



PAKISTAN: SECURITY CHALLENGES

By Ian Dudgeon, November 4, 2010

Introduction

My presentation today is based on a visit I made to Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Lahore in Pakistan during 4-12 October 2010. The purpose of my visit was to understand the security challenges that Pakistan faces, particularly in the longer term, from a Pakistani perspective. The situation I will describe in my presentation, therefore, represents the views of those I met, i.e. their perceptions of the challenges they face, what they are doing about it, and why. I will offer my comments as appropriate.

Those I met included politicians, serving and former government and military officials, members of various influential think-tanks, academics, journalists, authors and members of the business community. All were keen interlocutors and, I believe, spoke very frankly about the security challenges Pakistan now faces, as they saw them. Most also prefaced their comments with the statement that the security challenges are complex, and largely interrelated. This certainly came out in my discussions, and is reflected in my presentation.

I would particularly like to thank the Pakistan High Commission in Canberra, the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (ISSI), the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and our High Commission in Islamabad for their excellent support in making the visit such a success.

Pakistan – Some Statistics

I will begin by briefly giving some statistics about Pakistan that help set the scene for my presentation.

Pakistan comprises an area of some 796,000 sq km or a little smaller in size to NSW (801,500 sq km). It has common borders with India (2912 km), Afghanistan (2560km), Iran (909 km) and China (580 km). Pakistan's coastline is 960km long.

Pakistan's estimated population is around 175 million, some 44% being Punjabi, 15% Pashtun, 14% Sindhi, 4% Baloch and the remaining 23% comprising other ethnic groups. 95% of the population is Muslim, of which 75% is Sunni, 20% Shia and the remaining 5% mostly Hindu and Christian. Pakistan is a developing country. Unemployment is about 14% and there is very high under employment. Some 24% of the population are estimated to live below the poverty line. Of those in employment, 43% are employed in agriculture, 20% in manufacturing, and 37% in services. However, Pakistan has rich resources, and the potential to expand its economy with the right vision, economic reforms, and skilling of its labour.

Finally, Pakistan's military forces number about 500,000 troops. Its arsenal includes nuclear weapons.

Pakistan's Security Challenges: External and Internal



Australian Institute of International Affairs

Promoting understanding of international issues

Pakistan's security challenges are both external and internal. I will speak about the external challenges first, then on their internal challenges, and conclude with some observations of my own.

India

The first external security challenge I will discuss relates to India

India has been and remains Pakistan's major external preoccupation since partition in 1947. The origins of these preoccupations relate directly or indirectly to the legacies of independence, and involve not only military issues, but water security and trade and investment issues.

Military Threat

Of major concern to Pakistan is the direct military threat posed by India. The two countries have fought "major" wars on three occasions, 1947, 1965 and 1971 (the latter resulting in the secession of East Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh) and a "minor" war in 1999. Other "minor" hostilities have included numerous border skirmishes between elements of their armies, and "proxy wars" involving, allegedly, support by both sides to cross-border insurgency and indigenous militant groups.

By way of setting the background scene to the current military relationship between Pakistan and India, three points were made. Firstly, both Pakistan and India are nuclear powers, with Pakistan establishing nuclear parity with India in the late 1990s. The deterrence factor resulting from this state of nuclear parity is a compelling factor for both countries to ensure that any future military hostilities remain well below the 'nuclear threshold'. Secondly, India has sought to dominate the non-nuclear battle space by threatening the use of its conventional military superiority, through the adoption in 2004 of their *Cold Start Strategy*. This strategy, seen by Pakistan as a form of intimidation, involves India reserving the option of responding to any hostile action by or originating from Pakistan, by the deployment, without warning, of a large military force across any border area by up to 80km, and the use of these territorial gains to negotiate "peace" concessions on India's terms. The announcement of this strategy coincided with peace initiatives by former Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, but I do not know whether the two are related. I will talk more about these initiatives shortly. Thirdly, the Pakistan military's assessment is that, while India may see China as their major potential threat, much of India's military capability and deployments are Pakistan-specific in their focus.

Kashmir is at the heart of Pakistan-India security challenges. The wars in 1947, 1965 and 1999 involved Kashmir, and most military skirmishes and so-called "proxy wars" have also involved Kashmir. It is not intended here to go into the history of Kashmir other than to say there is a UN-recognised Line of Control (LoC) between those areas occupied by Pakistan and India. My Pakistani contacts acknowledged past support, tacit or active depending with whom I spoke, to the militant organisation Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) in the conduct of a cross-border activities into India-occupied Kashmir. However, those who alleged direct support claimed that, as part of Pakistani initiatives to resolve the conflict over Kashmir, such support had now ceased. I would flag, however, the comment by one government official that while he was confident that Pakistan, specifically the Inner Service Intelligence (ISI), had sufficient influence amongst the traditional LeT leadership to ensure their cessation of cross-border activities, he was unsure that the LeT leadership had the degree of control over all of its affiliated networks to prevent continuing cross-border activity by some. Notwithstanding this, the general view was that ongoing dissidence in India-occupied Kashmir is now largely an indigenous response to India's occupation policies.



Australian Institute of International Affairs

Promoting understanding of international issues

I mentioned previously peace initiatives by former President Musharraf which reached their height during 2004-2005, but wavered after that due to domestic developments affecting Musharraf's political tenure, and India's reported failure to grasp the opportunities which Musharraf presented. According to recent media reporting, Musharraf claimed 'near agreement' was reached with India concerning Kashmir, and two other contested border areas, the Siachen Glacier and the Sir Creek maritime boundary. However, a number of contacts questioned whether agreement was as near as Musharraf boasted, particularly on Kashmir, and suspected he might have inflated progress on Kashmir for self-serving purposes. In the event, Musharraf resigned as President in September 2008, and peace negotiations were scuttled by the Mumbai terrorist attacks in November 2008. As you know, the Indians have claimed these terrorists could not have entered India from Pakistan without some Pakistan knowledge of, if not support for their movement and intent.

Since 2008 some measures have been taken to try and restore the peace dialogue, both at the ministerial level and through back-channel diplomacy, but with limited success. The major sticking point was identified as Pakistan wanting a composite dialogue i.e. all issues potentially on the table, and India wanting to first resolve their concerns about direct or indirect state-sponsored terrorism. Related to this are two other issues. The first is Pakistan's support for self-determination of all Kashmiris, and Kashmiri involvement in the future negotiations. And secondly, there are some complex legal issues regarding the ability to prosecute in Pakistan's courts, Pakistanis allegedly engaged in cross-border terrorism.

Almost all those I met, including government, military and ex-military, said it was time for Pakistan to work seriously towards closer ties with India. They supported as a matter of priority the need to press on and resolve the Kashmir issue and border disputes in the Siachen Glacier and Sir Creek estuary. They recognised that the initiative to do so depended on the will and courage of the political leadership of both countries. And in the case of Pakistan, given the powerful influence of the military in foreign policy and national security issues generally, military support for this initiative was also essential. Pakistan saw the 'composite dialogue' approach as the only practical way forward. In particular, they hoped that by initially resolving the 'relatively simple' Siachen Glacier and Sir Creek issues, this would help build the trust and confidence required for progress on Kashmir. And according to my ISSI interlocutors, building trust and confidence would also require Pakistan having to overcome entrenched issues of 'pride and prejudice'.

However, resolving Kashmir posed serious challenges. Pakistan recognised the formula had to be win-win politically for both governments. But for India, they recognised that the inclusion of Kashmiris as part of the negotiations, and granting Kashmiris the right of self-determination would be difficult conditions to accept. And for Pakistan, Indian demands on the issue of support to militants, or terrorists, could not easily be met, especially in the short term.

I mentioned earlier the problems of LeT control over elements of its network of militants, and legal issues affecting the prosecution of those accused of engaging in cross-border hostilities. But for Pakistan it was more complex than that. The problem was interrelated with Pakistan's internal security situation i.e. increased militancy and extremism, and how Pakistan combats this. Many contacts said it was not a simple case of a hard crack-down by security forces on these groups, including the arrest of their leadership, rather the solution must address the "root causes" that spawned these groups, and this would take time. India had been told this. According to my contacts, what Pakistan does not know is whether India would concur in the current circumstances to proceed with seeking agreement, initially on Siachen and Sir Creek, and subsequently on Kashmir, or wait out action by Pakistan that meets their threshold for resolution of the terrorism issue.



Australian Institute of International Affairs

Promoting understanding of international issues

In addition to issues on Pakistan's eastern border with India, concern was also expressed about the threat posed by India on Pakistan's western border. The alleged cross-border support by India intelligence operatives in Afghanistan to Baloch militants within Pakistan was cited as one example, although some contacts saw this activity as limited to a form of measured pressure by India on Pakistan to stop Pakistan or Pakistan-based support to Kashmiri militants in Indian-occupied Kashmir. Importantly, no-one believed India sought to seriously destabilise Pakistan – they believed it simply was not in India's security interests to do so.

Of greater concern to Pakistan, however, was India's growing political, economic and military influence in Afghanistan generally, and how this would, or could, conflict with Pakistan's longer term interests. Specifically, Pakistan feared the formation of a potentially hostile coalition government in Afghanistan. They feared a government that was pro-India politically and that could allow a significant ongoing Indian military presence in Afghanistan that would enable India to 'hedge' Pakistan militarily from east and west. In addition, there was strong suspicion amongst some about the true motives behind India's US\$1 billion plus local infrastructure development assistance program in Afghanistan e.g. was it military-related with a covert Pakistan focus?

Water Security

Let me now address the issue of water security:

Although of a much lower profile than the military issues, but potentially of no less importance, a number of contacts did express serious concern about India's construction of dams along tributaries of the Indus River, and the implications of this for Pakistan's water security. The significance of this issue is that some 80% of Pakistan's arable land is dependent on water from the Indus River system. If the water supply is reduced, it will directly affect Pakistan's agricultural production, impact on Pakistan's ability to feed its people, and reduce its foreign currency earnings from agricultural exports.

There are mechanisms in place to discuss and resolve water security issues, including the Indus Water Treaty of 1960. Where negotiations under this Treaty have failed, the World Bank has played an important mediation role, but some current disputes are being taken to the international Court of Arbitration for resolution. Without going into further detail, let me simply say my contacts stressed that water security is of vital concern to Pakistan, but they were cautiously optimistic of equitable resolutions through direct practical dialogues and third party mediation, and that the Kashmir issue would not adversely impact on this.

Trade and Investment

I will now briefly discuss Pakistan- India trade and investment

I had the opportunity to discuss these issues briefly with a number of those I met, including politicians, government officials and those in business. All recognised that two-way trade and investment between Pakistan and India was a serious casualty of their hostile relationship since 1947. For example, according to ISSI research material provided to me on two-way direct trade, in 2008 this only amounted to US\$2 billion, with India accounting for 1% of Pakistan's foreign trade and Pakistan accounting for 0.5% of India's foreign trade.

However, the research material also claimed that total imports of each other's products was actually much higher, but were sourced from third countries within the region e.g. an estimated 36% of India's South Asian imports were assessed as originating from Pakistan and some 69% of Pakistan's imports from South Asia were assessed as originating from



Australian Institute of International Affairs

Promoting understanding of international issues

India. It made a lot of sense, therefore, for cost and other reasons, to increase direct two-way trade between the two countries. The major barriers to this were identified as both tariff and non-tariff, but I was assured these could be changed to create a more favourable environment if there was the mutual will to do so.

The logic of increased two-way trade and investment, including the opportunity for Pakistan to ride the coat tails of India's rising economic status, was not in question, and I would mention that the Governor of the Punjab, Mr Salman Taseer, spoke strongly on the need for Pakistan to take the initiative and seek ways to create opportunities for this. His province in particular had much to gain from positive change. However, given the long history between Pakistan and India, most of those with whom I discussed this issue, while supportive of positive change, voiced some caution against becoming too dependent on Indian trade and investment for fear that India could use it at some future time to political advantage.

And that brings us back to trust, confidence, pride and prejudice. A number of contacts speculated whether positive moves on Siachen, Sir Creek and especially Kashmir would help set the climate to build trust and confidence, and lessen pride and prejudice, in this and other areas.

Afghanistan

Let me now talk about Pakistan and Afghanistan. I do not intend here to go into the history of Pakistan's involvement with the Mujaheddin, and later Taliban forces, initially against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, and subsequently during the period 1989 through to the tragedy of 9/11. Nor do I want to get into the detail of the complexities in the period since 9/11.

But my contacts did emphasise the legacy of the multitude of facilities set up in Pakistan along the Afghan border, particularly within the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), from 1979 onwards to provide training, logistical support and safe sanctuaries to Afghans, Pakistanis and other international groups engaged in the fight against Soviet occupation forces in Afghanistan. They also mentioned the establishment of many new local madrassas, mostly financed by Saudi money, their religious-only curriculum, and their wahabbist or more radical form of Islam.

All of this became an integrated part of the life of the local border tribes, and took on a life of its own. For this reason it is often difficult to separate physically the Afghan Taliban, which I will simply refer to as the Taliban, and the Pakistan Taliban, which I will refer to by the major group, the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP.

And finally, my contacts emphasised the overlay of the enduring political and administrative complexities of the FATA within the national framework of Pakistan since independence in 1947.

One other important background consideration, as explained to me, was the Pashtun-Taliban relationship. The Pashtuns are the majority tribe in Afghanistan, and they spill across the border with Pakistan, particularly throughout the FATA area. The Pashtun population in Afghanistan exceeds 13 million, that in Pakistan numbers some 24 million. They are Sunni, as is the majority of Muslims in Pakistan.

Pakistan sees its security interests best served by the strong Pashtun presence in Afghanistan along its border, and the proper weighting of its representation and influence in any future Afghan coalition government. Circumstantially, the Taliban are the most dominant force, politically and militarily, amongst the Pashtuns in Afghanistan. The confluence of this dominance of the Taliban in Afghanistan with Pakistan's security interests was seen as a default situation. My



Australian Institute of International Affairs

Promoting understanding of international issues

contacts said they have no liking of the Taliban either in terms of their ruthlessness, which incidentally, many thought was matched by the Northern Alliance, or their wahabbist brand of Islam.

My Pakistan contacts well understood the pressure on the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and US forces in particular, to demonstrate progress in the war in Afghanistan by mid 2011, and stressed that Pakistan also was under very strong US pressure to stop Al Qaeda and the Taliban from receiving material supplies from their supporters in Pakistan or being able to use Pakistan for sanctuary purposes.

However, the view was also stressed several times that you cannot just shut down the situation along Pakistan's border over night. Two main reasons were given for this.

The first was the geography of the border itself. Pakistan's border with Afghanistan was some 2340 km long, and it was impossible to monitor and control a border of that length. For example, there were only two official crossing points (Chaman and Torkham) along the border, 20 designated 'frequented' crossing points i.e where there was some administrative including customs presence, and 340 designated 'unfrequented crossing points' i.e no administrative presence. In addition to these there were 821 Pakistan army border posts and an additional 112 posts manned by the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF)/ISAF. But in reality there were potentially thousands of potential crossing points along the border. It was by its nature very porous, especially where, for historical, ethnic, family or religious reasons, the Taliban had the sympathy and support of many local Pakistan tribes.

The second was the size and consequences of the military challenge. Pakistan's total military deployment along the border was some 147,000 troops. Operations against Al Qaeda and the Taliban in the FATA and nearby areas were very difficult to mount, and had been very costly in terms of casualties. For example, according to statistics issued by the Pakistan military, since 2001 Pakistan had suffered 9,616 casualties comprising 2,421 killed in action and 7,195 wounded in action, and there were an additional 23,216 civilian casualties. In response to some criticism that Pakistan should do more along the border, the point was made that the size of their troop deployment and casualties suffered, considerably exceeded those of ISAF during the same period. For example, ISAF force deployments were 101,530 from 43 nations (compared to 147,000 from one nation), 1582 killed in action (compared to 2421) and their tenure in combat was between 6-12 months (compared to 26 months for Pakistani forces)

No figures were given for Taliban casualties during the same period.

Military operations within FATA were described as 'successful' in terms of establishing 'control' in all areas except North Waziristan, where major operations were yet to be mounted. Variations of the definition of 'success', however, need to be understood. I was told that while the casualty statistics mentioned are evidence of some very severe fighting and thus a serious commitment by Pakistan's military, success does not necessarily mean the elimination of the Taliban. It can mean that some Taliban have been forced to relocate to another area. North Waziristan was cited a case in point. Success can also mean a negotiated arrangement between the Taliban and Pakistan military not to fight in certain areas. These 'temporary' arrangements were attractive in some circumstances to Pakistan's military and local civilian officials alike, as they reduced the level of conflict, and especially the frequency and savagery of Taliban ambushes and assassinations. But both the Pakistan military and officials fully realised such arrangements were only 'buying time', and did not resolve the underlying issues.

In the case of North Waziristan, the reticence of the Pakistan military to mount operations there was seen by most contacts as driven by two factors. The first was that neither the military nor civilian authorities were yet ready to mount



Australian Institute of International Affairs

Promoting understanding of international issues

a large scale and complex operation that inevitably would incur high military and civilian casualties. For example, in the case of the military, many of their resources were still committed to flood relief and thus not available for operations. And secondly, such an operation could prove unnecessary, at least as envisaged, depending on the profile of a future coalition government in Afghanistan i.e. there was a case to wait and see whether the foreshadowed new Afghan coalition government includes the Taliban, and if so, whether that will enable the voluntary relocation of the Taliban and their foreign supporters from North Waziristan, and elsewhere, to Afghan territory.

One obvious question to flow from the ability of the Pakistan military to negotiate non-fighting arrangements was the extent of contact between the military and Taliban leaders. The response was that only the ISI would know, but direct and/or indirect contacts were known or assumed to exist. For example, several I spoke to referred specifically to contact with the powerful Haqqani network. However, this did not assume direct contact with Al Qaeda or an awareness of the Al Qaeda leadership's whereabouts. The assumption by most was that the Pakistan military were cooperating with ISAF in locating the whereabouts of specific Al Qaeda targets, and coordinating their actions to capture or kill them.

A further question was if the specific whereabouts of Taliban leaders was known, at least some of the time, why didn't the Pakistan military kill or capture those leaders? Responses varied but two had multiple support. Firstly, there was the fear, indeed likelihood, of a bitter and bloody back-lash from the Taliban, and probably from their supporters amongst the TTP related groups. For the reasons already mentioned, this they wished to avoid, at least until they were ready to take the fight to the Taliban through serious and sustained operations. Secondly, Pakistan was able to negotiate with the existing, often older and longer serving leadership. If they were eliminated, they would be replaced with a younger more radical leadership who would not, or were far less likely, to want to negotiate.

Regarding the future government in Afghanistan, none of those whom I spoke to anticipated the creation of a 'stable' coalition government that excluded the Taliban and only included an unrepresentative non-Taliban Pashtun presence. Not only did my contacts not support the formation of such a government for national security reasons, but in their view, given the military strength and influence generally of the Taliban, no such government could realistically survive.

The position put to me was that Pakistan's security interests required a government in Afghanistan that was 'tolerable', not a government that would continue to challenge its security interests. For Pakistan, any future coalition government had to include the Taliban because of the Pashtun factor, and for that inclusion to work, the Pashtuns had to have a genuine share of power. Furthermore, several I spoke to said that to achieve this, Pakistan had to be directly involved in the broking with the Taliban and the Karzai government, and not leave the broking with Karzai alone.

What my contacts said they did not know was whether the Taliban was interested in joining a coalition at this time. One view was that they were not interested. With a timetable for the commencement of a withdrawal of ISAF forces set, all they had to do was wait out the withdrawal, consolidating power in the interim. Another view was they could agree to join the coalition, if only to hasten the withdrawal of foreign forces, but still continue to consolidate power. Once foreign forces, or at least foreign combat forces, had withdrawn, the Taliban could well go on the offensive to seize more power in the expectation that foreign combat forces would not return. In sum, there was no optimism about the future and no-one discounted that any such contest for power could precipitate civil war.

The view expressed to me was that the Pashtuns were the key to a solution in Afghanistan. Eliminating Taliban influence meant the de-Talibanisation of key members of the Pashtun leadership and that required provision of an



Australian Institute of International Affairs

Promoting understanding of international issues

'alternative agenda' to win the Pashtuns over. This was the same formula that Pakistan had to employ to address its own internal security challenges.

China & Iran

I will end discussion on external challenges with brief comments on Pakistan's two other neighbours, China and Iran. China is a close ally of Pakistan. The only 'tension' mentioned was China's fear of the reach of Pakistan's Islamic extremists across their border, and China had put measures in place to monitor and control this.

Relations with Iran were described as good at the government-to-government level. However, there were some concerns in Pakistan over Iran's strong opposition to the Taliban, support for the Karzai government and support for Shia tribal groups in Afghanistan. There was also concern about allegations of Iran's possible intentions to develop nuclear weapons. My contacts also referred to concern on Iran's part about cross-border links between militants, and smuggling across the Pakistan-Iranian border, particularly of narcotics, sourced from Afghanistan. The Pakistan view was that both governments were keen to ensure the relationship remained sound, and they continued to work together to ensure potential security issues remained contained.

Internal Security Challenges

Finally, I want to talk about Pakistan's internal security challenges.

It emerged fairly quickly during my discussions that internal security was seen as Pakistan's major security challenge. It also interrelates significantly with Pakistan's external challenges.

The security threat was described as Islamic-based militancy which had grown out of the infrastructure created within the border areas of Pakistan, especially but not limited to the FATA, to train and support the Afghan mujaheddin, Taliban and Pakistani and other sympathisers to fight Soviet occupation forces in Afghanistan. It was, according to two senior government contacts, a case of the 'monster' turning on and biting its creator.

I mentioned earlier that these organisations had become integrated into local society, in the FATA especially, that many were indistinguishable from the Taliban, and they took on a life of their own. While the TTP and LeT were identified as two prominent militant organisations, in fact scores of like-organisations had now spawned throughout Pakistan, most of which were networked in one form or other, but under independent leadership.

And because many in the FATA were financed externally, particularly by Saudi-based sources, they established their own madrassas, often in areas where schools of any kind did not exist, and promoted a religious-only curriculum based on wahabbism and promoting a sharia law-based society. Several contacts commented that one outcome of this religious radicalism was the growth of religious violence against the Shia and other non-Islamic religions, and less overall violence, at least for now, directed at government institutions.

The point was also emphasised that this spawning occurred in the Pakistani environment of high unemployment and underemployment, of a high number of people living at or below the poverty line, in areas where basic government services such as health, water supply, other infrastructure, governance and justice were limited, where public schooling did not exist or was limited, and where the number of madrassas run by moderate Islamists that taught life skills, and the charitable reach by these moderates were also limited.



Australian Institute of International Affairs

Promoting understanding of international issues

My Pakistan contacts appreciated that the situation they described was an environment ripe for the growth of radicalism, and the spreading of domestic instability. They spoke strongly of the need for government to acquire the capability to adequately provide the basic services required, not only on a nation-wide scale to remove the 'root causes' of the problem, but to step into areas controlled by the military and prevent the return of radicalism or insurgency. The latter situation applied particularly in areas of the FATA and the Swat Valley. In the absence of the government's present capability to adequately provide these basic services, especially in military controlled and held areas, the army was doing all it could within its resource limitations to fill the vacuum. But ultimately the responsibility was that of the civilian government, not the military.

There was a general acceptance also that moderate Islamic institutions had to work in parallel with government in addressing the situation I have described, as the solutions were so intertwined. On this issue, one contact closely associated with moderate Islam said it was important to avoid, wherever possible, open confrontation between moderate and radical Sunnis. The formula the moderates should adopt was to create an "alternative agenda" by providing more madrassas with a broader curriculum in more areas, providing a much greater reach of religious charitable support than at present, and moderate preaching in the mosques to counter the preachings of the radicals.

My contacts also appreciated that Pakistan had to find ways of promoting economic growth in order to provide more employment opportunities and raise living standards generally. They were aware, however, that the current security climate was likely to deter some investment, particularly foreign investment.

All those I met, and they assured me the government generally, were conscious of the importance, enormity and urgency of the security and related socio-economic challenges involved. They accepted the need for urgent government action, and appreciated that even in a best-case situation, effective action would take considerable time.

But for government to adequately meet its responsibilities, there were also issues of the availability of all the human, physical and financial resources to do the job. My contacts believed Pakistan was up to meeting many of the challenges, but would need international support to meet others. On the issue of foreign investment, I put the proposal that India was possibly the most logical source; the Indians knew Pakistan, they had a vested interest in a secure and stable Pakistan, and there was the logic of closer ties given the opportunities that India's economic growth would provide. Many agreed with this view.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I wish to express the following comments.

There is no doubt that Pakistan's security challenges are complex and mostly interrelated. I believe the major issues are clear, the challenge lies in the solutions.

Internal security emerged as Pakistan's largest and most urgent challenge. Effectively addressing this situation will require resources, bold action but implemented with sensitivity, political courage and very strong leadership. The solution must also have the partisan support of all political parties, and both the support and parallel interaction of moderate Islam. There is also a need for appropriate foreign assistance to contribute to Pakistan's capability to successfully meet this challenge. Pakistan's stability is important not only to Pakistan itself, but regionally. A potentially unstable nuclear power in South Asia is to be prevented at all cost.



Australian Institute of International Affairs

Promoting understanding of international issues

India looms large as a challenge for Pakistan, but the potential opportunities, including economic opportunities, also loom large in contributing to a solution. Would the public acknowledgement by Pakistan of its internal security challenges and the announcement of a comprehensive plan to address these, which necessarily must include addressing the threat of radicalism and terrorism that is of concern to India, provide India with the 'win' they are looking for, and facilitate the comprehensive dialogue that Pakistan seeks?

Pakistan is an important key to the 'Afghan solution'. Pakistan's requirement of appropriate Pashtun representation and weighting in a coalition government means that in the foreseeable future, and certainly within the 2011 timeframe, that would have to include Taliban representation. If the Taliban's inclusion is the accepted formula of the Karzai government and ISAF, then Pakistan should do everything to encourage the Taliban to join. That would create the "tolerable" government in Afghanistan that Pakistan seeks to protect its national security interests. This does not conflict with Pakistan taking comprehensive measures to address its internal security challenges, including concurrent action to get rid of Taliban sanctuaries and support systems in its border areas. Indeed, how Pakistan does this, and Pakistan's success in addressing its internal security challenges generally, might provide valuable 'lessons learned' for the de-Talibanisation of the Pashtuns in Afghanistan.

Ian Dudgeon is a Presidential Associate of the AIIA and currently in Iran. This transcript was originally delivered as a presentation to the AIIA ACT branch in Canberra on November 4, 2010. This transcript can be republished with attribution under a Creative Commons Licence.