's hold on nuclear weapons reduces nuclear conflict chances in South Asia. Not so, because the opposite is true. It is General Musharraf and the Pakistan Army that has resorted to nuclear brinkmanship and nuclear war mongering.

All of the above fallacies should discourage the United States adopting Option II. The United States opting for Option II would entail pandering by America for the Pakistan Army's insatiable thirst for weaponry to reduce its asymmetry with India. It was tried in 1950s and thereafter with active US military aid and the consequences have been unfavourable both for the Pakistani nation state and the United States. The Pakistan Army has not allowed anyone to question its own military defeats at the hands of India, corruption and military ineffectiveness.

Further, Option II adoption by United States and its fall-out could lead India to impose an arms race on Pakistan which Pakistan could ill-afford and nor could the United States subsidise such a Pakistani defence build-up. This Option also endangers the successful culmination of the emerging US-India strategic partnership.

Most importantly, this would reinforce the image of the United States in Pakistani minds of United States standing with the Pakistani Army in between them and opposing the return of democracy to Pakistan.

**United States Option III - Stable Democratic Pakistan:** Stable and democratic Pakistan entails what? It entails that a political climate is engineered in Pakistan by the United States which could ensure the following:

- Pakistan Army role in the political and foreign affairs of Pakistan be marginalized and Pakistan Army is forced to return to the barracks.
- Restoration of Parliamentary (not Presidential) democracy in Pakistan in elections initially to be conducted in presence of foreign observers to pre-empt rigging by Pakistan Army and its ISI.



- Pakistan Army be made subservient to the Parliamentary system.
- De-jehadisation of Pakistan as an essential pre-condition for economic aid from international bodies and foreign investments.

The United States has within it the power, muscle and coercive pressure to force the release of the Pakistan Army stranglehold on the Pakistani nation state. It is bewildering for people in South Asia to witness within South Asian countries, the United States following double standards. The United States clamours for democracy in Myanmar and political emergence of Aung San Suu Kyi. Yet the United States is silent on restoration of democracy in Pakistan and has never made any statement for the return from exile of former premiers Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto.

A democratic Pakistan in full civilian control, however disorderly to begin with, due to prolonged spells of Pakistan Army misrule, will be at peace with itself, peace with its South Asian neighbours and more amenable to United States advice and directions.

If historical precedents are to go by, then the United States would find it very difficult to adopt Option III, unless Cold War mindsets are changed in the civil and military bureaucracies in Washington. For them it is easy to deal with military rulers of Pakistan.

Option III of the United States will be stoutly opposed and impeded by General Musharraf and by the Pakistan Army. The Pakistan Army for its own survival as the commanding elite in Pakistan can distract the United States from Option III by even de-stabilising Pakistan using Islamic Jihad or even opt for regional destabilization by indulging in war with India. But the United States can bring the Pakistan Army on its knees by cutting off all Western economic aid and military assistance to Pakistan.

Yet, it is imperative that the United States adopts Option III for its own long term good in terms of its political standing and strategic interests in South Asia.

**Concluding Observations:** As per the tenets of the United States new national security strategy formulations, if there is one state that demands 'regime change' by United States intervention, it is decidedly Pakistan. The Pakistan Army-commanded Pakistani nation state has excelled in state-sponsored terrorism across borders on both its western and eastern peripheries, nuclear weapons proliferation, nuclear war-mongering and has forced Pakistan's slide into a 'failed state' status.

Owen Bennet Jones of the BBC in his recent book has made the comments on the Pakistan Army as follows: "Pakistan Army enjoy a better reputation than it deserves. Both on the field of battle and in periods of military rule its record has been far from glorious. If Pakistan is, as many Pakistanis believe a failed state, then the army (Pakistan Army) must take its fair share of the blame."

Commenting on General Musharraf, Jones states: "General Musharraf's regime has another problem. It faces a fundamental contradiction. A man who assumed power illegally, and whose legitimacy depends on military forces, has argued that he alone can restore democracy to the country".

The above would indicate that the Pakistan Army and General Musharraf are the main culprits contributing to the ills that plague Pakistan and impeding its emergence as a moderate Islamic state at peace with itself and its neighbours. Therefore in terms of exercising United States options in Pakistan, the US Administration needs to dispense with Option I and II analysed above. It would be in America's long term interests to adopt Option III i.e. bringing about a politically stable, moderate and democratic Pakistan.

The United States has the political and military standing to ensure the restoration of parliamentary democracy in Pakistan. The United States should refrain from manipulating the perpetuation in power of the Pakistan Army to serve its geo-political strategic interests. That is the only honorable course of action for the United States.

Concluding, it is for the United States to act forthwith and act now before Pakistan in its downward slide under Pakistan Army rule becomes irretrievable and beyond redemption. Caution here can best be expressed in the words of John Norris, Special Advisor to the International Crisis Group who states: "The world community should approach Pakistan and its problems with open eyes. Offering tacit support for quasi-military rule into the indefinite future may make it more difficult, not less, to tackle the foundations of Pakistan's insecurity."

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