

Will Pakistan Become a Failed State or Change Its Direction?  
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Did the US go to war with the wrong countries when we took on Iraq and Afghanistan? Perhaps we should have gone after our \223good allies\224 Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, who were really responsible for 9/11. This is, of course, wishful thinking considering the many ways that we need relations with these two countries, so we hold our noses and deal with them as \223frenemies,\224 not friends.

Pakistan grows more troubling by the day, with the Islamists increasingly violent and the secular society under constant threat. The Pakistani Intelligence Service (ISI) has long used Islamists to carry out their agendas in Afghanistan (they created the Taliban) and against India (terror attacks such as the horrific one in Mumbai a few years ago).

It is important to understand why the ISI does this. Their notion of protecting Pakistan is based on a long-standing fear of India, their much larger and ultimately more powerful neighbor. Both countries have developed nuclear capability: Pakistan, out of unreasonable fear of India, and India out of reasonable fear that the Pakistanis are crazy enough to consider using such a weapon. Both countries have spent money on developing nukes to intimidate each other while failing to spend the money educating their young and cleaning up their air, water, and crumbling infrastructure. The paranoid Pakistanis don't realize that India is afraid of China, also a nuclear power, more than they fear Pakistan.

Pakistan began in 1947 as a secular breakaway state where Muslims would be safe. India, also in 1947, became a secular state where all its multi-ethnic, multi-religious population could enjoy the freedoms of the modern world. India's long romance with the Soviet Union hampered its development, but when the Cold War ended and India came out of its fog, it began the long-delayed process of joining the modern secular world. They still have far to go, but they are on the right path.

Pakistan, however, is in a downward trajectory, ever since one military dictator, Zia-ul-Haq, found it politically expedient to promote a most backward form of Islam. During his reign, Sharia law replaced much secular law, with consequences such as the growing floods of \223honor killings,\224 blasphemy executions, and assassinations of journalists, academics, or politicians whose views Islamists didn't like. They also have the honor of being the last repository of polio; cynical clerics claim that polio vaccine is a western plot to make their children sterile.

Their latest horror is the public stoning of a pregnant woman who married a man her family did not like. They beat her right outside the courthouse and then finished her off, stoning her to death with bricks. Her murderous father justified this as an honor killing of a disobedient woman, and said he had no regret. He thinks his religion justifies this. What an embarrassment to Pakistan!

Pakistani immigrants to the British Isles have taken their terrible values with them with dire consequences. The British only now realize that their indulgent immigration policies threaten their very survival as a modern state. Canada has also suffered from Pakistani immigration, as have many European states. In addition, the danger does not come from Pakistan alone, but from a global Islamist movement that lures the young. Every modern state is in danger.

But there is a glimmer of hope. India has just elected a new Prime Minister (Narendra Modi), someone with backbone, who invited the Pakistan's PM, Nawaz Sharif, to attend his inauguration. If these two can develop a relationship, much could change.

When India no longer threatens them, there is no need for the ISI to support Islamists. By stopping anti-India propaganda, these two nations could benefit each other. Secular Pakistanis love India's movies, foods, and TV. If India no longer had to fear Pakistan, India's own Muslim population would just be Indians, not perceived as potential agents of Pakistani terror.

Even Afghanistan might be able to get out from under when Pakistan no longer poisons its survival. This could be a win/win for everybody (other than Islamists). Are Pakistan and India are both smart enough to do this?

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