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SAIS South Asia Studies and INDUS

cordially invite you to a discussion on Pakistan's complex ethno-religious identity



Pakistan's Search for Identity:
An Inexplicable Trajectory

A discussion with **Dr. Ayesha Jalal**

Moderated by Vali Nasr, Dean of Johns Hopkins, SAIS

Friday, April 22, 2016

1:00-3:00 pm

Kenny Auditorium | 1740 Massachusetts Ave. NW

Light refreshments served

Dr. Jalal is a Pakistani-American scholar and the Mary Richardson Professor of History at Tufts University. She is the author of numerous books on Pakistan, including *The Struggle for Pakistan: A Muslim Homeland and Global Politics* (2014); *The Pity of Partition: Manto's Life, Times and Work across the India–Pakistan Divide* (2013); and *Partisans of Allah: Jihad in South Asia* (2010), among others.

INDUS: Mobilizing People's Power is a D.C.-based think tank and advocacy group dedicated to a progressive and politically stable Pakistan.

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RSVP to raman2@jhu.edu by Thursday, April 21



Dr. Hassan Abbas, Department Chair, Regional and Analytical Studies at the National Defense University in Washington, DC, addressed members of Congress on March 22 and delivered a statement to the House Foreign Relations Committee during its hearing [Women Fighting for Peace: Lessons for Today's Conflicts](#).

His full statement is available [here](#).

The Diplomat | March 16, 2016

What's Wrong With US-Pakistan Relations?

A look at how both sides can improve their strained relationship.

By Touqir Hussain

The United States and Pakistan had the sixth round of their strategic dialogue in Washington recently. The [U.S. Pakistan Strategic Dialogue Joint Statement](#) issued after the talks details extensive ongoing cooperation in the fields of energy, trade, investment, education, and science and technology, and reiterates the commitment to continue it. It also speaks of close cooperation in counterterrorism, especially action against Al-Qaeda and its affiliates and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)/Da'esh. But on regional security issues, strategic stability, and non-proliferation, there were largely hints of policy differences glossed over by generalities, with Afghanistan being the exception where the need as well as desire for cooperation was obvious.

Overall, the statement, though strong on rhetoric was mixed on substance. It was essentially an aspirational statement. And given the complexities of the U.S.-Pakistan relations and their recent history, one would say much work needs to be done by both sides to realize its objectives.

Regardless of whether one labels the U.S.-Pakistan relationship strategic or transactional, it has served the interests of the two countries over the last six decades. Yet it has not been a normal bilateral relationship. More often than not, the two countries have been allies on one issue while being antagonists on another. The United States lived with or tolerated the differences when there were overriding strategic interests. But when these interests had been served, it resorted to sanctions, and Pakistan responded with its own devices. It is not just Pakistan that took advantage of the United States; Washington did too in equal measure. In sum, they lost as much as they gained from the relationship.

Over time, both the U.S. and Pakistan governments accepted the losses grudgingly and gains ungratefully and still found each other relevant in times of need. But times have changed. Since the September 11 attacks, the relationship has gotten entangled with the ongoing war in Afghanistan. It is never easy to handle a war-related relationship, especially when that war has not been going well. This is even more so when there are multiple issues and stakeholders with competing interests and priorities. Also impacting the relationship is Washington's growing ties with India, along with a whole set of new security issues which have agitated public concerns, fueled by a 24-hour news cycle and an activist think tank community.

This has affected public opinion as well as politics, preventing a coherent and workable policy towards the war in Afghanistan as well as U.S.-Pakistan relations more generally. As a consequence, Pakistan is seen as having undermined the war effort and the stabilization of Afghanistan. Though Islamabad has been a good partner in the war on terrorism, it is being defined not by what it has done but by what it has failed to do. A whole new industry of writings on Pakistan representing different interests has emerged in what often seems like a competition for negativity. This has caused recurring tensions and irritants in the relationship. The U.S. Congress keeps talking about cutting off aid, while the White House keeps harping on the Haqqani network. And among the chattering classes, the common

refrain is that U.S. aid to Pakistan has been a dead loss.

The fact is the bulk of the aid, the so called Coalition Support Fund, is not aid. It was essentially reimbursement for Pakistan's cost in deploying about 170,000 troops in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province for years and for providing road communications for the logistics support to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops in Afghanistan. Deployment of forces for combat costs money, as Washington knows from its own experience in Afghanistan and Iraq. Should Pakistan expect no compensation for its work?

Pakistan has a lot to answer for, but not so much for the 'failure' of the Afghanistan war. Even if one accepts that it has been a 'failure,' there were many causes for this. The military campaign in Afghanistan lacked a political strategy. Furthermore, in the rush to war, there was little effort at comprehending the nature of the threat or the enemy. Even at the outset, it was clear to close observers of the region that the Taliban were not going to fight; they were going to run away to Pakistan where they had a support. Was it difficult to understand? The lack of strategic context of the war, incoherent war aims, insufficient resources and poor execution soon undermined the war effort, especially as attention and resources shifted to the Iraq war. And thereafter, the strategy would change every year, much like it continues to change even now.

The United States, Afghanistan and Pakistan have all made mistakes. Afghans have to realize that despite the fact that Washington has contributed a great deal to create a new Afghanistan, they themselves have not played their role well. The national unity government clearly is not working, and the so-called Kerry plan has not been implemented. And regardless of whether policymakers want to admit it or not, the ethnicity issue also continues to remain a major factor. Afghans are a great people, and theirs is a great country. But they need to face the reality of its internal fissures, the role of the regional strong men and power brokers, and the corruption which is hindering their efforts at stabilization. Groups like the Taliban or Haqqani network are the resulting consequences, not the root causes of Afghanistan's troubles. Afghans cannot keep shifting the onus of their failures to Pakistan. The Taliban are in Pakistan because no one is defeating them in Afghanistan.

Taliban are not invincible. They have to be defeated politically within Afghanistan and that can only be done with good governance, rule of law, ethnic unity and by taming the regional centers of power. As Ioannis Koskinas pointed out in a two-part article in Foreign Policy Magazine last month, though the fracturing of Afghanistan's body politic looms, it can be stopped. "Ultimately, many Afghans believe that the country's security woes have more to do with poor Afghan government choices than Taliban battlefield brilliance. At their core, the greatest performance failures of 2015 were political, rather than military," Koskinas wrote. "The [fall of Kunduz City](#) to the Taliban in late September 2015 was emblematic of such grand deficiencies".

As for Washington, it has to realize that strategic issues cannot be dealt with through a merely transactional relationship with Islamabad. The United States and Pakistan need a

strategic relationship. Forging this is not easy; both countries need to contribute. Pakistan does have legitimate security concerns that need to be acknowledged. The United States also has to recognize that Pakistan does have a strategic importance as it affects American interests in India one hand and Afghanistan on the other. Now that the United States is leaving Afghanistan, it needs Pakistan's help even more to stabilize Afghanistan. Besides, as others have [rightly observed](#), the region's significance has been enhanced considerably as a consequence of China's growing involvement there as well.

Pakistan, for its part, must understand that if it wants a strategic relationship, it will have to earn it. While national interests may diverge in some cases, where Pakistan has a shared interest with the United States, Islamabad needs to bring its policies closer to those of Washington, especially when it comes to addressing America's core security concerns. Jihadists have to be dealt with without distinction not only for America's sake but also Pakistan's as well. It is crucial that Pakistan explain its position and policy responses on this issue unambiguously and effectively from high echelons of the civil-military leadership. Silence conveys complicity, a lack of commitment, or, at best, ambivalence. This is not good for establishing mutual trust with which Pakistan has already taken one chance too many in the past.

Both countries also have to get rid of old assumptions. Pakistan should shed its belief that the United States cannot walk away from the bilateral relationship; the United States should abandon the notion that Pakistan cannot survive without U.S. help or that cutting off aid will beat Pakistan into submission. The fact is that Pakistan would [rather forgo aid than do something against its national interest](#). Lastly while de-hyphenating the relations with India and Pakistan may be fine, the United States must recognize that it cannot advance its [broader interests in South Asia](#) without a South Asia strategy.

Has Pakistan been a good partner thus far for the United States? I think so. But if the United States thinks otherwise, it should keep in mind that only good policies make good partners. Then Washington doesn't have to worry [about issuing blank checks](#).

Touqir Hussain, a former Ambassador and Diplomatic Adviser to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, is Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University and SAIS Johns Hopkins University, where he is also Senior Pakistan Visiting Fellow. He writes on South Asian security issues, Iran, and Afghanistan.

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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

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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

Islam in Europe: Perception and Reality

The Data Team

With rising tension in Europe in the wake of the recent Brussels attack and the increasing frequency of such violence, there has been a growing strain in the relationship between Muslims and their European counterparts. “Many across the continent see Islam as incompatible with the West. Yet perceptions can easily run ahead of reality. The European public wildly overestimates the proportion of their populations that is Muslim.” With these infographics the team at the Economist attempt to further explore such perceptions and ground them in reality. [[The](#)

[Economist](#)]

Stanford scholars casts new light on Hindu-Muslim relations

Marguerite Rigoglioso

"Stanford religious historian, Audrey Truschke, uncovers a surprising cultural alliance between Muslim and Hindu elites in early Sanskrit texts. Her findings could help ease current tensions between the two groups." [[Stanford Report](#)]

Street Child Games: Pakistan finish as the best of the lot

Natasha Raheel

Pakistan finished as the best team at the Street Child Games held in Rio de Janeiro last month. The team "comprising Mehar Ali, Mohammad Naeem, Naseer Ahmed and Salman Hussain collected four gold, five silver and four bronze medals to finish ahead of eight other participating countries — India, Burundi, Egypt, Great Britain, Mozambique, Liberia, Philippines and hosts Brazil." [[The Express Tribune](#)]

#NotAllMuslims: The One Thing You Need to Know After the Brussels Attacks

Sally Kohn

Activist and lawyer, Sally Kohn, highlights the increasing marginalization of Muslims in the West and the growth of Islamophobia. She emphasizes the need to reject divisive politics and advocates for pluralism and diversity so we can reject unfounded stereotypes that play into the hands of ISIS. [[Refinery29](#)]

Pakistan, India civil society leaders call for revival of talks

INP

"Key civil society leaders and opinion makers from India and Pakistan, including parliamentarians, former diplomats, former military officers and policy experts met in Bangkok for the 18th round of the Chaophraya Dialogue organized by the Jinnah Institute (JI) and the Australia India Institute (AII). In addition to prospects for bilateral relations, special focus was given to recent tensions in Jammu & Kashmir, the challenge of violent extremism on either side of the border, the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, prospects for visa liberalisation and regional connectivity, as well as recommendations from two specially designated Task Forces on climate change adaptation and developing alternative histories and narratives that could positively impact public discourse." [[Daily Times](#)]

Nuclear Threat Initiative Index 2016: Challenges and opportunities

Huma Rehman

"In post 9/11 scenario concerns regarding nuclear proliferation and terrorism became a serious matter for global policymakers". "The Nuclear Threat Initiative Index is an effort for controlling global nuclear terrorism threats by indexing nuclear material possessing states." Within this context it is important for "the global community to seek viable options for an effective and accountable global system for securing nuclear materials to protect the world from the dangers of nuclear terrorism". [[The Nation](#)]

Q&A: The Sunni-Shia divide through the eyes of a child

Raya Al Jadir

Al Jazeera spoke with filmmaker Hoda Elsoudani about her new documentary, Why Can't I Be A Sushi. The documentary "follows the journey of two young half-Iraqi sisters who are curious about the sectarian conflict gripping the Islamic world. It follows their journey as they learn how historical decisions have increased intolerance and fomented divisions within their society." [[Al Jazeera](#)]

My Father's Killer's Funeral

Aatish Taseer

Aatish Taseer analyzes the growth of radical and extremist ideology in Pakistan as exemplified by the throngs of people who gathered to mourn and commemorate Malik Mumtaz Hussain Qadri, his father's killer. [[NYT](#)]

Is it Valhalla?

Asad Rahim Khan

Asad Rahim Khan analyzes the state of Pakistan today and explores the dichotomy between the

seemingly “liberal and progressive” left and the religious right. [[The Express Tribune](#)]

24 libraries in the world so magnificent they'll take your breath away

Libraries have long stood as the greatest symbol of our intellectual development. Many have been built on a grand scale, their creators sparing no expense. Despite the passage of time, some of these great public buildings still have the power to astound. [[Brightside](#)]

The FBI has a new plan to spy on high school kids across the country

Sarah Lazare

“Under new guidelines, the FBI is instructing high schools across the country to report students who criticize government policies and “western corruption” as potential future terrorists, warning that “anarchist extremists” are in the same category as ISIS and young people who are poor, immigrants or travel to “suspicious” countries are more likely to commit horrific violence.” [[Salon](#)]

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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