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## Responding to Terrorist Threat: Perspectives from Saudi Arabia and Pakistan

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### Introduction

While terrorism-driven security concerns continued to dominate the strategic landscape in the increasingly intertwined regions of South Asia and the Gulf in the first half of 2006, the combined impact of the American strategic failure<sup>1</sup> in Iraq and the manifest inability of the NATO-led ISAF forces in Afghanistan to stabilize the war-ravaged country, spawned new fears of regional instability, forcing neighboring countries in the region to contend with a highly convulsive security environment fraught with unpredictable consequences. This article focuses on security challenges faced by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in the wake of the launching of the “global war on terror” (GWOT) by United States in October 2001. The article begins by noting the limitations of GWOT as a strategic precept and highlights the emerging consensus among countries in the Southwest Asian region that without addressing its structural roots, the problem of terrorism and its violent manifestation cannot be effectively tackled. It then focuses on the Pakistani and Saudi responses to the intensifying challenge of Al-Qaeda led terrorist activity in the year 2006.

### Limitations of GWOT

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<sup>1</sup> The *Iraq Study Group Report* released on December 7, 2006 described this failure in following words: “As of December 2006, nearly 2,900 Americans had lost their lives serving in Iraq. Another 21,000 Americans have been wounded, many severely. To date, the United States has spent roughly \$400 billion on the Iraq War, and costs are running about \$8 billion per month...Estimates run as high as \$2 trillion for the final cost of the U.S involvement in Iraq. Despite a massive effort, stability in Iraq remains elusive and the situation is deteriorating...The ability of the United States to shape outcomes is diminishing. Time is running out.” James A. Baker III and Lee H. Hamilton, *The Iraq Study Group Report* (Washington, D.C., 2006), 27.

As the “global war on terror,” launched in October 2001, entered its sixth year, there were many visible signs that the US-led campaign had run into a strategic cul-de-sac.

First, despite its forcible ejection from Afghanistan under “Operation Enduring Freedom” and the killing and arrest of some of its key figures, Al-Qaeda continues to survive both as an “idea” and as an “evolving and adaptive entity” with a potential to mount lethal terrorist attacks.

Second, instead of shrinking the pool of potential recruits for Al-Qaeda, American anti-terror policies seem to be producing the opposite effect. This is starkly evidenced by the rising wave of suicide attacks launched by Al-Qaeda sympathizers in Iraq and Afghanistan<sup>2</sup>. In Iraq, a country under US military occupation for over three years, Al-Qaeda seems to have established a firm popular base which has allowed it to mount “suicide attack, large truck bombs and attacks on significant religious or political targets.”<sup>3</sup> As Richard Clarke argued, Bush “launched an unnecessary and costly war in Iraq that strengthened the fundamentalist, radical Islamic terrorist movement world wide.”<sup>4</sup>

Third, despite massive deployment of financial, intelligence and military resources worldwide, feelings of insecurity and vulnerability to terrorist attacks remain pervasive. The GWOT has failed to secure the world against the scourge of terrorist violence. This is graphically illustrated by the multiple bombing on the London Transport network on July 7, 2005 that killed 52 people and injured 700, and the July 11, 2006 attacks on Mumbai railways in which 200 people were killed and over 800 injured.

Why has the GWOT been such an egregious failure? Part of the answer has to do with the uni-focal manner in which the United States has tried to wage this war but a large part has to do with an American fixation with the identity and motivations of the terrorists without taking into account the contextual and enabling factors, including the impact of American imperial policies, that have allowed them to engage in asymmetric warfare.<sup>5</sup> By

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<sup>2</sup> According to Hekmat Karzai, director of the Center for Conflict and Peace Studies in Kabul, Afghanistan, there were 83 suicide attacks in Afghanistan in 2006, as compared to 21 in 2005 and only one in 2001 and 2002. Quoted in Beth Allen Cole and Jorge Aguilar, “Five Years After the Fall of the Taliban: Afghanistan and the War on Terrorism,” *USIP Peace Briefing* (Washington, DC: USIP, November 2006), 2.

<sup>3</sup> Baker and Hamilton, *Iraq Study Group Report*, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Richard A. Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (London: Simon and Schuster UK, 2004), p. x.

<sup>5</sup> Aarish Ullah Khan, “The Terrorist Threat and Policy Response in Pakistan,” *SIPRI Policy Paper No. 11* (Stockholm: SIPRI, September 2005), 7. As pointed out by Khan: “While the root causes must be tackled to decrease the number of terrorists, an understanding of the enabling factors for terrorists is also needed in order to reduce their capacity to act. It is all the more necessary because reducing the motivation behind

declaring “war” on terror, the US has not only by definition excluded the use of non-military means to defeat terrorists but has also sought their physical elimination as the only benchmark for the success of its anti-terror campaign. Speaking in October 2005, US President George Bush outlined some of the successes of GWOT:

Together, we’ve killed or captured nearly all of those directly responsible for the September the 11th attacks; as well as some of bin Laden’s most senior deputies; al Qaeda managers and operatives in more than 24 countries; the mastermind of the USS Cole bombing, who was chief of al Qaeda operations in the Persian Gulf; the mastermind of the Jakarta and the first Bali bombings; a senior Zarqawi terrorist planner, who was planning attacks in Turkey; and many of al Qaeda’s senior leaders in Saudi Arabia.<sup>6</sup>

The main problem with this “exterminist” approach towards counter-terrorism is not only the fact that “terrorism is notoriously difficult to eliminate” but also the policy conundrum that “if elimination is the proclaimed goal, then every subsequent terrorist incident represents a victory for the terrorists.”<sup>7</sup> This approach is also flawed because by demonizing the other it leaves no space for communication. As astutely observed by Gary Younge “unencumbered by context, causality, proof or persuasion,” the Bush doctrine does not require one to understand anything “about your enemy but the fact that it must be eliminated. So long as you are convinced of its guilt, you do not need to prove it to any one else. There should be no negotiation or mediation, no distinction between those who commit acts of political violence and those who support them.”<sup>8</sup> Additionally, it also promotes obfuscation of terrorism as a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon. As pointed out by the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee Report, the phrase “war against terrorism” is inappropriate as “it does not adequately describe what has become a multi-faceted and complex international effort to thwart terrorist attacks across the globe simultaneously with attempts to address the background to international terrorism.”<sup>9</sup>

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terrorism is a task for a generation or more, and reducing their capacity will demand constant attention in the meantime.”

<sup>6</sup> Remarks by President Bush, National Endowment for Democracy, Washington D.C., October 6, 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Adam Roberts, “The ‘War on Terror’ in Historical Perspective,” *Survival* Vol. 47, No. 2 (Summer 2005), p. 124.

<sup>8</sup> Garry Younge, “Turning Brute Force into a Doctrine,” *Dawn*, December 11, 2001.

<sup>9</sup> House of Commons, “Foreign Policy Aspects of the ‘War Against Terrorism,’” *Foreign Affairs Committee Fourth Report of Session 2005-06* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, July 2006), 16.

An unfortunate consequence of this exclusive American focus on the identity of the terrorists rather than on their actions and local contexts, in which those actions are embedded, has been the conflation of terrorism with militant Islam. This conflation has not only forced the Muslim countries and their citizenry into a “defensive and survivalist mode”<sup>10</sup> but also has deflected critiques of the US’s role in underwriting injustice and sustaining oppression on a global scale. As argued by Asma Barlas: “by shifting the burden of “defeating and eradicating militant Islam” onto “moderate Islam,” the US is absolved of the responsibility to rethink its own injurious policies.”<sup>11</sup> Instead of self-critically evaluating the role played by its own policies in aggravating the Muslim sense of injury on issues such as Palestine, the patently false conflation of Islam with terrorism results in a distorted understanding of both. As Ziauddin Sardar and Merryl Wyn Davies write: “America has the power and resources to refuse self-reflection. More pointedly, it is a nation that has developed a tradition of being oblivious to self- reflection.”<sup>12</sup> The rise of the so-called “Muslim terrorism” has nothing to do with Islam as a religion, which, like all other religions, espouses the cause of peace, harmony, non-violence, and human co-existence. As pointed out by the Final Report of the High Level Group for Alliance of Civilizations:

It is imperative to note that none of the world religions condones or approves of the killing of innocents...Recently, a considerable number of acts of violence and terrorism have been committed by radical groups on the fringes of Muslim societies. Because of these actions, Islam is being perceived by some as inherently violent religion. *Assertions to this effect are at best manifestly incorrect and at worst maliciously motivated. They deepen divides and reinforce the dangerous mutual animosity among societies.*<sup>13</sup> (Emphasis added).

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<sup>10</sup> Graham Fuller, “Freedom and Security: Necessary Conditions for Moderation,” *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* Vol. 22, No. 23 (Summer 2005): 26.

<sup>11</sup> Asma Barlas, “The Excesses of Moderation,” (Paper presented, Colloquium on “Moderate Islam,” University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT, February 21-22, 2004), available at < [http://www.asmaabaras.com/TALKS/20040221\\_Utah.pdf](http://www.asmaabaras.com/TALKS/20040221_Utah.pdf)> (accessed March 27, 2007).

<sup>12</sup> Ziauddin Sardar and Merryl Wyn Davies, *Why Do People Hate America?* (New York: Disinformation, 2002), p. 13

<sup>13</sup> “Alliance of Civilizations,” Final Report of the High Level Group (Istanbul and New York, 2006), 10, available at <<http://www.unaoc.org>> (accessed December 5, 2006).

Far from being mysterious or irrational, the Arab/Muslim anger towards the United States is a consequence of some specific factors and policies which are well-described by Ali Mazrui:

...there are global causes of Islamic radicalism and global reasons why “Muslim terrorism” has gone international. One factor is the “Latin Americanization” of the Middle East by American policy-makers and strategists...American imperialism in Latin America had been an empire of control rather than one of occupation. The same is true of American imperialism in the Middle East...The second major trigger of global Islamic radicalization consists of the state of Israel; its brutal occupation of the Palestinian people; the annexation of Jerusalem; and the United States’ enormous material, diplomatic and uncritical support of the Jewish state...The United States provides Israel with an umbrella of impunity. The resulting international frustration has aroused widespread rage throughout the Muslim world. The third international trigger of Islamic radicalism and major cause of Muslim terrorism is the multiple humiliations of Muslims in so many different countries...there are also domestic causes of Muslim radicalization...but even those domestic radicalizing forces might not have risen to the levels of terrorism if they were not reinforced by a resentment of American support for most muslim dictators for decades – especially oil rich dictators, but along with oil-poor Pakistan and Egypt.<sup>14</sup>

### **Terrorist Threat and Saudi Response**

The National Intelligence Council’s 2020 Project report, *Mapping the Global Future*, predicts that “terrorist violence” in the Middle East “is likely to be aimed more directly and conspicuously at the area’s regimes than it is now.”<sup>15</sup> It went on to note that the “responses by regimes will be variable, ranging from increased repression to varieties of co-optation.”<sup>16</sup> In 2006, Saudi Arabia continued to face the threat of Al-Qaeda sponsored terrorist activity, which was compounded by the spillover effects of the violent chaos in neighboring Iraq. The two countries have a long and porous border and around “900 people are believed to be operationally active in Iraq and

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<sup>14</sup> Ali A. Mazrui, “Liberal Islam versus Moderate Islam: Elusive Moderates and the Siege Mentality,” *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* Vol. 22, No. 23 (Summer 2005): 83-84.

<sup>15</sup> “20/20 Vision? The Middle East to 2020?” *Middle East Quarterly* (Winter 2004), 5.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

ready to conduct operations in Saudi Arabia.”<sup>17</sup> Riyadh’s biggest fear is that “disorder will spill over its own borders in the form of experienced, battle-trained fighters who can easily infiltrate into the kingdom, bringing with them newly honed skills in bomb-making and other aspects of insurgent warfare and joining with al Qaeda elements already active in Saudi Arabia.”<sup>18</sup> Interior Minister Prince Nayif bin Abdul Aziz acknowledged in July 2005 that “we expect the worst from those who went to Iraq,” predicting that they would be even more dangerous than those who had fought in Afghanistan,<sup>19</sup> “Iraq now constitutes the main base of terrorists... The condition in Iraq is changing day by day, posing multiple dangers for the region. We are living this situation and doing everything possible,” Prince Naif told reporters in Riyadh on November 12, 2006. He said some agencies were taking young Saudis to Iraq and using them “to carry out explosions... These youths go to Jordan and Syria ... and then sneak into Iraq. They will never be able to do that through our borders,” he said.<sup>20</sup>

Not much is known about the organizational structure or membership of the Al-Qaeda organization within Saudi Arabia. For example, it is not known if it is a coherent organization as opposed to a network of autonomous cells. There is also no reliable estimate of the number of individuals operating in Saudi Arabia; some analysts speculate that there are no more than 1,000–2,000, while others suggest much higher or lower figures.<sup>21</sup> What follows is a brief chronology of the major terrorism-related incidents in Saudi Arabia in 2006.

It should be noted that Saudi Arabia’s experience with terrorism is not new and it pre-dates the 9/11 terrorist attack on the United States. For example, in November 1979 Saudi Arabia violently put down the Grand Mosque uprising with French military help. The uprising was staged by Juhayman al-Utaybi, a charismatic preacher, and his group of followers, who called for the abolition of radio, television, professional soccer, and employment of women outside the home and urged the overthrow of the royal family for its alleged “corruption and close relationship with infidel powers.”<sup>22</sup> In November 1995, terrorists struck a joint US-Saudi facility in Riyadh that killed five Americans. A few months after the Riyadh bombing,

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<sup>17</sup> House of Commons, “Foreign Policy Aspects of the ‘War Against Terrorism,’” 43.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph McMillan, “Saudi Arabia and Iraq: Oil, Religion, and an Enduring Rivalry,” *USIP Special Report 157* (Washington, DC: United Institute for Peace, January 2006), p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> “GCC To Adopt Strategy To Deal with Iraq: Naif,” AFP, November 13, 2006

<sup>21</sup> House of Commons, “Foreign Policy Aspects of the ‘War Against Terrorism,’” 40.

<sup>22</sup> Rachel Bronson, *Thicker Than Oil: America’s Uneasy Partnership with Saudi Arabia* (London: Oxford University Press, 2006), 147.

a truck bomb exploded outside Khobar Towers, an apartment complex housing 2,000 members of the US armed forces. The explosion killed 19 US servicemen and wounded another 372.<sup>23</sup> However, the terrorist violence reached a new level in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. On May 12, 2003, attacks on Western housing compounds in Riyadh killed 35 people; and on November 8, 2003, 17 people, most of them expatriate workers from Arab countries, were killed in a suicide attack on a residential compound in Riyadh. The following months saw a series of deadly bombings and shoot-outs as militants attacked expatriate workers and the Saudi police. In June 2004, three gun attacks in Riyadh left two Americans and a BBC cameraman dead, and BBC Security Correspondent Frank Gardner seriously wounded. The same week, a US engineer was abducted and beheaded.

### **Chronology of Terrorist Activities in Saudi Arabia**

- On January 17, 2006, the Ministry of Interior reported that five men suspected of planning terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia were arrested.
- On February 24, 2006, the Saudi authorities announced that they had foiled a suicide attack on a major oil processing plant at Abqaiq – the first direct assault on Saudi oil production.
- Following up on the Abqaiq attack, security forces raided an Al-Qaeda safe house in Riyadh on February 27 and seized a ton and a half of explosives, three cars with forged license plates, 24 guns of various types with ammunition, and numerous videotapes. Five militants were killed in the raid, three of whom were on the list of most wanted militants.
- On April 18, 2006, the Ministry of Interior stated that Saudi security forces arrested five militants in connection with the failed Abqaiq oil facility attack.
- On May 12, 2006, the Ministry of Interior reported that a car fired on the US consulate in Jeddah. Security forces apprehended the armed individual later identified as Muhammad bin Abdel Raziq Saad Faidi Al-Ghamidi.
- On June 23, 2006, the Ministry of Interior confirmed that Saudi security forces killed six Al-Qaeda militants and arrested one militant in a raid in the Al-Nakheel neighborhood of Riyadh. Information obtained during the raid also resulted in the arrests of two additional suspected militants with direct links to the group.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 216.

- On June 24, 2006, the Ministry of Interior announced that from May 9 through May 23 Saudi security forces arrested 27 suspected Al-Qaeda terrorists in raids throughout the Kingdom.
- On August 22, 2006, four suspected militants surrendered to Saudi security forces in Jeddah after police laid siege to a building in which they were hiding.
- According to an official statement released on August 22, 2006, “at least 90 civilians, 55 security personnel and 136 militants have died since the unrest began in May 2003 and hundreds more have been wounded.”
- Between September and October 2006, Saudi authorities arrested 136 terrorist suspects who, according to official sources, had “exploited the Umrah traffic to smuggle in people who were trained abroad.”<sup>24</sup>
- On December 7, 2006 four armed gunmen in Jeddah killed two Saudi police officers when they tried to foil an attempt to assist in a prison breakout.<sup>25</sup>

A cursory look at the terrorist activity in Saudi Arabia in 2006 reveals that Al-Qaeda-backed terrorist violence remains the most significant security challenge for the Saudi authorities.

The aborted Al-Qaeda attack on the Abqaiq facility marked the beginning of the so-called “economic jihad” by Al-Qaeda against Saudi Arabia. Two days after the Abqaiq attack, an Al-Qaeda-affiliated cleric named Sheikh Abd-al-Aziz bin Rashid al-Anzi published a treatise which provided a religious justification for Osama bin Laden’s late 2004 call for the Mujahideen to “strike supply routes and oil lines, and to place twice as many mines [at oil targets] that leave behind no wounded, and to assassinate company owners in Riyadh, Kuwait, Jordan and other places.”<sup>26</sup> Entitled “The Religious Rule on Targeting Oil Interests,” and posted on a British internet website, the treatise claimed that “targeting oil interests,” is “lawful economic jihad in this era” and mentioned “pipelines,” “oil-refineries and related facilities,” and “individuals prominent in oil industry” as three sets of oil-related targets against which operations are permissible.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> “Two Saudi Officers Die in Shootout,” *Arab News*, December 8, 2006.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Michael Scheure, Stephen Ulph and John C. K. Daly, “Saudi Arabian Oil Facilities: The Achilles Heel of the Western Economy,” The Jamestown Foundation (Washington, DC: May 2006), 10.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* Three months before the Abqaiq attack, on December 7, 2005, al-Jazeera ran extracts from a recorded interview with Ayman al-Zawahiri in which he urged the Mujahideen to “focus their attacks on the oil wells stolen from the Muslims because most the revenues of this oil goes to the enemies of Islam.”



Apart from dealing with religiously motivated terrorist activity within the country in which some elements of its own citizenry are implicated, Saudi authorities now have to contend with the spillover effects of the sectarian war between the Sunnis and Shiites in neighboring Iraq. As many as two million Shiites live in Saudi Arabia, where they comprise 10-15 percent of the population. Most Saudi Shiites reside in the Eastern Province, which is also home to the world's largest concentration of oil assets and about 90 percent of Saudi Arabia's oil production. Although there is little evidence of Shiite militancy inside the Saudi kingdom, the ongoing violence between Shiites and Sunnis in Iraq could ignite the flames of "confessional violence" as "Saudi Salafi-Jihadists do in fact return home and inject new blood, energy and more sophisticated techniques into homegrown Saudi terrorist movements" and begin to "clash with the quiescent Shiites living inside the oil-rich Kingdom."<sup>28</sup>

The Saudi authorities are deeply concerned about bleed-back and would like to see better intelligence in Iraq as well as improved border control. The Saudi decision to build a double-track barbed fence fitted with remote sensors and thermal cameras along its border with Iraq reflects this concern. According to Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz, the interior minister, the proposed fence "will have 135 gates, all monitored with ultraviolet technology to prevent the infiltration of terrorists...and also to halt the smuggling of arms, drugs and persons into the Kingdom."<sup>29</sup> According to the US Army, Saudis comprise 12 percent of the estimated 3,000 foreign combatants fighting on the side of the insurgency in Iraq.<sup>30</sup> With Iraq becoming a crucial training ground for international terrorists, Saudi Arabia has to be concerned with the long-term "blow-back effects" of its citizens' involvement in that country. As pointed out by Peter Taylor:

By far the more important capability for carrying out local attacks is the availability of expertise, especially in bomb making, operational planning and tactics.... Foreign terrorists who have been involved with the Al Qaeda Jihad in Mesopotamia ....are now able to return to their countries of origin...battle hardened and with skills acquired and honed in Iraq.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> John Solomon, "Saudi Arabia's Shiites and their Effect on the Kingdom's Stability," *Global Terrorism Analysis* Vol. 4, No. 15 (July 27, 2006): 8.

<sup>29</sup> "Saudi Pressing Ahead with Fence on Iraq Border: Minister," AFP, November 15, 2006.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> House of Commons, "Foreign Policy Aspects of the 'War Against Terrorism,'" 21.

The threat of terrorism confronting Saudi Arabia while magnified by the deteriorating security situation in neighboring Iraq also has its domestic roots. According to a House of Commons Report “Insufficient job creation, an ill-adapted education system and anachronistic economic structures, particularly when coupled with the sight of thousands of Princes enjoying lavish lifestyles, risk popular discontent.”<sup>32</sup> To stem popular discontent translating into tacit support for forces of religious extremism, Riyadh has made special efforts to utilize Saudi Arabia’s “windfall” oil earnings to boost the pace of industrialization to create job opportunities for unemployed Saudi youth.

To supplement its security driven counter-terrorism strategy, Saudi Arabia has also tried to evolve a longer-term approach targeting the causes of terrorism and the recruitment of terrorists. Religious education in Muslim countries has come under intense scrutiny after the tragic events of 9/11. Western analysts often portray religious seminaries as incubators for terrorist violence as “they instill hatred in the minds of young people who later become the recruits of terrorist organizations.”<sup>33</sup> Positing a causal linkage between terrorist activity and pedagogy of violence taught in these religious schools, George Tenet, former CIA Director, told the Senate Armed Services Committee on March 19, 2002:

...Primary and secondary education in parts of the Muslim world is often dominated by an interpretation of Islam that teaches intolerance and hatred. The graduates of these schools – “madrasas” – provide the foot soldiers for many of the Islamic militant groups that operate throughout the Muslim World.<sup>34</sup>

Saudi Arabia has taken some basic steps to limit the influence of the religious conservatives who control state education where the bulk of the students are educated. These steps range from editing the curriculum to remove passages glorifying death and promoting hatred, to opening some 4,000 private primary and secondary schools which will have more

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>33</sup> Ali Riaz, “Global Jihad, Sectarianism And the Madrassahs in Pakistan,” *IDSS Working Paper no. 85* (Singapore: Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies, NTU August 2005), 1. How Madrassahs in the Muslim countries instill hostile propaganda among the youth is well described by Coulson: “Spartan classrooms in which children rock back and forth reciting passages from the Koran” and “common to most of these schools...are students and teachers unwavering support for Osama bin Laden, and their hostility toward the West, Jews, Hindus and particularly the United States.” Quoted in Ali Riaz, *op.cit.*, 3.

<sup>34</sup> George J. Tenet, “Worldwide Threat – Converging Dangers in a Post 9/11 World,” Testimony of Director of Central Intelligence Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, March 19, 2002, available at < [https://www.cia.gov/cia/public\\_affairs/speeches/2002/senate\\_select\\_hearing\\_03192002.html](https://www.cia.gov/cia/public_affairs/speeches/2002/senate_select_hearing_03192002.html) > (accessed March 27, 2007).

flexibility in terms of curriculum and teaching styles, to convening educational conferences highlighting the need for moderation and tolerance, and using the modern media, especially TV, to discredit those espousing violence in the name of Islam. The Saudi government has sought to use religious authorities to tackle the ideology behind terrorism. Ulemas have been urged to refute militants' arguments, preaching against the religious rhetoric and explaining in mosques and on television that their acts are breaches of Islam. Religious scholars, some of them known for their conservative views, have issued strongly-worded statements, bolstered by references to the Quran and Sunnah, categorically condemning Al-Qaeda's actions and its attacks on Muslims and non-Muslims. Repentant militants have also appeared on television and Islamist mediators have been brought in.<sup>35</sup> In October 2006, Saudi media took the bold step of airing a comedy program which ridiculed Islamic extremism with its depiction of "terrorism academy" named after the popular global TV franchise Star Academy.<sup>36</sup> In January 2006, Saudi Arabia hosted a meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in the holy city of Mecca. During the conference King Abdullah criticized Al Qaeda using "Islamically loaded terminology." The conference's final communiqué stated: "Islam is a religion of moderation which rejects bigotry, extremism and fanaticism."<sup>37</sup>

As part of its counter-terrorism strategy, Saudi Arabia has also taken steps to deny the channeling of terrorist funding through the country. According to Professor Neil Patrick, "the monitoring of significant bank deposits and/or transfers is now far more comprehensive, while charitable giving, formerly a key means for transferring monies to armed groups, is much more closely circumscribed, with one notable organization eventually being prevented from operating..." SAMA (the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency) is more efficient in following financial trails and in limiting the potential for monies to be transferred out of the country for nefarious purposes than a number of other GCC countries' central banks.<sup>38</sup> Despite these measures to stem the flow of Saudi money for terrorist activities, media reports indicate that "private Saudi citizens are giving millions of dollars to Sunni insurgents in Iraq and much of the money is used to buy weapons, including shoulder fired anti-aircraft missiles."<sup>39</sup> Saudi officials

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>36</sup> "Saudis Use TV to Mock Militants," Reuters, October 3, 2006.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>39</sup> Salah Nasrawi, "Saudis Reportedly Funding Iraqi Sunnis," Associated Press, December 8, 2006.

have vehemently denied that Saudi money is being used to fund the armed Sunni insurgency in Iraq.

Responding to domestic calls for democratic reform, the Saudi government has taken a number of steps for political opening including setting up of a National Dialogue and the holding of municipal elections. In early 2005, municipal elections were held in Saudi Arabia for the first time as an initial step in the democratization process.<sup>40</sup> In a statement before the Consultative Council in April 2006, King Abdullah laid out his priorities and the pace at which they should be addressed:

“We cannot remain rigid while the surrounding world is changing,” he said. “Thereby we will continue, God willing, in the development process, strengthening national dialogue, liberalizing the economy, fighting corruption, uprooting monotonous habits, increasing efficiency of government institutions. We will enlist the efforts of all sincere workers, both men and women. All that will be done incrementally and moderately.”<sup>41</sup>

The crux of the problem is that if King Abdullah moves too quickly, he risks backlash; too slowly, and the changes might not survive his tenure. Notwithstanding this dilemma, King Abdullah has begun to move decisively to introduce his own version of incremental glasnost in the political arena. On October 21, 2006, King Abdullah issued a new succession law, which created an Allegiance Commission to ensure the smooth transfer of power and remove the uncertainty caused by the inability of a king or crown prince to run the affairs of the state as a result of poor health. Under the law, the commission will have a say in the appointment of a crown prince proposed by the king. If the commission rejects the nominated crown prince, it would vote to choose between the king’s candidate and its own for the title.<sup>42</sup>

### **Pakistan: Frontline State Fighting Terrorism**

In the aftermath of September 11, Pakistan became a pivotal coalition partner of the US-led global war on terror. Faced with the coercive American pressure either to “be with America or with the terrorists” and in case the latter “be prepared to be bombed backed to the stone age,”<sup>43</sup> Islamabad not only jettisoned the Taliban regime in neighboring Afghanistan

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<sup>40</sup> For details see Pascal Menoret, “The Municipal Elections in Saudi Arabia 2005: First Step on a Democratic Path,” Arab Reform Brief (Paris: Arab Reform Initiative, 2005): 1-6.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Rachel Bronson and Isobel Coleman, “The Kingdom’s Clock,” *Foreign Policy*, (September/October 2006), available at <[http://www.cfr.org/publication/11562/kingdoms\\_clock.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/11562/kingdoms_clock.html)> (accessed December 5, 2006).

<sup>42</sup> “Saudi Arabia: New Law To Streamline Succession,” *Arab News*, October 22, 2006.

<sup>43</sup> Pervez Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006), 201.

but also agreed to provide vital logistical support for Operation Enduring Freedom. The events of September 11 offered Pakistan a great window of opportunity to reverse its disastrous pro-Taliban Afghanistan policy and pull the country out of imminent economic bankruptcy and international isolation.<sup>44</sup> In its role as a frontline state against terrorism, Pakistan undertook an extensive set of efforts to counter the looming threat of religious militancy and overcome Al-Qaeda's terrorist threat. These measures have included the following:

- Sharing of intelligence on terrorist activity with the United States and its allies;
- Ban on Jihadi organizations such as LET, JEM, TNFJM, SSP, TNSM;
- Strengthening of the anti-terrorist law and setting up of anti-terrorist courts with the military's participation;
- Condemnation at the highest level of acts of international terrorism performed by groups with societal links and roots in Pakistan;
- Ban on display and carrying of weapons;
- Freezing of the financial assets of the banned Jihadi groups;
- Freezing of bank accounts of more than 50 organizations suspected of links with sectarianism or international terrorism;
- The decision to incorporate the anti-terrorism recommendations of the inter-governmental Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering in Pakistani banking laws;<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 203. In his memoir, *In the Line of Fire*, President Musharraf explained his rationale for abandoning the Taliban and for supporting the United States in the following words: "The ultimate question that confronted me was whether it was in our national interest to destroy ourselves for the Taliban. Were they worth committing suicide over? The answer was a resounding no....the benefits of supporting the United States were obvious. First, we would be able to eliminate extremism ...and flush out the foreign terrorists from our midst...second, loosening the stranglehold of our debt and lifting economic sanctions. Third, after being an outcast nation following our nuclear tests, we could come (sic) center stage."

<sup>45</sup> FATF was set up at the G7 meeting in Paris in 1989 to monitor the implementation of measures against money laundering. The FATF Eight Special Recommendations on Terrorism Financing issued on October 31, 2001 are: 1) Ratification and implementation of UN instruments; 2) Criminalizing the financing of terrorism and associated money laundering; 3) Freezing and confiscating terrorist assets; 4) Reporting suspicious transactions related to terrorism; 5) Increasing international cooperation; 6) Regulating

- Arrest and trial of those involved in terrorist activity;
- Hunting down and arrest of remnants of Al-Qaeda network in Pakistan;
- Ban on “hate speech” during Friday prayers;
- Setting up of a special anti-terrorist task force.

The efforts made by the Pakistan government to control Al-Qaeda’s terrorist threat have yielded some concrete results. Since September 2001, Islamabad has “captured 689 Al-Qaeda operatives” and handed over 369 to United States.<sup>46</sup> Those captured by Pakistani authorities have included many prominent Al-Qaeda figures such as Abu Zubayda (March 2002 in Faisalabad), Khalid Sheikh Mohammad (March 2003 in Rawalpindi) and Abu Faraj al-Libbi (May 2005 in Mardan).<sup>47</sup> In addition, the Pakistan government has managed to avert many terrorist attacks in Pakistan. Table 1 below lists some of the attempted terrorist attacks that were thwarted by the government authorities.

**Table 1: Averted Terrorist Attacks in Pakistan**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Target</b>
April 2002	President of Pakistan
September 2002	President of Pakistan
October 2002	Unknown targets
December 2002	US diplomat
July 2003	Awam express train
March 2004	US Consulate, Karachi
April 2004	Military General Headquarters and Parliament
November 2004	Shah Faisal Mosque
November 2006	Presidency and Parliament

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alternative remittance systems; 7) Disclosing wire transfer details; and 8) Regulating non-profit organizations. For more details see <[www.oecd.org/fatf/SrecaTF-en.htm](http://www.oecd.org/fatf/SrecaTF-en.htm)>.

<sup>46</sup> Pervez Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir*.

<sup>47</sup> Aarish Ullah Khan, “The Terrorist Threat and Policy Response in Pakistan,” 30.

**Source: Adapted and updated from Aarish Ullah Khan (2005), p. 32**

The focus of Pakistan's anti-terrorist campaign in 2006 remained Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)<sup>48</sup> which, because of its geographical proximity with neighboring Afghanistan, tribal codes offering protection to honored guests, reputation as a "lawless frontier," and difficult terrain emerged as the main sanctuary for Al-Qaeda and Taliban elements. In an attempt to open up these fabled "No Go Areas" especially the North and South Waziristan, to "prevent outflow of terrorists/miscreants and unwanted elements from entering into Pakistan,"<sup>49</sup> Pakistan military launched its first operation in the tribal area on June 27, 2002 and since then it has conducted "44 operations" in which "302 terrorists have been killed and 663 captured."<sup>50</sup> Over 700 Pakistani soldiers have been reportedly killed in these military operations.<sup>51</sup> On January 13, 2006, in an attempt to kill Al-Qaeda's number two, Ayman al-Zawahri, who had reportedly visited the village of Damadola in the Bajaur tribal district of Pakistan on the Afghan frontier, American forces bombed several housing compounds. The attack killed at least five top Al-Qaeda figures and left scores of innocent civilians including children and women dead and many injured. Pakistan's Islamist political parties called for severing all ties with the United States for this attack on the country's sovereignty.<sup>52</sup> While the Pakistani forces have been successful in catching some foreign terrorists as a result of these operations, they have, by and large, failed to prevent the use of tribal belt as a sanctuary by the Taliban and Al-Qaeda remnants.

Partly in reaction to the substantial loss of its fighting men but largely as part of its broader strategy to marginalize the Taliban and Al-Qaeda influence in FATA through economic development, Islamabad changed its tactics by substituting use of force with a more conciliatory approach.

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<sup>48</sup> FATA comprised seven Agencies of Mohmand, Khyber, Kurran, Orakzai, Bajaur, North Waziristan and South Waziristan and six Frontier Regions, including the Malakand Agency. The region stretches nearly 230 km from Bajaur Agency to South Waziristan. FATA has a population of about 7 million and covers an area of 27,220 sq kms with a porous border of 450 km with Afghanistan. The federal government directly administers FATA with the Governor of the North West Frontier Province acting as an agent to the President. For details see Dr. Noor ul Haq et al, "Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan" *IPRI Paper 10* (Islamabad: Islamabad Policy Research Institute, 2005), 71-88.

<sup>49</sup> Major General M. Shaukat Sultan Khan, "Pakistan's Struggle Against Domestic and Global Terrorism in the Security Realm," in *Political Violence and Terrorism in South Asia*, ed. Pervez Iqbal Cheema et al., (Islamabad: Islamabad Policy Research Institute, 2006), 26.

<sup>50</sup> Aarish Ullah Khan, "The Terrorist Threat and Policy Response in Pakistan," 30.

<sup>51</sup> Zahid Hussain, "Deadly Dilemma," *Newsline*, November 2006, 23.

<sup>52</sup> Barnett R. Rubin and Abubakar Siddique, "Resolving the Pakistan-Afghanistan Stalemate," *USIP Special Report 176*, October 2006 (Washington, DC: USIP, 2006), 1.

Notwithstanding a string of broken agreements<sup>53</sup> that it had signed with local tribal leaders to stabilize the volatile situation in South Waziristan, Islamabad concluded a high-profile peace deal with the tribal elders of Utmanzai tribe and local militias on September 5, 2006. Under the terms of the agreement, the militants undertook to implement the following six decisions of the Loya Jirga (grand tribal council):

- 1) No attacks would be launched against law-enforcement agencies, armed forces and government installations. Also, there would be no target killings.
- 2) No parallel administration would be set up in North Waziristan and the writ of the government of Pakistan would be accepted. The political administration would be approached for solution of local problems and all issues would be solved under the *Riwaj* (customs and traditions) and Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR) with the cooperation of the Utmanzai tribes and their elders.
- 3) Nobody would be allowed to cross the border to take part in military operations in neighboring Afghanistan. However, there would be no ban on traveling to Afghanistan in line with existing laws and traditions for trade purposes or meeting relatives.
- 4) No interference would be carried out in settled districts adjoining North Waziristan and no effort would be made to establish parallel administration there.
- 5) All non-Pakistanis would leave North Waziristan. Those unable to do so would have to live peacefully in the area and respect the existing laws as well as all the terms of the peace agreement.
- 6) All government assets including vehicles, weapons, wireless sets, etc captured by the militants during fighting would be returned.

The government on its part agreed to implement the following eight jirga decisions:

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<sup>53</sup> Two previous agreements are worth mentioning. The first is Shakai Agreement. This Agreement was reached at Shakai, South Waziristan, on April 24, 2004. The agreement required foreign militants present in the area to register with the political authorities. If foreigners were to remain in the area, they were to live peacefully and abide by the law. The deal fell through as militants led by Nek Mohammed refused to accept the government's condition for the registration of foreign militants. Nek Mohammed was subsequently killed in a rocket attack by the security forces of Pakistan. The second agreement was signed between militant leader Baitullah Mashud and the administration on February 7, 2005. Under the agreement, the militants promised to remain peaceful and not harbor foreign militants. This agreement never took off, as Abdullah Mashud, another local militant leader, disowned it.



- 1) All those persons arrested during the military operations would be freed and would not be rearrested in these cases.
- 2) All privileges and benefits allowed to the tribes in the past would be restored.
- 3) Checkpoints newly erected on the roads would be dismantled while only Khassadars (tribal armed force) and Levies would man the old check posts as was the practice earlier.
- 4) All confiscated vehicles, weapons and other assets would be returned to the tribesmen.
- 5) Once the agreement is signed, the government would halt all ground and aerial military operations and in future resolve all issues under the terms of tribal customs and traditions.
- 6) All the innocent victims of military operations would be compensated for human and material losses. Owners of private properties that were damaged would also be paid compensation.
- 7) There would be no ban on carrying arms in keeping with existing tribal traditions and practices. However, the ban on heavy weapons would continue.
- 8) Implementation of the peace agreement would begin with redeployment of Pakistan Army troops from road checkpoints to their camps and bases.<sup>54</sup>

The two sides also agreed to form a 10-member committee comprising officers of the political administration in North Waziristan and tribal elders and religious scholars to monitor and ensure implementation of the agreement and serve as a bridge for contacts between the government and the Utmanzai tribes. It was also agreed to initiate action against any person or group, whether local or foreigner, who violates the agreement or tries to destroy peace in North Waziristan.

Critics of the North Waziristan accord have excoriated it as a thinly veiled attempt by the Pakistan army to cut its losses by capitulating to the forces of religious extremism running rampant in the area. As the latest Asia Crisis Group Report put it: “This accommodation facilitates the growth of

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<sup>54</sup> Rahimullah Yousafzai, “Breakthrough Agreement: So Far So Good,” *The News* (Sunday) September 16, 2006.

militancy and attacks in Afghanistan by giving pro-Taliban elements a free hand to recruit, train and arm.”<sup>55</sup>

The prospects for lasting peace opened by the North Waziristan accord were overshadowed by angry tribal reaction to the October 30, 2006 missile attack on a madrassa in Bajaur in which 85 people including children were killed.<sup>56</sup> President Musharraf defended the attack by claiming that those killed “were all militants. They were doing military training there. We were working on them for last six, seven days and we know who they were and what they were doing.”<sup>57</sup> Pakistani security officials further claimed that the destroyed religious seminary “was being used as a terror training facility where suicide bombers were being trained to launch attacks in Pakistan and Afghanistan.”<sup>58</sup> The madrassa attack provoked angry protests in the tribal belt where “thousands of heavily armed protesters took to the streets” in the biggest anti-government demonstration ever.<sup>59</sup> They chanted “Death to Musharraf! Death to Bush”<sup>60</sup> The Leader of opposition in the National Assembly, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, termed the attack “an unpardonable act” and a former head of the ISI with pro-Taliban leanings, General (Retd) Hameed Gul visualized that “Like Saddam Hussein, Musharraf might be tried by a future regime for killing his own people.”<sup>61</sup> A week later, on November 8, 2006 a suicide bomber blew himself up at an army-training centre at Dargai in the North West Frontier Province, killing 40 soldiers and injuring 39 recruits of the Punjab Regiment Centre and their instructor.<sup>62</sup> Linking the Dargai suicide blast with Al-Qaeda, Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao told a press conference in Islamabad on November 28, 2006 that the government had found evidence of “positive leads” of Al-Qaeda involvement in the incident in which 40 military personnel were killed.<sup>63</sup>

As the above brief narrative suggests, the most serious security challenge facing Pakistan is the threat from religious Islamic militancy running rampant in its tribal areas. The level of determination of the jihadi terrorists is evident from their targeting of Pakistan’s political structure right up to its top. The highest target of these terrorists was and remains the president of the country. There were two successive attacks on the life of

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<sup>55</sup> “Pakistan’s Tribal Areas: Appeasing the Militants” *International Crisis Group Asia Report, No. 125* (Brussels: December 11, 2006), 1.

<sup>56</sup> Intikhab Mir, “The Velvet Fist Revealed,” *Newsline*, November 2006, 54.

<sup>57</sup> Anwar Mansuri, “Bajaur Dead Were All Militants, Says Musharraf,” *Dawn*, November 1, 2006.

<sup>58</sup> Zahid Hussain, “Deadly Dilemma,” *Newsline*, November 2006, 18.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Paul Garwood, “Pakistani Air Strike Sparks Protests,” Associated Press, October 31, 2006.

<sup>61</sup> Zahid Hussain, “Deadly Dilemma,” 23.

<sup>62</sup> “42 Soldiers Killed in Suicide Attack at Dargai,” *The Daily Times*, November 9, 2006.

<sup>63</sup> “Lead Links Dargai Blast with Qaeda,” *The Nation*, November 29, 2006.

President Pervez Musharraf in December 2003, which he narrowly escaped. Other targets later included the military Corps Commander at Karachi in June 2004 (who is currently the Vice Chief of the Army) and the current Prime Minister, Shaukat Aziz (who was PM designate and Finance Minister at the time), in July 2004.”<sup>64</sup> The spillover effects of intensifying Taliban insurgency in neighboring Afghanistan have compounded this threat of homegrown militancy. In Afghanistan, more than 1,600 people were killed in 2005, and the violence is on the rise. In May 2006, Afghanistan saw some of the fiercest fighting since the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001. On November 26, 2006, a suicide bomber blew himself up in a crowded restaurant in the southeastern province of Paktia, killing 15 people and wounding 24 others. This suicide strike was the 102 in Afghanistan in 2006. Two hundred and forty one people have been killed in these suicide attacks.<sup>65</sup> There have already been more suicide attacks in 2006 than in the whole of 2005 (17) and 2004 (five). There are also fears that the violence is spreading to previously safe provinces. Cultivation of opium poppy has increased dramatically following the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001. Today, Afghanistan is the world’s largest supplier of opium (87 percent). In 2006, Afghanistan is expected to produce 92 per cent of the world opium, 60 percent of which will be produced in the South of the country. The emergence of a ‘narco-economy’ has warped the fabric of the state at every level.<sup>66</sup>

In its recent report Asia Crisis Group, identified the following factors behind the intensifying Afghan insurgency: “political disenfranchisement, resource quarrels, corruption, lack of opportunities and development, abuse by local and international security forces.”<sup>67</sup>

American policy makers have voiced concern over the adverse regional implications of Taliban’s reemergence in Afghanistan. Former US deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage told a seminar in Singapore on November 27: “If Afghanistan is not a success, President Pervez Musharraf in Pakistan will not be successful in moving to enlightened moderation.”<sup>68</sup> NATO’s leaders reaffirmed at their November 2006 Riga summit that “peace and stability in Afghanistan is NATO’s key priority,” calling upon “all of Afghanistan’s neighbors to act resolutely in support of the Afghan government’s efforts to build a stable and democratic country within secure

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<sup>64</sup> Aarish Ullah Khan, “The Terrorist Threat and Policy Response in Pakistan,” 18.

<sup>65</sup> “57 Taliban Among 72 Killed in Afghan Bloodbath,” *The News*, November 27, 2006.

<sup>66</sup> “Countering Afghanistan’s Insurgency: No Quick Fixes,” *International Crisis Group Asia Report No. 123* (Brussels: November 2, 2006), 5.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-13.

<sup>68</sup> “Afghan Failure Will Upset Musharraf: US”, *The Nation*, November 28, 2006.

borders” and particularly encouraging “close cooperation between Afghanistan, Pakistan and NATO, including through the Tri-Partite Commission.”<sup>69</sup> For its part, the Pakistani leadership has been stressing the need to rebuild and stabilize Afghanistan. In his Gauhar Memorial Lecture on “Key Developments on the Pakistan-Afghanistan Border” organized by Altaf Gauhar Foundation in Islamabad on November 27, 2006, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz proposed a “Marshall plan type programme to rebuild Afghanistan.” He said: “Afghanistan’s success is our success because we share commonalities. The drugs and terrorism are the real threats to the world peace and we will have to fight the menace...We, Pakistan, are loser if there is instability in Afghanistan.” He went on to say that Islamabad wants that “all Afghan refugees return to their homeland and it is possible only when they have resources to earn their livelihood.”<sup>70</sup>

With insurgency inside Afghanistan reaching alarming proportions, Kabul began to publicly accuse Islamabad of actively supporting the resurgent Taliban fighters. President Karzai has repeatedly called upon Islamabad to act against Taliban leaders and operatives, dismantle their training camps, deny sanctuary and shut down the jihadi madrasas that provide recruits from Pakistan. “I don’t think the Taliban have a headquarters, but the Taliban have sanctuaries” and these “sanctuaries are definitely in Pakistan.” The Afghan President also alleged that Islamabad’s September 5, 2006 agreement with pro-Taliban militants is fuelling further cross-border attacks.<sup>71</sup> Holding Pakistan directly responsible for the Taliban-led insurgency, President Karzai warned Pakistan that: “[I]t is like trying to train a snake against somebody else. You don’t train a snake. You cannot train a snake. It will come and bite you.”<sup>72</sup> While agreeing that there are “Al-Qaeda and Taliban both in Afghanistan and in Pakistan....They are certainly crossing from the Pakistani side and causing bomb blasts and terrorist activities.” President Musharraf insists that the problem and its solution lie in Afghanistan since the Taliban have “roots in the [Pashtun] people,” who could be provoked into “national war” if Kabul fails to address their grievances. “The war,” Musharraf says, “has to be won on the Afghan side. In Pakistan we are certainly taking action against the elements supporting

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<sup>69</sup> Text of Riga Summit Declaration, November 29, 2006, available at <<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2006/p06-150e.htm>>.

<sup>70</sup> “Pakistan Wants Stable Afghanistan: Shaukat,” *The Nation*, November 28, 2006.

<sup>71</sup> Kathy Gannon, “Afghan Leader: Taliban Chief in Pakistan,” Associated Press, October 17, 2006.

<sup>72</sup> Asia Crisis Group Report, “Countering Afghanistan’s Insurgency: No Quick Fixes,” *International Crisis Group Asia Report No. 123* (Brussels: November 2, 2006), 24.

the Taliban in Afghanistan.”<sup>73</sup> Reacting sharply to Afghan allegations that Islamabad was abetting the Taliban-led insurgency in Afghanistan, and especially media reports that Afghan officials had presented him a list of Taliban leaders allegedly living in Pakistan, President Musharraf told CNN in March 2006: “I feel there is a very, very deliberate attempt to malign Pakistan by some agents, and President Karzai is totally oblivious of what is happening in his own country.”<sup>74</sup> During his September 2006 state visit to Kabul, President Musharraf vehemently denied allegations that Taliban had been receiving official help: “Let me say neither the government of Pakistan nor ISI [Pakistani intelligence] is involved in any kind of interference inside Afghanistan.”<sup>75</sup> During his October 2006 visit to Washington, the Pakistan President stressed that the violence in Afghanistan is a domestic Pashtun phenomenon and gaining popular support: “He [Karzai] is not oblivious. He knows everything but he is openly denying – turning a blind eye like an ostrich.”<sup>76</sup> On December 12, 2006, addressing Afghan students at a local school in Kandahar, President Karzai accused Islamabad of using Taliban insurgency to “scare him off” and to enslave his people. He told the gathering of students that: “Pakistan hopes to make slaves out of us, but we will not surrender.” Venting his frustration over continuing suicide bomb attacks and a surge in violence, the Afghan leader said: “I told (Pakistan’s President) Musharraf we are angry and the nation is angry. I told him I am the one preventing them otherwise they will come after you.” Sending a message to the Taliban’s fugitive leader Mullah Omar and other commanders, President Karzai said, “if it is you operating out of a basement of Pakistan’s ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence agency) God may break your backbone.”<sup>77</sup> Reacting to President Karzai’s emotional outburst against Islamabad, Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri said that Mr Karzai was misinformed and was merely looking for a scapegoat. “To those who say this, I would like to say that it is a common human reaction when you have difficulties, you find somebody else to blame....People who are well informed ... they know better. They know what Pakistan is doing; they know

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<sup>73</sup> Nasir Jamal and Ahmed Hassan, “Taliban: An Afghan Issue: Accord to Set Up Anti-terror Group with UK,” *Dawn*, November 20, 2006.

<sup>74</sup> “Pakistan President Blasts Afghan Leader: Musharraf Upset Over Release of Intelligence Information to Media,” *CNN.com*, March 5, 2006, <<http://edition.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/asiapcf/03/05/musharraf/index.html>>.

<sup>75</sup> “Afghan Force ‘Needs More Troops,’” *BBC News*, September 8, 2006, <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/5322698.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/5322698.stm)>.

<sup>76</sup> “Blair, Musharraf Meet Amid Anti-terror Fallout,” *CNN.com*, September 28, 2006, <<http://edition.cnn.com/2006/POLITICS/09/28/blair.leaders/index.html>>.

<sup>77</sup> “Frustrated Karzai again lashes out at Pakistan,” *Dawn* December 14, 2006.

the price that Pakistan is paying.”<sup>78</sup> To address mounting international complaints from Afghanistan, the US and NATO that Islamabad was not doing enough to help stabilize the situation in the border area and the growing concern about tribal areas turning into safe haven for the Taliban and militants, Foreign Secretary Riaz Mohammed Khan announced on December 26, 2006 that “Pakistan Army had been tasked to work out modalities for selectively fencing and mining the Pakistan-Afghanistan border” in keeping with “our policy to prevent any militant activity from Pakistan inside Afghanistan.”<sup>79</sup> Describing the measure as a “last resort” to stop cross-border movement of terrorists, Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Khan claimed that “by taking such steps we want to show our intention to those who have been blaming Pakistan for not controlling the infiltration of the Taliban into Afghanistan.”<sup>80</sup> Reacting sharply to the Pakistani decision to mine and fence the border with Afghanistan, Kabul described the measure as “neither helpful nor practical.” Demanding that Islamabad should “fight terrorists in a real manner,” a presidential spokesman said: “We are against it. The border is not where the problem lies.”<sup>81</sup>

As a consequence of the resurgence of Taliban in neighboring Afghanistan, Pakistan’s tribal areas have been transformed into, to use Steve Metz’s terminology, a “Category II sanctuary” for terrorist activity. Category II states, according to Metz, tolerate terrorist activity not as a deliberate policy but “because of fear, weakness, or sympathy.”<sup>82</sup> It is worth mentioning here that nearly half of today’s Afghan population has visited Pakistan at some point, making it a country that Afghans are most familiar with outside their homeland. About 60,000 Pakistanis currently work in Afghanistan and 10,000 of them cross the border daily. Pakistan’s bilateral trade with Afghanistan now surpasses \$2 billion a year (with Pakistani exports to Afghanistan totaling \$1.2 billion, and Afghanistan’s exports to Pakistan totaling \$700 million).

During his March 2006 visit to Pakistan, US President George W Bush supported the Reconstruction Opportunity Zones in tribal areas of Pakistan, particularly between Pakistan and Afghanistan as a means to

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Syed Irfan Raza and Qudssia Akhlaque, “Afghan Border to Be Fenced,” *Dawn*, December 27, 2006.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> “Kabul Describes the Step as Insufficient,” *Dawn*, December 27, 2006.

<sup>82</sup> Category I states support terrorist movements as an official policy (e.g. Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq). Category III states become haven for terrorist activities because their systems of legal and civil rights and their large immigrant communities provide a form of protection. Most of the Western open societies with large concentration of immigrant communities would fall in this category. For details see Steve Metz, “State support for Terrorism,” in *Defeating Terrorism: Strategic Issue Analysis*, ed. John R. Martin (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2002): 21-26.

alleviate grinding poverty prevalent in the area. FATA is one of the poorest regions in Pakistan. Per capita income is half that of the very low national per capita income of \$500. Of its 3.1 million inhabitants, over 60 per cent live below the national poverty line. Per capita public development expenditure is one third of the national average. The overall literacy rate is 17.42 per cent compared to 56 per cent nationally. Male literacy is 29 per cent and female literacy is only 3 per cent as compared to the national 32.6 per cent for females. President Musharraf has announced that his government will spend \$16.5 million (Rs 10 billion) on development, as well as \$150 million in a five-year economic initiative to integrate FATA into the national economy by “breaking [the] vicious cycle of poverty, poor social services, lack of economic opportunities, and vulnerability to the easy solutions offered by extremism.” The main objective is to expand the resource base, generating economic activity and jobs and improving social indicators to meet Millennium Development Goals. The government estimates it needs to create 100,000 jobs.<sup>83</sup> Addressing a high-level meeting in Islamabad on November 30, 2006 Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said the Reconstruction Opportunity Zones (ROZ’s) would greatly “transform” the “tribal areas” by “strengthening the infrastructure, generating economic activities and creating more jobs and better facilities of life for the people of these areas.”<sup>84</sup>

The implementation of these important development schemes including ROZ cannot take place in the climate of violent conflict gripping the area. It is imperative to establish peace and this goal cannot be achieved without sustained cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Mutual recriminations are easy and politically expedient but counterproductive. Pakistan and Afghanistan must realize that they have a common enemy in Al-Qaeda and its associates and both would lose if the threat posed by these forces is not contained.

### **Conclusion**

As this narrative of the security challenges faced by Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, two of the most important frontline states in the global war on terror, suggests deteriorating security situation in their respective neighboring countries – Iraq and Afghanistan – has enormously complicated their efforts to bring the terrorist threat under control. While making an extensive contribution to the ongoing GWOT, both countries have tried to

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<sup>83</sup> “Economic Initiative for the Federally Administered Tribal Areas,” Ministry of Commerce, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad, undated policy memo quoted in “Pakistan’s Tribal Areas: Appeasing the Militants,” *International Crisis Group Asia Report, No. 125* (Brussels: December 11, 2006), 10.

<sup>84</sup> “US Congress To Discuss Setting Up ROZ’s in Pakistan,” *The News*, November 30, 2006.

evolve counter-terrorism strategies that best suit their respective national environments. Stabilizing Iraq and Afghanistan would be absolutely critical for the successful implementation of these strategies. It is worth mentioning here that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have been silent but effective partners of each other in combating the shared threat of terrorism. In February 2004, at the personal request of President Bush, Saudi Arabia paid \$235 million for 24 Bell helicopters for the Pakistan army to help Islamabad augment its capability for tracking terrorists and potential assassins.<sup>85</sup> Both Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have suffered a lot from the seeds of religious radicalism that were planted nearly three decades ago when following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, United States launched a global jihad to defeat the “evil empire.” In the drastically altered geopolitical context marked by the rise of asymmetric warfare, United States and its allies must carry their share of burden by helping Saudi Arabia and Pakistan overcome the pernicious legacy of that jihad.

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<sup>85</sup> Bob Woodward, *Bush at War, Part III State of Denial* (London, New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006), 217.