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U.S. POLICY OPTIONS IN POST-ELECTION PAKISTAN

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BEFORE THE

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U.S. POLICY OPTIONS IN POST-ELECTION PAKISTAN

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2008

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Biden, Kerry, Feingold, Boxer, Bill Nelson, Menendez, Cardin, Lugar, Hagel, Corker, Isakson, and Barrasso.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR., U.S. SENATOR FROM DELAWARE

The CHAIRMAN. Hearing will come to order.

Welcome, Secretary. Appreciate having you here.

I'm going to make a brief opening statement, then turn it over to my colleague Chairman Lugar, and then we'll begin to move.

And I say good morning to my colleagues.

Ten days ago, Pakistan—in Pakistan, three members of this committee witnessed a truly extraordinary thing; and the world observed, I think, an outcome that was better than anyone really had anticipated, at least in my perspective. People went to the polls and overwhelmingly cast their votes for democracy, moderation, and the rule of law. It's not merely that the party of President Musharraf was clearly, clearly outvoted by the two major competing parties, but there was—well, the least noted outcome election was, the religious party suffered serious losses, which I think was a significant, significant expression of the will of the people of Pakistan.

Senator Kerry, Senator Hagel, and I were privileged to observe this election. We met with a wide cross-section of Pakistanis, in and out of government. We met with the leaders of the three largest political parties, two of whom are expected to form the coalition that leads Pakistan to its first truly civilian government in nearly a decade.

We met with the wife of the imprisoned leader of the lawyers' movement, a brave woman carrying the message of those judges and attorneys who were arrested for the crime of practicing law. We met with Pakistani journalists, human rights advocates, and other members of the civil—of civil society, many of whom had faced detention and physical intimidation in recent months.

And we were the first foreign visitors to meet with President Musharraf the day after the election, relatively early that morning. He promised to honor the message delivered by the Pakistani peo-

ple, and, quite frankly, he was—there was a bit of nobility in the way he addressed us. He walked into the room, said, "The people have spoken," and he would abide by the judgment. And when asked about issues relating to the Supreme Court and other contentious issues, he said, "That will be for the Parliament to decide," and he indicated that he was willing to—my phrase, not his—step back into the roles of the President, as opposed to the Prime Minister. And, under the Constitution, as all my colleagues know, the vast power under that Constitution is in the hands of the Prime Minister, not the President. It was encouraging, to say the least. And I take him at his word, and I hope the administration will hold him to his word.

The Pakistani people have expressed a very clear vision for what they want their nation to look like: Moderate, democratic, grounded in the rule of law, with leaders who provide good governance and the basic necessities for all citizens of Pakistan.

It's in America's vital national interest, to say the least, to help Pakistan make this admirable vision a reality and this transition smooth. Why? Well, because Pakistan, along with its neighbor, Afghanistan, could provide the ballast of moderation to stabilize the Muslim world in that part of the world, or it can become the generator of violent radicalism that would directly threaten our own security, as well as the security of the people in the region.

The Afghan-Pakistan border region is where the 9/11 attacks were plotted, it's where most attacks in Europe since 9/11 have originated. It's where Osama bin Laden lives and his top confederates enjoy safe haven, planning new attacks. And it's where we must urgently, in my view, shift our focus to the real central front on the so-called war on terrorism, using the totality of American strength, not merely our military, which is incredible. I know all of you have traveled abroad in the last 3 or 4 years, seeing these kids, the stuff they're doing, the authority they're given—young captains, a young Navy commander out in a PRT; it's astounding, the authority he has and the judgment he's exercised. I sat down, Dick, and he laid out for us—I literally—I'm not being facetious—I could have been in a graduate class at one of the great universities—he explained the tribal allegiances, the history of the tribes, the way in which they function. I mean, these kids—these guys and women, they are truly, truly, truly amazing. And I'm not being solicitous. It really is a great, great asset we have. But, it is not the totality of the U.S. arsenal, and it's not—but it's been relied upon more than any other part of our arsenal. Our ideas matter, too.

The border area between Pakistan and Afghanistan, in my view, remains a freeway for fundamentalism, with the Taliban and al-Qaeda now finding sanctuary on the Pakistani side, and where suicide bombers they recruit and train wreak havoc upon Afghanistan and, I predict, increasingly, within Pakistan.

Pakistan's cooperation in the fight against extremism is critical to our success in Afghanistan, but that cooperation has been, in my view, sporadic, at best. The reason is that, until recently, the terrorists we were fighting and the extremists the Pakistanis fear, in my view, are not one and the same. Islamabad's main concern is the indigenous militants in the Federally Administered Tribal

Areas—Mr. Mehsud, in particular. Success of Pakistani Governments have taken turns fighting them, appeasing them, playing one militant group against the other, or using them to make trouble in Kashmir, on its eastern border, or in Afghanistan, on its western border.

This different focus, the Pakistanis, versus our focus on al-Qaeda, in particular, and Taliban, second, I think, is a reason for some of the disconnect that has existed, in terms of how we view, "the war on terror" in that region. This different focus is why, in my view, President Musharraf decided to divert Pakistani resources from fighting al-Qaeda and the Taliban to keeping his political opponents at bay. It's why, in my view, when Musharraf concluded that we were not serious about finishing the job in Afghanistan—and that's not a knock on the military, that's a judgment that some of us have made, 5 years ago, when we diverted resources badly needed in Afghanistan to Iraq and left, in my view, Afghanistan somewhat bereft of the needed resources in order to conduct this war. And Musharraf, in my view, observed that. And, as I said to General Musharraf and others—my first visit to Afghanistan, over 6 years ago, I remember meeting with a British two-star, and I asked the British two-star, I said, "How long will your Parliament allow you to stay?" And he said "We Brits have an expression, Senator, as long as the big dog is in the pen, the small dog will stay; when the big dog leaves, the small dogs will, too." The big dog left Afghanistan. America left Afghanistan, in terms of what was really needed in Afghanistan, in my view. And I believe that generated a conclusion on the part of Mr. Musharraf that we weren't likely to finish the job in Afghanistan, and he began to cut his own deals with extremists in Pakistan. It's why, in my view, Pakistan could concentrate most of its military might on the Indian border, not on the Afghan border. It's why the Pakistani people have not supported, based on their polling data, what we call—what we call the "war on terror" in that region.

But, now the monster that Pakistan's intelligence service helped create is turning on its master. Today's enemy No. 1 is Baitullah Mehsud—an indigenous militant—who is taking the fight beyond the FATA, the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas in the mountains, and is likely behind the assassination of Benazir Bhutto. Mehsud is independent of the Afghan Taliban and the al-Qaeda in Pakistan, but he is giving them sanctuary, and they are helping train his forces. As Islamabad awakens to this new reality, I think there's an opportunity to put Pakistan and Afghanistan and the United States on the same strategic page.

Some argue that, imperfect as Musharraf has been, the civilian leaders of last week's elections return to power will be even worse partners in fighting terrorism and fostering real progress in Pakistan. I disagree, if we change our policy.

For Pakistan, nothing is more important than giving the moderate majority a clear voice and a stake in the system, in my view, and that's what the election was about, in my view. Without that, dissent gets channeled underground and, over time, moderates make common cause with extremists. We've been down that road before, in my view. It's not absolutely analogous, but it's similar.

We went down that road in Iran. And it leads to nowhere. Nowhere good.

With this election, the moderate majority has regained its voice. The United States should seize the moment to move from a policy based on a personality—Mr. Musharraf—to one based on an entire country—Pakistan. I believe we should, first of all, triple nonmilitary assistance—and, to put it in perspective, nonmilitary assistance is roughly $500 million a year now—triple nonmilitary assistance, and make it clear we plan on sustaining that for a decade. This aid should be focused on schools, roads, and clinics, and expanding development in the tribal areas.

Second, we should give the new government, once it's formed—if it is formed consistent with democratic principles and it is a transition that we expect—a democracy dividend of $1 billion in annual assistance to jump-start its progress.

Third, we should demand transparency and accountability in the military aid we continue to provide. It's one of the things I want to talk to you about, Mr. Secretary.

At the same time, we have to recognize that, even as Pakistan develops the will, it still lacks the capacity. One of the things we came away with—not speaking for my colleagues—but, one of the things I came away with was, notwithstanding, whether or not the Pakistani military and the political establishment had the will to take on extremists in the FATA and in the territories, it does not have the capacity—it does not have the capacity to do it. And so, at the same time, as I said, we have to recognize and help develop the will, we have to help them with their capacity, which is a complicated process, I acknowledge.

Its military is designed to fight a conventional war with India, not to conduct counterinsurgency operations in the tribal areas. So, we should make it a priority, as our military is attempting to do, to help train Pakistan in—to reorganize its military, not in its entirety, but to reorganize its military to be better suited to deal with those very areas.

Last, in my view, we should engage the Pakistanis on issues important to them, rather than just those important to us. For the last three decades that I've been here, the fact is that our relations with Pakistan has been basically transactional, and that's how the Pakistanis view it and understand it. And I believe they wonder—that moderate majority wonders whether or not we are looking for a long-term relationship based on mutual interests. I think we have to demonstrate to the people of Pakistan that ours is a partnership of mutual conviction, not merely of American convenience, that we care about their needs and progress, not just our own interests, narrowly defined. That happens to be, in my view, the best way to support—to secure the support of the Pakistani people and their democratic-elected leaders, for our priorities, starting with the fight against al-Qaeda and the fight for Afghanistan.

Our witness today is one of the most eminent members of the administration. He is Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte, who has taken on challenges as diverse as serving as Ambassador to Iraq, to the National—to Director of National Intelligence.

Mr. Ambassador, welcome. It's a delight to have you here.

And let me now yield to Chairman Lugar for his opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD G. LUGAR, U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA

Senator LUGAR. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And I congratulate you and Senator Hagel, Senator Kerry, on, really, an extraordinary mission of observing the election, but, beyond that, your advocacy, as represented in your statement this morning.

I join you in welcoming our friend, John Negroponte.

Pakistan has long been one of the most strategically important nations to the United States. Its efforts against terrorism within its borders, its stewardship of its own nuclear arsenal, its relations with other nations in the region, are truly critical to global security.

The situation in Pakistan is more positive than many of us had anticipated before the recent election. Although the election campaign and the voting had a number of serious problems, I share the assessment that the outcome at least broadly represents the will of the Pakistani people.

The election appears to have restored a rough balance of power in the country, with the party of the late Benazir Bhutto, the Pakistan People's Party, the party of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, the Pakistan Muslim League, each winning a large number of parliamentary seats. The parties have agreed to join together to form a government. And the supporters of President Musharraf did not fare well.

Equally important, the voters in the North West Frontier Province repudiated extremism by voting out the fundamentalist religious parties who came to power in 2002, replacing them with the secular opposition. This is a return to normalcy in that area, and, I hope, a sign that Pakistanis will increasingly reject the extremism that poses as much a threat to their interest as it does to the United States interest in the region.

These changes provide an opportunity for the United States to recalibrate its policy toward Pakistan. The Bush administration has been criticized, in Pakistan and by some in this country, for focusing his policies too narrowly on President Musharraf, who siezed power in a coup, refused to respect democratic institutions and the judiciary, and only very recently resigned his post as leader of the military. The administration should broaden its scope and engage with the new political actors on stage, and reach out to the general public of Pakistan.

If Pakistan is to break its debilitating cycle of instability, it will need to achieve progress on fighting corruption, delivering government services, promoting broad-based economic growth. The international community and the United States should support reforms and contribute to the strengthening of Pakistani civilian institutions. And I commend the chairman for his specific suggestions as to how that might be implemented.

Part of our recalibration should involve revisiting the issue of foreign assistance, in particular. We should carefully reconsider both the amounts we are providing and the goals we are hoping to achieve in Pakistan. Establishing reconstruction opportunity zones

in frontier regions, continued investment in important sectors, such as education, and efforts to restructure our military assistance in Pakistan, are all steps in the right direction.

More immediately, the United States could demonstrate its regard for the rule of law by encouraging the new government to reverse or rescind the actions against the media and judiciary that were taken during the state of emergency last year. The United States previous reluctance to press President Musharraf on these matters has fueled doubts within Pakistan about our commitment to democratic principles. The Bush administration should engage the two new government parties to continue our cooperation in the fight against terrorism, al-Qaeda, and the Taliban. However, U.S. interests are neither one-dimensional nor short term, and bilateral cooperation must also address economic and social challenges throughout the country. Otherwise, our security goals are unlikely to be reached.

While some in the new Pakistan Government may favor new tactics in the battle against al-Qaeda, the Taliban, or other extremists, the leaders of both parties appreciate the grave threat that these elements pose to Pakistan's internal security, and the United States should work with the parties to achieve agreement on a strategy for fighting extremism and advancing Pakistan's broader national interests. We should make it clear to the people in Pakistan that our interests lay not in supporting a particular leader or party, but in democracy, pluralism, stability, the fight against violence and extremism. These are values supported by a large majority of the Pakistani people.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to make this comment and to welcome the witness.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Ambassador, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN D. NEGROPONTE, DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have submitted a longer statement for the record, but would like to make some brief summary remarks.

Thank you for inviting me here to discuss recent developments in Pakistan. Let me, first, underscore that the stakes remain very high in that country. Successful American engagement with a stable and democratic Pakistan is vital to our national security interest. Pakistan has been indispensable to our worldwide struggle against radical terrorist groups. As Afghanistan's neighbor, Pakistan plays a pivotal role in the coalition's war effort there. Without peace and stability on the Pakistani side of the border, success in Afghanistan will prove elusive, its future will be decisive, too, in the search for stability in South Asia, a region of vastly increased importance to the United States.

There is a common United States and Pakistani interest in Pakistan's success, in the robust and multifaceted fight against violent extremism, focused on democracy and economic development, as well as on security cooperation. We intend to pursue that common

interest vigorously with whatever government emerges from the election.

Pakistan, as you noted, took another big step toward civilian democracy on February 18, holding successful parliamentary elections under challenging circumstances. I thank Senators Biden, Kerry, and Hagel, of this committee, and Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, for their interest in Pakistan's democratic progress. You were in Pakistan on election day, observing polling places and talking to political leaders, and I believe your presence helped underscore, for the Pakistani people, the importance we place on their democratic progress.

The election outcome proves that moderate prodemocracy parties are the heart of Pakistan's political system, and that religious-based politics have no hold on the voters. While not perfect, the elections reflected the will of the voters, who have embraced the results. Over 70 Pakistanis lost their lives on election day, and we regret the violence that led to those deaths. I think it is fair to say, however, that the violence could have been worse. The Pakistani people refused to be intimidated by a wave of fatal terrorist attacks prior to election day. In fact, they voted in higher percentages on February 18 than during the last general elections, in 2002, when conditions were undeniably safer. We think that democratic participation in the election results will help focus Pakistan's resolve on countering the growing threat of violent extremists.

Looking ahead, the United States must help the Pakistani people size the opportunities that these successful elections now present for their country. Our assistance and engagement in Pakistan is designed to help the country develop into a modern, moderate, democratic, and prosperous country. We should now renew our efforts. We will continue to support Pakistan's democratic progress. We will continue to help Pakistan build a better education system, improve governance across the country, and offer more economic opportunities to its citizens in impoverished areas. We will also help—we will also continue to help Pakistan to increase the capacity of its security forces to fight the violent extremists that threaten us both.

Our efforts in each of these areas are ongoing. We supported Pakistan's elections, and now we will support the Pakistani people as they choose their leaders. Political parties are negotiating the formation of a government, and we look forward to working with the leaders who emerge from that process. We have robust education, governance, and economic growth programs in Pakistan. Between 2002 and 2007, for example, we invested $256 million in projects to reform and revitalize Pakistan's education system. We also continue to help Pakistan improve its security force capabilities. In many areas, in the northwest, in particular, local forces cannot defend their homes and towns against militants and terrorists.

For national security reasons, much of our assistance to Pakistan will continue to focus on the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. This area, on both sides of the border, is critical to our national security. Al-Qaeda leaders use this area to plot, plan, and train for attacks in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and, indeed, throughout the world, including against the United States and United States inter-

ests abroad. Thanks to strong bipartisan support, we are implementing a multiyear program to expand, equip, and train local security forces in the tribal areas. The goal is to give these forces what they need to protect their towns and fight violent extremists who are trying to undermine Pakistan's modernization.

We are partnering with select units of Pakistan's special forces, as well. Enhancing Pakistan's counterinsurgency skills in the tribal areas is only part of the story, however. Also, thanks to congressional support, the United States Agency for International Development is implementing programs to support the Pakistani Government's 9-year, $2 billion sustainable development plan for the tribal areas. We hope to continue supporting this program, with a total commitment of $750 million over the next 5 years. Our and Pakistan's programs are increasing economic opportunities and improving governance in sections of the tribal areas with little hope and few jobs. The battle for hearts and minds is nowhere more evident than here, where towns and villages without strong economic foundations are vulnerable to extremist infiltration.

We urge you to consider and pass legislation to create Reconstruction Opportunity Zones which can play a major role in the development of this part of Pakistan, as well as on the other side of the border, in Afghanistan. We look forward to legislation authorizing these zones to be introduced in Congress and eventually passed.

On February 18, the Pakistani people rejected the forces of fear and terror, and, instead, cast their votes for freedom and democracy. We should help the Pakistani people seize the opportunities that their successful elections now present. We are fully prepared to work closely and intensively with all of Pakistan's leaders to create a strong civilian democracy to continue to aggressively prosecute the war on terror.

I note with interest Chairman Biden's proposal on our assistance to Pakistan, which we are looking at closely. We look forward to talking with you about how we can strengthen our commitment to Pakistan's democratic progress, to continue economic prosperity, and to continue to—continued close cooperation against violent extremism. With the support of Congress, we will remain close allies with Pakistan in support of our common objectives.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Negroponte follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN D. NEGROPONTE, DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to address recent developments in Pakistan, where the stakes remain very high for the United States and for the world. Pakistan has been indispensable to our worldwide struggle against violent extremists, and successful American engagement with a stable and democratic Pakistan is vital to our national security interests. As Afghanistan's neighbor, Pakistan plays a pivotal role in the coalition's war effort there. Without security and stability on the Pakistani side of the border, success in Afghanistan will prove elusive. Pakistan's future will also be decisive in the search for stability in South Asia—a region of vastly increased importance to the United States. The United States and Pakistan have a common interest in the success of a robust and multifaceted fight against violent extremism, focused on democracy and economic development as well as on security cooperation. We intend to pursue that common interest vigorously with Pakistan's next government.

Pakistan took a big step toward civilian democracy on February 18, holding successful elections under challenging circumstances. We thank Senators Biden, Kerry, and Hagel of this committee, and Representative Sheila Jackson-Lee, for their interest in Pakistan's democratic progress. You were in Pakistan on election day, observing polling places and talking to political leaders, and I believe your presence helped underscore for the Pakistani people the importance we place on their democratic progress.

The election outcome demonstrates that Pakistanis are strongly committed to democracy, and the outcome in the North West Frontier Province shows that Pakistanis want good governance, including effective action against violent criminals and suicide terrorists. Although not perfect, the elections reflected the will of the voters, the vast majority of whom have embraced the results.

More than 70 Pakistanis lost their lives on election day. We condemn the violence that led to those deaths. I think it is fair to say, however, that the violence could have been worse. The Pakistani people refused to be intimidated by a wave of murderous terrorist attacks prior to election day. In fact, they voted in higher percentages on February 18 than during the last general elections in 2002, when conditions were undeniably safer. We think that democratic participation and the election results will help focus Pakistan's resolve on countering the growing threat of violent extremists.

Thanks to strong congressional support, the United States was able to help Pakistan prepare for the elections. International observers got the accreditation they needed to do their jobs, and they were allowed to visit and monitor polling stations. We helped the Election Commission post voter information online, including a list of polling station locations, the voter rolls, and a roster and running tally of election complaints. We also supplied 215,000 translucent ballot boxes for election day.

Our private and public engagement with senior Pakistani leaders helped end the state of emergency in December 2007, which we believed was a setback to Pakistan's democratic progress. We supported the international observer effort as well, deploying some 40 American monitors, and an additional 38 independent observers. Along with six other countries, we financed and helped train more than 19,000 domestic observers. In general, the observer groups' reports judged the elections successful, even while pointing out serious flaws in the process. The United States continues to believe that only democracy can build a long-term consensus among Pakistanis on a moderate, prosperous future for their country. Our engagement with Pakistan's leaders reflects those beliefs.

Looking ahead, the United States must help the Pakistani people seize the opportunities that these successful elections now present. We supported Pakistan's elections, and now we will support the Pakistani people as they choose their leaders. Political parties are negotiating the formation of a government, and we look forward to working with the leaders who emerge from that process. Our assistance and engagement in Pakistan are designed to help the country develop into a modern, moderate, democratic, and prosperous country. We should now renew our efforts by continuing to support Pakistan's democratic progress, to improve its education system, to improve governance across the country, and to offer more economic opportunities to its citizens in impoverished areas. We will also continue to help Pakistan increase the capacity of its security forces to fight the violent extremists that threaten Pakistan's gains and the world's security. In many areas in the northwest, in particular, local forces cannot defend their homes and towns against militants and terrorists.

For national security reasons, much of our assistance to Pakistan will continue to focus on the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Al-Qaeda leaders exploit this area to plot, plan, and train for attacks in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and, indeed, throughout the world, including against the United States and against U.S. interests abroad. Thanks to strong bipartisan support, we are implementing a multiyear program to expand, equip, and train local security forces in the tribal areas. The goal is to give these forces the capabilities they need to protect their towns and to fight violent extremists who are trying to undermine Pakistan's modernization. In the short term, we continue to encourage Pakistan to aggressively target al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and other violent extremists who enjoy safe haven in the tribal areas.

Militants and terrorists treat the Afghanistan/Pakistan border region as a unified battle space. Coordination among Afghan, Pakistani, International Security Assistance Force, and U.S. forces in the border region is therefore crucial to denying violent extremists space to plan and train there. In mid-March, we and our Afghan, Pakistani, and coalition partners will open the first of six planned Border Coordination Centers at Torkham, Khyber Agency. The centers will make it possible for Pakistani, Afghan, and International Security Assistance Force representatives to coordinate more effectively to stop the enemy from skirting both sides of the rugged border to avoid engagement.

Enhancing Pakistan's counterinsurgency skills and improving coordination along the border is only part of the story, however. Also thanks to congressional support, the U.S. Agency for International Development is implementing programs to support the Pakistani Government's 9-year, $2 billion Sustainable Development Plan for the tribal areas. We hope to continue supporting this program with a total commitment of $750 million over the 5 years from FY 2007 through FY 2011. Our and Pakistan's programs are increasing economic opportunities, developing capacity and improving governance in sections of the tribal areas with little hope and few jobs. Nowhere is the battle for hearts and minds more evident than here, where towns and villages without strong economic foundations are vulnerable to extremist infiltration. Just as our earthquake assistance to Pakistan in 2005 and 2006 had a profoundly positive impact on the people of Pakistan—generating good will that has lasted to this very day—so do we envision our support for development of the tribal areas opening this challenged environment to government and opportunity.

We are accomplishing much in the tribal areas. This month we will help refurbish several hospitals' delivery and surgical facilities, and will train maternal health and other medical professionals. We will continue a 4-year polio eradication drive. We recently provided water and sanitation facilities to 108 girls' schools and 54 communities in the tribal areas. We are supporting a range of education programs, from school construction to curriculum development, that seek to expand opportunities at all education levels. In another area, we are talking to local officials about how to restore police authority to a central market. We are even providing blankets, stoves, utensils, and other relief items to individuals in North Waziristan who have been displaced due to fighting in South Waziristan. These are just a few examples of the activities we are pursuing to improve lives and enhance governance in the tribal areas.

Our security and development programs in the tribal areas are critical to achieving our highest long-term objectives in the war on terror. These programs will boost sustainable economic development for citizens in impoverished areas at the epicenter of the war on terror and drugs. Just as important, these efforts are essential to maintaining forward momentum in strengthening our long-term, broad-based relationship with the Pakistani people. In this regard, we urge you to consider and pass legislation to create Reconstruction Opportunity Zones, which can play a major role in development of this part of Pakistan and on the other side of the border in Afghanistan. This legislation is vital to long-term development, to creating jobs, and to providing an alternative to illicit activities, including terrorism and narcotrafficking, in some of the most troubled regions of Pakistan and in Afghanistan.

On February 18, the Pakistani people cast their votes for freedom and democracy. We must continue to help the Pakistani people seize the opportunities that these successful elections now present. We are fully prepared to work closely and intensively with all of Pakistan's leaders to create a strong civilian democracy and to continue to aggressively prosecute the war on terror. I note with interest Chairman Biden's far-reaching proposal on restructuring our assistance to Pakistan, which we are studying closely. We look forward to talking with the committee about how we can strengthen our commitment to Pakistan's democratic progress, to economic prosperity, and to continued close cooperation against violent extremism. With the support of Congress, we will remain close allies with Pakistan in support of our common objectives.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

As you can see, we have a big turnout. The reason why some of our colleagues have left, we move in order of seniority, and they're in other committees, and Banking Committee has the Chairman of the Fed there, and a few other things, but they're all planning on coming back.

So, with the permission of the chairman, I think we should do 7-minute rounds, so everybody has an opportunity, here, getting questions.

I have many, many questions, as we all do, so I may, with your permission, submit some in writing for the Department.

One of the things that I observed—I think we all—the three of us, had a sense of, anyway—we did not get into the Federally Administered Territories—Tribal Areas, but we got very close; we were right in the border, and we saw their counterparts, in effect,

on the Afghan side of the border. And we watched these young military and aid workers, civilian workers, do remarkable things with a little bit of money in these forward operating bases and in these PRTs that we visited. And we went up into the area nestled up into the mountains, just beyond Tora Bora. As a matter of fact, we had an interesting landing, because—we blame it all on Senator Kerry for wanting to go see Tora Bora. I'm only kidding, John, but——

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. But, literally, it was amazing what's happened up there.

And here's the point. The point is that I came away more convinced than I was before, Dick, that economic assistance into these areas has a gigantic bang for the buck, and that if it worked in the Afghan side, I was even more convinced it would have even greater firepower, figuratively speaking, on the Pakistani side.

And so, my first question is a generic one, and just could—if you'd help me with close to a yes or no—is that—Do you believe that our ability to bring some economic opportunity into the FATA, into the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, has, along with the training of the Pakistan special forces, along with our efforts in coordination from the Afghan side, that it is one of the elements of being able to get a hold on the terrorists coming out of that territory?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Absolutely, Senator. And I would just make two points.

I think that the Government of Pakistan itself has felt that in the last couple of years, and they developed this $2 billion, multiyear plan to develop the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, and then, of course, we have this $150 million a year plan—5 years, $750 million, total—which I think can, and will, play a very important role in helping reduce the threat of extremism in that part of the country.

The CHAIRMAN. I knew you believe that, but I think it's important, for the record, for a lot of our colleagues not on this committee to understand that the administration, as well, believes there's a correlation between the economic assistance and our ability to do this.

I would—there is much to speak about, and I appreciate the invitation to talk with the administration about the proposal I put forward, which, quite frankly, I don't think is a lot different than what my friend Senator Lugar is proposing, and maybe he and I can work out a—an overall position, here. But, I hope we can make some progress on that. I don't—I think we're sort of on the same page, the administration and us, on what we want to—how we want to move forward.

One place where I don't—at least, I haven't gotten an answer and—is that we have provided $10 billion now in economic assistance—excuse me—military assistance, explicitly for the purpose of dealing with the fight against al-Qaeda and the Taliban. And people with whom we spoke, both here and in the region, point out that there is not much accountability—at least, we're not aware of any accountability. I asked Assistant Secretary of State Boucher, back on December 8—I asked him several questions relating to re-

imbursements, the $6 billion, in particular, over the last 6 years. And what we're told is that every military—and it's become, sort of, the cash cow for speaking with our Embassy personnel, they view it as a sort of a cash cow for remittance and reimbursement, and it's—asked the question, "Well, how do we know what we reimburse? Do we know whether or not the billion dollars we are paying to deal with the extremism in the—along the Afghan border—is that money being spent there, or is it being spent on the Indian border? Where is it being spent? How do we know?" It's kind of hard to find a billion dollars worth of expenditures, as I look at it, along the border with Afghanistan, which I think is the central point.

And so, I was told the State Department keeps meticulous records of the reimbursements made under the coalition support funds to Pakistan. I was told that if State does not—that there is some paper trail, and that there is a—but, there is a specific signoff when—and the way it works, as I understand it—and my time's about to run out, so maybe you can explain this to me—the Pakistani military submits—or the Pakistani Government—in this case, it was, up to now, Musharraf—submits a bill for reimbursement, saying, "We help—we kept our commitment, we're out there fighting the terrorists, this is how much it cost us, reimburse us for this." I'm told that there is a specific—a specific individual or group of individuals at State and Defense who look at this and say, "Yeah, this really was expended for the purpose of fighting terrorism." I have asked whether or not, in a classified forum or a nonclassified forum, those of us in this committee could see that, because we're the ones, along with the Armed Services Committee, saying, "OK, let's spend a billion dollars of the taxpayers' money." I see very little evidence that a billion dollars has been spent in what we would characterize antiterrorist, anti-al-Qaeda, anti-Taliban expenditures per year.

So, is there a reason why—did they just not get around to it, or is there a reason why State is unwilling to submit these records to us, showing what they've signed off on that—what constitutes legitimate reimbursement for the war on terror in Pakistan?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Senator, first of all, if I could, my understanding is that—you talked about $10 billion—I think that's probably——

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I—let me amend that.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE [continuing]. The aggregate——

The CHAIRMAN. Six billion, in the aggregate, since——

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Correct.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. 9/11.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Right. I believe it's $5.6 billion in coalition support funds that have been provided. And you're correct in pointing out that these are funds appropriated to the Department of Defense, and they are essentially a reimbursement to the Government of Pakistan for expenses incurred in their cooperation with us for logistical, military, and other support provided to our operations in the war on terror. The Embassy does have a role in this, although the final disbursement decision is made by the Department of Defense. I will have to look into the question of the

receipts and the information, but we're certainly more than prepared to provide a briefing to the committee on this.

And let me go back, on the question——

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I——

Ambassador NEGROPONTE [continuing]. Of providing the documentation that you requested.

The CHAIRMAN. I would——

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. I don't know whether this is an issue—as between the fact that it's DOD funds, as opposed to our funds—whether they have the lead responsibility for providing that kind of information.

The CHAIRMAN. But, as I understand it——

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. I would have to inquire——

The CHAIRMAN. I'm 57 seconds over my time—but, as I understand it, State has to sign off first. State actually——

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Right

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. Looks at it and checks it out.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Right.

The CHAIRMAN. And so, I would formally request that we have such a briefing, in whatever setting you think it has to occur.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. OK.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Yield to my colleague.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Negroponte, as you can gauge from at least our opening statements, the chairman and I are on the same page with regard to what we hope is your testimony, that there really does need to be a comprehensive plan involving the economy, specific focus of foreign assistance, in one form or another, as well as accountability for military expenditures. So, I'm going to ask two or three things, so that you can express, maybe, more essay form, rather than spot answers.

My first question will be, How rapidly can the administration come forward? I realize that's not your prime—or your only responsibility. The Department of Defense is involved, National Security Council, the President's own decision. But, it seems to me that this is a crucial turning point—the election, the formation of this government now, our views with regard to that government—and that the need to at least spell out what type of moneys we're thinking about, and how those are to be organized, is really critical, in terms of our diplomatic role in approaching the new leadership, as well as the Pakistani people, and, for that matter, our allies elsewhere, who we are counting upon in Afghanistan. Certainly that forthcoming NATO meeting in Bucharest will clearly have that at the top of the agenda, quite apart from consideration, at least, directly with Pakistan.

So, in terms of timeliness, we're about to take up—in the Senate in a couple of weeks—a budget that is not definitive for the whole year, but it does really bring the issue, hopefully, forward pretty fast. And if this is to be effective, why, appropriations would need to follow fairly rapidly if we are to seize this moment.

So, my thought is whether we do this in private session, initially or publicly, that is, the need for a comprehensive plan and a very rapid one, in which we may have suggestions. The chairman has

made some, in terms of actual sums of money involved. But, the administration's views are really important, at this point.

Now, I think, on top of that, I would stress, once again, this idea of accountability. The thought will clearly come to many members, "Sure, we would like to support some of these objectives, but how do we know what has happened, what have the results been?" Certainly, press accounts have offered a rather murky view of this. But, here we have a new beginning, we have a new government, an election, and a new day. At least, we can cast it this way, and I think the Pakistani people may already have.

Now, as a third function in—this is a more difficult proposition, I would admit, but this is a good opportunity, it seems to me, once again, to think about transparency with regards to the nuclear program of Pakistan. And whatever happened to A.Q. Khan—or, more importantly, his network? What still exists? What elements are there that are very important for us in nonproliferation in a lot of other areas that have been affected by Pakistan through this important individual, at one point—A.Q. Khan? For the time being, President Musharraf has assured us that he's done about the best that he can, simply with, a sort of house detention of A.Q. Khan, but with nothing more said. He would have testified, I think, if he were here, that A.Q. Khan is a national hero, perhaps of greater significance than even President Musharraf himself or anybody else. And, therefore, you don't touch national heroes. From our national interests, however, we need to have some thoughtful conversation about this. And so, as we have a new beginning with Pakistan, hopefully we think about this, because we are in heavy negotiations right now—and they're rather labored—with the Parliament of India, with regard to the nuclear agreement that we hope to fashion there. But, many in India, in that Parliament, quite apart from the Communists, but, say, the military, would say, "Why in the world are we becoming more transparent with regard to the IAEA or America or anybody else, with the Pakistanis, right across the border, being supported, militarily, by the United States, but without the same questions asked, without the same possibilities?"

So, this is a large bit of planning, suddenly; but then, this is the way the world works, and this is such a critical area for our national security, it would be worthwhile for our highest officials to take the time, right now, to formulate a plan.

Do you have any overall comment about this?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. A couple of comments, Senator.

First of all, we, of course, are operating under our existing plans, and we had a 5-year, $3 billion assistance program for Pakistan under the global war on terror, so that's fiscal year 2005 through fiscal year 2009, $600 million a year. We also have the earthquake reconstruction moneys, which are also being expended at the moment. Plus, now, of course, as I mentioned, this 5-year plan, from fiscal year 2007 through fiscal year 2011, to support the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. So, those, I would submit to you, are the elements of a plan that are already ongoing. I think the fact that the 5-year, $3 billion global war on terror plan will be ending in fiscal year 2009 presents an opportunity to have the kind of dialogue that you're talking about. So, without getting into specific

numbers and figures, I think it's something that we ought to discuss, going forward.

And the other more general point I would submit, which I think is the tenor of the commentary that we've heard in this room so far today, is that the situation in Pakistan is of as great an interest to us—to the United States and to our interests—as the situation in Afghanistan, and, in some sense, these two countries, they're the flip side of the same coin, as far as the problems we're trying to address. We're never going to be able to succeed in one of those countries unless we succeed in the other. And I think that's a crucial point, and I would hope that those who are watching or listening would be receptive to that suggestion.

On accountability, one point I would like to make about, "How do we know what's happened?"—I was reading, in preparation for the hearing, about some of the results of our economic assistance programs in Pakistan in recent years, and I really do think that some of the progress in that country, in terms of infant mortality, literacy, particularly female literacy, has been, really, quite impressive. Enrollment in schools, which—in 2000, for example, female enrollment in schools was 47 percent; now it's 59 percent. I think there have been some significant improvements in the social and economic situation in that country. And we would hope to see a reinforcement of those trends in the future years.

Last point, on whatever happened to A.Q. Khan—as you correctly note, he is under house arrest. I gather his health may be an issue. But, in any event, I don't think that that network is active, at the moment. I think it has been neutralized, if you will, and I think we're satisfied that that kind of activity is not continuing, at the moment. And I think that we've also succeeded in getting quite a bit of information from the Pakistani authorities about questions that were of concern to us in that regard. But, I think we probably have to talk, in classified session, about the A.Q. Khan network, if we're to go into it any more deeply.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I'd say to my colleague, one of the things that startled us, the day after the election, is the first comment by Sharif was that he wanted to see the release of A.Q. Khan. That was the first official statement he made, to the best of our knowledge. Fortunately, he did not win outright, but it reinforces your point about the national hero status.

Senator Kerry.

Senator KERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here with us. With reference to that landing that Senator Biden was talking about, I want you to know that—that's the first time I realized I was responsible for it, but, apart from that, we had decided that if the Taliban or al-Qaeda attacked, the three Senators were just going to go out and talk them to death. [Laughter.]

So, we weren't worried at all.

Mr. Secretary, one of the things that really hit all of us while we were there, particularly through the competence of the young PRT personnel that we met with, who are doing extraordinary work, obviously, in nation-building, perhaps even more so than in their military operations—though they are engaged in those also—but

what was really significant was the civic community-building taking place, and the changes occurring as a consequence of that. And, as Senator Biden said, if you spend some money, and you invest in it, you can get results. How you do that is pretty critical. What the relationships are, what your footprint is, what the perceptions of the people are of that footprint—all of that is part of the mix.

It struck us how critical—and, indeed, you've said it in your testimony—the relationship is between what happens on that border in Pakistan to Afghanistan, and vice versa, what happens in Afghanistan to Pakistan, because of those tribal linkages, the freedom of movement, obviously, and the history there, culturally and otherwise.

Here's the "but" in the big question. We observed that, in Pakistan, their leadership tends to be far more concerned, and expresses greater concern about, the indigenous insurgency. Baitullah Mehsud and company are a far greater concern to them than al-Qaeda. And, in fact, disturbingly, I have read, in the papers in the last couple of days, discussions not dissimilar to what Musharraf engaged in Waziristan, with the tribal leaders for some kind of a settlement. It didn't work then; it allowed freedom of movement; violence went up. And I think that's a recipe for disaster. And I'd like to hear your comments on the administration's view with respect to your concerns about these distinctions between different insurgents and the capacity of the Pakistan military and Government to focus on this mutual concern of transformation that has to take place in those areas, and the full measure of engagement that's got to take place, with all of its risks, in order to really provide real stability.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. First of all, Senator, I would say, I don't think that—whatever might be said about talking or not talking with the militants, I don't think there's any particular sympathy in the Pakistani body politic for militant extremism. And I think we saw that in the outcome of the election results.

Senator KERRY. But, Musharraf cut a peace deal, so to speak, and the peace deal was, "If you don't bother us in X, Y, and Z, we're not going to bother you here," and that allowed them freedom to do what they want to do with al-Qaeda.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. If you're talking about the deal in south Waziristan—and it didn't really work, and I think they——

Senator KERRY. That's what I'm saying.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. I think they found that out. And I believe—and the government has got 100-plus-thousand troops up in that frontier area, they've got two divisions in Waziristan—I believe, one in south Waziristan, and one in the north—and they've engaged in significant combat.

Senator KERRY. They have. But, again, in our meetings with the ISI, and in the discussions with folks, there seemed to be a conclusion that those 100,000 troops and others aren't really trained for counterinsurgency, they don't understand counterinsurgency, and that there's a lack of capacity to be able to achieve this. So, just having 100,000 troops up there engaging in these assaults, in fact, can push people further away toward the insurgency, rather than doing what we need to do to win.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Right. And I think that that's one of the plan—that's really one of the plans, going forward, is to help Pakistan improve it's counterinsurgency capability, in two different respects: One, helping the army with some of its special units—and we have plans with regard to that; and the other is to help train the frontier corps, although that'll take a longer period of time. But, in that $750 million plan, we've got some ideas of helping the frontier corps, as well.

So, I would say that it's not a question of accommodating these extremist forces. I believe that the Government of Pakistan wants to, and I believe the political actors in Pakistan want to, deal with them. They do not want to give them free rein. They've suffered a lot of casualties. There's been an enormous increase in violence in the past year, and it's spread, as you know, not only from the FATA, but down into what they call the settled areas. And they want to resist this trend, and beat it back. But, it's going to take some time and some work——

Senator KERRY. My concern is that if there isn't a more effective partnership with respect to the counterinsurgency mission, and a greater understanding on their part of how to implement it, I fear that they are just going to increase that insurgency.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. And that's why, I think, we have to work with them harder on both the counterinsurgency—the military and security aspect of training them, and working with them on the economic aspects that we're talking about. And I think we're positioning ourselves better to do that than we've been, in previous years.

Senator KERRY. Do you feel that there are some best practices that come out of the Afghan PRTs that might be applied to what we're doing, in terms of that?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. I would have to study that, but the one major difference, of course, is that we're not going to be able to use American military forces.

Senator KERRY. Clearly understand—we want the Pakistanis to do this.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Right.

Senator KERRY. We don't want American forces—but, the best practices fit, nevertheless, in the context of the mix of activities, the presence of a robust kinetic capacity, while, at the same time, doing the other things——

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Right. And I think that's a good idea. And I think we should encourage our AID officials, who have, perhaps, the principal responsibility for carrying out these assistance programs in the FATA, and they're doing it mainly through Pakistanis, nongovernmental organizations, subcontractors, and so forth. But, I think it would be good, if they're not already doing so, to compare notes with those running the PRTs across the border.

Senator KERRY. I was impressed that, in a sense, this is sort of a next-generation effort, and I saw this in Iraq also. A young Navy commander from Nebraska who was in a PRT was unbelievably impressive to all of us in his ability to brief us on every single tribe, the leaders, knowledge of their history, a sense of who the players were, and what the dynamics were between them. And he really understood politics. And, while wearing a uniform, his effort

was to try to separate the enemy from the people without using the military. But, that presence does make a difference, notwithstanding. And I think we may have to rethink the AID model, which doesn't necessarily work in these unsecure situations, where you can't keep people out there. And that was just eye-opening. It was significant. I'm not saying it's the whole solution. For one, you've got to substitute those people as rapidly as possible with indigenous forces, obviously.

And the other question that leapt out at me—and I'd just leave it on the table—there's a big nut for the American people in that PRT presence, when it's on a broader basis. And the question that has to be asked, Is there a cheaper way? Is there a more effective way to train indigenous forces and do this without the American people taking on in some aspects the responsibility of a "52nd state? And we need to think about that.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. If I could, just one point, Mr. Chairman, in reply.

One of the issues that you're addressing, really, is how we're going to gear up in the future to deal with these kinds of stabilization situations, and, is there more that could be done? And, of course, the chairman and Senator Lugar have submitted legislation on reconstruction and stabilization.

Senator KERRY. Right, the civilian corps.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. They call this the Reconstruction and Stabilization Civilian Management Act. And I think that could very well be part of the mix in the future, and I think it's a very good—a very, very good initiative, and hope that it receives the support of the Congress.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

As you can see, Mr. Ambassador, both Senator Kerry and I were startled that someone from Nebraska knew so much. [Laughter.]

I now recognize the Senator from Nebraska. Senator Hagel. [Laughter.]

Senator HAGEL. Well, I——

The CHAIRMAN. For the record, that was a joke. OK? I mean——

Senator HAGEL. I'm not often introduced with such a flourish of flowery——

[Laughter.]

Senator HAGEL [continuing]. Positive contribution.

And I would add my note, not only of gratitude, but of acknowledging how impressive all of those young men and women were, and the work that they're doing. And they are more than just soldiers; as Senator Kerry noted, they are ambassadors, they are mayors, they are mediators, they are warriors. And it's really a dramatic recognition of commitment, but also training, as well.

I'd also like to acknowledge our ambassadors in that area. Obviously, we spend a lot of time with Ambassador Patterson, in Pakistan, and her colleagues, who are doing a very, very important job. And doing it in a way that has, I think, made a considerable difference in watching the Pakistanis respond to Ambassador Patterson and her people was some measure, I think, of the respect that she has earned, as well as our position there. And I would also add the same for Ambassador Wood and his colleagues, in Afghanistan.

Ambassador Negroponte, you noted, in the opening of your statement, the importance, as you have said here—"Pakistan's future will also be decisive in the search for stability in South Asia," and you connected that to Afghanistan. I agree with that. I'm going to ask you a question based on that statement. It is my opinion that the belt that stretches from Iran to India—Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India—represents as important an area—and you've noted in your testimony—but also as a dangerous, combustible, complicated area of any area in the world. And when you add to that China, off the border of India, and Turkey, off the border of Iran, we find three nuclear powers, a nation that obviously is quite interested in developing nuclear capability in Iran, an indispensable ally in Turkey, and Afghanistan and that strip of land, the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, represents, I think, the centerpiece of our fight—the world's fight—against extremism.

Now, I know that you agree, at least in some measure, to that based on your testimony. My question is this. If, in fact, any of that is accurate, what I have just noted, what is our regional strategy? You have gotten into some of this regarding Afghanistan and Pakistan, as to how they are connected, how they are linked. One cannot be successful without the other—very clear, very obvious. But, I think it's broader than that and deeper than that. I would include that entire region, the nations that I just mentioned. And so, it seems to me that some regional strategic context is going to be required, if it's not already being applied, and I'd like to get your response to that "regional strategy" concept.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Of course, the countries you mentioned, in addition to Pakistan and Afghanistan, have other neighbors, as well—I mean, China, and so on, and so forth; and Turkey, of course, is part of the European region. I think you're asking a very complex question, but, I think the way I would try to answer it, Senator, is, first of all, we think the most important priority is to deal with the very sensitive border area that you're talking about, and deal with the militant extremism; all the while, working to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan, and help that government extend its writ throughout the country. I would say that's point No. 1.

I think point No. 2 is that, as you know, we have, in recent years, improved our relationship, our outreach to India, and have developed more of a partnership with that country, while, at the same time—and I think we've played a constructive role in that regard—encouraging improvement in relationships between India and Pakistan. And then, of course, Iran, I would say, is a whole sort of different issue set. It happens to border on Pakistan and Afghanistan, but it also plays a significant role in the Middle East; mostly negative. So, I think it would be hard to slot all of this into one regional strategy of the kind you're talking about, but there certainly are elements there.

Senator HAGEL. Well, obviously, we deal with each on the basis of the dynamics and the realities that are in play, but, at the same time, it seems to me, the strategic moves that we make in any of these areas affect all of the other areas. And that's what my point is. Do we think about that? Do we strategize? Obviously, Afghanistan is sitting there with two dangerous borders, to the east and

the west. The dynamic of Iran seeing American forces on each side of its border. Do we factor those in to the larger fabric of our strategic thinking, with our allies and our aid, working with governments?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. I think we do. If I could say this about Iran; I think Iran plays a fairly negative role, wherever it happens to be engaged. We've seen—and I'm sure you encountered this when you were in Afghanistan—a concern about their providing explosive devices to the Taliban. They've not been helpful in Iraq. And, of course, they've played a role in fomenting and encouraging militant extremism in the Middle East region, particularly in Lebanon, and in the Israeli-Palestinian situation. So, I think that Iran itself calls for a strategy to deal with it, both in the context of Afghanistan and Pakistan, but also the Middle East, generally.

Senator HAGEL. Do we have enough people to carry out these programs that you were talking about in your testimony, and Senators Biden and Kerry and Lugar were talking about?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. We've got a total, in our mission in Pakistan, of—permanently assigned—of over 1,400 people; 336 are Americans, 1,098 are local nationals. And that doesn't include a fairly healthy number of temporary duty personnel who are in Pakistan at any given time. So, I would say it's a good size mission.

Senator HAGEL. Well, my time is up, but that really wasn't my question. It's a good size mission, I recognize that, but you're talking about a number of new programs in your testimony. For example, pass legislation to create Reconstruction Opportunity Zones. We saw a number of those programs; not these specific ROZ programs, but other programs. My question is, Do you have the manpower in order to implement a rather aggressive agenda, which I think are needed, of programs, or are you going to require more people?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. I think, with respect to Reconstruction Opportunity Zones, if and when we accomplish that, we may need some more resources, both financial and human, and maybe that'll be true of some other programs, but I do think that we have a solid basis right now, and it may require some adjustments—upward, going forward, but I wouldn't want to commit to any, or predict any, specific numbers.

Senator HAGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Feingold.

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this very timely hearing.

And thank you, Secretary Negroponte, for your testimony.

And, Mr. Chairman, I know you and some of the other Senators are just back from Pakistan. I appreciate hearing the recent insights that you're able to give.

The historic, relatively peaceful parliamentary elections in Pakistan have ushered in a new opportunity to build strong institutions that can bolster and build a strong democracy, address the increasing insecurity throughout the country in a balanced manner, and ensure that our assistance is consistent with the needs of the people of Pakistan, rather than with a President who now has been rejected by Pakistan's voters and who has increasingly repressed political space and undermined democracy.

We must seize this opportunity to reverse decades of failed, ineffective policies with various Pakistani leaders. We can do this by promoting and supporting the rule of law, and by seeking to eliminate corruption, poor governance, endemic poverty, and historic marginalization. We should help ensure that restrictions on basic freedoms and political rights are permanently reversed, all while working with the Pakistani Government to counter the terrorist threats that fester and grow in Pakistan and the border region.

And, with regard to some questions, I'm interested to hear from you about U.S. Government intentions to support the newly formed coalition government. Mr. Secretary, how does the United States intend to support the loosely formed coalition government? And can you speak to how our policy has actually been impacted by these elections?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Regarding our intentions, Mr. Chairman, as I said in my opening statement, we certainly look forward to working with whatever government emerges from this process. We don't know yet what that government will be. I spoke to Ambassador Patterson this morning. She predicted that such a government should emerge within the next couple of weeks, perhaps sooner. So, we're in a "wait and see" mode, as far as that is concerned. But, certainly, we look forward to working with that government in every way possible, and being supportive.

Senator FEINGOLD. Well, obviously, in the long run, the actions will speak louder than words, and I'm sure it's not escaped the attention of the Pakistani people that, as the administration has paid at least lipservice to democracy in Pakistan, it has continued to provide hundreds of millions of dollars in military equipment designed to combat a conventional military foe—actually, not terrorists—a military foe to the Musharraf regime. So, right now, are you encouraging this coalition to work with President Musharraf's party? Isn't there a danger that your unwavering support for the regime will cost us the support of the Pakistani people?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Well, as I said, we're going to work with whatever government emerges from the process. We're not in the business of recommending specific alignments or specific coalitions. I think we would, as a general proposition, urge that the moderate political forces work together. And, of course, President Musharraf is still the President of his country, and we look forward to continuing to work well with him, as well.

Senator FEINGOLD. But, what about the military support to the regime continuing unabated, without any recognition of the political change, here? I mean, doesn't it send a troubling message?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Right. I think it's not a question of supporting a particular individual, Senator. It's a question of providing assistance to the institution of the army and of the security forces in Pakistan, and try to enable them in the ways that we've been discussing, here—improving their counterinsurgency capability and so forth. And also, I don't think we should underestimate the high impact that some of our economic and social programs have had, whether it's been on literacy or democracy support. Actually, we did a lot, as your colleagues know, to support the election process that was just carried out, in terms of helping promote election observation, democracy promotion, and so forth.

Senator FEINGOLD. I recognize that point. I also recognize that, in an ideal situation, providing support to the military for a country certainly can be consistent with supporting institutions and supporting a country moving forward. But, in this case, there's a particular problem with the military, with the role of the army in Pakistan, and with President Musharraf's relationship with the military, and how that's perceived by the public. So, obviously, you're aware of that, and it carries more messages than simply supporting a military institution.

But, let me switch to the issue of judicial reform. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher told a January 29 House subcommittee hearing, "We have urged the political leaders and other leaders in Pakistan to focus on the need for an independent judiciary. I think it's fair to assume they won't really address it seriously until after the election." However, immediately after the elections last week, rather than pressing this point, administration officials were reportedly pressuring the new Pakistani leadership to stop their calls for reinstatement of the judges dismissed by Musharraf when he declared martial law.

So, what is the administration's policy regarding reinstatement of the judges? And is it consistent with the Bush administration's stated support for democratic institutions?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Just one point on the previous issue, Senator, which I, of course, should have mentioned, is that Mr. Musharraf did take off his uniform and did step down as Chief of Staff of the Army, and I think that was a very significant development.

Senator FEINGOLD. Very, very late in his Presidency, after many years of requests, and only right before the election.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Correct. But I do recall—prior to her tragic death, I spoke to Mrs. Bhutto, and I recall her saying that she thought this was one of the most important things he could do to advance the prospects for a fair and free election in her country.

Senator FEINGOLD. I agree with that.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. And, of course, we can't lose sight of the fact that the Pakistani military now is a vital institution in this war on terrorism.

As far as the question of the judicial reform, this is something that we believe the Pakistanis themselves are going to have to sort out. And I think that it's something that'll be taken up in their legislature. And we will watch that discussion with interest. And we're certainly not trying to block any changes of any particular kind, nor do we have some kind of prescription or formula for how they should go about reforming or improving their own judicial system.

Senator FEINGOLD. But, does the administration have a policy regarding the reinstatement of those judges? Are they asking—are we asking for that, or not?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. We have not—we have been silent on the subject to best of my knowledge.

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, whoever you are. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. I'm not sure who I am, either. [Laughter.]

Senator CORKER. I want to thank you for your testimony, and I certainly was glad to hear of the testimony of the three Senators who were there during the elections. I was there, I guess, within a day of General Musharraf taking his uniform off, and met with him, and really was touched, if you will, by many of the comments that he made. And, I think, actually, some of the Senators have said the same thing. I also met with former Prime Minister Bhutto to encourage her to run, and not boycott the elections; and 27 days later, of course, she was assassinated. But, I think it shows tremendous progress to see what has happened when we had a president that was, in essence, shellacked, if you will, during an election, and yet, is moving ahead with trying to build a coalition. And I would say that I'm actually somewhat—while this person is not perfect—impressed with what is happening. It looks like we may, in fact, have a peaceful transition. Certainly the country is, by no way, perfect, and there are lots of issues that need to be addressed, but I hope that you will continue to work with all the leaders in Pakistan to ensure that this continues. And I want to thank the Senators for having done what they did.

Let me just ask you this. What do you think has caused the fact that moderates were elected, when, in fact, we have this tremendous turmoil that is taking place there, which is very different from what has occurred in other countries, where more extremists have actually taken the lead—what do you think has caused this response by the electorate, to, in essence, cause moderates to come to the forefront?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Two points. One would be that I think there are a lot of secular political leaders in Pakistan, and they have a fairly long tradition of that. But, the other point I would make is that, whereas the problem of militant extremism was bottled up in the FATA area in previous years, it has spread into what the Pakistanis call the "settled areas" now. And I'm sure it was mentioned to you that the number of suicide bombings and car bombs and so forth had gone up significantly in the past year or so, acts of violence by terrorists, in the settled areas. And I think that what you're seeing is a reaction to that fact. People don't like that, they don't like the disruption to their lives, they don't like the terrorist threat. And I think they want to see it dealt with.

Senator CORKER. I thought that Chairman Biden's comments about increasing aid there, the soft aid that actually addresses the need of Pakistanis, and not necessarily focused so much on our transactional relationship, if you will, was actually a very good comment. I don't know about the actual numbers that need to be invested, but I did notice the President's budget actually reduced funding in that regard by $75 million. And it does seem that this is a time for us to really try to move ahead the government, move ahead the understanding of people, move ahead economic development and educational opportunities. And I'm just wondering why, at the time when this needs to occur, and we've invested so much in this country, we're actually, through the President's budget, reducing aid in that way, at least proposed aid, in Pakistan.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Yes; I'd have to look at those precise numbers, Senator, because my—the picture of the budget that I carry with me in my mind over the previous—you know, the previous several years, is that it's been running something between $600–$700 million a year for these past several years, and that's sort of the projection, going forward.

Senator CORKER. OK. Well, I do hope we can follow up with some of the meetings that I—that Ranking Member Lugar has asked about. And I hope we can get into some of the accountability issues.

Following up, again, on the chairman's thoughts regarding Musharraf's activities to sort of retrench and look at his own political backside, if you will, based on our lack of investment in Afghanistan, I will tell you, there's no question in my mind that our actions in Iraq have hurt us in Afghanistan, that we have disinvested there, that we have—we have, sort of, gone sideways over this last period of time because of that. But, I'd love for you to respond to that. I don't think he asked the question. I think he made the statement. Do you think that, in fact, did affect General Musharraf's focus as it relates to terrorism and retrenchment back to focus on his own political situation there—our lack of focus on Afghanistan?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Well, I guess, first of all, I would take some issue with the thought that we have not been focusing on Afghanistan, because we have a substantial effort there, both our own and, of course, the NATO countries, and we have this major NATO summit coming up, in April, where the subject of Afghanistan will be a focus.

Senator CORKER. But, I think the people on the ground—I mean, I think General McNeill and everybody there on the ground acknowledges that we have lacked in our effort there, because of resource issues, and that it has, in fact, hurt us. I mean, that's—these are the folks we depend upon to lead us in that regard——

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Right.

Senator CORKER [continuing]. And certainly have been hamstrung by some of the other efforts. And, again, I don't want to take issue with that, it's just an observation. I think you would agree with—do you not agree that we've been——

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. I think I would say that we're doing the best we can in both places, and they're both important, Senator.

The second thing I'd say is that there's been a rather sharp increase, in the last couple of years, in the assistance levels to Afghanistan, whether it's road-building or other types of aid. And I think another development in Afghanistan that's been good in the last couple or 3 years has been the emphasis on increasing the competence and capability of the Afghan security forces.

Senator CORKER. On the military side, but not at the police level. That's where we really——

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Yes. And that police is an area that we hope that some of our NATO allies will, maybe, come up with more offers of assistance. It's an area where we think they can be helpful.

Senator CORKER. But, back to the statement that was made, what do you think that did, in fact, or has, in fact, affected

Musharraf in his efforts as it relates to terror, versus just trying to shore up his own political base?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Senator, I was the Ambassador to the United Nations in 2001, when President Musharraf came to New York, had his first meeting with President Bush in November of that year, and, I think, ever since that time, he's been committed in this effort against violent extremism. And he made his famous speech there, at the end of 2001, and I think he's been strongly committed ever since. So, I don't think I would agree that he has somehow waned or relented in his effort on this.

Senator CORKER. I know my time is up. I would just say that, in meeting with our country team there on the ground, and certainly talking with our CIA operatives there, I think there is a tremendous disconnect between the leadership of Pakistan's view of where we are, as it relates to fighting terror, and our own CIA view of that. And I think there's a huge disconnect there. And hopefully, as we move into new leadership there, with a new Prime Minister, those can come into sync more fully.

But, again, I want to say, in general, I think we've moved along in a very good way, as it relates to progress there on the elective side. I thank the Senators for going over and making sure that the elections were focused on the proper way. And I think we have an opportunity for great progress there.

Thank you very much.

Senator HAGEL. Mr. Chairman, may I respond to something that the Senator from Tennessee said in regard to his observation about force structure in Afghanistan?

You recall, as does Senator Kerry, that, when we were there last week, we were told, by a very senior general, that he would require an additional two infantry brigades in the south, with a two-star billet, in addition to the 3,200 marines going in there. And I think it addresses part of what Senator Corker's comment was about resources in Afghanistan. This was not a Senator saying this; this was a rather senior general—not saying he wished we could do it, he said, straight out, "We have to do it."

The CHAIRMAN. And that he knows he can't do it, in terms of getting the troops. I apologize for the——

Senator BOXER. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. Interruption.

Senator Boxer.

Senator BOXER. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

I actually want to follow up on your opening—the points you made about funding. And today, there's an article—and welcome, Mr. Secretary—there's an article in the British press with the headline, "Pakistani Military Misspent Up To 70 Percent of American Aid." It goes on to say that, "American officials processing the payments at the Embassy in Islamabad have concluded that Pakistan's expense claims have been vastly inflated. According to an official, 'My back-of-the-envelope guesstimate is 30 percent of the money that they requested to be reimbursed was legitimate,'" so 70 percent was not. The official said he didn't know what happened to the remaining $3.8 billion, but suspected that some of the money might have been spent on F–16 fighter jets or, "a new house for an army general." The Pakistani military replied that, "We've

never received any formal complaint about this." Every month, the Pakistani's expense claims of about $80 million to the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad; no receipts are provided to support the claims, and the money is paid directly to the Finance Ministry.

Now, here's the thing. The American people are getting a bit impatient. We've got $9 billion that's missing in aid to Iraq. And now we hear this. The American people are being told that President Bush is cutting everything that they care about, including, let's see, funds for after-school programs. We're supposed to be spending $3 billion on these programs, but we are actually spending less than $1 billion. Millions of kids can't get in. The President is not even willing to spend $1 billion a year on these programs, but we're losing track of multiple billions of dollars in Iraq.

So, I guess I need to hear from you—what are you doing to address this?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Right. And earlier, Senator—and I can't recall whether you were here or not, but I did offer a briefing to the chairman on this whole issue of coalition support funds, but I said we'd have to work out as to whether it would be us, in the State Department, or the Department of Defense, since it's basically their moneys.

But, let me make a broad point, which is that we—in the case of these coalition support funds—have provided over the years, it's been to compensate Pakistan for the expenses it has incurred in providing military and logistical support in the war on terror. And, as I mentioned earlier, they have deployed something like 100,000 troops to their border area, which is not a trivial amount.

Senator BOXER. OK. Mr. Secretary, I don't—I want us to have a strong, cooperative relationship.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Right

Senator BOXER. I don't question that. I'm questioning some fraud and abuse that could be going on, what American officials are saying might be happening. Here is another quote: "The road could be paved with this money." All I'm saying is, I look forward to that briefing.

I ask unanimous consent to place into the record this article in the British press that says 70 percent of the money may be being misspent, and also the chart that shows how much money we're talking about, because it's a lot more than this $6 billion, when you go to the other accounts.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, it'll be placed in the record.

Senator BOXER. And so, I really do look forward, Mr. Chairman, to working on this with you as we see this administration slashing the budget for the American people.

Now, I also feel very disturbed by your seeming ambivalence about an independent judiciary. Again, we're spending billions of dollars in Iraq to set up a judiciary. The Pakistani President—Pervez Musharraf—dismissed the judiciary. Imagine what would happen if President Bush went to the microphone and said, "Today, I'm firing the Supreme Court, and all the judges can go home."

Now, the fact is, when we had a problem with the U.S. attorneys it caused an uproar. You saw what happened when we had a problem with U.S. attorneys being fired. We still haven't gotten to the bottom of that.

I would ask unanimous consent to place into the record a CRS report, which says, "Reseating the pre-November 3rd Supreme Court would almost lead to Musharraf's removal from office, as that court appeared close to finding his October reelection as President unconstitutional." I want to put that in, as well as another statement, here, "By some accounts, the administration remains wedded to a policy that would keep the embattled Musharraf in power, despite his weakness and lack of support."

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, it will be placed in the record.

Senator BOXER. So, I just hope you'll rethink this, because we don't seem to be sincere when we're quiet on the importance of an independent judiciary. It just doesn't meet American ideals and what we stand for in our Constitution.

So, I'd like us to rethink this. We cannot base our support for an independent judiciary on what they might find about President Musharraf. I just think it's bigger than that. And if you look at—and I'd ask unanimous consent to place part of a report from "Terror-Free Tomorrow: the Center for Public Opinion," in the record—just their summary page, if I might.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

Senator BOXER. There are some really wonderful things in the findings. The report basically finds that the Pakistani people really want to see Osama bin Laden and the terrorists gone. They also are very concerned that American policy is propping up Musharraf. This is not good for us. It is not good for us.

So—I will give you an example. And I will finish with this—in August 2007, Secretary Rice said, "I think that we and Pakistan have a very strong interest together in capturing or killing high-value targets." And she said, "Musharraf himself is at risk from extremists. We all have this in common, to get the terrorists." Yet, President Musharraf recently said, on a tour through Europe, regarding the fact that Osama bin Laden and al-Zawahiri are still at large, that it "doesn't mean much." He said, "it doesn't mean much." According to the Associated Press, Musharraf attributed his feelings about the two's continued freedom—bin Laden and Zawahiri—to the fact that the two are less a threat to his regime than Taliban-linked militants. He even went on to elaborate that the 100,000 troops that you referenced are not going around trying to locate Osama bin Laden and Zawahiri. He said that.

So, it's outrageous, and it runs contrary to what Secretary Rice said in August 2007. The fact that these al-Qaeda leaders are still on the loose is distressing to all Americans, especially the families and loved ones of those who died on 9/11. So, I think your defense and your support of Musharraf, and talking about the 100,000 troops, when Musharraf himself has said that those 100,000 troops aren't being used to catch terrorists, is just very concerning.

So, I have one last question. How do you reconcile Musharraf's statements that he's not worried about these two being loose, with what Secretary Rice said about our joint commitment to capturing high-value targets?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Right. Well, I can't—he'd have to address that, and I'd have to see the context in which he said all of that. It was a question-answer situation. But, what I would say is, we've had good cooperation with them on this issue of al-Qaeda. I

recall, as Director of National Intelligence, being very impressed by the cooperation that we had with the Government of Pakistan, particularly with counterparts of my then-organization in seeking out extremist militants. And I think it's worth recalling that Mr. Musharraf himself has been the victim of some of these militant assassination attempts.

Senator BOXER. That's what Secretary Rice said.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. So, I think that we are essentially on the same page with the Pakistani authorities on this issue.

Senator BOXER. Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to put in the record, because you said you didn't see it—it's from FOX News. The story has Musharraf saying that "The 100,000 troops we're using are not going around trying to locate Osama bin Laden and Zawahiri, frankly," and that, "it doesn't—it doesn't mean much," that they're running around loose. This is really outrageous.

And our President is still saying how strongly he supports Musharraf. I'd put that in the record, a comment made after the elections.

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—The above mentioned comment was not available at the time of printing.]

Senator BOXER. You know, so it's just concerning to me, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Isakson.

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Mr. Secretary. I am very supportive of what Chairman Biden and Ranking Member Lugar said with regard to the coordinated financial assistance to Pakistan. And I'm very supportive of the $150 million assistance provided to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in Pakistan. But, I do have a question with regard to that.

In Iraq, last month, I traveled with a PRT team into Ghazaliya, along with a combination of State and military officials and watched the application for, and the distribution of, microgrants, which is part of the PRT's goal to bring economic activity to Iraq, and was just amazed with the level of accountability and the results those microgrants made in that program.

Here is my question. I know we're not going to have military personnel of the United States in Pakistan, so we don't have that program for distribution and accountability of economic assistance. What type of NGO and what type of accountability are we going to have on the distribution of those funds in the tribal areas in Pakistan?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. I'd like to submit a longer reply——

Senator ISAKSON. Sure.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE [continuing]. To your question, for the record, Senator.

[The written response of the State Department follows:]

The State Department or U.S. Agency for International Development monitors assistance in the tribal areas by following standard Federal procurement and financial management regulations, conducting third party as well as inspector general performance and financial audits of contractors and grantees, and meeting all provisions of the Foreign Assistance Act, including preobligation requirements.

The U.S. Agency for International Development and the Pakistan Government have been working together to develop joint evaluation plans for programs in the

tribal areas as well. That includes collecting baseline data and regular monitoring and evaluation plans. Several large programs, including the Capacity Building and Livehoods contracts, have been recently signed. One of the first things the contractors will do is collect baseline data to monitor and evaluate the success of the programs.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. But, in brief, I would say, first of all, the—our aid programs are administered under the applicable Federal rules of accountability.

The second is that we do have AID personnel stationed up in Peshawar, adjacent to the FATA area. And, third, Ambassador Patterson has also designated a position, in her Embassy, of a coordinator for our assistance programs to the FATA area, who will also have that kind of oversight responsibility. So, we will certainly be mindful of the need for accountability—oversight and accountability.

Senator ISAKSON. Is the—on that—in addition to that, is the type of assistance contemplated similar to the micro-grants and -loans that are being made in Iraq for business development—small business?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. I don't know that for a specific fact, but my understanding is, it's going to be for the range of civic development, community development type programs.

Senator ISAKSON. It's my understanding, one of their goals is to try and bring some employment, economic benefit, and economic sustainability to the tribal areas.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Absolutely. And, of course, that's why these Reconstruction Opportunity Zones would be so helpful, as well.

Senator ISAKSON. The second thing I want to mention, you may not want to comment on but you can if you want to, is in regard to terrorism and extremism in Pakistan. In Atlanta, Georgia, we had an incident last year, where two Islamic students at Georgia Tech were arrested, and a cell was broken up—thanks to our intelligence under FISA and the Patriot Act, in communications between Islamabad, Atlanta, and Toronto—successfully before its activation. Those communications were coming out of Pakistan, out of Islamabad. I want to just make the point that we leave ourselves, I think, at some risk, with the FISA law now being not extended. And one of the reasons that I was so supportive of reauthorizing this measure on the floor of the Senate was because of that singular experience we had in our city, to bring up a close and personal experience and how important it is to have that type of intelligence.

And there is al-Qaeda in Pakistan, and it is operating, and it is central in the war on terror. And I'm appreciative for the cooperation that we have had, and I think it's critical that the State Department engage and maintain our relationship with this new and emerging Government in Pakistan, because I think it's probably the key area in the world in the war on terror.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's all I have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator Cardin, thank you for your patience.

Senator CARDIN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate it.

Mr. Secretary, I thank you for your long record of service to our country in so many different roles.

There's a lot we need to understand from this election, and if I had to point to one area that offers great promise—the rejection of extremism—particularly in the northwest area. And it seems to me that we should be looking at modifying U.S. policy and expectations as to what we expect the new leaders of Pakistan to do in identifying ways to root out the terrorist networks, particularly in the tribal areas.

I'm frustrated and I think Americans are frustrated, that we haven't been able to make more progress in rooting out the areas that seem to be without control, where al-Qaeda and others can operate without real accountability.

There's going to be a new Prime Minister in Pakistan. Clearly, the power of the President has been changed. There'll be a new Parliament. What should be our expectations of what these leaders can do in order to gain greater control of the territories and root out these training cells and operational support for terrorist organizations?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Well, I guess the first point I want to make, Senator, is Pakistan is a sovereign country, and, in the last analysis, whatever they do to deal with these issues has got to be based on their government's perception and their people's perception of their own best self-interest.

Senator CARDIN. And I agree with that. My point is that U.S. policy can affect that. And, of course, we have the involvement, not only in the United States, but the international community, in trying to support efforts within Pakistan. The chairman has mentioned that; I fully agree that it needs to be reevaluated.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Right.

Senator CARDIN. So, using all of our tools, it seems to me we can have an impact. My question is, What can we expect?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Here would be my answer to that. First of all, I think that whatever we do should be done on a cooperative basis. I think that it is harmful when people—very often, unidentified sources—talk about us somehow taking this matter into our own hands and acting unilaterally. I think all that does is get people's backs up on the scene. But, I think what we can expect is that—we would like to work with the Government of Pakistan to help them in our social and economic programs in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and in other parts of Pakistan, to help deal with the root causes, if you will, of this militant extremism. We would also like to work with them on the security front, whether it's intelligence or the military, to help improve their counterterrorism and their counterinsurgency efforts. And so, the expectations would be, really, to strengthen our collaborative efforts together and for them to be open to that kind of cooperation with the United States.

Senator CARDIN. I would just make the observation. Those who participated in the elections, their votes were more encouraging than the current leadership in Pakistan, as to taking on the extremist groups. It's clearly the right thing, but it's also, perhaps, the popular thing within Pakistan. And that may not have been the reading of the leaders, prior to the election.

I want to comment on Senator Corker's point, because it's clear to me that our efforts in Iraq has an impact on what's happening

in Afghanistan, it's having an impact on what's happening in Pakistan. And many of us think that we're not focusing on—as we should—on terrorists, because of the way that Iraq is being handled.

The Iraq coalition is a small coalition compared to the international support we have in Afghanistan and as it relates to Pakistan. So, it seems to me, and most Americans, that what's happening in Iraq is affecting our effectiveness in dealing with Afghanistan and the cooperation we're receiving in Pakistan. And I just welcome your thoughts on that, understanding your position in the administration. We want to have an effective policy in Pakistan. The purpose of this hearing is, given these new opportunities brought about by these elections, how we can have programs to deal with terrorists operating in this region and engage the international community as effectively as we can?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Of course, in addition to my position in the administration, I'm a former United States Ambassador to Iraq, so I have a particular personal experience in that regard.

Senator CARDIN. And I met you there. I thank you for your hospitality when I was in Baghdad——

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Right.

Senator CARDIN [continuing]. When you were Ambassador.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. So no matter what anybody thinks about the merits or demerits of us having gone in there in the first place, I think we all recognize the importance of now getting it stabilized and getting it on the right footing. And Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus will be coming back shortly to brief the Congress and the American people on the situation there, and I think they're going to be presenting a fairly hopeful and encouraging report.

But, as far as Pakistan is concerned, I think the important point of departure, Senator, is the recognition of its importance in this global situation, and the importance of Pakistan, not only for itself, but for, also, the situation in Afghanistan. And it sounds to me, from the discussion we've had this morning, that we're sort of on the same page in that regard, so what we've got to do is look at ways, going forward, to be as supportive as we possibly can. I don't know what else to say, at this stage.

Senator CARDIN. Well, I thank you. I just think there is a new opportunity here, because of the elections. I hope we have a way to energize the international community and working with the sovereign country of Pakistan, to have higher expectations of what can be achieved in the tribal and the border areas as far as eliminating the safe havens that currently exist.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. That does remind me of one other point that I think is worth mentioning—and you've suggested it, yourself—and that is, we also need, in our dialogue—and I've been doing this—trying to do this more and more—in our discussions with friends and allies around the world, we need to draw their attention to the importance of Pakistan, in addition to whatever support they might be providing to some of these other critical countries. But, in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan—our help to these countries is vital, each of them, to the United States national interests.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Barrasso, thank you for your patience.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for making me feel so welcome, as the newest member of this committee.

The CHAIRMAN. I was just, actually, saying very nice things about you to the Senator—Senator Lugar. I am impressed. And I—presumptuous of me to say that, but I am, and I——

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. And the floor is yours, sir.

Senator BARRASSO. And thank you very much, Mr. Ambassador. I know many of the questions have already been asked. Just two. First, regarding the elections and the multiple parties trying to get together with the coalition. I know you want to continue to focus on working with the new Parliament to ensure Pakistan's cooperation with us in fighting terrorist groups. You may have addressed some of it already. Do you believe that there are allies that we have, within the new government that is forming, who will continue to work with us?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Well, we certainly look forward to working with whatever government emerges. I can't tell you the precise coloration, if you will, or the specific individuals, because we don't know the answer to that question yet. But, I think, given the rejection of the Islamist parties, I think the general tendency in the country toward moderation and secular government—I would hope and expect that we would be able to work as well, if not better, with the forthcoming government than we have in the past. Certainly hopeful.

Senator BARRASSO. Yes. And then looking at the history of Pakistan, and the role of the military involvement over the years. We have a new military leader in November 2007, who was appointed the general by Musharraf. Do you see the military playing an additional part in Pakistan's future as we've seen in the past? And how do we go about with that?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Right. And I think the point here is that the military is a very important institution in Pakistan, particularly with regard to maintaining security in that country. I think it was a significant development that President Musharraf stepped down from the military, took off his uniform. And my sense is that the current leadership of the Pakistani military is very focused on their military tasks and on increasing their professionalization. And we want to be supportive of that. There's work to be done together in helping them increase their professionalization, their training, and their counterinsurgency capabilities.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much, Mr. Ambassador.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Senator Barrasso follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN BARRASSO, U.S. SENATOR FROM WYOMING

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Biden, Senator Lugar, members of the committee, I am honored to be here today. Through this committee's distinguished history, members have played an important role in shaping relations with world leaders and promoting our foreign policy objectives. We live in an ever-changing world and this committee has a re-

sponsibility to be diligent in supporting and directing the United States role as a world leader.

Building sound relationships with our allies and others in the international community effectively aids the United States as we seek to resolve conflicts and address humanitarian crises. As issues arise, it is important that this committee provide appropriate oversight and leadership to ensure that American values of liberty and justice are evident in our policy decisions.

While Americans are generous in aiding those suffering from disease, political unrest, war, and natural disasters, it is important that the committee support policies that ensure taxpayer dollars are used wisely. As conflicts of all kinds continue to wreak havoc in the lives of so many people around the world, the United States will work with our allies to address regional and global conflicts, particularly those that have a direct impact on our Nation's interests.

I am pleased to hear the Honorable John Negroponte's testimony regarding the current situation in Pakistan. Pakistan has proven to be an ally in the war on terrorism and plays an important role in the stability of South Asia. The elections held this month in Pakistan produced a new government and Pakistan's leaders are negotiating the direction their country should take.

It is vital that the U.S. build upon our relationship with Pakistan and support the Pakistanis' efforts to have a voice in their own government. Determining our Nation's level of involvement in any country is difficult, but also a vital aspect of our Nation's interest in maintaining our security and promoting freedom. Due diligence must be given in all aspects of our continuing relationship with Pakistan.

I look forward to discussing this issue further.

Again, I am honored to serve on this committee and I value this opportunity to serve Wyoming in this capacity.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator, do you have any further questions?

Senator LUGAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, if I——

The CHAIRMAN. Sure. Yes, please.

Senator LUGAR. Mr. Secretary, as you say, we've got to see how the government will form. There are press reports today of a demand by the leader—the two major leaders of parties, that there be a meeting of the assembly right away. One news account says that the election results are not official in all of the constituencies, thus far, although a vast majority apparently have been decided, and it would appear that, clearly, the two major—well, three parties have approximately a two-thirds majority, or maybe more. And the reason that this is being stressed is that they're saying, under the Constitution, this would give this assembly the power to change the judiciary; for that matter, to impeach President Musharraf. Now, whether that's the will of the group when they meet is another question.

But, we've been, you know, advising you, and you've been advising us, that we are already doing a good number of things, in terms of taxpayer dollars, with regard to the military, or economic support, and we have encouraged, perhaps, further briefing by you about accountability of funds, as well as other issues that we've raised, so that we're all on the same page, in terms of a very timely response.

But, I'd just ask you, What do you foresee as the timing of events in Pakistan, or do you have any prediction of this? In other words, how soon is it likely that this assembly will come together, that there will be fundamental decisions made about the leadership and the institutions of the country? And are these likely to be so disruptive that whatever new policies or augmentation of what we're now doing could be, sort of, lost in the process of Pakistani politics for a period of time?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Right. I believe, Senator, the first step is that the election results need to be certified. And it's conceivable—I'm not sure whether that has to be done before the legislature, or not. Perhaps it does. So, maybe that's what that is about.

But, my understanding, from talking to Ambassador Patterson this morning, was that she expected that—although she wasn't certain—that a government would likely be formed within the next 2 weeks.

Senator LUGAR. Two weeks.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Perhaps sooner. Obviously, we would hope that, however this process unfolds, that it happen in a way that reflects that same moderation that permitted a relatively peaceful conduct of these elections, and permits Pakistan to go forward in a way that cannot be exploited by the enemies of democracy, including the terrorists.

Senator LUGAR. That leads to my comment, and that is, To what extent, while this process of 2 weeks, maybe more, is going on—as Ambassador Patterson has noted, and we are hopeful the same spirit of moderation might prevail. But, is that spirit more likely to prevail if there are at least some announcements coming from the United States about the emphasis of what we wish to do? In other words, our public recognition of the possibilities of moving to assist the economy.

Now, you've pointed out we have some multiyear responsibilities and commitments, but these are, I think, not well known to the American public, quite apart from the Pakistani public. Maybe even the testimony you have today, it would reiterate that we have these commitments already, and that you are working with the Congress to think through what more we can do. It might be reassuring, might help the stability or encourage moderation that you're discussing, as opposed to our taking a standoffish view, seeing how it all works out, but then being dismayed that, unfortunately, there were currents in Pakistani politics, that are not involved in the election, that are disturbingly surprised.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Well, first, I think—I would hope this hearing could be construed in the way that you suggest, as a——

Senator LUGAR. Yes.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE [continuing]. A relatively—as a positive statement about our interest, and a constructive statement about our interest in Pakistan.

The other specific point I would mention is that I gather that introduction of this Reconstruction Opportunity Zone legislation may be fairly imminent, and I think that would certainly be well received in Pakistan, and demonstrate the fact that we're interested in being supportive of both Afghanistan and Pakistan's economic development.

Senator LUGAR. Well, I think you're very correct. And, without being self-serving about this, I would say that the bill that Senator Biden and I have introduced and has come from this committee has had a hold on the Senate floor for a while. That's the reason why a large majority of Senators who would like to express exactly what you are saying today have not had that opportunity. So, I'm hopeful that we can work with the House legislation, with the leadership of the Senate. I count upon my chairman to be persuasive

with regard to that, because clearly this is timely, I believe, to reinforce all that we're saying today, in the event we appropriate the money, the means of spending it, and doing so properly, using both Defense Department people and State Department people, and others, for that matter, in a team effort, is really important.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. And that—if you're referring to your civilian stabilization initiative, I think that's a groundbreaking idea. I really do, Mr. Chairman.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

If I could follow up, just very briefly. And this falls in the category of above my paygrade. But—and mildly presumptuous to suggest to you, Mr. Ambassador, because I know you know how, sort of, voracious the foreign press is in some of these countries.

One observation, which I'm sure is not instructive, but it—just a reminder—it astounded me, and, I think, my two colleagues, how uniform the press in Pakistan was when we held a departing press conference where there were—hundreds?—I mean, as large a press conference as I've ever attended, other than the Bork hearing—and there was almost an anger—there was an anger expressed, in the tone of the questions coming from the press, on the failure of the three of us to immediately call for the immediate resignation of Musharraf. And almost every question asked—and, unfortunately—well, not "unfortunately"—we literally had to catch a plane, so we couldn't stay—was in the context of the promoted notion by the press that the administration was standing foursquare, notwithstanding the elections, behind Musharraf exercising a similar kind of power he's exercised in the past. I know that's not true. I know that's not the administration's position. But, in a sense—the point that Senator Lugar made—I strongly urge you to consider, to the extent that you can affect the White House's perception, as well, that—I truly believe, if you were—if the administration were to put forward a statement, essentially acknowledging Musharraf's comments that he made in the editorial in the—I guess, the Washington Post, or the New York Times, I can't remember what editorial he wrote—and the expectation that you believe he will, in fact, recede to the position of President and not Prime Minister, which is where the power is. If you were to state that you were working with the Congress to increase economic assistance, if you were to state that you were prepared and anxious to work with the new coalition government—people don't know that in the press in Pakistan. It's surprising.

Now, I know we have a very fine Ambassador. I am truly impressed with her. All of us are. I think she's one of the finest we have. Obviously, she'd know better than either Senator—myself or any of us here, whether the characterization I have just made about what I think average Pakistanis reading the Pakistani press believe about our position, including our position on the court. And I really think it's an opportunity to begin to change perceptions on the ground.

But, that's my perception. I would urge you—I know you would—I would urge you to speak with our Ambassador to see whether or not what I've said is accurate. And you would know as well as anyone.

Second point I'd like to make, in closing—the reason we were waiting, I thought Senator Menendez, who's in another committee, was going to come back; he's not able to, but I'm sure he may have a few questions to submit for the record.

Two closing observations. You referenced that we're doing more in Afghanistan. And we are doing more in Afghanistan. One of the most interesting things I've found, I say to my friend Dick Lugar, is that everyone we spoke to in Afghanistan, on the American side, from young soldiers we referenced, to our Ambassador, to the military, all started with an interesting opening comment, some version of what I'm about to say. We acknowledge we haven't done much from 2001 to 2006; we dropped the ball. Some version of that. But, from mid 2006 to now, we have begun to get this together. I found that refreshing, and I found that—not in an "I told you so" way, but I found it refreshing that there was a recognition that a lot more had to be done.

But, I just put this one little statistic in your head—which I think is, at least from my perspective, a way of looking at the effort. From 2001 to today, we have spent the same amount of money and resources for reconstruction in Afghanistan that we spent in 3 weeks—3 weeks—on just military operations in Iraq. This is not to suggest—which I think we should, but I'm not making the case we should do less in Iraq, but I am just making the case that if the consensus you, kind of, heard from members here, on both sides of the aisle, that we think the fault line in the war on terror is on that border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, we think a great deal more has to be done in Afghanistan, both militarily and economically. And, again, I'm not suggesting you agree or disagree, I just want to make that observation.

No matter how much more we've done, when you think of it in terms of 3 weeks is—as much is spent on military operations in Iraq as we've spent in 6 years on reconstruction in Afghanistan, it's kind of—it's a bit of a—it's a bit of a—it's not—it exaggerates, in some ways, but it really illustrates how much has to be done.

But, I apologize, I see my friend Senator Nelson is here. I recognize the Senator. The Senator said he likes us very much, Senator, but this seniority system of asking questions, he's not as crazy about. I felt that exact way 'til I became chairman. [Laughter.]

Senator BILL NELSON. I understand.

Well, I have been—let me just be very complimentary of you. I came here so that I could hear you and hear the Secretary. And I came early, and not only did I listen to you, I asked for a copy of your remarks, which I have read. And——

The CHAIRMAN. I'm about to reconsider this seniority thing. [Laughter.]

Senator BILL NELSON. Well, I would just be curious if the Secretary would reflect specifically upon your remarks, Mr. Chairman. And I'm going to reread your remarks from your opening statement. And Senator Biden said, "I believe we should, first, triple nonmilitary assistance, and sustain it for a decade, from about $500 million to about $1½ billion. This aid should be focused on schools, roads, and clinics, and on expanding the development of the tribal border areas. Second, give the new government, if it's formed consistent with the democratic principles, a democracy divi-

dend of $1 billion above this annual assistance to jump-start progress. And, third, demand transparency and accountability in the military aid that we continue to provide."

Now, I think we can stipulate that we all agree to No. 3. I'd like to know your comments, Mr. Secretary, to the chairman's recommendations on one and two—triple nonmilitary assistance, especially to get it to schools, roads, and clinics; and, second, to give the new government a democracy dividend of a billion dollars above this annual assistance to jump-start progress.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Right. Senator, as I said—it may have been when you weren't in the room—I said that this was a proposal we were looking at. At the same time, of course, we have our own budget proposal, at the moment, before the Congress, so I'm not in a position to say that, yes, we should modify that. But, what I did point out was, two things. First of all, that our 5-year, $3 billion assistance program to Pakistan from fiscal 2005 through fiscal 2009 will be expiring in 2009, so I think we have to start thinking about what we're going to be doing in the future years. And this election may, indeed, be a point of departure. And the chairman's suggestion may also be a point of departure for taking a hard look at that.

And the other was to say that I think that the chairman's suggestion reminds us—and I think it highlights—the tremendous importance of this country—Pakistan, that is—to this global war on terror, and to the intrinsic importance of Pakistan itself. But, I wasn't in a position to explicitly agree or disagree with the idea of tripling nonmilitary assistance or paying a democracy dividend.

Senator BILL NELSON. Well, I'll never forget—and I'll just stop with this, Mr. Chairman—early on in this decade, I was visiting Pakistan, and I so well remember our Ambassador, a career Foreign Service officer, expressing to me, in that visit, her frustration that our aid was not getting out to build those schools and to get those curriculum materials into the schools, that it was getting siphoned off into other things. And so, when you say "schools, roads, and clinics," I certainly agree.

And it's not only Pakistan. You know, it'll be most of the Third World that the assistance that we need to do is to get it there. And this is not the first time that somebody has raised this issue; it's a continuing problem.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, if I can say to the Senator, before I yield to—you still have time, but before I yield to Senator Menendez—I do recall you coming back and making that assertion before the committee.

What I would say to the Ambassador, Senator Lugar and I, before he left, we've agreed, with our staffs, to work on a joint bill that we would introduce along those lines.

And I'd invite the Senator to join us and give his input on what that should look like. But, hopefully, we can, in light of the changed circumstances—the budget was offered prior to the election, and this may be a possibility. We can work out a 2009 budget, here, and maybe, immediate, in the supplement, some additional help. But, I very much look to the Senator for his leadership on that, because I do recall you coming back, making the statement. I remember you saying to me that the Saudis had built 7,000

madrassas in that region, and why weren't we building schools in that region? So, I look forward to his participation.

Senator Menendez, thanks for coming back.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for holding this hearing. It's——

The CHAIRMAN. Thanks.

Senator MENENDEZ [continuing]. Incredibly important. And I want to echo some of your remarks that our policy should be to Pakistan, as an entity, not to a person. And I think it's been one of our mistakes.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for being before the committee. And, unfortunately, I had another hearing at the same time, with Chairman Bernanke; and the economy is important, but so is our policy toward Pakistan, so I'm glad to be able to make it back.

You know, in December we had a hearing, under the auspices of the full committee's—with the chairman's authority to have us have a hearing of the subcommittee on our aid issues. And, you know, when I look at the amount of money that we have spent in Pakistan to date, and now, looking at the results of the election, and looking at where we go from here, I am concerned, as the administration presents its latest requests to the Congress, whether we are headed in the right direction. I sent a letter to Secretary Rice on the 21st in which, you know, I outlined some of my concerns. Certainly, when I look at anti-Americanism, when I look at what has happened, in terms of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border and the FATA region, I really wonder—and so, now I'd like to get a sense of you, do we know how much money has actually been spent in the FATA region—of U.S. taxpayer dollars——

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Well, in this——

Senator MENENDEZ [continuing]. Toward our——

Ambassador NEGROPONTE [continuing]. Fiscal year, the plan is for $150 million.

Senator MENENDEZ. Yes. No, that's——

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. You're asking——

Senator MENENDEZ [continuing]. This fiscal year. I'm asking what we've done——

Ambassador NEGROPONTE [continuing]. What's actually been disbursed?

Senator MENENDEZ. Yes.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. I would have to submit that for the record.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, if you would.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. I certainly know that we've begun, you know, programs there. They're underway.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I'd like to know what we've actually——

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Sure.

Senator MENENDEZ [continuing]. Spent. And how much do you think will be spent on development programs in that region?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. In Pakistan?

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, particularly in the FATA region.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. You mean, beyond the $150 million?

Senator MENENDEZ. Do you have a sense of what we have spent, to date? It's the same—you—you'd have to get that for the record, as well?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. I think so, yes.

[The written response from the State Department to the above questions follows:]

The Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement has spent $160 million since 2002 in the border areas. This money funds our Border Security Program, which includes road and other infrastructure construction, provision of an air wing, training of law enforcement agencies, and commodity support, as well as our Counternarcotics Program, which includes crop control and demand reduction efforts.

The United States Agency for International Development has spent $12.4 million in the tribal areas since 2002 (when USAID returned to Pakistan). We started slowly because the Government of Pakistan was still working on a comprehensive plan for development of the tribal areas, which it completed in late 2006. The initial money was spent on vaccinating children in the region for tuberculosis and polio and prividing health services to children. USAID also rebuilt 38 schools and provided water and sanitation facilities in several girls' schools. Significantly, USAID used a private sector construction company from the North West Frontier Province to work on the schools, to demonstrate that private sector companies from the settled areas of Pakistan can operate inside the tribal areas, with appropriate safeguards, and earn a profit. Finally, we also have supported Kushhali Bank, a microfinance institution, to open branches in all seven tribal area agencies.

Senator MENENDEZ. OK. Let me just ask you, What are our expectations—as we look at the new leadership in Pakistan that has been elected and, what is our expectation of their engagement? They've been critical of President Musharraf's policies in supporting the United States in its effort, particularly in the tribal regions—what do we expect from this new leadership in Pakistan as it relates to this region? I focus on this region—of course, there's a lot of different issues in Pakistan that are important, but, you know, we get our intelligence reports as the—publicly—aspects of it—and they clearly say that one of the greatest single challenges to national security in the United States is al-Qaeda's reconstituted strength in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, where it is also suspected that Osama bin Laden presently finds safe haven. We look at the money that we have spent to date. We now look at a new leadership elected by the people of Pakistan, who seem to have a different view. So, the question is, What do we expect of this new Pakistani leadership, as it relates to being engaged with us in dealing with the terrorism that emanates out of this safe haven?

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. First of all, a point I made earlier and several times during the hearing, we plan to work with whatever government emerges from this electoral process and from the national assembly. So, that would be my first point.

Second, whatever one might say about Pakistan's efforts against militant extremism, I think it is important to point out that they—they, themselves, have suffered a very high number of casualties, both military and civilian, in this struggle. And I think what we would hope to do with this government is work in partnership with them, and be helpful where we can, in their efforts to curb and bring under control militancy, which we know that they, themselves, reject. And I think one—that's one of the clear results of these elections, is that the Pakistani people, themselves, do not want this kind of militant extremism in their midst.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I appreciate your answer, but here's my concern. Congress has a fiduciary responsibility to the Amer-

ican people, both in terms of the expenditure of its tax dollars, as well as in the preservation of its security. And the bottom line is, $10 billion later, since 9/11, we have not prevented al-Qaeda from operating in a safe zone along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border; you know, we have rising anti-Americanism; we have not, in my mind, pursued a policy that deals with the moderate center in Pakistan; and this FATA region is a huge challenge, notwithstanding—$10 billion later. So, I have—and then we have a terrible accounting process, where we can't seem to get a handle about what, in fact, we have spent, and how it has been spent, and, particularly, where, in fact, it has been spent, as it relates to the FATA region. So, before one can ask for more, one has to justify both the past, as well as make the case——

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Right.

Senator MENENDEZ [continuing]. For the future. And that's the essence of my question.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. No; I understand, Senator. The answer has several parts, but one part would certainly be, we don't know how much worse things would be if we hadn't gone through the efforts that we have gone through. For example, would we have been able to influence the Pakistani Government to send 100,000 troops into the FATA area? They've got two divisions there, as was being mentioned earlier. So, that's one of the results—or one of the acts for which we are providing these coalition support funds, the $5.6 billion that we've provided since 2001. They've done a lot of work against militant extremism. And in their own country they're revising their curriculum of these madrassas, for example, and of their school system, they're trying to secularize it. On the anti-Americanism issue, we've got 500 students—I think it's the largest Fulbright Program of any of our academic exchange programs here in the United States, with Pakistani students coming over here. So, this is work in progress.

But, I would submit to you that the situation is—has improved in a number of important respects, and I certainly would hate to speculate as to how much worse it might be, had we not been engaged at all. But, I think it would have definitely been worse.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't want to belabor your—the time—and I appreciate it.

But, you know, my—Mr. Secretary, you know, we can look at anything—any problem in our country, domestically or abroad, and say, "Imagine if it would have been worse if we hadn't done this." The question is, spending billions to accomplish whatever your estimate of what has been accomplished is, compared to what has been accomplished, is the balance. And I would venture to say that many of us would say that we've far outspent what the accomplishments were. And if we think—whether it be in Iraq, or whether it be in Pakistan—that spending billions of the taxpayers' dollars for a relative small return is the rate in which we make estimations, then we are in deep trouble. I think that there's a—there is a lot larger expectation. And I'm not just going over the past, I'm now looking prospectively. And it just seems to me, at least speaking for this one member, that there has to be a far more robust accounting, as well as a convincing, and a—hopefully, a changing of the dynamics as to how we are spending our money for the purposes

that we seek to achieve. We certainly want a stable, democratic Pakistan. But, at the same time, I find it increasingly difficult to go back to my home State of New Jersey or to chair the subcommittee on our foreign assistance, and say that, $10 billion later, we would consider the amount of money that we spend, for what we achieved, a success. I personally would not consider it a success.

So, I think we need to do a lot better, as you look at this next budget. And I would really urge a—some better metrics than what we have today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

You've been very patient and responsive, Mr. Ambassador. Thank you very much.

I was just having—and I'll conclude by saying—a brief conversation with the chief of staff, here—and I will follow up with Senator Lugar—but our hope is that we may be able to get together a consensus piece of—with the help of the chairman of the subcommittee—consensus piece of legislation relative to economic assistance, both in the supplemental, possibly, but also for FY09 budget, based on what I've heard here today, through the leadership of the subcommittee chair—I think there's a consensus here, and maybe be able to get, in that process, before we produce that for a markup here, have an opportunity to sit with you, or whomever you designate, Mr. Ambassador, to talk about the outlines of such a proposal.

Again, I don't say that, at this point, about—arguing about whether or not what was proposed is appropriate or not appropriate. Things have changed. Things have changed in the last 2 weeks. And I hope we can agree on taking advantage of that change.

Again, I thank you, Mr. Ambassador. Do you have any closing comments you wish to make, or—the floor is yours, if you do.

Ambassador NEGROPONTE. Just two points, Mr. Chairman, part of it answering the points that Mr. Menendez made, which—I understand his points. The only thing to say in reply is that it is a vital area, particularly the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. I believe Pakistan is the third-largest recipient of assistance from the United States, and, I think, deservedly so.

And then, the other point I'd like to associate myself with is the point that both the chairman and, I think, by implication, Senator Nelson made, when he was asking the question—I do think that whatever we do with Pakistan, and for Pakistan, ought to be over the longer term. I think that our relationship with Pakistan in past years, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s suffered from peaks and valleys and ups and downs. And I think that whatever we can do to put it on as a sustainable a basis as possible would be to the good for this vital country in a vital region of the world.

The CHAIRMAN. I'm glad to hear you say that. And I would note, for the record—I know you—we all know this—but, that transactional relationship occurred with Democratic Presidents, as well as Republican Presidents, so it's not like—I just hope we do not make the mistake we, in hindsight, made with regard to Afghanistan, as it affects Pakistan, that, after the Russians were defeated,

we essentially walked away. It would be a real disaster to do that. I think everybody is aware of that.

And so, this is one of the areas, with your leadership, Mr. Ambassador, we really look forward to working with you. I think we can do something very positive here, and try to do it quickly.

I thank you. And I thank my colleagues.

The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:55 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. BARACK OBAMA, U.S. SENATOR FROM ILLINOIS

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing on "U.S. Policy Options in Post-Election Pakistan." I also appreciate Deputy Secretary Negroponte's willingness to discuss his assessments related to this important topic.

On February 18, a strong majority of the Pakistani people called for a new direction for their country. The two main opposition parties that made substantial gains in the parliamentary elections are moderate and have expressed a willingness to work with the United States. The stark choice that has been presented to us by the Bush administration—between President Musharraf on the one hand, and violent Islamists on the other—was shown to be false.

This development presents an important opportunity for the United States to change its policy toward Pakistan. For years, U.S. policy has valued stability in Pakistan over the advancement of democracy—as a result, we have gotten neither. Our unconditional embrace of President Musharraf has stifled democratic reforms, stoked anti-American sentiment, and contributed to a level of instability that has hampered Pakistan's efforts to combat terrorism and extremism. Meanwhile, the Pakistani Government has failed to root out the al-Qaeda and Taliban sanctuary in its northwest tribal region.

To advance American interests and American values, we need a policy toward Pakistan that promotes the interests of the Pakistani people, not just the interests of Pakistan's President. All citizens of the world have a fundamental right to live in freedom, and to express themselves through robust democratic institutions. To the extent that violence, censorship, and intimidation threaten to destabilize Pakistan and jeopardize its progress toward democracy, American national interests within Pakistan are more likely to suffer.

Pakistan remains a critically important ally in the fight against al-Qaeda, and for this reason, I have been proud to support significant investments in its stability and economic development over the last several years. However, a more effective relationship with Pakistan can be established if we set sensible conditions on our foreign aid to Pakistan to ensure that it is advancing democracy and combating al-Qaeda with an effective approach.

I believe we should continue funding for Pakistan in the areas of counter-terrorism, public education, health, microenterprise development, humanitarian assistance, and democracy and rule of law programs. However, I believe we should temporarily suspend all other funding for Pakistan until we are sure that U.S. funds are not being used to repress democracy in Pakistan, and we should make military aid conditional on the Pakistani Government making substantial progress in closing down terrorist training camps, evicting foreign fighters, and preventing the Taliban from using Pakistan as a staging area for attacks in Afghanistan.

If the Pakistani Government increases investments in secular education to counter radical madrasas, we should also increase America's financial commitment in this area. If the Pakistani Government does take action to combat al-Qaeda in its northwest tribal region, we must help Pakistan invest in the provinces along the Afghan border, so that the extremists' program of hate is met with one of hope.

A Pakistan that is firmly rooted in seeking democracy and demonstrable progress in combating terrorism will be better for the people of Pakistan, and for American national security. And in the long term, a democratic ally will be a stronger ally in the fight against al-Qaeda and its affiliates.

I will continue to press for a U.S. policy that demonstrates a commitment to the people of Pakistan, and a more effective approach to foreign assistance to promote democracy and roll back the forces of extremism.

RESPONSES OF DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN NEGROPONTE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY SENATOR RUSSELL FEINGOLD

Question. During last week's hearing you noted that the final distribution decisions on coalition support funding is made by the Department of Defense, not by the United States Embassy in Pakistan, even though the Embassy does have a role to play. Senator Biden noted that the State Department has to sign off first, which you agreed with. In the interest of clarifying "chief of mission" authorities in circumstances such as our reimbursement to the Pakistani Government of such large sums of U.S. taxpayer dollars like the Coalition Support Funds, can you clarify what the specific process is and how decisions are made regarding what is and what is not reimbursed and who has final clearance of any reimbursement?

Answer. The Government of Pakistan submits Coalition Support Fund claims through the Office of the Defense Representative at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad where they are reviewed for completeness and accuracy, and valid claims are then endorsed. Claims are then reviewed by U.S. Central Command which validates that Pakistan provided support to war on terror objectives and U.S. operations and that costs would not have been incurred by Pakistan otherwise. Next, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) evaluates the claims to ensure costs are reasonable compared with U.S. costs for the same services and operations to show cost savings and are credible based on the documentation provided. The claims are then coordinated with the Department of State, which must concur on the reimbursement and confirm that it is in line with U.S. foreign policy objectives, is consistent with U.S. Government National Security Strategy, and does not unfavorably affect the balance of power in the region. Concurrently, the Office of Management and Budget must give concurrence. After receiving Department of State concurrence, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) prepares a determination for the Deputy Secretary of Defense to sign a notification to Congress. Once the 15-day congressional notification period expires, the Comptroller releases funds to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency for payment to Pakistan.

Decisions regarding what is and what is not reimbursed are made throughout the auditing process, which takes place at the three entities noted above—the Office of the Defense Representative at the Embassy, U.S. Central Command, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Comptroller).

Final clearance on the reimbursement is provided by the Deputy Secretary of Defense and is dependent upon concurrence from the Department of State. In addition Pakistan can only receive Coalition Support Funds reimbursement after a 15-day congressional notification period. Thus, congressional approval is also a necessary part of the process.

We note that the Defense Department has provided detailed information on Coalition Support Funds claims processed for Pakistan since 2001 to Congress.

Our understanding is that the information has been made available to members of this committee.

Question. Can you expand on how the State Department here in Washington engages with the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan regarding both major and minor policy decisions? How regularly are there back and forth conversations, and how much input does the Embassy have into any policy changes that might occur? How frequently does the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan speak with the U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan and what mechanisms exist to ensure they can communicate regularly?

Answer. The Department and U.S. Embassy in Islamabad and its consulates in Lahore, Peshawar, and Karachi work closely as a single team to develop and implement policies. The impressive array of formal reporting that the Department receives daily from these posts and the numerous e-mails exchanged guides the policy-making process on major and minor issues. The Department's Bureau for South Asia and Central Affairs Front Office, Office of Pakistan and Bangladesh Affairs, and Office of Afghanistan Affairs consult daily with posts via phone and e-mail to receive the latest updates on political events in Pakistan and discuss policy developments in Washington. A large number of Department offices are also involved when issues relate to their responsibilities and expertise. The Bureau for South Asia and Central Affairs and Embassy Islamabad began holding a bi-weekly video conference to discuss overall strategy and policy priorities, among other specific issues. Department policy moves forward only with Embassy guidance and input—initiatives, both major and minor, are determined with the guidance and input of the Ambassador and her staff who communicate closely with the Government of Pakistan and other elements of Pakistani society.

Embassies Islamabad and Kabul work closely together. In addition to regular consultation between our two Ambassadors in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Embassy per-

sonnel monitor cable traffic from both posts closely and report back and forth as needed. Numerous e-mails are exchanged daily. Border Coordinator positions in Islamabad, Kabul, and Washington serve to increase our ability to focus on the transborder region and advance our goal of drawing the Afghan and Pakistani Governments into cooperative projects to address that region's problems.

Question. In last week's hearing you stated that the State Department is in a "wait and see mode" as far as working with whatever government officially emerges from the recent elections. To that end, could you be more specific with regards to what kinds of scenarios the State Department is developing to react to any changes a new government might make to existing institutions, including the Pakistani military. If President Musharraf does step down—or is forced to react—how will State react?

Answer. The two largest parties in Pakistan's February 18 parliamentary elections, the Pakistan People's Party and the Pakistan Muslim League–Nawaz, formed a coalition government in March 2008. We are engaging with the new government to pursue our critical national interests and to strengthen and build a broad-based, long-term relationship between our two countries. Most recently, President Bush met with Prime Minister Gilani in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on May 18, and several senior U.S. officials have met government leaders since March.

We encourage all political parties to work together to continue Pakistan's development as a progressive, moderate, and stable country at a key geopolitical crossroads. Pakistan faces tough economic, governance, and security challenges that affect the Pakistani people on a daily basis. We speak regularly with Pakistan's leaders about developing solutions to those real and pressing problems.

Moving forward, one of our major objectives is to help Pakistan develop its civilian institutions, in order to build a more stable relationship between its civilian and military establishments. The military has made several visible efforts to demonstrate its commitment in this regard. For example, in April, Army chief General Kayani formally briefed Prime Minister Gilani and the Cabinet on security developments in the FATA, demonstrating the military's acknowledgment of the civilian government's leadership role. Another positive step we have seen in this direction is that the Pakistani military recently recalled all military personnel working in civilian government positions to return to military jobs.

Pakistan's democratic development is an on-going process that we support but do not seek to drive. It is up to the Pakistani people and their elected leaders to choose a path toward democracy that achieves peace and stability and advances freedom and prosperity. We will continue to work closely with Pakistans to pursue our national interests and to strengthen our countries' long-term partnership.

Question. I have long supported international volunteering—both for the personal benefits accrued to the individual volunteers and the broader benefits, such as a more positive and accurate image of Americans and of America. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has established an office of Coordinator for Volunteer Service, strengthening the agency's management of volunteer programs sponsored or supported by USAID. One example of these programs is the Farmer-to-Farmer program, authorized by Congress and managed by USAID, which enables U.S. agricultural experts to assist developing country farmers through sharing modern practices and technologies. Can you discuss the nature, extent, and benefits of these types of programs in Pakistan? What recommendations does USAID have to increase Americans' engagement in areas of development need in Pakistan?

Answer. The U.S. Agency for International Development established the Office of Coordinator for Volunteer Service to better align three agency-managed volunteer programs: The Farmer-to-Farmer program; the Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance; and Volunteers for Prosperity.

Like the Farmer-to-Farmer program, Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance is housed within USAID's Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade. Established by USAID in 2004, Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance utilizes skilled volunteers with experience in a variety of sectors through a consortium of 15 U.S.-based nongovernmental organizations to support the agency's field activities in economic growth. Through December 2007, Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance deployed 149 American volunteers on 194 assignments.

Volunteers for Prosperity is an interagency initiative that was established in September 2003 by President Bush through executive order to promote greater international volunteer service by skilled American professionals. Led by the Volunteers for Prosperity Office of USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance, Volunteers for Prosperity has (as of September 30, 2007) helped to mobilize 74,000 American professionals—doctors, nurses, engineers, teachers, business

people, and others—in support of the nation's global health and prosperity agenda through a network of over 250 U.S. companies and nonprofit organizations.

Currently, the Farmer-to-Farmer program has no involvement in Pakistan. None of the agreements awarded in 2003 to eight implementing U.S. nongovernment organizations proposed work in Pakistan. From 2004 to 2008, the Farmer-to-Farmer program will operate in 40 countries, providing over 3,000 volunteer technical assistance assignments averaging 3½ weeks duration.

USAID believes that any measures for increasing Americans' engagement in areas of development need in Pakistan should include consideration of the current situation regarding the security and safety of Americans. The State Department has an advisory in effect for Americans traveling in Pakistan because they have been targeted for violence in various locations throughout the country.

USAID believes that one option for increasing Americans' engagement in Pakistan's development could involve strengthening Volunteers for Prosperity. There is ample justification for a stronger Volunteers for Prosperity program. Already the most active of the three in Pakistan—and operating on a considerably smaller budget than either of its peers—Volunteers for Prosperity may be particularly well-suited for increasing Americans' engagement in the development of Pakistan because of its focus and experience managing obstacles facing Americans seeking to volunteer abroad.

Volunteers for Prosperity is helping to engage more Americans in development throughout the world by addressing significant obstacles to their volunteer service.

Given its focus and utility in addressing obstacles to volunteer service abroad, providing Volunteers for Prosperity with greater authority and scope as well as additional resources could prove a worthwhile option for increasing Americans' engagement in Pakistan's development as well as the development of other countries.

ARTICLES SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BARBARA BOXER

[From The Guardian, Feb. 28, 2008]

PAKISTANI MILITARY "MISSPENT UP TO 70% OF AMERICAN AID"

U.S. EMBASSY STAFF BELIEVE EXPENSES CLAIMS—INFLATED ARMED FORCES DENY SERIOUS IRREGULARITIES

(By Declan Walsh in Islamabad)

America's massive military aid package to Pakistan is being scrutinised after allegations that as much as 70% of $5.4bn in assistance to the country has been misspent.

Since 2002 the U.S. has paid the operating costs of Pakistan's military operations in the tribal belt along the Afghan border, where Taliban and al-Qaida fighters are known to shelter.

Pakistan provides more than 100,000 troops and directs the battles; the U.S. foots the bill for food, fuel, ammunition and maintenance. The cash payments—averaging $80m (€40m) a month—have been a cornerstone of U.S. support for Pakistan's president, Pervez Musharraf.

But over the past 18 months, as militants have seized vast areas of the tribal belt and repelled a string of Pakistani offensives, the funding has come under the microscope.

American officials processing the payments at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad have concluded that the Pakistani expense claims have been vastly inflated, two western military officials have told the Guardian. "My back of envelope guesstimate is that 30% of the money they requested to be reimbursed was legitimate costs they had expended," said one, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The official said that the U.S. did not know what had happened to the remaining 70% of the funds—amounting to approximately $3.8bn—but suspected that some of the money might have been spent on F–16 fighter jets or "a new house for an army general."

Other than those possibilities, he said, at least half the money was thought to have disappeared. "Who knows, the roads on Constitution Avenue [in Islamabad] may have been paved with part of this money," he added.

The Pakistani military denied the claims. "As far as the military is concerned, I can assure you we have full account of these things," said its spokesman, Major General Athar Abbas. He admitted that there had been some American complaints but denied serious irregularities. "Yes there are minor issues they keep raising, but at no stage have we received any formal complaint from any official channel."

The controversy highlights not only strains in the relationship between Washington and Islamabad but also the limits of George Bush's "war on terror." Pakistani officials say they have lost more than 1,000 soldiers in the tribal areas since 2002—twice as many as the U.S. has lost in Afghanistan—and caught or killed more than 1,000 "terrorists."

U.S. officials, who have propped up Musharraf as militants have rampaged across the tribal belt and beyond, feel they have received bad value for money.

Pakistani civilians are angry with both sides. Anti-American sentiment has hit a new high, while anger towards Musharraf contributed to the thrashing his party received in last week's election.

The scale of U.S. military assistance was shrouded in secrecy for years. When it became public, so did its extraordinarily lax accounting procedures.

Every month the Pakistani military submits expense claims averaging $80m to the U.S. embassy in Islamabad. No receipts are provided to support the claims, and the money is paid directly into the finance ministry.

Poorly accounted-for claims for payment caused the U.S. to suspend payouts several months last spring, a second western official said. The Washington Post reported last week that a claim for "roads and tracks" from the Pakistani navy had been rejected. Abbas claimed that the navy was "also involved in the war on terror" in having to "guard against infiltration of arms and explosive from abroad."

The scale of the problem has led U.S. officials to share their worries with other allies in Pakistan. American politicians have used the payments to exert pressure on Musharraf. On the eve of last week's vote, Democrat Senator, Joe Biden, head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, warned that funding could be slashed if there was widespread rigging. But analysts and officials say the U.S. is unlikely to turn off the cash tap any time soon given Pakistan's importance in the hunt for Osama bin Laden and other foreign fugitives.

Table 1. Overt U.S. Aid and Military Reimbursements to Pakistan, FY2002-FY2009
(rounded to the nearest millions of dollars)

Program or Account	FY2002	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008 (est.)	FY2002-FY2008 Total	FY2009 (req.)
1206	—	—	—	—	23	14	57	94	[h]
CN	—	—	—	8	29	39	55	131	[h]
CSF[a]	1,169[e]	1,247	705	964	862	731	993[g]	6,672	200[i]
FC	—	—	—	—	—	—	75	75	25[h]
FMF	75	225	75	299	297	297	298	1,566	300
IMET	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	11	2
INCLE	91	31	32	32	38	21	22	267	32
NADR[b]	10	1	5	8	9	10	10	53	11
Total Security-Related	**1,346**	**1,505**	**818**	**1,313**	**1,260**	**1,115**	**1,512**	**8,869**	**570**
CSH	14	16	26	21	28	22	30	157	28
DA	10	35	49	29	38	95	30	286	—
ESF[c]	615	188	200	298	337	389	347	2,374	603[j]
Food Aid[d]	5	28	13	32	55	—	42	175	37
HRDF	1	—	2	2	1	11	—	17	—
MRA	9	7	6	6	10	4	—	42	—
Total Economic-Related	**654**	**274**	**296**	**388**	**539[f]**	**521**	**449**	**3,121[f]**	**668**
Grand Total	**2,000**	**1,779**	**1,114**	**1,701**	**1,799**	**1,636**	**1,961**	**11,990**	**1,238**

Sources: U.S. Departments of State, Defense, and Agriculture; U.S. Agency for International Development.

Abbreviations:

1206: Section 1206 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2006 (P.L. 109-163, global train and equip; Pentagon budget)
CN: Counternarcotics Funds (Pentagon budget)
CSF: Coalition Support Funds (Pentagon budget)
CSH: Child Survival and Health
DA: Development Assistance
ESF: Economic Support Fund
FC: Section 1206 of the NDAA for FY2008 (P.L. 110-181, Pakistan Frontier Corp train and equip; Pentagon budget)
FMF: Foreign Military Financing
HRDF: Human Rights and Democracy funding
IMET: International Military Education and Training
INCLE: International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (includes border security)
MRA: Migration and Refugee Assistance
NADR: Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining, and Related[b]

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CRS Report for Congress

Pakistan's 2008 Elections: Results and Implications for U.S. Policy

April 9, 2008

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Congressional
Research
Service

Pakistan's 2008 Elections: Results and Implications for U.S. Policy

Summary

A stable, democratic, prosperous Pakistan actively working to counter Islamist militancy is considered vital to U.S. interests. Pakistan is a key ally in U.S.-led counterterrorism efforts. The history of democracy in Pakistan is a troubled one marked by ongoing tripartite power struggles among presidents, prime ministers, and army chiefs. Military regimes have ruled Pakistan directly for 34 of the country's 60 years in existence, and most observers agree that Pakistan has no sustained history of effective constitutionalism or parliamentary democracy. In 1999, the democratically elected government of then-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was ousted in a bloodless coup led by then-Army Chief Gen. Pervez Musharraf, who later assumed the title of president. In 2002, Supreme Court-ordered parliamentary elections — identified as flawed by opposition parties and international observers — seated a new civilian government, but it remained weak, and Musharraf retained the position as army chief until his November 2007 retirement. In October 2007, Pakistan's Electoral College reelected Musharraf to a new five-year term in a controversial vote that many called unconstitutional.

The Bush Administration urged restoration of full civilian rule in Islamabad and called for the February 2008 national polls to be free, fair, and transparent. U.S. criticism sharpened after President Musharraf's November 2007 suspension of the Constitution and imposition of emergency rule (nominally lifted six weeks later), and the December 2007 assassination of former Prime Minister and leading opposition figure Benazir Bhutto. To the surprise of nearly all observers, the February elections were relatively free of expected violence. The apparent absence of large-scale election-day rigging allowed opposition parties to decisively defeat Musharraf's allies in Parliament, where nearly all of the senior incumbents lost their seats. An opposition coalition took power in the National Assembly in late March. Parties opposed to Musharraf also took power in three of the country's four provincial assemblies. The result led to the Bush Administration's permanent lifting of coup-related sanctions on aid to Pakistan that had been in place for more than eight years.

Political circumstances in Pakistan remain fluid, however, and the country's internal security and stability remain seriously threatened. Many observers urge a broad re-evaluation of U.S. policies toward Pakistan as developments create new centers of power in Islamabad. The Bush Administration has vigorously supported the government of President Musharraf, whose credibility and popularity decreased markedly in 2007. The powerful army's new chief, Gen. Ashfaq Pervez Kiyani, has shown signs of withdrawing the military from a direct role in governance. Moreover, Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani may enjoy reinvigorated influence if anticipated reversions to the country's 1973 Constitution — which empowers Parliament over the presidency — come to pass. As the nature of U.S.-Pakistan relations shifts, potential differences over counterterrorism strategy and over the status of Pakistan's deposed judges may bedevil bilateral ties. This report reviews the results of Pakistan's February 2008 vote and discusses some of the implications for U.S. policy. See also CRS Report RL33498, *Pakistan-U.S. Relations*, and CRS Report RL34240, *Pakistan's Political Crises*. This report will not be updated.

Pakistan's 2008 Elections: Results and Implications for U.S. Policy

Background[1]

A stable, democratic, prosperous Pakistan actively working to counter Islamist militancy is considered vital to U.S. interests. The history of democracy in Pakistan is a troubled one marked by ongoing tripartite power struggles among presidents, prime ministers, and army chiefs. Military regimes have ruled Pakistan directly for 34 of the country's 60 years in existence, and most observers agree that Pakistan has no sustained history of effective constitutionalism or parliamentary democracy. The country has had five Constitutions, the most recent being ratified in 1973 (and significantly modified several times since). From the earliest days of independence, the country's armed forces have thought of themselves as "saviors of the nation," a perception that has received significant, though limited, public support. The military, usually acting in tandem with the president, has engaged in three outright seizures of power from civilian-led governments: by Gen. Ayub Khan in 1958, Gen. Zia-ul-Haq in 1977, and Gen. Pervez Musharraf in 1999.[2]

After 1970, five successive governments were voted into power, but not once was a government voted out of power — all five were removed by the army through

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[1] For broader background for 1999-2005, see CRS Report RL32615, *Pakistan's Domestic Political Developments*, by K. Alan Kronstadt.

[2] In 1958, President Iskander Mizra, with the support of the army, abrogated the Constitution as "unworkable and full of dangerous compromises." Three weeks later Mizra was exiled and Army Chief Gen. Ayub Khan installed himself as President while declaring martial law and banning all political parties (thus formalizing the militarization of Pakistan's political system). His appointment of a senior civil servant as Deputy Martial Law Administrator gave some legitimating cast to the event and, four years later, Ayub Khan introduced a new Constitution that sought to legitimate his rule in the absence of martial law. In 1977, and in the midst of political turmoil involving Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto and the Pakistan National Alliance opposed to him, Army Chief Gen. Zia-ul-Haq, in apparent collusion with conservative Islamic groups, declared martial law, suspended the Constitution, dissolved the National Assembly, and took power in a bloodless coup. He vowed to hold national elections within 90 days, but soon rescinded that promise, and spent the next 11 years making changes to the Pakistani Constitution and system of governance that would ensure his continued hold on power. In 1999, Army Chief Gen. Pervez Musharraf overthrew the elected government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, dismissed the National Assembly, and appointed himself "Chief Executive." He later assumed the title of president and oversaw constitutional amendments that bolstered his own powers. Two of the three coups d'état (Zia in 1977 and Musharraf in 1999) were entirely extra-constitutional in nature. See Robert Stern, *Democracy and Dictatorship in South Asia* (Praeger, 2001).

explicit or implicit presidential orders.[3] Of Pakistan's three most prominent Prime Ministers, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was executed; his daughter Benazir Bhutto was exiled, then later assassinated; and Nawaz Sharif suffered seven years in exile under threat of life in prison before his 2007 return. Such long-standing political turmoil may partially explain why, in a 2004 public opinion survey, nearly two-thirds of Pakistanis were unable to provide a meaning for the term "democracy."[4] A 2008 index of state weakness labeled Pakistan the world's 33rd weakest country (between Zambia and Cambodia), based largely on low scores for political institutional effectiveness and legitimacy, and for the (in)ability of the government to provide citizens with physical security.[5]

Table 1. Notable Leaders of Pakistan

Governor-General **Mohammed Ali Jinnah**	1947-1948
Prime Minister **Liaquat Ali Khan**	1947-1951
President **Iskandar Ali Mirza**	1955-1958
President-General **Mohammed Ayub Khan**	1958-1969
President-General **Mohammed Yahya Khan**	1969-1971
President-Prime Minister **Zulfikar Ali Bhutto**	1971-1977
President-General **Zia ul-Haq**	1978-1988
Prime Minister **Benazir Bhutto**	1988-1990
Prime Minister **Nawaz Sharif**	1990-1993
Prime Minister **Benazir Bhutto**	1993-1996
Prime Minister **Nawaz Sharif**	1997-1999
President-General **Pervez Musharraf**	1999-present

Pakistan's New Political Setting[6]

2007 Political Crises

The year 2007 saw Pakistan buffeted by numerous and serious political crises, culminating in the December 27 assassination of former Prime Minister and leading opposition figure Benazir Bhutto, who had returned to Pakistan from self-imposed exile in October. Bhutto's killing in an apparent gun and bomb attack (the circumstances remain controversial) has been called a national tragedy for Pakistan

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[3] See "The Calculus of Electoral Politics in Pakistan (1970-2008)," Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency, January 2008, at [http://www.pildat.org/publications/publication/elections/Calculus%20of%20Electoral%20Politics.pdf].

[4] International Foundation for Election Systems, "National Public Opinion Survey Pakistan 2004," available at [http://www.plsc.org.pk/survey/index.htm].

[5] Brookings Institution, *Index of State Weakness in the Developing World*, at [http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/02_weak_states_index.aspx].

[6] See also CRS Report RL34240, *Pakistan's Political Crises*.

and did immense damage to already troubled efforts to democratize the country. Pakistan's security situation has deteriorated sharply: the federal government faces armed rebellions in two of the country's four provinces, as well as in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA, see map on the last page), and the country experienced at least 44 suicide bomb attacks in the latter half of 2007 that killed more than 700 people. In 2008, Pakistan has suffered an average of more than one suicide bomb attack every week.[7]

Pakistan faces considerable political uncertainty as the tenuous governance structure put in place by President Musharraf has come under strain. Musharraf himself was reelected to a second five-year presidential term in a controversial October 2007 vote by the country's electoral college. Under mounting domestic and international pressure, he finally resigned his military commission six weeks later. Yet popular opposition to military rule had been growing steadily with a series of political crises in 2007: a bungled attempt by Musharraf to dismiss the country's Chief Justice; Supreme Court rulings that damaged Musharraf's standing and credibility; constitutional questions about the legality of Musharraf's status as president; a return to Pakistan's political stage by two former Prime Ministers with considerable public support; and the pressures of repeatedly delayed parliamentary elections which eventually took place on February 18, 2008.

On November 3, 2007, President Musharraf had launched a "second coup" by suspending the country's Constitution and assuming emergency powers in his role as both president and army chief. The move came as security circumstances deteriorated sharply across the country, but was widely viewed as an effort by Musharraf to maintain his own power. His government dismissed uncooperative Supreme Court justices, including the Chief Justice, and jailed thousands of opposition figures and lawyers who opposed the abrogation of rule of law. It also cracked down on independent media outlets, many of which temporarily were shut down. The emergency order was lifted on December 15, but independent analysts saw only mixed evidence that the lifting led to meaningful change, given especially the continued existence of media curbs and a stacked judiciary. On the day before he lifted the emergency order, Musharraf issued several decrees and made amendments to the Pakistani Constitution, some of which would ensure that his actions under emergency rule would not be challenged by any court.

2008 Parliamentary Elections[8]

Overview. On February 18, 2008, Pakistan held elections to seat a new National Assembly and all four provincial assemblies. As noted above, independent analysts had predicted a process entailing rampant political-related violence and electoral rigging in favor of the recently incumbent, Musharraf-friendly Pakistan Muslim League-Q (PML-Q) faction. Despite weeks of bloodshed leading up to the polls, the day itself was surprisingly calm and turnout was slightly higher than for the 2002 election. Moreover, fears of large-scale rigging appear to have proven

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[7] See the South Asia Terrorism Portal database at [http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/Fidayeenattack.htm].

[8] See also CRS Report RL34335, *Pakistan's Scheduled 2008 Elections*.

unfounded, as the PML-Q was swept from power in a considerable wave of support for Pakistan's two leading opposition parties, the PPP, now overseen by Benazir Bhutto's widower, Asif Zardari, and the PML-N of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. (Neither of these figures ran for parliamentary seats and so neither currently is eligible to serve as Prime Minister, but this circumstance could change.)

The two largely secular, moderate parties proceeded to form a ruling parliamentary coalition in Islamabad. Their leadership explicitly seeks to legislate sovereign powers back to the Parliament by restoring the 1973 Constitution (Musharraf had overseen amendments empowering the office of the president) and to reinstate Supreme Court and other judges who were dismissed in Musharraf's November 2007 emergency imposition. They also lead coalition governments in the two most populous of the country's four provinces.

In the view of many outside observers, President Musharraf's efforts to keep himself in power have "reinforced his alliance with thoroughly illiberal forces" and have "alienated all the modern, secular and liberal forces in Pakistan."[9] Nevertheless, Musharraf called the election a "milestone" that his government had "worked tirelessly" to make credible, and he vowed to work with the new Parliament to defeat terrorism, build effective democratic government, and create a foundation for economic growth. PPP leader Zardari called the occasion a vindication of his late wife's battle for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan and a new start for a country that had been "battered by dictatorship."[10]

Indeed, as a perceived referendum on President Musharraf's rule, the polls represented a widespread popular rejection of his policies. They also appeared to forward arguments that the Pakistani populace supports moderate political parties without explicitly religious manifestos. At the same time, the results were seen by many analysts as compounding difficulties for U.S. policy makers who may have placed too much faith in the person of Musharraf, an increasingly isolated figure whose already damaged status is now further weakened.[11] Still, there is a widespread view that the exercise represents an important new chance for the development of democratic governance in Pakistan.

Rising inflation and food and energy shortages have elicited considerable economic anxieties in Pakistan. Such concerns are believed to have played a key role in the anti-incumbency vote and are likely to weigh heavily on the new government. At the same time, Islamist extremism and militancy have been menaces to Pakistani society throughout the post-2001 period and particularly in 2007. In a sign that radicals might seek to test the new government, suicide bomb and other attacks on

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[9] Fareed Zakaria, "Musharraf's Last Stand," *Newsweek*, January 21, 2008.

[10] Pervez Musharraf, "A Milestone on the Road to Democracy" (op-ed), *Washington Post*, February 22, 2008; Asif Ali Zardari, "Momentous Day for Pakistan, Bhutto's Legacy" (op-ed), *CNN.com*, March 18, 2008.

[11] "Pakistan Elections Toss Wrench Into U.S. Works," *Los Angeles Times*, February 23, 2008; "Pakistan's Political Coalition Means New Challenges for U.S.," *Washington Post*, February 24, 2008; "Pakistan's Musharraf Increasingly Isolated: Analysts," *Agence France Presse*, April 3, 2008.

both security forces and civilian targets have been rampant since the elections, costing hundreds of lives.

Election Preparations. Pakistan's National Assembly ended its five-year term on November 15, 2007, marking the first time in the country's history that the body had completed a full term without interruption. President Musharraf appointed a caretaker Prime Minister and cabinet for the election period. Many analysts viewed the caretaker cabinet as being stacked with partisan Musharraf supporters that further damaged hopes for credible elections. There were numerous reports of government efforts to "pre-rig" the election.[12] Pakistan's Chief Election Commissioner initially announced that polls would be held on January 8, 2007. About 13,500 candidates subsequently filed papers to vie for Pakistan's 272 elected National Assembly seats and 577 provincial assembly constituencies. The full National Assembly has 342 seats, with 60 reserved for women and another 10 reserved for non-Muslims. Amendments to the Pakistani Constitution and impeachment of the president require a two-thirds majority for passage.

Opposition parties were placed in the difficult position of choosing whether to participate in elections that were considered likely to be manipulated by the incumbent government or to boycott the process in protest. Upon Benazir Bhutto's late December assassination and ensuing civil strife, the Election Commission chose to delay the polls until February 18, spurring a nationwide debate. PPP and PML-N leaders demanded the election be held as scheduled; the Bush Administration appeared to support their demands. Zardari's calculation likely was rooted in expectations of a significant sympathy vote for the PPP. The main opposition parties criticized the incumbent government and accused it of fearing a major loss, but nonetheless chose to participate in the polls. As Musharraf's political clout waned, the Musharraf-allied PML-Q party faced more daunting odds in convincing a skeptical electorate that it deserved another five years in power.[13]

In late January, Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia Richard Boucher told a House panel that the fundamental U.S. goals with regard to Pakistan remained unchanged and included a desire to see "successful transition to democracy and civilian rule" and "the emergence of leaders through a credible election." While denying that the Administration was prepared to accept "a certain level of fraud," he expressed an expectation that some level would be seen: "On a scale from terrible

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[12] See "Reflections on the Electoral History of Pakistan (1970-2008)," Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency, January 2008, at [http://www.pildat.org/publications/publication/elections/How%20Elections%20Stolen.pdf].

[13] "Musharraf Ally Battles Foes and Apathy in Pakistan Vote," *Reuters*, December 19, 2007. A public opinion survey undertaken by the Washington-based International Republican Institute during the emergency showed that a large majority of Pakistanis opposed the measure and nearly two-thirds said they would support a boycott of scheduled elections. Musharraf's approval rating remained low, with nearly three-quarters of respondents saying they opposed his reelection as president and 67% wanting his resignation. When asked who they thought was the best leader to handle the problems facing Pakistan, 31% chose Bhutto, 25% cited Sharif, and 23% said Musharraf (see [http://www.iri.org/mena/pakistan/pdfs/2007-12-12-pakistan-poll-index.pdf]).

to great, it'll be somewhere in the middle."[14] More than $26 million in U.S. aid to Pakistan was devoted to democracy-related programs there in FY2007.[15]

Election Monitoring. Despite anticipated election day violence, voter turnout was solid, averaging nearly 45% nationwide (ranging from a low of 25% in the FATA to more than 50% in the Federal Capital Territory). At least 25,000 Pakistani citizens were accredited by the Pakistan Election Commission to serve as domestic observers. Some 500 international observers — including 56 from the United States — were in the country on February 18, along with more than 500 more foreign journalists covering the election. Preliminary statements from European Union observers conceded that a level playing field had not been provided for the campaign but that, on election day itself, "voting on the whole was assessed as positive." The mission fielded by Democracy International — a nongovernmental group contracted by the State Department — also identified a "seriously flawed and difficult pre-election environment," but reached its own preliminary conclusion that the reasonably peaceful and smoothly conducted polls represented "a dramatic step forward for democracy in Pakistan."[16] Pakistan's print media were cautiously optimistic about the mostly fair and violence-free elections. On the economic front, the process likely contributed to a steadying of the rupee's value and a 3% rise in the Karachi Stock Exchange's main index.

Election Results. Although President Musharraf had been reelected in a controversial indirect vote in October 2007 and was not on the ballot in 2008, the elections were almost universally viewed as a referendum on his rule. As shown in **Table 2**, the PPP won a clear plurality of seats (121) in the National Assembly. While the Musharraf-allied PML-Q won substantially more total votes than did the PML-N of Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan's "first past the post" plurality electoral system allowed Sharif's party to win 91 National Assembly seats to only 54 for the incumbents. This outcome provides the country's two main secular opposition parties with a near two-thirds majority. They are joined in a new national ruling coalition by the secular Pashtun nationalist Awami National Party (ANP). The Sindhi regional Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM), which was part of the ruling bloc under PML-Q leadership, performed considerably better than in 2002 to win about 7% of the vote and 25 seats at the national level. These five top-performing parties now account for about 92% of all National Assembly seats.

Table 3 shows the PPP won an outright majority in the provincial parliament of Sindh, the Bhuttos' ancestral homeland, and so can govern there without coalition partners. In the wealthy and densely populated Punjab province, Sharif's PML-N dominated the PML-Q in the incumbent party's heartland (despite winning fewer total votes) to take nearly half of the provincial assembly seats there. Sharif's brother Shabaz is expected to serve again as Chief Minister, overseeing a coalition with the PPP in the provincial assembly based in Lahore. Voters in the North West Frontier

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[14] Transcript: "House Government Reform and Oversight Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs Holds Hearing on Pakistan Elections," January 29, 2008.

[15] See [http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/pr-110607b.html].

[16] See [http://www.democracyinternational.us/downloads/ElectionStatementFinal.pdf].

Province (NWFP) roundly rejected the previously incumbent Islamist coalition and awarded the ANP a resounding comeback after its virtual shutout in 2002. The PPP and ANP agreed to share power in the NWFP, with the Chief Minister and 12 of 21 cabinet ministers coming from the ANP. Only in sparsely populated Baluchistan did the PML-Q seem sufficiently strong to retain power.

Table 2. Selected 2008 National Assembly Election Results

Party/Coalition	Votes won	Percentage of total vote	Seats secured	Percentage of seats secured
PPP (Pakistan People's Party)	10,606,486	31%	121	36%
PML-N (Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz)	6,781,445	20%	91	27%
PML-Q (Pakistan Muslim League - Quaid-e-Azam)	7,989,817	23%	54	16%
MQM (Muttahida Quami Movement)	2,507,813	7%	25	7%
ANP (Awami National Party)	700,479	2%	13	4%
MMA (Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, a coalition of Islamist parties)	772,798	2%	6	2%
Other[a]	5,166,433	15%	26	8%
Total	34,665,978	—	336	—

Source: Election Commission of Pakistan and various press reports

a. Mostly independent candidates, but includes five additional parties at the national level. Other Pakistani political parties of note are the Pakistan People's Party - Sherpao, an offshoot of the PPP led by Aftab Sherpao, who served as Interior Minister in the government of Shaukat Aziz under President Musharraf; the Baluchistan National Movement; the Sindh National Front, and numerous smaller regional and religious parties. A list of the 49 parties registered for the 2008 election is at [http://www.ecp.gov.pk/content/Symbol-allotted.pdf].

The membership of the new National Assembly is generally wealthier and more secular than its predecessors.[17] The PPP's expected sympathy vote apparently did not materialize in any major way, but the party did win 31% of national votes cast, up from about 27% in 2002. It was, in fact, the PML-N of Nawaz Sharif that appeared to perform best in the key battleground region of southern Punjab, winning wholesale votes from disgruntled former PML-Q supporters. Despite a result seen by many as suboptimal from Washington's perspective, a senior Bush Administration official responded to the outcome with broad approval:

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[17] "New Crop of Pakistani Lawmakers Are Richer, Flashier And More Secular," *Associated Press*, March 19, 2008.

> The election outcome proves that moderate pro-democracy parties are the heart of Pakistan's political system and that religious-based politics have no hold over the voters. While not perfect, the elections reflected the will of the voters, who have embraced the results.... We supported Pakistan's elections and now we will support the Pakistani people as they choose their leaders.[18]

For some analysts, the relatively successful elections are an indication that Pakistan is shifting away from its traditional feudal-patronage political system.[19]

Table 3. Selected 2008 Provincial Assembly Election Results
(shown as a percentage of announced seats won)

Party/Coalition	PP	PS	PF	PB
PPP (Pakistan People's Party)	29%	55%	26%	17%
PML-N (Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz)	45%	0%	8%	0%
PML-Q (Pakistan Muslim League - Quaid-e-Azam)	24%	6%	4%	32%
MQM (Muttahida Quami Movement)	0%	32%	0%	0%
ANP (Awami National Party)	0%	0%	39%	6%
MMA (Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, a coalition of Islamist parties)	1%	0%	12%	16%
All others	1%	7%	11%	29%

PP: Punjab Assembly; **PS**: Sindh Assembly; **PF**: North West Frontier Province Assembly; **PB**: Baluchistan Assembly
Source: Geo Television at [http://www.geo.tv/election2008/images/data/PAPosition.pdf].

Musharraf's Status. Immediately following their poll victory, the leaders of both major opposition parties issued calls for President Musharraf's resignation. Though he rejects such calls, Musharraf has expressed a willingness to work with the new Parliament, even as he recognizes the potential for a two-thirds opposition majority to reverse many of the changes made during his rule. This might in particular include parts of the 17th Amendment to the Constitution, which grants presidential powers to dismiss the Prime Minister and dissolve Parliament. Such a super-majority could even move to impeach him. **Table 2** shows that a PPP/PML-N/ANP combine could potentially collect two-thirds of the National Assembly vote, but it presently appears that a PPP-led government will not (in the near-term, at least) seek to remove Musharraf through impeachment. Even with such an intention, the opposition alliance is unlikely to corral sufficient votes in the Pakistani Senate, where the PML-Q had enjoyed a simple majority until several crossovers diluted its

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[18] Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte, "Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr. Holds a Hearing on U.S. Policy Options in Post-Election Pakistan," *CQ Transcripts*, February 28, 2008.

[19] See, for example, William Dalrymple, "A New Deal in Pakistan?," *New York Review of Books*, April 3, 2008.

strength.[20] Many analysts contend that Musharraf has sought to manipulate the transfer of power process through the creation of uncertainty and instability, and some continue to insist that Musharraf should follow "the logic of the people's verdict" and resign.[21]

New Civilian Government

Coalition Building. Negotiations on coalition building were settled on March 9, when PPP leader Zardari and PML-N leader Sharif issued a written declaration of their intention to share power at the center (along with the ANP) under a PPP Prime Minister and in the Punjab under a PML-N Chief Minister.[22] In a major show of opposition unity, the accord notably vowed to seek restoration of deposed judges to office within 30 days of the new government's seating (see below). The leaders also promised to implement a May 2006 "Charter of Democracy" inked by Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif that would include removing the president's power to dissolve parliament, as well as his power to appoint military service chiefs. Many viewed the March 9 "Murree Declaration" as an historic rejection of military-bureaucratic rule in Islamabad and a victory over forces that sought to keep the opposition divided.[23] The Islamist Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam faction headed by Fazl-ur-Rehman (JUI-F) will vote with the PPP-led coalition, which was bolstered when 11 parliamentarians elected as independents joined it (7 aligning with the PPP and four others taking up with the PML-N). Fahimda Mirza — a Sindhi businesswoman, PPP stalwart, and close associate of Zardari — is now Pakistan's first-ever female National Assembly Speaker.

Benazir Bhutto's long-time party deputy and National Assembly member Makhdoom Amin Fahim initially had been dubbed the PPP's leading prime ministerial candidate. Fahim, who comes from a feudal Sindh background similar to that of Bhutto, was seen to have led the party competently in her absence, but does not possess national standing and support close to that enjoyed by Bhutto herself. During early March, intra-PPP discord arose over the party's prime ministerial candidate, with some party leaders reportedly unhappy with Fahim and seeking a leader from the Punjab province. Some reports also indicated that Sharif's PML-N had pushed for the nomination of a Punjabi Prime Minister, and the more vehemently

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[20] Before the February election, the Senate's pro-Musharraf bloc (PML-Q + MQM) enjoyed a simple majority of 56 seats and the opposition had 42 seats (two seats are vacant). However, at least six and perhaps seven PML-Q Senators are believed to have since formed a forward bloc and intend to vote with the new (PPP/PML-N/ANP/JUI-F) government. This would give the new ruling coalition a simple majority in the Senate. More PML-Q defections are anticipated. The next Senate elections are set for March 2009 ("PPP-Led Coalition Attains Majority in Senate," *News* (Karachi), March 25, 2008).

[21] Shafqat Mahmood, "Musharraf Should Give Up" (op-ed), *News* (Karachi), March 21, 2008; Ijaz Hussain, "Should Musharraf Quit?" (op-ed), *Daily Times* (Lahore), April 9, 2008.

[22] Declaration text available at [http://thenews.jang.com.pk/updates.asp?id=39768].

[23] See, for example, Husain Haqqani, "An End to Military Bureaucratic Rule"(op-ed), *Nation* (Lahore), March 12, 2008; "Deal May Spell Bad News for Musharraf," *BBC News*, March 10, 2008.

anti-Musharraf Nawaz faction reportedly opposed Fahim's candidacy because of his frequent contacts with the unpopular Pakistani president.[24]

Government Formation and Outlook. On March 22, PPP Co-Chair Asif Zardari announced the prime ministerial candidacy of Yousaf Raza Gillani, a party stalwart from the Punjab province. Gillani was Parliament Speaker during Benazir Bhutto's second government (1993-1996) and spent five years in prison (from 2001 to 2006) after being sentenced by an anti-corruption court created under President Musharraf. Musharraf's opponents say the court was established as a means of intimidating and coercing politicians to join the PML-Q, which Gillani had refused to do.[25] On March 24, Gillani won 264 of 306 votes cast to become Pakistan's new Prime Minister. Of his 24 cabinet ministers, 11 are from the PPP and 9 from the PML-N. The junior coalition partners (ANP and JUI-F) hold three ministries and an independent candidate will oversee the remainder. Other important new federal ministers include:

- Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, who hails from a land-owning family in southern Punjabi city of Multan and has been a PPP lawmaker since 1985, serving as a Punjab provincial minister during the 1990s;

- Defense Minister Chaudhry Ahmed Mukhtar, an industrialist from the Gujrat region of Punjab, who served as federal commerce minister in Benazir Bhutto's second government (1993-1996) and who won his parliamentary seat in 2008 by defeating PML-Q leader Chaudhry Shujaat Hussein; and

- Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, a native of the Punjabi city of Lahore and central leader of PML-N party who served as federal commerce and later finance minister in Nawaz Sharif's second government (1996-1999).

Asif Zardari has at times seemed to flirt with the idea of offering himself as the PPP's prime ministerial candidate, then later rule himself out for the job. Still, many analysts believe Zardari may be grooming himself for that office in the future. Until Benazir Bhutto's teenaged son and political heir Bilawal Bhutto Zardari completes studies at Oxford University, Zardari is to run the PPP. Zardari is a controversial figure in Pakistan: he spent at least eight years in prison (without conviction) on charges ranging from corruption to complicity in murder, and some of these cases still stand unresolved. In March 2008, courts dismissed seven pending corruption cases against Zardari. The Pakistani government later withdrew as party to a Swiss money laundering case against him, perhaps clearing the way for him to win a by-election and become eligible to serve as Prime Minister.[26] Constitutional

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[24] "PML-N Vetoes Candidature of Fahim," *Dawn* (Karachi), March 11, 2008.

[25] "Profile: Yusuf Raza Gillani," *BBC News*, March 23, 2008.

[26] As part of 2007's power-sharing negotiations between President Musharraf and Benazir (continued...)

amendments overseen by President Musharraf in 2003 include a requirement that parliamentarians possess a college degree or its equivalent, which Zardari apparently does not. This represents another potential obstacle to his seating as prime minister.

Nawaz Sharif himself may eventually prove to be the greatest benefactor of Pakistan's political upheaval. There is little doubt he would serve a third time as Prime Minister if given the opportunity. Some analysts speculate that Sharif is angling for early new elections in which his party might overtake the PPP nationally.[27] Criminal convictions related to his overthrow by the army in 1999 stand in the way of his future candidacy. With his past links to Pakistan's Islamist parties — his party's 1990 poll win came only through alliance with Islamists and he later pressed for passage of a *Shariat* (Islamist law) bill — and his sometimes strident anti-Western rhetoric, Sharif is viewed warily by many in Washington.

Potential Coalition Discord. Never before in Pakistan's history have the country's two leading political parties come together to share power. While many observers praise the Murree Declaration as representing what could be a new conciliatory style of party politics, others note that the PPP and PML-N spent most of the 1990s as bitter enemies. The history of mutual party animosity in fact dates to 1972, when Benazir's father, then-Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, nationalized industries owned by Nawaz Sharif's father.[28] Opposition to President Musharraf's continued power unites these parties at present, but with Musharraf likely to fan the flames of party competition — and with his possibly imminent departure from power removing the key unifying factor between them — many analysts are pessimistic that a PPP-PML-N accommodation can last.

Several of Asif Zardari's post-election moves reportedly have alarmed some among his newfound political partners and spurred further doubt about the coalition's longevity. These include gestures toward the MQM party formerly allied with President Musharraf and historically a bitter rival of the PPP in Karachi. Also, the new defense minister, a PPP stalwart, issued statements laudatory of Musharraf, spurring some observers to wonder anew about the PPP's commitment to the anti-Musharraf agenda of its allies at the center.[29] Moreover, intra-party rumblings in the

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[26] (...continued)
Bhutto, Musharraf issued a National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO), which provides amnesty for all politicians who served in Pakistan between 1988 and 1999, thus essentially clearing Bhutto, Zardari, and others of pending and potential corruption charges. Officials said the amnesty would not apply to former Prime Minister Sharif.

[27] "Moeed Yusuf, "Well Played, Mr Sharif" (op-ed), *Friday Times* (Lahore), February 27, 2008.

[28] "Decades of Enmity Threaten Pakistani Coalition, Say Analysts," *Agence France Presse*, February 22, 2008. See also "Doubts Linger Over Pakistan's New Political Dawn," *Reuters*, February 28, 2008.

[29] "PPP Co-Chairman Stuns Allies," and Mir Jamilur Rahman, "A Depressing Spectacle" (op-ed), both in *News* (Karachi), April 5, 2008; "PPP-PMLN Tensions Again?" (editorial), *Daily Times* (Lahore), April 6, 2008.

PPP have triggered press reports of an impending split, potentially to be led by Sindh party leaders unhappy with the Punjabi-heavy nature of the new federal cabinet.[30]

Restoration of Deposed Judges. As part of a six-week-long state of emergency launched by President Musharraf on November 3, 2007, seven Supreme Court justices, including the Chief Justice, and scores of High Court judges refused to take a new oath of office and were summarily dismissed. The Supreme Court was then reconstituted with justices appointed by Musharraf himself. The question of whether and how to restore the Chief Justice and other deposed senior judges remains a key divisive issue. Immediately upon taking office, the new Prime Minister ordered all remaining detained judges to be released. In declaring an intention to restore the pre-November 3 Supreme Court, the new civilian dispensation appeared to set itself on a collision course with Musharraf. Reseating that court would almost certainly lead to Musharraf's removal from office, as the justices had appeared close to finding his October reelection unconstitutional.

Pakistan's recently retired Attorney General and longtime Musharraf ally, Malik Qayyum, rejected the new government's plan to reinstate the judges within 30 days, saying their dismissal was constitutional and that efforts to reverse it through executive order or parliamentary resolution would be futile. According to him, only an amendment to the Constitution can reverse President Musharraf's earlier actions. Many legal experts cast doubt on Qayyum's position, however, claiming that because Musharraf's emergency imposition was inherently unconstitutional (as ruled by the Supreme Court on November 3, 2007, just before its reconstitution), all actions taken under that authority are invalid.[31] Some detractors of the new government's intentions call the effort a farce rooted in a desire for revenge, and they seek establishment of an independent judiciary without bringing back what critics have termed "a group of biased, politicized, and vengeful judges."[32]

The "lawyer's movement" that arose in response to Musharraf's March 2007 dismissal of Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry (who was reseated in July) was a vital facet of the pro-rule of law, anti-Musharraf sentiment that spread in Pakistan during 2007. It has not faded away: lawyers continue to boycott many courts and the movement remains able to mobilize significant street protests, which Chaudhry continues to publicly support. Nawaz Sharif himself has accused the U.S. government of actively discouraging the restoration of the deposed judges.[33] When asked during a Senate hearing about the status of Supreme Court justices and other judges dismissed under Musharraf's emergency proclamation, Deputy Secretary John Negroponte conceded that the U.S. government had "been silent on the subject."[34]

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[30] See, for example, "Fahim, Ghinwa May Join Hands," *Post* (Lahore), April 8, 2008.

[31] "Legal Battle Looms Over Sacked Pakistan Judges," *Reuters*, March 18, 2008; "Khalid Jawed Khan," Can the Judges Be restored?" (op-ed), *Dawn* (Karachi), March 18, 2008.

[32] Ahmed Quraishi, "Politics of Revenge" (op-ed), *News* (Karachi), March 11, 2008.

[33] "Pakistan TV Show Discusses Judges' Restoration Issue," *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, March 18, 2008.

[34] "Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr. Holds a Hearing on U.S. Policy Options in Post-Election

(continued...)

Aitzaz Ahsan, the lawyer who lead the successful effort to have former Chief Justice Chaudhry reseated earlier in 2007, has been at the forefront of the current effort to restore the pre-November 3 judiciary. His post-emergency detention attracted the attention of numerous U.S. Senators, who called for his immediate release. Ahsan has accused the U.S. government of callousness regarding Musharraf's crackdown on the Supreme Court.[35] A Punjabi, he could represent a new power pole within the traditionally hierarchical PPP and is viewed by many as a potential future party leader. Even before the PPP's poll victory there were signs that Zardari would seek to ensure party unity by offering Ahsan deputy status. On March 2, Ahsan was released from four months of detention and was quickly back in the public eye calling for the judges' release and full restoration.

President Musharraf reportedly sought to make a deal in which he would relinquish his powers to dissolve parliament if the opposition agreed to drop its efforts to restore the deposed judges. Although this deal was not consummated, it was taken by some as a sign of desperation from the Pakistani president, who finds himself increasingly without allies or influence. Musharraf may be willing to accept the judges' restoration provided the Parliament order it with a two-thirds majority.[36]

There have been indications that the PPP's central leader, Asif Zardari, may not stand by the coalition's agreement to restore the ousted judges. These include a "charge sheet" in which Zardari reportedly holds some of the deposed Superior Court justices responsible for his past imprisonment. Zardari may seek a judicial reforms package rather than the "restoration of personalities."[37]

Role of the Pakistani Military. The army's role as a dominant political player in Pakistan may be changing. Following President Musharraf's November resignation as army chief, the new leadership has shown signs of distancing itself from both Musharraf and from direct involvement in the country's governance. The president's handpicked successor, Gen. Ashfaq Pervez Kayani, has issued orders barring officers from holding unauthorized meetings with civilian leaders; dictated that all active officers holding posts in civilian agencies resign from those positions; and announced that the military's only role in the election process would be maintenance of security. He has since called for a "harmonized relationship between various pillars of state, as provided in the Constitution."[38] In late March, Gen.

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[34] (...continued)
Pakistan," *CQ Transcripts*, February 28, 2008.

[35] Aitzaz Ahsan, "Pakistan's Tyranny Continues" (op-ed), *New York Times*, December 23, 2007.

[36] "Musharraf Seeks Deal to Remain in Power," *Financial Times* (London), March 12, 2008; "Musharraf Is Quickly Losing His Grip On Pakistan," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 24, 2008; "Judges Restoration By Two-Thirds Majority Acceptable," *News* (Karachi), March 2, 2008.

[37] "Zardari Issues 'Charge Sheet,'" *News* (Karachi), April 5, 2008.

[38] "Pakistan Military Retreats From Musharraf's Influence," *McClatchy Newspapers*, January 18, 2008; "Army Chief Urges Harmony Among Pakistan's Leaders," *Reuters*, (continued...)

Kayani exerted further influence by making his first major new appointments, replacing two of the nine corps commanders appointed by Musharraf. The command and control structure for Pakistan's nuclear weapons arsenal reportedly will not change under the new government. The National Command Authority — created in 2000 and chaired by the president — will retain control through military channels.[39]

Many analysts see Kayani as motivated to improve the image of the military as an institution after a serious erosion of its status under Musharraf. His dictates and rhetoric have brought accolades from numerous commentators. Any moves by the army to interfere with Parliament's actions on the deposed judges or potential pressures to oust Musharraf quickly could, however, damage the non-partisan image built in recent months.[40]

Implications for U.S. Policy

Pakistan's relatively credible 2008 polls allowed the Bush Administration to issue an April determination that a democratically elected government had been restored in Islamabad after a 101-month hiatus. This determination permanently removed coup-related aid sanctions that President Bush had been authorized to waive annually if such a waiver was seen to serve U.S. interests.[41] Both before and after the elections, U.S. officials advocated for "moderate forces" within Pakistani politics to come together to sustain political and economic reforms, and to carry on the fight against religious extremism and terrorism. The catastrophic removal of Benazir Bhutto from Pakistan's political equation dealt a serious blow both to the cause of Pakistani democratization and to U.S. interests. Given the plummeting popularity and political influence of their key Pakistani ally, President Musharraf, over the course of 2007, Bush Administration officials were seen to have no "Plan B" and were left with few viable options beyond advocating a credible electoral process and awaiting the poll results. With those results showing a sweeping rejection of Musharraf's parliamentary allies, the Administration found its long-standing policy in some disarray and it now faces even greater pressures to work more closely with civilian and military leaders beyond the president.[42]

By some accounts, the U.S. government sought to influence the coalition-building process in Islamabad, in particular by pressuring the PPP to strike a deal with the remnants of the Musharraf-friendly PML-Q.[43] Some observers suspect the

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[38] (...continued)
March 6, 2008.

[39] "Pakistan's Nuclear Command Stays Unchanged: Official," *Reuters*, April 8, 2008.

[40] Hasan-Askari Rizvi, "Post-Musharraf Civil-Military Relations" (op-ed), *Friday Times* (Lahore), April 4, 2008.

[41] Federal Register 73, 69, p. 19276-19277, April 9, 2008.

[42] "Washington's New Pakistan Problem," *Time*, March 28, 2008.

[43] See, for example, "Zardari Resisted US, Presidency Pressures," *News* (Karachi), February 22, 2008; "Pressure on Asif, Nawaz to Work With President," *Dawn* (Karachi), February
(continued...)

Bush Administration remains wedded to a policy that would keep the embattled Musharraf in power despite his weakness and lack of public support. According to some reports, this tack may fuel interagency disputes in Washington, with some career diplomats arguing that the United States could damage its position by appearing to go against a clear popular mandate rejecting Musharraf.

Upon completion of Pakistan's February 18 elections, the State Department lauded the "step toward the full restoration of democracy."[44] When asked in February about coalition-forming negotiations and the outstanding issue of the ousted judiciary, a State Department spokesman summarized the U.S. view:

> Ultimately, what we want to see happen is the formation of a government that's going to be an effective partner for the United States, not only in confronting extremism but also in helping Pakistan achieve the broad-based goals for that country's political and economic development. In terms of the specifics of how that's done, of who winds up in a coalition, who winds up in which ministry, what happens in terms of judicial reform or in terms of judicial appointments, those are really matters for the Pakistanis themselves and for the new government to decide.[45]

At the same time, a statement by the White House spokeswoman expressed continued support for President Musharraf in the face of questions about post-election calls for his resignation:

> Well, the President does support President Musharraf for all of the work that he's done to help us in counterterrorism. And if you look at what we asked President Musharraf to do — which is to take off the uniform, to set free and fair elections, and to lift the emergency order — he did all of those things. And so now it will be up to the people of Pakistan to see what their new government will look like. But the President does certainly support him, and has continued to.[46]

By late March, however, when a new Parliament, Prime Minister, and federal cabinet were being seated, senior Bush Administration officials appeared to be recognizing the importance of a broader array of political figures in Islamabad and were vowing to work with all of them.[47]

Most Pakistanis express a keen sensitivity to signs of U.S. attempts to influence the post-election coalition-building negotiations, especially when such attempts were seen to run contrary to the expressed will of the Pakistani electorate. The continuation of perceived U.S. meddling in Pakistan's domestic politics has elicited

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[43] (...continued)
23, 2008.

[44] See [http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2008/feb/101059.htm].

[45] See [http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2008/feb/101267.htm].

[46] See [http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/02/20080225-5.html].

[47] "Press Statement - Deputy Secretary John Negroponte," U.S. Embassy Press Release, March 27, 2008.

widespread resentment among Pakistanis.[48] Many analysts urge the U.S. government to respect Pakistani sovereignty and self-determination by allowing the Pakistanis to determine their own political arrangements without foreign interference.[49]

The Bush Administration's public statements reflect a willingness to do just this, at least at a rhetorical level. In what was taken to be a clear indication of shifting U.S. policy, visiting Deputy Secretary Negroponte — who had in late 2007 described the Pakistani president as an "indispensable ally" of the United States — offered little in the way of public defense for Musharraf and called his future status a matter to be determined by "the internal Pakistani political process."[50] Considerable criticism had arisen in the Pakistani press over the timing of Negroponte's visit, with some commentators expressing anger that American officials were intruding before the new government's formation was complete. A Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokesman sought to clarify that the visit had been planned for some time and its concurrence with formation of the new government was merely coincidental. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice echoed the claim, adding that she had hoped the timing of the Negroponte-Boucher visit would be taken as a "sign of respect" for Pakistan's democratic processes.[51]

Upon returning from a trip that included observing the Pakistani elections, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Senator Joe Biden concluded that Pakistan had "passed the most important test" by holding reasonably free and fair polls, and he again argued that the United States "should move from a Musharraf policy to a Pakistani policy." During a subsequent Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on Pakistan, Biden proposed tripling U.S. economic and development aid to $1.5 billion, adding an annual "democracy dividend" of $1 billion to reward Islamabad if the government there is able to continue a peaceful transition to democracy, and demanded transparency and accountability in continued military aid.[52] Proposals to increase U.S. assistance to Pakistan may be gaining wider acceptance in Congress of late.[53]

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[48] "US Support for Musharraf Rousing Anti-American Feeling in Pakistan," *Associated Press*, February 29, 2008; "U.S. Embrace of Musharraf Irks Pakistanis," *New York Times*, February 29, 2008; "Hands Off Please, Uncle Sam" (editorial), *News* (Karachi), March 25, 2008; "American 'Interference' and Our Rage" (editorial), *Daily Times* (Lahore), March 27, 2008.

[49] See, for example, Robert Hathaway, "Needed: New Terms of Engagement," *Friday Times* (Lahore), March 3, 2008.

[50] "US Says No Meddling to Save Musharraf," *Associated Press*, March 27, 2008. See also "US Offers Support for Pakistan's Parties," *Associated Press*, March 11, 2008.

[51] See [http://www.mofa.gov.pk/Spokesperson/2008/Mar/Spokes_26_03_08.htm]; Secretary Rice, "Interview With the Washington Times Editorial Board," March 27, 2008.

[52] "Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr. and Sen. John Kerry Hold a News Conference on Their Recent Trip to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey, and India," *CQ Transcripts*, February 26, 2008; "Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr. Holds a Hearing on U.S. Policy Options in Post-Election Pakistan," *CQ Transcripts*, February 28, 2008.

[53] "U.S. Offers Pakistan Assistance," *Reuters*, March 28, 2008.

After meeting with numerous Pakistani officials in Islamabad in late March, Deputy Secretary of State Negroponte said,

> [T]he U.S.-Pakistan partnership remains strong, and we envision a continued close, productive alliance that benefits both countries. The United States is committed to working with all of Pakistan's leaders on the full spectrum of bilateral issues, from fighting violent extremism to improving educational and economic opportunities.... In the months ahead, the United States looks forward to engaging Pakistan's new government on how best to promote economic growth and reduce poverty. The United States will continue to help the Pakistani people build a secure, prosperous, and free society.[54]

In 2008, and for the first time in more than eight years, the United States must deal with a new political dispensation in Islamabad that may agree on the need to combat religious extremism, but that may differ fundamentally on the methods by which to do so. In their first official meetings with the new government, visiting U.S. officials received a reported "dressing down," in particular from Nawaz Sharif, who declined to give Negroponte "a commitment" on fighting terrorism.

President Bush telephoned new Pakistani Prime Minister Gillani on March 25, reportedly having a "good conversation" in which the two leaders agreed that U.S. and Pakistani interests are best served by continuing to fight terrorism and extremism. On this basis, the White House anticipates Pakistan's "continued cooperation."[55] The leader of a late March U.S. congressional delegation to Islamabad reportedly came away with a clear sense that Pakistan's new leaders will continue to cooperate closely with the United States on counterterrorism.[56] There are, however, ongoing concerns in Washington that the new Islamabad government will curtail militarized efforts to combat Islamist militants and instead seek negotiations with Pakistan's pro-Taliban forces.

Prime Minster Gillani has identified terrorism and extremism as Pakistan's most urgent problems. He vows that combatting terrorism, along with addressing poverty and unemployment, will be his government's top priority. Foreign Minister Qureshi has said the new government does not intend to negotiate with terrorists, but does believe in "political engagement." In a subsequent telephone conversation with Secretary of State Rice, Qureshi vowed that Pakistan would "continue its role in the international struggle against terrorism" and he emphasized a need to facilitate this effort through economic development in the FATA.[57]

The Islamists' electoral defeat is not necessarily a victory for U.S. interests in the region, as the ANP-led government in the North West Frontier Province could offer its own resistance to the kinds of militarized approaches to countering militancy

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[54] See [http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/pr_03272008.html].

[55] See [http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/03/20080325-3.html].

[56] "Tierney: Pakistan Will Cooperate With US," *Boston Globe*, March 29, 2008.

[57] "Pakistan Vows No Talks With Terrorists," *Associated Press*, April 7, 2008 Pakistan foreign Affairs Ministry press release at [http://www.mofa.gov.pk/Press_Releases/2008/April/PR_087_08.htm].

reportedly favored by Washington.[58] The ANP is expected to play a central role in planned negotiations with militant groups. While Prime Minister Gillani promises to open a dialogue with religious extremists who lay down their arms, the new NWFP Chief Minister, ANP figure Amir Haider Khan Hoti, asserts that the problem cannot be solved by speaking only to tribal elders, but at some point must include the militants themselves. Hoti has demanded that the United States end its suspected missile attacks on Pakistani territory and calls for military action against extremists only as a last resort. The ANP also asserts that the Pakistan army is not a party to the conflict in the tribal areas and so will not have a seat at any negotiation table.[59]

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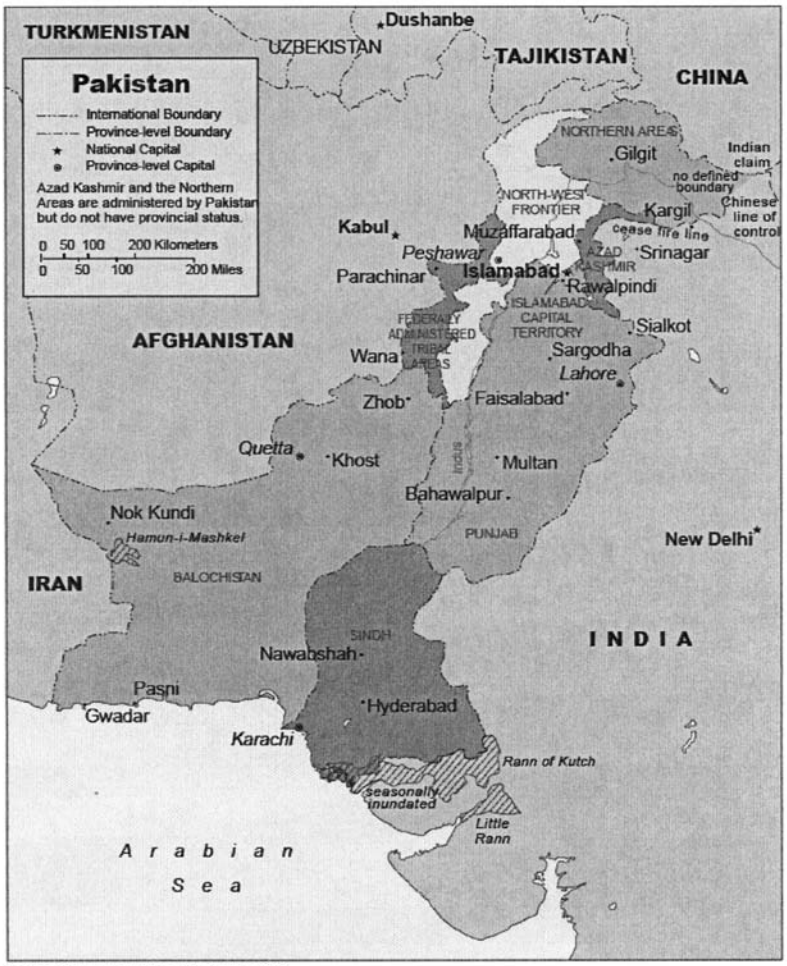
[58] "Islamists' Loss Is Not a U.S. Win in Pakistan," *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 2008; "Moderates Hold Key in Pakistan," *New York Times*, March 26, 2008.

[59] "Pakistan Rethinks US Policy on Militants," *BBC News*, April 1, 2008; "Pakistan"U.S. Must Stop Missile Strikes," *McClatchy News*, April 2, 2008; "Army Not Party to FATA Conflict: ANP," *News* (Karachi), April 6, 2008.

Figure 1. Map of Pakistan



Source: Map Resources. Adapted by CRS.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FROM "TERROR-FREE TOMORROW: THE CENTER FOR PUBLIC OPINION"

In a resounding setback for American policy, Pakistanis strongly favor their own government not fighting against al-Qaeda and the Taliban, but negotiating with them instead. Public support for al-Qaeda is also gaining ground since earlier this year.

Important Parliamentary by-elections are scheduled in Pakistan for June 26. In the first poll before the elections, our survey shows that Nawaz Sharif is now the most popular political leader in Pakistan. Mr. Sharif's party, the PML–N, would emerge as the clear winner in any national contest, far eclipsing the current largest party in Parliament, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

These are among the many findings of a new and extensive nationwide public opinion survey from May 25 to June 1, 2008, across Pakistan, covering both urban and rural areas and all provinces. The survey, with face-to-face interviews of 1,306 Pakistanis age 18 or older and a margin of error of 3 percent, was conducted by Terror Free Tomorrow: The Center for Public Opinion, in collaboration with the New America Foundation, and field work inside Pakistan by the Pakistan Institute for Public Opinion, an affiliate of Gallup Pakistan. The survey is the third nationwide poll over the past 9 months conducted by Terror Free Tomorrow and Gallup Pakistan.

PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR AL-QAEDA, THE TALIBAN AND BIN LADEN INCREASES; PAKISTANIS DECISIVELY FAVOR NEGOTIATIONS OVER MILITARY ACTION

Half of all Pakistanis want their government to negotiate and not fight al-Qaeda, with less than a third saying military action by the Pakistani Government against al-Qaeda is called for. (For Pakistani Taliban, 58 percent favor negotiating to 19 percent for military action.)

Pakistan is considered by most national security experts to be the home base of Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda and many Taliban fighters. From a safe haven in the border areas of Pakistan, they are free to train, plan and launch attacks inside Afghanistan and elsewhere. Indeed, last week, Admiral Michael Mullen, Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that the planning to hit America itself with another terrorist attack is now taking place—and that it would come from Pakistan.

The new Pakistani civilian government has begun a controversial policy of negotiating with certain Pakistani Taliban fighters—though not with al-Qaeda.

In stark opposition to American policy, the Pakistani people themselves would go even further than their own government and not only negotiate with Pakistani Taliban fighters, but with both Arab al-Qaeda and Afghan Taliban fighters as well, decisively opposing any military action.

Even before the latest American military incursion (which occurred after our poll was complete), a mere 12 percent of Pakistanis supported any unilateral American military action against al-Qaeda fighters inside Pakistan. Strong opposition to the U.S. military has also intensified since earlier this year.

Favorable opinion toward al-Qaeda is mounting inside Pakistan. A third of Pakistanis now voice a positive view, nearly double the percentage from earlier this year. Similarly, for bin Laden, 34 percent currently have a favorable opinion, up from 24 percent in January (but still below the 46 percent who thought so in August 2007). Trust for American motives has sunk to new lows: Three quarters of Pakistanis say that the real purpose of the U.S.-led war on terror is to weaken the Muslim world and dominate Pakistan.

Significantly, when asked who was most responsible for the violence that is occurring in Pakistan today, more than half (52 percent) blame the United States—only 8 percent al-Qaeda fighters.

Despite the spate of suicide bombings that have shaken Pakistan at the apparent hands of al-Qaeda and the Taliban, Pakistanis see the United States as posing the greatest threat to their own personal safety. Forty-four percent of Pakistanis think the United States poses the greatest threat to their personal safety (traditional enemy India is next at 14 percent). By contrast, a mere 6 percent feel al-Qaeda is a threat, with 4 percent the Afghan Taliban and 8 percent the Pakistani Taliban.

PAKISTANIS AGREE WITH AL-QAEDA GOALS, BUT NOT TACTICS

Al-Qaeda's considerable goodwill inside Pakistan is generated by their perceived goals, which Pakistanis say they largely share. More than any other goal, Pakistanis think that standing up to America is the goal of bin Laden and al-Qaeda—and 57 percent agree with that al-Qaeda goal. Likewise, the most important reason for

backing al-Qaeda/bin Laden for almost two-thirds of their supporters was the perception that they stand up to America and lead a defensive jihad against it.

Pakistanis, however, continue to oppose suicide attacks, with 14 percent thinking these attacks can often or sometimes be justified. Pakistani opposition to suicide attacks extends to whoever is the intended target, with opposition equally highest to both Pakistani and American civilians and dropping slightly for Pakistani and American military personnel.

BEFORE UPCOMING BY-ELECTIONS, NAWAZ SHARIF AND THE PML–N OVERTAKE THE PPP AS THE MOST POPULAR PARTY IN PAKISTAN

In another dramatic reversal of Pakistani public opinion, Nawaz Sharif has emerged, by far, as the most popular political leader in Pakistan today. In advance of the June 26 Parliamentary by-elections in Pakistan, a striking 86 percent of Pakistanis have a favorable opinion of Mr. Sharif, a former Pakistani Prime Minister with conservative Islamist ties that have made some American policymakers indicate concern.

Mr. Sharif has also seen a steady rise in his popularity, from 57 percent favorable in our August 2007 poll, to 74 percent in January 2008 and 86 percent today. As significantly, those with a very favorable opinion have almost doubled since January 2008 to 43 percent now—a level no other political figure in Pakistan comes even close to. (By comparison, Mr. Zardari, leader of the PPP, just has a 13 percent very favorable rating.)

If national elections were held today, Mr. Sharif's party, the PML–N, would emerge as the clear winner, garnering 42 percent of the vote to the PPP's 32 percent. The PML–N has witnessed a significant surge in popularity. From only 15 percent saying they would vote for them in our August 2007 poll, to 25 percent in our preelection January poll (which mirrored the actual election results), the party today stands at 42 percent, the most popular party in Pakistan.

PAKISTANIS HOLD THEIR GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HIGH FOOD AND FUEL PRICES; WANT INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY AND BLAME PPP AND MUSHARRAF FOR IMPASSE OVER RESTORING JUDGES

The reasons for the rise of Mr. Sharif and the declining fortunes of others inside Pakistan can be found in widespread Pakistani discontent with the status quo.

The high cost of food and fuel is hitting ordinary Pakistanis hard. An overwhelming 86 percent of Pakistanis have faced increasing difficulty in obtaining flour for their daily food consumption—primarily because of high prices. And Pakistanis consider their own government most responsible.

Similarly, 81 percent have been affected by the high price of fuel, with again, in their view, the Pakistani Government most responsible, only for fuel closely followed by American and Western oil companies.

Overall, just 20 percent of Pakistanis think their country is heading in the right direction. With the highest priority Pakistanis have for their government (even slightly higher than the economy) an independent judiciary, most Pakistanis now blame the PPP and President Musharraf for failing to restore the judges sacked by Mr. Musharraf last fall. Almost three-quarters of Pakistanis want Mr. Musharraf to resign and if he doesn't, to be removed by Parliament as President.

Dissatisfaction with the current civilian government does not mean, however, that the public wants the Pakistani military to return to political affairs. In our survey last August, 45 percent approved of the military playing a role in the political and economic affairs of the country. That number has now dropped to 28 percent, while those who disapprove have steadily risen from 46 percent last August to 64 percent now, with those strongly disapproving doubling to over half.

OPINION OF THE U.S. STILL NEGATIVE, BUT OPEN TO CHANGE

While attitudes towards the United States and particularly the American war on terror remain strongly negative, Pakistanis say that a change in American policy toward Pakistan would bring about a stunning change in Pakistani public opinion toward the United States.

Two-thirds of Pakistanis said that policies ranging from increased American business investment, free trade, educational aid, disaster assistance, medical care/training and increased U.S. visas for Pakistanis would significantly improve their opinion of the United States.

More than two-thirds of Pakistanis who now have favorable views of al-Qaeda and bin Laden said they would also significantly change their opinion of the U.S. with these new American policies.

Indeed, the number of Pakistanis who are now willing to view the United States more positively with new American actions is higher than at any other time that we have measured in our surveys.

[FROM FOXNEWS.COM, JAN. 23, 2008]

MUSHARRAF: PAKISTAN ISN'T HUNTING USAMA

Pervez Musharraf says he still gets the question a lot: When will Usama bin Laden and his top deputy be caught? The Pakistani president insists it's more important for his 100,000 troops on the Afghan border to root out the Taliban than search for Al Qaeda leaders.

That bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri are still at large "doesn't mean much," the former general said Tuesday on the second day of a swing through Europe. He suggested they are far less a threat to his regime than Taliban-linked militants entrenched in Pakistan's west.

Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri are believed to be hiding somewhere in the lawless tribal areas along Afghanistan's frontier with Pakistan.

"The 100,000 troops that we are using . . . are not going around trying to locate Usama bin Laden and Zawahiri, frankly," Musharraf told a conference at the French Institute for International Relations. "They are operating against terrorists, and in the process, if we get them, we will deal with them certainly."

A U.S. ally in its war on extremist groups, Musharraf has come under increasing pressure following the assassination of opposition leader Benazir Bhutto last month and for his brief declaration of emergency rule in early November.

Musharraf, who as commander of Pakistan's military seized power in a bloodless coup in 1999, said the remnants of Afghanistan's former Taliban regime and its Pakistani sympathizers are the "more serious issue" for both countries.

But he said there was "zero percent chance" that Al Qaeda, the Taliban and their Pakistani allies could defeat his 500,000-strong army or that Islamic militants could win control of the government in Feb. 18 parliamentary elections.

As part of the "multi-pronged strategy" against terrorists, Pakistan has erected fences "selectively" and set up 1,000 checkpoints along the Afghan border in an effort to stop militants from using the areas to launch attacks inside the neighboring nation, he said.

Musharraf credited cooperation between Pakistani intelligence services and the CIA, both of whom believe that Pakistani militant leader Baitullah Mehsud was the mastermind of the Dec. 27 gun and suicide bomb attack that killed Bhutto.

But in Washington, the State Department's counterterrorism chief, Dell Dailey, said the Bush administration was displeased with "gaps in intelligence" received from Pakistan about the activities of extremist groups in the tribal regions.

"We don't have enough information about what's going on there. Not on Al Qaeda. Not on foreign fighters. Not on the Taliban," he said.

Dailey, a retired Army lieutenant general with extensive background in special operations, said Pakistan needs to fix the problem. He said the U.S. wasn't likely to conduct military strikes inside Pakistan on its own, saying that would anger many Pakistanis.

Musharraf played down the impact of recent attacks by extremists in the border region of South Waziristan, calling them "pinpricks" that his government must manage—not a sign of a resurgent Taliban.

Attacks on forts in that district over the last month—including a battle Tuesday—have fanned concerns that militants with links to Al Qaeda and the Taliban may be gaining control in the region.

Pakistan's army said fighting at the fort and another clash killed at least seven paramilitary border guards and 37 militants Tuesday.

The border region emerged as a front line in the war on extremist groups after Musharraf allied Pakistan with the U.S. following the Sept. 11 terror attacks. Washington has given Pakistan billions of dollars in aid to help government forces battle militants.

Rising violence in the border region and a series of suicide attacks across Pakistan that killed hundreds in recent months have added to uncertainty before next month's elections, which many people predict will further weaken Musharrafs grip on power.

Despite turmoil at home, Musharraf defended his visit to four European countries, saying he wasn't concerned about the stability of his regime while he was away.

"I can assure you that nothing will happen in Pakistan," he said. "We are not a banana republic."

French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who met privately with Musharraf on Tuesday, expressed support for Pakistan's fight with extremists and promised to press for increased European Union aid when France takes over the bloc's rotating presidency in July, Sarkozy's office said.