

Pakistan

Expand the U.S. Agenda toward Pakistan Prospects for Peace and Stability Can Brighten

Background

Many forces combine in Pakistan to threaten global peace and security, rendering it the most dangerous country in today's world. Violence is a dominant feature of the political landscape—most notably in the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in December 2007. The February 2008 elections, however, may have put Pakistan on a tortuous path toward democracy.

In most respects, the current administration's policy toward Pakistan has not paid off. The next President must change the agenda and seek to alter the mood, by revamping Pakistani visions of America. Pakistani people must be persuaded that America supports democracy in their country and can be a long-term and reliable ally. They should feel that the struggle against Al Qa'eda and its allies is their war as well as ours.

Recommendations

The next President also should take advantage of opportunities to improve the security situation in South Asia by:

- increasing and redirecting economic and military aid to Pakistan to strengthen the new democracy
- working with Kabul and Islamabad to gain a public agreement, guaranteed by the United States, that the Durand Line, which is the disputed border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, can be altered only with the consent of both governments
- quietly seeking an agreement between New Delhi and Islamabad on Kashmir, probably based on a formula that would make the Line of Control between Indian and Pakistani authority in Kashmir a permanent and normal international border (perhaps with minor modifications) and render it a permeable frontier, so that the Kashmiri people can live more normal lives, and
- greatly intensifying efforts to ensure the security of Pakistan's weapons arsenal, while avoiding reckless talk about using unilateral means to secure the Pakistani systems.

Key Facts

- Pakistan has sold nuclear technology to North Korea, Iran and Libya, and acquired it partly by theft in the Netherlands
- The top leaders of Al Qa'eda, Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, fled to Pakistan after the collapse of Afghanistan's Taliban regime in 2001, along with Taliban leader Mullah Omar
- The country is a pathway for opium from Afghanistan to the world market.

A full version of this proposal, as well as supporting background material, is available at www.opportunity08.org.

About the Author and the Project

Bruce Riedel

Bruce Riedel is a senior fellow with the Saban Center for Middle East Studies at Brookings. A former CIA officer, Riedel focuses on political transition, terrorism and conflict resolution. He was a senior advisor to three U.S. presidents on Middle East and South Asian issues.

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