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Mobilizing People's power

Dedicated to Democratic Ideals, a progressive and politically stable Pakistan, and strong US-Pakistan relations.

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Contents

1. Marvin Weinbaum: "Pakistan Looks Toward A Year Of Stability But Little Rights Progress"
2. Youth Leadership Development Program
3. Our Focus
4. Media Review

Pakistan Looks Toward A Year of Stability But Little Rights Progress

Marvin Weinbaum

Dr. Weinbaum is Director of Pakistan Studies Center at Middle East Institute in Washington DC. He is a member of the INDUS Academic Panel.

Pakistan seems on track in 2017 for another year of just getting by. The country seems likely as in the recent past to avoid fully confronting its most challenging problems yet managing to do enough to avoid their becoming seriously worse.

Measures to curb domestic violence undertaken by Pakistan's military and civilian government can be expected to fall short of making the hard choices needed to eliminate ensconced extremist groups.

The military's campaign in the FATA and paramilitary actions in Karachi and elsewhere in conjunction with the country's National Action Plan (NAP) are given credit for lowering the number of terrorist attacks nationwide. Even so, the intelligence coordination envisioned by NAP has not been achieved and the high incidence of deadly high-profile attacks in 2016 may well continue in 2017.

Also lacking is the political will among Pakistan's leaders to target those violent jihadi groups like Lashkar-e Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad, which along with the Afghan Taliban continue to be treated as strategic assets in Pakistan's security calculus involving Kashmir and Afghanistan.

Indications are that Pakistan's policymakers will do little in 2017 to address the structural weaknesses in a sluggish economy. Declining direct private investment and weakening balance of payments are unlikely to be reversed this year, and the country's heavy debt burden will continue to grow.

But Pakistan is not expected to face economic crisis or pay a price politically for inaction. Low oil and gas prices and strengthened currency reserves have taken pressure off the government to confront such difficult issues as tax reform and inequality.

Public discontent, so visible in recent years over shortages in electricity, has been lessened by the country's increasing megawatt capacity. Above all, the popular euphoria over the agreement with China that promises more than \$50 billion to construct an economic corridor uplifting the country's transit and energy infrastructure has created the popular impression that Pakistan will be eventually relieved of all its economic ills.

Politically, most predictions foresee a year of greater political stability. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's overseas financial holding, as revealed by the Panama Papers, will continue to plague him for some months as will efforts of opposition parties to weaken and delegitimize his leadership. Yet Sharif will probably continue to outmaneuver his political enemies and be buttressed by popular approval of his government's development projects.

Imran Khan's movement shows signs of running out of steam, and its longtime rival, the People's Party, has not regained its footing as a national party.

Sharif's Muslim League stands a good chance of being returned to power in the event early national elections are called in 2017.

A modus vivendi seems to be largely in place between Pakistan's civilian leaders and its military. Despite the generals' disdain for Sharif and much of the political class, the military appears content with a status quo in which its domain of foreign and defense policy remains secure and it can avoid the responsibilities that come with assuming the powers of government.

In this often delicately balanced relationship, the Sharif government has acquired a newfound confidence. Its successful management of a new army chief's selection in November has probably gained the Sharif regime a better hearing from the military and greater assurance that the ruling party will be allowed to serve out its term in office.

The government's hand has also been strengthened as it has assumed the lead role in negotiating the direction of Chinese economic investment in Pakistan.

The year 2017 will not mark progress in expanding human and civil rights or legislation curbing corruption. More problematic still is the future of a blasphemy law.

However, closure should finally be achieved in long-overdue integration politically and administratively of Pakistan's tribal areas with the rest of the country. In all probability, the seven tribal agencies of FATA will be consolidated within Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. Less certain is whether the Pakistani Taliban, which found refuge from the army's Zarb-e Azb campaign across the border in Afghanistan, will begin to seep back into North Waziristan.

For the time being at least, barbed rhetorical exchanges and periodic border clashes are likely to mark relations between Pakistan and India. Although both nuclear-capable powers seek to avoid deeper conflict, another major terrorist attack inside India could, however, end the restraint heretofore shown by the Modi government.

Pakistan's suspicions of Indian activities in Afghanistan may increase further in 2017 should Taliban military gains force the Kabul government to lean heavily on India for meeting its security needs.

The optimism expressed in Pakistan that a new U.S. administration may be more understanding of the country's policies will probably fade quickly. Under a Trump administration, the long-lasting U.S. alliance with Pakistan can be expected to become more transparently transactional and carry more sticks than carrots.

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Youth Leadership Development Program

INTRODUCTION

After more than six and a half decades of independent existence, scientific, technological and industrial advances, comparable to most advancing nations of the world, Pakistan continues to struggle with some fundamental issues. The most pressing of these being absence of a unified vision, lack of focus on nation building and philosophical disagreements on identity. Decades of state ambivalence on critical issues, social apathy and enslavement of masses by bureaucracies that were created to serve them require a resolution to the identity crisis and restoration of rights of the individual within the national consciousness as an imperative for a direly needed social transformation. Such a transformation is a formidable task under any circumstances especially when national priorities have been neglected or put on hold for decades.

As Rasul Baksh Rais, a Political Analyst said some time back "At the grass roots level, I see a revolution of rising frustrations with the system from the precincts of Karachi to the furthest points in Gilgit-Baltistan". This is the reason why people are falling back on narrow identities, like sect, tribe and caste to survive or access power. It is also a reason for militancy, extremism and political violence. A public and youth in general, driven by anger and hopelessness, may have no or very little commitment to any system — they may rather pull it down, sooner than later.

The real threat to Pakistan resides not in the mosques and the madrassas, Talibans, instability in Afghanistan or the growing power of its immediate neighbour but in its fragile political leadership, dominance by dynasty politicians, land lords at the center stage in running Pakistan, institutional weaknesses and its numb and indifferent elite with their never exercised capacity to cultivate awareness at grass roots, the capacity to evolve the right leadership, the capacity to revive abandoned learning institutions, the capacity to engage and provide the much needed jump start in turning things around. Our apathy has paid us well. We lived with religious sectarian violence and then with violent fighting based on ethnicity and cultural differences. And now violence and intolerance has taken over our streets.

- **The Challenge:** How to mobilize and consolidate Pakistan's resources in its more than sixty percent young adults, to evolve new, passionate and self-less political leadership that would have an impact on a decades long State's ambivalence on critical issues, absence of focus on national priorities, nation building, economic and social justice.

SCOPE

INDUS – Mobilizing People's Power was born out of these concerns and necessity of getting back to basics. This is our effort to bring a diverse set of scholars together, focused on creating awareness and mobilizing Pakistan's intellectual capital. The philosophy behind INDUS: Most important political and public policy reform start with an idea, originating from the academic world. Most important agents of political change are not politicians, political parties or financial contributions but ideas from research organizations, think tanks and college campuses. INDUS is one such idea: "Gather, consolidate and blend the powerful support of Pakistan scholars, thinkers, writers and journalists with un-remitting and passionate desire of Pakistanis in Pakistan and around the globe to see a strong politically stable Pakistan.

INDUS is a group of enthusiastic and dedicated individuals with genuine, selfless and passionate concern for Pakistan's future and political stability, INDUS has no political affiliations in USA or political ambitions anchored in Pakistan. This is pure and simple, a service to Pakistan.

Besides our focus on leadership, policy and governance issues, student / youth Leaders is an important part of our mission objectives and ongoing commitment to evolving passionate and committed political leaders for a stronger and politically stable Pakistan. The current statistics pertaining to the young adult population of Pakistan, about sixty percent under 21 years of age is a demographic wind fall that Pakistan must harness in preparing young people for a brighter future along with capacity to serve as leaders in whatever profession they choose or whichever community they are part of.

Through our Youth Leadership program, we propose to connect about two hundred community-minded high school juniors and seniors, to acquire skills and training that would groom them to be well-rounded individuals, ready and able to face the challenges of practicing their chosen career path. They will be awarded paid summer internships with local nonprofit /charitable organizations such as Abdul

Sattar Edhi Foundation, Aga Khan Social Welfare Board, Ansar Burni Trust, The Citizens Foundation, etc. They will also participate in INDUS and its partners sponsored Annual National youth leadership summit in Karachi, The summit will highlight issues like building a more inclusive society and pathways to leadership, national geopolitical landscape, inherited and current fundamental issues that need attention of the policy research institutions, political leadership and decision makers.

INDUS youth development program emphasizes on effective youth practices such as adult mentoring and activities related to leadership, development, decision-making, citizenship, and community service. Adult mentoring and leadership development opportunities such as community service and peer-centered activities during non-school hours are also an important program element. Following are the highlights of INDUS Youth Leadership development initiative:

1. Acquiring the skills, behaviors, and attitudes that enable them to learn through social interaction, team work & networking experience.
2. Understand their individual strengths, future goals, and ability to act based on that understanding.
3. Develop individual strengths, ethical values, self, management, reasoning skills and ability to make informed decisions.
4. Demonstrate the ability to set goals and develop a plan.
5. Acquire self-determination, advocacy and consensus building skills.
6. Understand the importance of community participation, service to others in their community, their country and the world
7. **Monthly Workshops:** During the three months of internship, a monthly day long workshops will be conducted on following important topics. Each workshop attendance is mandatory. Each workshop attendee will be required to follow the workbook provided and complete assignments indicated in the work book.
 1. **Citizenship Rights & Responsibilities/ Pakistani First:** Simple interpretation of Constitution to explain rights and responsibilities of citizenship & *United We Stand: First a Pakistani*
 2. **Rights of the Individual:** Address Pakistani society's urgent issue of a weak national bond, religious bigotry, radicalization and identity crisis through practical and innovative grass roots approach project activities that focus on increased awareness and highlight the fact that most society ills have their roots in lack of respect for right of the individual. Social, cultural, economic injustice cannot be eradicated without the society, leadership and the state recognizing this fact.
 3. **Fundamental issues:** Simple high level overview of Pakistan's problems of society and polity; Fault lines and asymmetry between political and non-political or unelected institutions; Good Governance issues; Need for re-drawing geopolitical order for equity in sharing national resources; Need for land reform; Feudal-and dynasty dominated political order; National Security Goals: Internal & external Threats; Persistence of ideological controversies over the role of religion and faith.

APPROACH

The proposed Youth Leadership Initiative is a three way partnership between:

1. Banking and Financial Institutions that understand the value of the initiative to Pakistani youth in particular and the Pakistani nation in general. These institutions support the youth leadership development initiative as a national priority, an opportunity to be a proud participant in national development at the grass roots level.
2. Not for Profit charitable organizations that see the INDUS Youth Leadership Development initiative as a natural extension of their dedication for service to the nation and fulfilling a vital national priority.
3. INDUS-Mobilizing People's Power realizing the initiation of one of its core mission objectives in service to Pakistan.

CURRENT STATUS

Details on further defining important aspects of the initiative, approaching various financial institutions and Non Profit organizations and outlining a program for the launch of INDUS Youth Leadership training initiative will be forthcoming.



Athar Javaid, President of INDUS-Mobilizing People's Power discussing Youth Leadership Development with Head of Operations of Faysal Bank, Director of State Bank of Pakistan, and Project Lead during a recent visit to Karachi.



INDUS Newsletter



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OUR FOCUS

Youth Leadership Development

Creating campus-based, strictly nonpolitical Student Government Associations that offer Executive, Legislative & Judiciary functions experience within the campus environment. Elected student representatives, as Members of Parliament, Senators and

judges manage all aspects of student affairs, in conjunction with campus administration.

Pakistan Civil Liberties Union

Civil liberties are personal guarantees and freedoms that the government cannot abridge, either by law or by judicial interpretation. However in today's Pakistan, rising violence, intolerance, weak rule of law, endemic corruption, lack of social and economic justice, and religious freedom, social exclusion of the vulnerable and the marginalized are a common phenomenon that the people of Pakistan face on a daily basis. Pakistan Civil Liberties Union – PCLU is a watchdog organization intended to combat all the above issues at every cross section of our society.

Community Integration & Civic Promotion

When successful, the processes of community integration and civic promotion begin with the individual and, alongside support from Federal, State, and municipal programs, advance collectively, often through socialization with informal groups and professional and cultural associations. However, due to regional, organizational, and programmatic differences, the catalytic potential of civil society organizations is underutilized. Partnerships with local, regional, and national civil society organizations will advance community integration, promote the concept of citizenship, and highlight pathways to achieve the "American Dream."

Policy Research – As It Happens

Campus-based political and social sciences research. Graduate Student and Faculty focusing on policy issues for possible social, cultural, and political reform, followed by advocacy action and awareness creation by the same researchers for the purposes of legislative reform as appropriate.

Cultivating Early Awareness

Aimed at increasing youngsters' awareness of rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and building a national bond at a very impressionable age, leading to real benefits to the nation in evolving future leadership.

MEDIA REVIEW

Five Forces Behind Pakistan's Pivot Towards Russia

Shahid Raza

Pakistan's historical relationship with Russia was a byproduct of its orientation toward the US in the 1950s, during the Cold War. Pakistan-Russia rapprochement, which began in the 21st century, has continued apace, driven by the following five factors: new geopolitical dynamics and multipolarity, specifically a belief that "a multi-polar world order is critical for maintaining both regional and international peace and stability...to bring about a regional solution to the war in Afghanistan"; the "India Factor" and a strengthened US-India relationship; Russian ambitions to reach Arabian waters and Pakistan's interests in coastal and infrastructure development projects; regional stability and the political integration of the Taliban; counterterrorism cooperation and weapon sales. ([KATEHON](#))

The Russia Pakistan Equation

Sabena Siddiqi

The author discusses the emerging China-Pakistan-Russia axis. The trilateral "bloc" is driven by closer US-India relations, India's approach to Pakistan and CPEC, conditions in Afghanistan and the status of the Taliban, and the three countries respective relationships with the United States. ([KATEHON](#))

How Pakistan may test the Trump administration

Bruce Riedel

Although al Qaida's presence in Pakistan has largely been dismantled; Pakistani democracy, though fragile, has bloomed; and PM Sharif has distanced Pakistan from Saudi Arabia and dampened Sunni-Shiite tensions, the Trump administration still "has to deal with a nation of almost 200 million people armed with a fully-tested nuclear arsenal which is both a victim and a patron of terrorism." The new U.S. President will likely be tested early. ([Brookings](#))

Roads to nowhere: Pakistan's misguided obsession with infrastructure

The Islamabad-Lahore highway is desolate 20 years after it opened—evidence that "Pakistan's government is building more airports, roads and railways, even though the existing ones are underused." Due to terrorism and insurgency, infrastructure development was unable to trigger the expected economic boom. Instead, Pakistan should invest in "better nutrition, health, and education." ([The Economist](#))

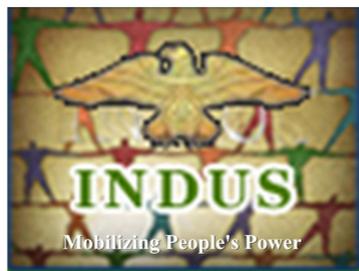
Islam's Lesser Muslims: When "Khuda" became "Allah"

Alia P. Ahmed

The author discusses the cultural and linguistic Islamization of Pakistan, an import from Saudi Arabia begun under the Zia regime during Cold War tensions and conflict in Afghanistan. It was not the first form of "social engineering" that Pakistan experienced; the original instance followed Partition, when Urdu was deemed the sole national language in 1947. Consequently, "Pakistan's crisis of identity is a chronic" condition. ([LobeLog](#))

As always, thank you for reading, and thank you for your efforts. If you have questions or comments, or desire to participate in any way, please don't hesitate to contact us at induspk.usa@gmail.com.

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