

Part II: Pakistan

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The stability of Pakistan is key to security in South Asia, argued Templer. The situation is very serious and deserves at least as much attention as the Middle East. A worrying cycle of tension between India and Pakistan needs to be broken. To do this, Pakistan needs to restrict cross-border militant activity across the Line of Control that divides Indian and Pakistani-controlled Kashmir. As well, more needs to be done to bring India to the negotiating table on the Kashmir issue, he added.

AGAINST CONVENTIONAL WISDOM: MYTHS ABOUT PERVEZ MUSHARRAF

Templer argued that the “conventional” wisdom that characterized Western thinking after September 11 was that Musharraf had made a “heroic policy shift” by siding against the Taliban in the U.S.-led “war on terror.” Templer expressed a contrary view, stating that these actions of the Pakistani military are premised on a broader strategy to remain in power, rather than a sincere desire to crack down on extremism.

One of the main myths propagated by the Pakistani military is that they are under threat from extremist elements in the public. In fact, Templer stated, the military is firmly in control of these groups. He remarked that terrorist attacks within Pakistan are rarely directed against the military establishment.

The Pakistani military and extremist groups have acted in a symbiotic relationship. In fact, the relationship between terrorist groups in Pakistan and Pro-Taliban elements is very close. Since January 12, 2002, when Musharraf made a pledge to crack down on extremist groups operating in Pakistan, the groups themselves have expressed little fear of punishment from the military regime, said Templer, basing his findings on recent interviews with militant groups in Pakistan. The Musharraf regime has opted for a “round up the usual suspects” strategy, characterized by jailing suspected terrorists and releasing them shortly after.

On education, Templer argued that Musharraf’s regime has made little headway on reform of Pakistan’s religious schools (*madrassas*), which many analysts have called bases for the propagation of extremist thought and ideology. While the Pakistani government insists they are capable of self-regulation, Templer was skeptical about this assessment. Much of the difficulty with *madrassa* reform is that they provide useful services for poor families unable to send their children to schools.

THE KASHMIR MILITANTS

Efforts to crack down on Kashmir terror groups operating within Pakistan’s borders have so far been inadequate. Pakistan’s strategy on Kashmir is to “bleed India” using the Kashmir militants, said Templer. He added that unless Pakistan halts this strategy, tensions in the region will only further escalate.

A RETURN TO DEMOCRACY: THE ONLY WAY FORWARD FOR PAKISTAN

“Our sense is that the military will stay in power for a long time,” said Templer. Unless Pakistan