



# THINK SOUTH ASIA

## EDITORIAL



### **António Vieira da Cruz**

Editor of **Think South Asia**  
Policy Advisor of South Asia  
Democratic Forum

*“Etymology says a lot of  
Pakistan’s early history.”*

In this edition we will put the focus on Pakistan, a country with more than 180 million people, being the 6th most populous country in the world. We could roughly say that the story of Pakistan was marked by two partitions: the partition of India in 1947 and its own partition in 1971. But as History is more complex than that, we are dedicating this edition of Think South Asia magazine to Pakistan.

In the case of this country, etymology says a lot of its early history. The word “Pakistan” did not exist before 1933, when it was coined by the Muslim nationalist Mr Choudhry Rahmat Ali who, with other intellectuals, wanted to create a separate Muslim homeland in South Asia. According to scholars, the name has its origins in the acronym PAKSTAN, which results from Punjab + Afghani territories + Kashmir + Sindh + Baluchistan. An “i” was introduced amidst for reasons of pronunciation

and the word resulting from this mix, “Pakistan”, was given to the new country in 1947. This very same word has also a meaning in Urdu and Persian languages: “land of the pure” or “land of the clean”.

So the country was founded by Muhammad Ali Jinnah in 1947, at the same time as India was founded by Jawaharlal Nehru. Both were influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and the 3 of them were fundamental for the independence of South Asian countries from the British. I write this raw background because after speaking with dozens of people about Pakistan, I saw literally everybody, both Islamists and Secularists quoting Jinnah for their advantage. Part of the problem is this: Jinnah had probably a clear vision about Pakistan, but he expressed it in such an ambiguous manner that this brought many consequences and questions until today. It is hard to find what the founder really meant for Pakistan, if a

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Muslim State or a State for Muslims. The partition of India had serious problems because the idea was to give to Pakistan the Muslim-majority territories. Nevertheless, the borders were not clear at all and issues like Kashmir are yet today to be solved, with loss to the India/Pakistan relations.

Another problem was the creation of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), which had a different culture and language from West Pakistan (the actual Pakistan). This generated many problems related to national identity and, in 1971, East Pakistan became independent with the help of India, and it is now the country known as Bangladesh. As a result of severe crimes against humanity, Bangladesh is now committed to punish the genocide criminals of 1971 through the International Crimes Tribunal in Dhaka. This is generating nowadays something we never saw in history: the Shahbag movement consists in the biggest set of protests against Muslim extremism in a Muslim-majority country. We should be interested in following these manifestations closely.

Internally, Pakistan also faces some important challenges. The way the “land of the clean” authorities’ deal with religious and ethnical minorities is far from being the most appropriate. You can find an article by Mr Wilson Chowdhry from the British Pakistani Christian Association where he points out clear cases of Minority Rights abuses and Human Rights violations that currently occur in Pakistan. This article is just the summary of a 500 pages report he recently launched in the House of Commons (Westminster,

London), named “The Targeting of ‘Minority Others’ in Pakistan”. If you are interested in more details, I strongly advise you to search and read it.

The Blasphemy Law is perhaps the most symbolic issue for the Christians in Pakistan and Mrs Asia Bibi, who still is in jail and sentenced to death, is with no doubts their emblem. To see the importance of this issue, the Minister for Minorities Affairs Shahbaz Bhatti (Christian) and the Governor of Punjab Salman Taseer (Muslim) were both killed because they supported Asia Bibi and were against the Blasphemy Law. Another issue of concern is Education, as we saw by what happened to the young Malala Yousafzai, or by analysing the hate-oriented official textbooks promoted by the government. Other cases exist, but Asia Bibi and Malala are perhaps the most well-known to the international community.

Concerning terrorism, the position of Pakistan is not better. In the beginning, Pakistan seemed to be an ally of the West against the Taliban, Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. But soon we discovered they were not serious allies in the “war on terror”, when the Pakistani intelligence agencies kept the support to the Taliban, protected terrorist groups like the Haqqani network and Lashkar-i-Islam, or even when the authorities harboured the criminal Osama Bin Laden near a military complex in the city of Abbottabad. Regarding this, no one was jailed for helping Bin Laden to hide; the only person in prison is the physician Mr Shakil Afridi, who was accused of treason for cooperating with the CIA in finding Osama Bin Laden, and therefore tortured and

sentenced to 33 years of imprisonment. This problematic attitude of Pakistan towards terrorism is reflected in the most recent position of Afghanistan in its peace process. The Afghani Deputy Foreign Minister Jawed Ludin said on the 27th of March 2013 that “Afghanistan is shocked by Pakistan’s complacency in the nascent Afghan peace process and is ready to work without Islamabad’s help on reconciliation”. Yet regarding Afghanistan, we publish in this edition a very strong message from the former Afghani Minister of Women’s Affairs Doctor Massouda Jalal, on the occasion of the International Women’s Day.

Well Afghanistan controls territories which in the past belonged to Baluchistan, a nation nowadays divided by Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. The majority of the Baluchi people are in the Pakistani controlled side of the nation and they never gave up their struggle for freedom. The response from the Pakistani authorities is vehement and is becoming more violent, being now known as the Pakistani “kill and dump policy”.

In Baluchistan the Chinese are building and exploring the port of Gwadar, which is geopolitically important for several reasons Dr Siegfried Wolf from the Heidelberg University explains in his interesting article. Because of its rivalry and disputes with India, China is a natural ally of Pakistan. The Chinese are active in the whole of South Asia, investing not only in Gwadar, but also in Tricomalee in Sri Lanka, funding the Maoists in Nepal, illegally occupying lands in northern Bhutan, supporting the coup d’état in the Maldives... so we cannot exclude

China from the South Asian equation. The official response of the Pakistani authorities to Human Rights complaints is that the government “supports the minorities”, agrees and condemns the Human Rights abuses, and finally promises to take action “against culprits” and “external forces”. Contrastingly, the victims usually say the government is in “state of denial”.

In fact, it seems that government’s role in the country is limited. All the testimonies and experts on the country say that the Military and the Intelligence Agencies (the most famous is ISI, but there are several others) are the ones truly ruling the country, and governments are almost meaningless. The Islamic extremism is transversal to all these institutions. No one answered me so long who is ultimately controlling the country. No one knows. Perhaps at the end it is not one person controlling it, but several Islamists and not necessarily only in the top of the hierarchy. This is worrying when we think that Pakistan is a nuclear State.

One must think if the aid money we (the USA and the EU) continuously give to Pakistan to fight terrorism and promote Human Rights, Women’s Rights, Education, Civil Society Empowerment and many other development goals is being really well spent. We must be sure that these funds are helping those who really need and not being spent in the destabilisation of this already sensible region.

Regional cooperation in South Asia is not possible while these issues of terrorism, extremist education (in some madrasas and in public schools) and

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Human Rights abuses are not seriously tackled. Pakistan is a very important country in the region and the implementation of the rule of law and granted respect for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights will benefit everybody regionally, beginning in Pakistan itself.

A critic should also propose solutions; nevertheless, I must leave here a simpler desire. I firmly hope that the Pakistani people could find in themselves the ability and strength enough to draw their own path of peace and respect for the Human Right of every single person.

These are some personal notes on Pakistan, but to know more about this fascinating country, nothing is better than taking a look to our country profile wonderfully written by Mst Sabikun Naher from the University of Dhaka.

Finally, I believe it is crucial to address two big issues in South Asia in general: water and corruption. Regarding water, we welcome the perspective of Mr João Moreira Pires, expert from Less Means More, writing on wastewater management as a development indicator. On the problem of corruption, the best is to return to the classics and read “Arthashastra”

from Kautilya (also known as Chanakya or Vishnu Gupta). He says:

“Just as fish moving under water cannot possibly be found out either as drinking or not drinking water, so government servants employed in the government work cannot be found out (while) taking money (for themselves).”

These words written in the 4th century b.C. during the Mauryan Empire could not be more valid today.

With special thanks to Manuel C.C.V.C., who helped me with the photos, this edition is dedicated to the Pakistani Christians and other minorities who suffer in life what we usually remember in this Lent and Easter season. Enjoy the readings and please do not hesitate to send your suggestions to the email [antonio@sadf.eu](mailto:antonio@sadf.eu) ■

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## Pakistan

Pakistan is officially known as the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and is situated in South Asia, with an area of 310,527 square miles with a 164.74 million population. It is the sixth most populous country in the world with 2.03% population growth rate, which is the highest among the SAARC countries. Pakistan has a 1,046-kilometre (650 miles) coastline beside the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman in the south and is bordered by India to the east. Afghanistan is to the west and north, Iran to the southwest and China in the far northeast. There are more than sixty languages are spoken in Pakistan. Urdu is the lingua franca, English is the official language, and Punjabi, Saraiki, Pashto, Sindhi, and Balochi are provincial languages. The national sport of Pakistan is hockey but cricket is the most popular game across the country. Karachi is its most populous city. Most of the population lives in an arc formed by the cities of Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Gujrat, Jhelum, Sargodha, Sheikhpura, Nowshera, Mardan and Peshawar. Islamabad is the Capital. It has four

provinces viz Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Local government follows a three-tier system of districts, tehsils and union councils, with an elected body at each tier. There are about 130 districts. The Tribal Areas comprise seven tribal agencies and six small frontier regions detached from neighboring districts. The court system of Pakistan is organised as a hierarchy, with the Supreme Court at the apex, below which are High Courts, Federal Shariat Courts, District Courts, Judicial Magistrate Courts, Executive Magistrate Courts and Civil Courts. Pakistani society is largely hierarchical, emphasizing local cultural etiquettes and traditional Islamic values. The basic family unit is the extended family. The traditional dress for both men and women is the Shalwar Kameez; trousers and shirts.

The name Pakistan was coined in 1933 by Choudhary Rahmat Ali. Pakistan is divided into three major geographic areas viz the northern highlands, the Indus River plain and the Balochistan Plateau. There are four distinct seasons viz a cool, dry winter from



**Mst. Sabikun Naher**  
BSS (Honors), MSS (running) in  
International Relations,  
Department of International  
Relations, University of Dhaka.

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# COUNTRY PROFILE

***“Male literacy is 70.2% while female literacy rate is 46.3%. Pakistan has 136 universities”  
mais***

***“Pakistan’s economy is Agriculture based and it is one of the largest producers of natural commodities”***



December through February; a hot, dry spring from March through May; the summer rainy season, or southwest monsoon period, from June through September; and the retreating monsoon period of October and November.

Education in Pakistan is divided into six main levels viz pre-primary, primary, middle, high, and intermediate and university. The literacy rate of the population above ten years of age in the country is 58.5%. Male literacy is 70.2% while female literacy rate is 46.3%. Pakistan has 136 universities.

Pakistan’s economy is Agriculture based and it is one of the largest producers of natural commodities. The structure of the Pakistani economy has changed from a mainly agricultural to a strong service base. Agriculture now accounts for only 21.2% of the GDP. Between 2002 and 2007 there was substantial foreign investment in Pakistan’s banking and energy sectors, clothing and textiles, food processing, chemicals manufacture, iron, steel and tourism. Pakistan is a rapidly developing country

and have a high potential to become the world’s largest economies in the 21st century. Pakistan’s estimated nominal GDP as of 2011 is US\$202 billion. The GDP by PPP is US\$488.6 billion which is 27th of the world. It is South Asia’s second largest economy, representing about 15 percent of regional GDP which is 47th of the world.

Pakistan has the seventh largest standing armed forces in the world. It tested successfully nuclear bomb in 1998 and become the only nuclear power among the Muslim world. Pakistani armed forces are the largest troop contributors to UN peacekeeping missions.

The territory of modern Pakistan was home to several ancient cultures and founding ground of some earliest civilization of human history i.e Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. The area has been ruled by numerous empires and dynasties, viz the Indian Mauryan Empire, the Persian Achaemenid Empire, the Arab Umayyad Caliphate, the Mongol Empire, the Mughal Empire, the Durrani Empire, the

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## COUNTRY PROFILE

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Sikh Empire and the British Empire. The modern state of Pakistan was established on 14 August 1947. From 1947 to 1956, Pakistan was a dominion in the Commonwealth of Nations under two monarchs. In 1970, Pakistan held its first democratic elections since independence. But after the East Pakistani Awami League won, Yahya Khan and the ruling elite in West Pakistan refused to hand over power and the Pakistan Army launched a military operation on 25 March 1971 as a result East Pakistan emerged as the independent state named Bangladesh. General Parvez Musharraf ruled Pakistan as head of state from 1999 to 2001 and as President from 2001 to 2008. After the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in December 2007, party member Yousaf Raza Gillani was sworn in as Prime Minister in 2008. Gillani was disqualified from membership of parliament and as prime minister by the Supreme Court of Pakistan in June 2012. In 2013, the supreme court of Pakistan give arrest order to the Prime Minister Ashraf Raza Gillani because of his corruption.

Pakistan's foreign policy focuses on national security and territorial integrity, sovereign equality of states, bilateralism, mutuality of interests, and non-interference in each other's domestic affairs. It tries to maintain close relationship with Muslim and all Arab countries. The country is an active member of the United Nations, OIC, Commonwealth of Nations, SAARC, ECO and the G20 developing nations. Pakistan now maintains a policy of "credible minimum deterrence". Pakistan's closest strategic, military and

economic ally has been China. Pakistan has had mixed relations with the United States. The relation of Pakistan with USA was very warm from 1950s, and presently is mixed in nature. Issues like terrorism, Drone attacks, economic barriers, Taliban, the Malala issue and human rights violations are weakening the external orientations of the country.

Pakistan shares border with two nuclear powers those are intended to be a super power of the upcoming world: China and India. This location is unique in the world that three nuclear powers share borders and rival each other on a common issue i.e. Kashmir. This is geographically one of the vital places of the world. Any form of instability in this pivot may disrupt the normal flow of world stability. The recent border conflict with India indicates the sensitivity of this position. Internally, Pakistan is passing in turmoil. Internal stability with external pressure and conflict issue heighten the importance of Pakistan for sake of stability and peace in this region and to some extent for the whole world.

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## Gwadar Port – A potential game changer?



### Siegfried O. Wolf

Director of Research of South Asia Democratic Forum; Lecturer in International Relations and Comparative Politics at the South Asia Institute, Heidelberg University, Germany

***“Gwadar is located outside the Strait of Hormuz near some of the world’s busiest shipping routes.”***

‘Gwadar is now a potential hub for trade and commerce in the region’. With these words, President Asif Ali Zardari expressed Pakistan’s hopes to turn the Sino-Pakistani project into a national and regional gateway that will boost the country’s feeble economy. Given the fact that Beijing is the principal financial sponsor of the port and that -since January 2013- it is managed by a Chinese company, Islamabad expects that Gwadar will give new impetus to China-Pakistan relations. The fact that Gwadar is located outside the Strait of Hormuz near some of the world’s busiest shipping routes supports Zardari’s statement. However, this is only part of the story.

First of all, when taking into consideration the numerous unfavourable determinants for the Gwadar’s project, many analysts remain sceptical that anyone will be able to turn the project into an economically viable endeavour. For example, the endemic poverty of the surrounding province of Balochistan, increasing opposition by large sections of the Baloch people, political instability, deteriorating security situation, and lack of infrastructure and connectivity with the hinterland all cast a dark shadow on the fortune of Gwadar. Hence, there is an imminent threat that this expensive

mega project will have no economic value. In brief, from an economic point of view Gwadar looks like a ‘white elephant’ which just came out of the blue in, quite literally, the middle of nowhere. Having this in mind one should raise the legitimate question: what are the real intentions of Pakistan and China behind the Gwadar project? Are they motivated by economic or rather by a military interests? Is it part of a long term strategy of Chinese preparation for a potential new Cold War-scenario between Beijing and Washington in the Asia-Pacific region? To tackle this puzzle, observers are emphasizing that one should draw the attention more towards the strategic and security aspects of Gwadar.

From a Pakistani perspective, the objective behind Gwadar is ostensibly beyond the economic argument. Being a brainchild of the Pakistani Armed Forces, naturally the port should serve more than commercial purposes only. Gwadar is envisioned as the regional transshipment hub for energy, services and cargo between Afghanistan, the Central Asian Republics (CAR), China and the Gulf. However, given the fact that Afghanistan and the CAR are increasingly linked with Iran’s Chabahar port (through the support of India) the importance of Gwadar

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as a regional transshipment hub is significantly reduced. But in security, military and strategic terms, the port remains of tremendous significance.

First it can serve as a listening post to monitor –and, if necessary, to disturb– one of the most important sea lanes for globally traded oil. The potential threat of energy security has severe political and strategic implications especially for Asian economies like India, Japan, Vietnam or Philippines among others which are in conflict with China over resources and territories. In other words, some strategists in Pakistan might be intrigued by using Gwadar as a political asset to improve its bargaining power in the context of other regional conflicts, namely Kashmir or water disputes.

Second, in case of an armed confrontation with India, Gwadar is in a much better geostrategic location than Karachi's Port. Therefore, Gwadar would reduce the dependence of Pakistan's Navy on the much more vulnerable ports in Karachi. There are indications that the Navy has its very own interests regarding Gwadar, especially in upgrading the port with naval facilities. By failing to hand over land (which belongs to the Navy) that was necessary for the establishment of a special economic zone at the port, the venture was significantly hampered. Consequently, Singapore's PSA International, the company which was responsible for managing the Gwadar port project before the authority was handed over to China, was forced to give up by the Pakistani authorities. Without a doubt, the Chinese were more appealing for Pakistan as a

partner than the Singaporean, which, unlike their Chinese counterparts, were interested in the port from a purely economic perspective.

Third, it seems that Gwadar is intended to be the cornerstone of an attempt to forge a new strategic triangle between Pakistan, China and Iran. Islamabad's trilateral ambitions are driven by Tehran's intentions to build a refinery and the recently signed Iran-Pakistan pipeline which would subsequently serve China's energy requirements. Besides the economic interests, the bottom line for Iran, Beijing and Pakistan is that all three states share ambiguous relations, to say the least, with the US and India and aim to limit the influence of New Delhi and Washington as much as possible in South Asia and the Indian Ocean. And last but not least, all three have a keen interest to suppress the Baloch national movement which is challenging their interests.

In order to understand the complexity of the Gwadar issue, one should also shed some light on Chinese interests in this project. Regarding official statements by Beijing, Gwadar is of utmost importance for energy security and trade. But unlike Pakistan –which publicly expresses its desire for a naval base operated by the Chinese– Beijing remains relatively quiet regarding the 'non-commercial' dimensions of the strategically well-located deep-seaport. Consequently, analysts are wondering about Beijing's intentions in Gwadar. Several assessments indicate that the Chinese takeover of the port is not

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# HEIDELBERG SPACE

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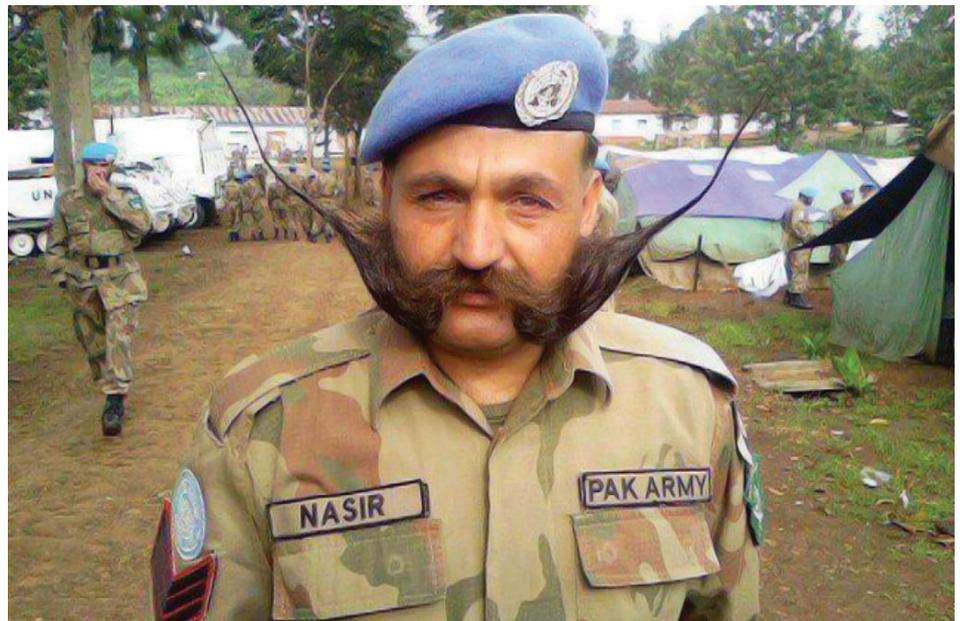
***“Around 20 per cent of the world’s oil and 60 per cent of Chinese energy requirements coming from the Middle East have to transit this bottleneck.”***

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only part of a long-run strategy to secure its energy routes but also a tool to expand control over maritime straits in the Indian Ocean, especially the eminent chokepoint in the Strait of Hormuz. Around 20 per cent of the world’s oil and 60 per cent of Chinese energy requirements coming from the Middle East have to transit this bottleneck. Therefore Gwadar -connected with Western China via the Karakorum Highway- offers China an alternative route via Gwadar. Basically China is facing what has been called ‘the Malacca dilemma’ meaning it is highly dependent on the congested and narrow Strait of Malacca between Malaysia and Indonesia for its imports of natural gas and oil shipments. In case of a conflict, this gateway could be blocked easily. In this context, one should mention that the Malacca Strait is under virtual control of Washington. The US have permanently stationed several fast Littoral Combat Ships in Singapore and the port of Singapore has facilities specially designed for US aircraft carriers.

Therefore, Gwadar is for China much more than a backup option for the Malacca route. It’s an ideal staging ground for all kinds of maritime activities. Nevertheless, China has demonstrated restraint regarding any further engagement in Gwadar, besides providing most of the necessary funds. However, this policy seems to have changed since the latest agreement in January allowed Beijing’s to take over control of the port this year. The ‘rediscovery’ of China’s enthusiasm regarding the commercial build-up is generally understood in the context of military and strategic considerations. Taking the growing influence of China in Pakistan and the ‘new strategic depth’ in the relation between both countries into account, it will be absolutely certain that Islamabad will grant basing rights for the Chinese Navy if Beijing were interested. This would grant China for the first time the possibility to use a port in the Indian Ocean for its ships and submarines. Furthermore, the option for regular refueling, refurbishment and repair and other services available,



would allow China to exercise extensive sea control in the area. This does not only serve the purpose of protecting the increasing volume of Chinese nautical mileage in the region but should also be interpreted as a response to India's blue-water navy build-up and the presence of US maritime forces.

Therefore, Gwadar under Chinese control has the potential to function as a 'game changer'. Until now, besides for some periodic naval visits, brief exercises, and some military-maritime cooperation with the Seychelles, China had no opportunity to operate with warships into the Indian Ocean on a permanent basis. In order to bridge this gap of insufficient capabilities regarding the maneuverability and reach of its vessels, China supports several port constructions not only in Pakistan but also in Sri Lanka (Hambantota port) and in Chittagong and Sonadiya, near Cox's Bazar. Additionally, China is also wooing the Maldives to gain more leverage. Of course, officially all these projects are supposed to push economic development and cooperation. However, since Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have an interest in maintaining cordial relations with India, it is highly unlikely that China will receive similar offers regarding strategic-military cooperation like the one from Islamabad. With Gwadar as a potential naval base, China will have an effective bridgehead in one of the most sensitive and important areas for global energy security. With regards to the massive build-up of China's naval capabilities, it is unlikely that the future of Gwadar will be only a port reserved for commercial ventures. As such Gwadar will serve as a key node and game changer when it comes to reshaping the traditional power

structure in Southern Asian regarding the control over the access to energy and other natural resources. Hence, it is important to point out that while there is ample reason to cooperate, China is primarily doing so to push its own strategic agenda.

First, China has more than once acted 'halfheartedly' when Islamabad reached out for support from its so called 'all-weather friend'. Taking the persistent talk about the 'thrust factor' in China-Pakistan relations into account, it seems that Pakistan's political decision-makers have a very selective memory when it comes to incidences in which China abandoned Pakistan. Just to recall, China did not back up Pakistan militarily in its 1965 and 1971 wars with India. It even turned its back diplomatically on Pakistan during the Kargil crisis of 1999 by supporting Washington's for Islamabad to withdraw its troops from the Indian side of the Line of Control in Kashmir. The Chinese position during this conflict helped to improve its relations with India which had turned sour over a couple of issues, including the 1962 border war, several territorial disputes, and issues concerning Tibet and the Dalai Lama. Furthermore, by adhering to strict neutrality in the 2002 crisis between India and Pakistan, Beijing also failed to live up to Islamabad's expectations. The statement that China is a 'friend of both countries', must have come as a major disappointment to the Pakistani security establishment at that time.

Second, the above mentioned decisions can also be partly seen as fortunate for South Asia and beyond because it helped to limit the conflicts to its regional sphere. Nevertheless, the

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***“Both the 1965 and 1971 wars ended in national disasters for Pakistan and increased international isolation. Furthermore, it led to a systematic genocide and countless war atrocities in Bangladesh.”***

***“The role of Pakistani security forces during the killing of three million Bangladeshi still remains to be adequately clarified and legally addressed.”***

Chinese did not do much to prevent the region from these wars -initiated by Pakistan- in using its growing influence on its ‘ally’. In contrast, by offering military hardware and technical supplies it sent out the wrong signals towards Islamabad contributing to enthusiasm about a potential success of upcoming war efforts. In contrast, both the 1965 and 1971 wars ended in national disasters for Pakistan and increased international isolation. Furthermore, it led to a systematic genocide and countless war atrocities in Bangladesh. The role of Pakistani security forces during the killing of three million Bangladeshi still remains to be adequately clarified and legally addressed. Obviously, Beijing’s strategic thinkers at that time were using China’s relations with Pakistan as a proxy for maintaining the high level of conflict in South Asia in order to extend its own influence at the expense of the US and India.

Third, besides the India-Pakistan conflict, also in Afghanistan, China is following its own strategy by doing business through outbidding non-Chinese private companies which can’t compete with large funded Chinese state enterprises. This will seriously hamper the development of a healthy Afghan economy in a long term perspective. This is gaining more momentum, since China is not willing to get involved in a sustainable reconstruction and reconciliation process in the country, which would not only serve Afghanistan as well as the whole region, but particularly Pakistan.

Fourth, the fact that Pakistan’s military is in war with the Taliban in the light of worsening US-Pakistan relations, which might lead to a reduction of US aid, will make the economically weak Pakistani state more dependent on China. In this context, it is significant to note that the Chinese were willing to maintain a ‘normalized’ relationship with the Taliban government in Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001. In order to protect its economic interests in the Afghanistan-Pakistani region, Beijing might be allured to continue this strategy in dealing with Taliban and associated extremist forces. In other words, when it comes to Chinese support for combating militant fundamentalism, there is potential threat of another disappointment for Pakistan’s elites.

Fifth, related to the point above, is the fact that China is indirectly enhancing Islamic fundamentalism and militancy in Pakistan. Facing subnational movements, militancy and terrorism in territories under its own control, Beijing should be a ‘natural ally’ against terrorism in Pakistan and Afghanistan. However, it appears that the Chinese prefer to benefit from the US-led ‘war against terror’ by taking a ‘free-ride’. In other words, where Washington does not receive much ‘bang for their bucks’ from Pakistan, Beijing is able with the help of Islamabad to reap the benefits of Washington’s stabilization efforts by concentrating on the economic exploitation of the ‘AfPak’ region. This undoubtedly emboldens the Taliban and associated groups since it indicates

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that there is a powerful neighbor who is willing to stay more or less neutral which might offer some potential room to maneuver in the future. This view gains more significance in the light of Indio-Pakistani relations. In order to contain India's influence and hegemonic aspirations in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region, China is fueling tensions between Islamabad and New Delhi -a modus operandi that plays straight into the hand of religious extremists in Pakistan.

To conclude, if China decides to turn Gwadar into a naval base, this will have severe implications on the security structure of the Indian Ocean. At the moment, there are indications that this could happen. Hence, this step definitely redefines the rules and conditions of a 'new great game' over influence in the whole region.

Nevertheless, Islamabad's decision-makers have to be aware of several conditions in the gamble for regional hegemony which will be played out: first, its asymmetric power relations with Beijing; second, that China is not always on the same political and strategic page as Pakistan; third, Pakistan is a significant but not one of the major players involved in China's grand strategy; and fourth Pakistan's people and regions like Baluchistan and Gilgit-Baltistan have to pay the price due to the Gwadar project. Islamabad has to realize -even if it might be the most important Chinese ally in South Asia- that it is only one of many 'junior partners' of China in Asia. At the end of the day, China's aspired strategic footprint might be too big for Pakistani boots. ■

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## Wilson Chowdhry

Chairman British Pakistani  
Christian Association,  
Chairman Redbridge Carnival;  
Director A. A. Security,  
Chairman of EIBP

***“Pakistan is currently rated as the sixth most dangerous country in the world for persecution of minorities.”***

## The Targeting of ‘Minority Others’ in Pakistan: Report Executive Summary

The sprawling nature of the subject matter makes a traditional chapter by chapter breakdown impossible, so this is a somewhat scattergun summary that captures the main issues.

- Pakistan is the world’s fifth most populous country, and over its existence has shown an unbroken downward trend in the standard of its treatment of religious and other minorities. It is currently rated as the sixth most dangerous country in the world for persecution of minorities.

- This report is a rare collaboration between researchers and activists from all the main minorities in Pakistan.

- The targeting of various minorities in Pakistan has grown through time, and in part can now be described as ‘genocidal’ in scope.

- Efforts to stem the flow of refugees and asylum seekers from Pakistan have led a number of Western countries, including the UK and Australia, into highly questionable relationships with Pakistani state agencies that are directly complicit in much of this targeted and genocidal activity, notably Pakistan’s main Intelligence Agency, the notorious ISI.

- In the UK, the treatment of ‘failed’ asylum seekers held in administrative detention is particularly poor, with racist and degrading treatment far from uncommon, including elements of physical and mental torture and other inhumane treatment of already traumatized rape victims and children. Reports include women stripped naked and filmed semi-nude by private security guards. Pakistani Christian refugees, and women refugees generally, for example, are particularly badly treated by the asylum adjudication process in the UK.

- Pakistani minority refugees represent a massively increasing portion of those seeking asylum in the UK, and the UK Border Agency (UKBA) has a very poor record in assessing these claims, with a high proportion of refusals being overturned at higher tribunals. A number of their rejections contain bizarre and sometimes outright self-contradictory justifications for refusing asylum, and a consistent pattern has emerged of UKBA grossly over-estimating the integrity and moral rectitude of Pakistani police as a whole, over-estimating the viability of internal flight as an alternative to seeking asylum, combined with a decidedly rose-tinted perception of the realities >>

of life for minorities in Pakistan. Christians in Pakistan's perception and complaint –whether justified or not - is that Muslims are given visa's and asylum in the UK, but by and large Christians aren't. Hindu's have more of an avenue of escape as Pakistan has a long border with India, an option not so viable for Christians.

- Hindus (and Sikhs, to an extent) are viewed with greater suspicion due to ongoing conflicts with India. In addition, Indian citizens who stray across the unmarked border are treated – however implausibly – as spies, and have been known to be held incommunicado in the prison system for decades without trial, undergoing torture and inhumane conditions, and without the Indian state or the Red Cross being informed.

- Widespread and compelling evidence shows Pakistan's notorious ISI intelligence agency is engaged in torture, lengthy detention without trial, and starvation of prisoners, both directly and by proxy, through various extremist groups, including the Pakistani Taliban. Pakistan's High Court has tried to take them to task for these kinds of abuse several times recently.

- US and UK pressure on Pakistan's authorities in the 'War on Terror' effectively make those nations morally complicit in the ISI's nationwide illegal detention infrastructure. For instance claims that MI5 officers on the ground were unaware of such mistreatment are directly and robustly contradicted by the testimony of ISI officials. UK government promises of transparency over MI5 and MI6 operational

guidelines around third-party torture have yet to be fulfilled.

- On occasion, the UK authorities have functioned within the UK itself as an extension of the ISI's state terror campaign, using British taxpayer's money to covertly monitor peaceful human rights activists as alleged 'terrorists', as well as sending officers on long, pointless and fruitless trips to the USA and Pakistan to get information that was already known. In one instance, they have continued to prosecute two Balochi activists for activities that a new Pakistani administration has long since publicly said were baseless and politically motivated.

- The concept of Genocide need not necessarily involve mass killing per se. It will also include deliberate and systematic targeting of the intended victims' language, culture, social life, history, language and religious and cultural buildings and shrines, as well as deliberate and systematic wounding of target populations physically and mentally, and practices such as forced prevention of birth and forced transfer of children. Anything that is organized with the goal of annihilating a population or culture and the imposing of the oppressor's culture can be considered 'genocidal'. •The definitions of 'minorities', 'institutionalized discrimination and racism' and other relevant terms are discussed, along with 'cultural genocide' and why it should be given more attention as a concept and a tool for assessing potential genocide situations.

- Journalists are targeted by extremist Islamic groups with the silent >>

***“Anything that is organized with the goal of annihilating a population or culture and the imposing of the oppressor's culture can be considered genocidal.”***

***“Journalists are targeted by extremist Islamic groups with the silent complicity of state agencies. These groups are intimidating all areas of Pakistani society.”***

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# MAIN STORY

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***“Security forces participate in gruesome murders and ‘disappearances’ of various minority and human rights activists on a regular basis, along the lines practiced by Hitler, targeting the cultural and intellectual elites of their victim population.”***

***“These forces also foment denial of their acts (a classic symptom of genocide) via various front groups, claiming conspiracy against Pakistan by Hindus, Zionists and Christians.”***

***“The Pakistani military and intelligence forces are engaging in an ongoing genocidal campaign in Baluchistan, an originally autonomous state.”***

complicity of state agencies. These groups are intimidating all areas of Pakistani society, to the point of being able to assassinate government ministers and state governors who oppose their agenda, and enjoy the patronage of powerful state agencies, in contrast to human rights activists who are often brutally targeted by those same state agencies.

- Security forces participate in gruesome murders and ‘disappearances’ of various minority and human rights activists on a regular basis, along the lines practiced by Hitler, targeting the cultural and intellectual elites of their victim population. These forces also foment denial of their acts (a classic symptom of genocide) via various front groups, claiming conspiracy against Pakistan by ‘Hindus, Zionists and Christians’.

- The Pakistani military and intelligence forces are engaging in an ongoing genocidal campaign in Baluchistan,

an originally autonomous state in the West of the country that was invaded and occupied by Pakistan after only a year in the late 1940’s. There are reports of widespread bombardment of villages and civilians. Currently, the state forces, as well as acting directly, appear to be using some Taliban-linked groups as proxies. Teachers, lecturers, politicians, poets, journalists, musicians, philosophers, human rights activists and other intellectuals are ‘disappeared’, some never to be heard of again, others whose bodies appear weeks later bearing marks of extreme torture in many cases. Evidence suggests a network of detainment centres where the tortures occur, and those who have escaped confirm torture, including rape, and the forcing of Baluchi men to rape Baluchi women prisoners on pain of having their own genitals cut off. Pakistan also connives with Iran against their common ethnic foe, handing some prisoners over to Iran to be hanged.



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# MAIN STORY

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- The conflict in the Afghanistan border zone raises particular issues with regard to minority rights due to the emergency laws in place in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Provincially / Partially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA). Another significant human rights issue in the area is the ongoing CIA and US military run drone strikes which result in disproportionate loss of civilian life. In addition, the Taliban and its allies routinely target minorities for extortion of money, as well as targeting schools, particularly girl's schools, which are often church-run. More generally and widely, extremist groups like the Taliban are engaging in a rising tide of kidnappings for funds, and religious minorities and foreign aid or medical workers are a particular target, especially as the Taliban oppose immunization and believe such programs to be espionage covers or plots.

- On top of extremist infiltration of both the armed and security forces as well as the legal community, among others, blasphemy laws and other systematically discriminatory legislation – largely based on Sharia law – provides a framework to nurture and grow ongoing and intensifying attacks on religious minorities and on freedom of religion and expression, to the point that Pakistani society and state as a whole can now be unequivocally described as undergoing a process of Islamicisation. For instance, women's testimony is legally worth half that of a man, and a non-Muslims testimony is half that of a Muslim, resulting in absolute legal discrimination that cycles into and from deep societal discrimination. Denial of justice to

minorities, already entrenched in Pakistani society, is growing rapidly in intensity. Blasphemy laws trigger religious terrorism, lynch mobs and societally instigated genocidal practices – both spontaneous and organized. Attempts to reform the application of blasphemy laws to reduce such abuses have fundamentally failed to do so. In this area the Pakistani government seems to have bent over backwards to accommodate the worst kinds of Islamic extremism, even including officially banned terrorist groups. Virtually every case of blasphemy is either as a result of mental illness or is fraudulent, ensuing on some personal or business dispute, or made out of religious hatred or a desire for gaining property or for the purpose of religious or ethnic cleansing of a neighborhood. Mobs will routinely call for those arrested for blasphemy to be handed over to be hanged, stoned or burnt alive. In the last twelve months in two separate incidents in different regions, vagrants accused of blasphemy and arrested – both of them believed to be mentally ill Muslim men – were beaten and burnt alive by mobs who stormed police stations and dragged them out into the road. There were several similar assaults on police stations by gun wielding mobs with the same intent on other occasions.

- Targeted persecution of Christians and other minorities occurs in every area of Pakistan, both geographically and socially. Kidnap, rape, forced conversion and marriage of minority women and girls occurs on a daily basis, sometimes as part of the sex slave trade, with a smaller number of teenage and prepubescent boys also targeted in abuse rings and prostitution rackets.

***“The Taliban and its allies routinely target minorities for extortion of money, as well as targeting schools, particularly girl's schools, which are often church-run.”***

***“Blasphemy laws and other systematically discriminatory legislation – largely based on Sharia law – provides a framework to nurture and grow ongoing and intensifying attacks on religious minorities and on freedom of religion and expression.”***

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# MAIN STORY

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***“Kidnap, rape, forced conversion and marriage of minority women and girls occurs on a daily basis, sometimes as part of the sex slave trade, with a smaller number of teenage and prepubescent boys also targeted in abuse rings and prostitution rackets.”***

***“Police are nearly always complicit with the kidnapers to some level, sometimes actively covering their tracks, more often than not mocking, pressuring or beating up victim’s families, and sometimes participating in rape themselves. Pakistani police can quite often be accurately described as criminal gangs themselves.”***

Muslim clerics and Islamic courts approve, routinely illegally converting and marrying off such under-age girls, as converting someone to the ‘superior’ religion of Islam is deemed a virtue. Non-Muslim women are seen as lawful prey. Some Islamicist groups in Pakistan even teach that any Muslim man who marries or even just rapes a non-Muslim woman will be rewarded with seventy virgins in heaven forever, thus making the reward for rape equal to that of a suicide bomber or martyr. Commercial sale of kidnapped women as ‘wives’, or giving them to supporters and followers as wives is sometimes practiced by quite senior state and national politicians. Sexual harassment and rapes without forced marriage and conversion are endemic and an entrenched routine in some villages. Police are nearly always complicit with the kidnapers to some level, sometimes actively covering their tracks, more often than not mocking, pressuring or beating up victim’s families, and sometimes participating in rape themselves. Pakistani police can quite often be accurately described as criminal gangs themselves. Those police that do genuinely try to uphold law and freedom are often sidelined or outmaneuvered or outgunned. Particularly in Karachi, police can function as proxy armies for political groups. In one case, the police burned a Christian man alive and raped his wife in front of their children.

- Attacks on and desecrations of minority religious buildings, statues, shrines, religious clerics and buildings are common. Death threats, extortion, fraudulent seizure of land and property, often in collusion with authorities or

police, are routine. Intimidation of impoverished minorities into selling their properties at dirt-cheap prices is routine in both urban and rural areas, further continuing the enforced impoverishment of such minorities. In the worst attacks well trained gunmen open fire on Christians in churches. In one such instance the attackers included a squad of burqa-clad female extremists toting – and using – powerful weapons. Mosque loudspeakers are very commonly used to whip up religious lynch mobs to enforce suppression of minorities, particularly Christians.

- Christian hospitals, churches and orphanages are often targeted for forcible or fraudulent acquisition, on occasion abetted by corrupt church leaders.

- Rape and sexual assault of largely poor young Christian nurses in the hospital system are routine, and cover-ups are standard. Prosecutions are virtually unheard of, and as for successful prosecutions, well..... Vulnerable minority patients are routinely targeted for conversion by Islamicist groups who roam some hospitals freely, searching for such victims. Christians and other minorities are routinely pressured to convert, including by financial inducement, offers of women to marry, promise of employment or promotion and/or threats of being laid off, threats or force and torture by neighbors, police, religious school students, converted family members and employers. Sometimes simply refusing to convert is deemed as worthy of death or other severe sanctions. In one case, a Christian farm laborer refused pressure to convert, and as punishment his

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## MAIN STORY

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two year old daughter was taken out into the fields and raped so badly that even after five rounds of reconstructive surgery, she will never be able to marry or bear children, and has to urinate out of a surgically constructed opening on her stomach. Whilst these operations were going on the family had to live underground for years, moving from house to house to avoid Islamic extremist clerics hunting them down to kill them for the blasphemous act of daring to refuse to convert, until finally, after special pleading to a Canadian government minister, they were allowed to claim asylum in Canada.

- Disruption of church services is fairly common. In one case last year, Muslims burst into a church whilst the children were rehearsing Christmas carols, smashed the church up and beat the children for daring to disturb the Mosque prayers. There have also been grenades thrown at a children's Christmas service, where the local media then accused the parents of the injured children, many of whom were injured themselves, of throwing the grenades.

- Non-mainstream and dissident Muslims are also routinely targeted.

- Violence between Shia and Sunni communities, as is usual through the Middle East, is in large part due to extremist groups on either side that are waging a proxy war funded by Iran and Saudi Arabia (with some other Gulf State support) respectively. Elements of Pakistan's military and intelligence agencies also sponsor extremist groups responsible for violence against 'other' communities.

- Ahmahdi's are a particularly targeted group. The notorious blasphemy laws include sections banning the group from describing themselves in Muslim terms, and the community is regularly faced with blasphemy charges, violent attacks and intense discrimination. For instance, recently the Lahore Bar Association banned certain brands of drink from court premises because they are made by an Ahmahdi owned firm.

- During recent floods, religious minorities faced widespread discrimination, being denied food and medical treatment by both Mosque based and government distribution centres at many locations, unless they converted to Islam. There are also reports of discrimination in the compensation and recovery processes, particularly pertaining to the granting of agricultural land to those whose fields had been destroyed.

- A number of measures designed to reduce discrimination in practice are subverted to perpetuate discrimination. For instance, there are reports that land-mafia grabs evade rules designed to prevent communally owned minority property being seized by marrying minority girls and then using the marriage as a basis for seizing property by force or by legal stratagem. Quotas designed to reserve 5% of government jobs for minorities to encourage minority graduates in practice perpetuate discrimination by forcing educated minority members into low-grade sanitation and cleaning jobs, whilst all too often illiterate Muslims are given supervisory posts.

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# MAIN STORY

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***“Other groups targeted have included the Jewish population – there are now no openly Jewish people in Pakistan, although there is believed to be a few hundred left who survive by pretending to be Christians or Muslims”***

***“The police and legal system in Pakistan is notoriously corrupt, and as well as the normal societal prejudice and discrimination, minorities face an additional hurdle in that they are usually the poorest, and the least able to bribe their way to justice”***

***“Traditional tribal elder councils are a parallel system of justice in Pakistan, to whom police often defer. Islamic courts also have a huge influence on the practice of law and order, and this is enshrined in the constitution”***

• In addition, efforts to try and improve minority political representation by allowing minorities to have an extra vote for a certain number of minority seats designated in accordance with official figures for minority populations have had some impact, but have also raised issues. There is considerable evidence to suggest that census figures have been systematically manipulated through the history of the Pakistani state to hide the true size of minorities in Pakistan, particularly the Christian population, and given the way minority voting is organized this effectively amounts to a partial political disenfranchisement of considerable parts of the population. Perhaps more seriously, these minority candidates are selected by the political parties which are dominated by Muslim interests, not by free election. This means that the candidates are beholden to their political sponsors more than the minority communities they are supposed to serve, leading to a widespread perception that many minority politicians – with a number of noble exceptions – are disconnected from the concerns of the community.

• The Presidency and several other top-level positions are explicitly denied to non-Muslims, and in most cases non-Muslims are not allowed to be judges, or else have extreme restrictions in what cases they are allowed to handle.

• Other groups targeted have included the Jewish population – there are now no openly Jewish people in Pakistan, although there is believed to be a few hundred left who survive by pretending to be Christians or Muslims.

• Police are trained in Sharia laws and practice. The legal code actually outlines laws of evidence follow Sharia principles, in that the testimony of a non-Muslim is worth half that of a Muslim, and that of a woman is half that of a man. This is especially problematic in the frequent occurrence of cases of kidnap, rape, forced conversion and marriage of minority women and young girls to Muslim men. Already intimidated by death threats or threats of blasphemy charges against their family, even when they do dare speak out, female minority victims of such crimes testimony is worth a quarter of their abusers, even if you leave aside the fact that their accusers are often powerful and influential businessmen or politicians, and have sympathetic Islamic scholars backing them up. Hindu and Scheduled Caste women are particularly vulnerable as the state does not recognize their religious marriage ceremonies and contracts. The police and legal system in Pakistan is notoriously corrupt, and as well as the normal societal prejudice and discrimination, minorities face an additional hurdle in that they are usually the poorest, and the least able to bribe their way to justice.

• In addition, traditional tribal elder councils are a parallel system of justice in Pakistan, to whom police often defer. Islamic courts also have a huge influence on the practice of law and order, and this is enshrined in the constitution.

• Further discrimination is found over the issue of intra-faith marriage. Because Islam is seen as the superior religion, it is perfectly acceptable for a Muslim man to marry a non-Muslim

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# MAIN STORY

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woman – the act of marriage is seen as automatically converting her to Islam in many circles – because it is the man (dominant) who is the Muslim and the more powerful in the relationship. However, it is socially utterly anathema for a non-Muslim man to marry a Muslim woman as it is seen as a non-Muslim demonstrating dominance over a Muslim, and an affront both to Islam and the woman’s family, and it will usually occasion violence. The whole non-Muslim community or family is held responsible, and the elopement almost automatically considered a kidnap. Muslim women will sometimes demonstrate, saying it is literally impossible for a true Muslim woman to consider such a relationship.

- Domestic and sexual violence against women and children is extremely common, even normal and normative in much of Pakistani society. Street children are almost always sexually abused within a couple of days of

going on the streets, and the majority of both boys and girls on the street have been sexually abused by police officers. Gangs often target children, especially minority children, for enforced prostitution. For instance, this is a particular problem facing the beleaguered Christian slum of Essa Nagri in Karachi, a community which also faces regular violent attacks by Taliban groups. Similarly, Muslim run brothels are routinely placed in minority neighborhoods, leading to sexual harassment of local women, who are seen as ‘easy women’. Another tactic is to induce poor minority men with beautiful wives or daughters into drugs, then blackmail them with threats of blasphemy or death into handing over the women into prostitution.

- Homosexuality is deeply frowned upon, although an underground community exists under the radar. However, in parts of Pakistan there is a traditional acceptance of pederasty, and »

***“Because Islam is seen as the superior religion, it is perfectly acceptable for a Muslim man to marry a non-Muslim woman – the act of marriage is seen as automatically converting her to Islam in many circles – because it is the man (dominant) who is the Muslim and the more powerful in the relationship”***

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# MAIN STORY

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***“Some of those minorities who convert to Islam do so for safety and freedom from fear.”***

***“Some of these converts find they are still badly treated and so want to return to their original faith, but given that every school of Sharia law deems such apostasy as a capital crime, at least for men, this is problematic.”***

minority boys and teens are especially vulnerable to homosexual rape. In Karachi, a number of Christian teens were seized in a series of incidents by police and never seen again, but the body of one was found the next day in the sewer, and after the Christian community forced police to conduct an autopsy, was found to have been raped and to have been killed by police bullets. There is also a traditional class of transgender, known as hijras, who also face grave discrimination, although the government is taking some steps to recognize them.

- Hazaras, particularly the Shia Hazaras, who form the majority of this ethnic group, are often targeted, and their strikingly different appearance mean they can be easily identified.

- Sikh's, Bahai's, Zoroastrians, and traditional tribal religions also face similar general discrimination, as do many Afghan refugees. Agnostics and atheists are known to exist in Pakistan, but keep generally underground and don't express their beliefs openly.

- Some of those minorities who convert to Islam do so for safety and freedom from fear. Some have gone on record as saying that, even though officially most Imam's say this is not an acceptable reason for converting, and it can be safely assumed that fear and safety is at least a partial factor behind a good number of conversions where those converting do not openly state this.

- Some of these converts find they are still badly treated and so want to return to their original faith, but given that every school of Sharia law deems such

apostasy as a capital crime, at least for men, this is problematic. Any Muslim-born convert faces the same issue. In this area, Pakistani law does not actually follow Sharia (although there was an attempt in 2006 to make it so, with death for male converts and imprisonment until 'repentance' for women, and all property and children removed to Muslim relatives or the state) but social attitudes generally do. Converts from Islam face discrimination and violence, sometimes from their own families. The convert can face being divorced and their children being permanently taken away from them, sometimes even by the courts. Converts generally have to live underground and in fear of their lives. In one instance, a convert from an extremist family was beaten badly, and hospitals completely refused him medical assistance out of fear of the extremists.

- Problems of discrimination against minorities, and against converts in particular, are made far worse by Pakistan's system of ID cards which designate a persons' religion. This means that minority citizens can be easily identified (in fact, ID cards with race or religion or other such ID markers are seen by experts as one of the pre-conditions for future genocide). The system is set up so that it is easy for someone to change their entry to Muslim, but impossible for someone to change their entry from Muslim to another religion, meaning that someone who calls themselves a Christian, but has Muslim on their ID card is easily identifiable as an apostate and vulnerable to being lynched. Even when Muslim has been put on the ID card in error, it is virtually impossible to

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change, as one Christian politician with a Muslim sounding name found to his very great political detriment recently.

- Discrimination manifests in other areas of society. In the prison system, time can be taken off sentences for successfully memorizing the Quran, but no such opportunity exists for minority members to gain freedom by memorizing their own sacred writings. Similarly, extra marks are awarded in schools for memorizing Quranic material.

- Minority students can face a great deal of discrimination in the education system, even in private schools. They can face harassment and pressure to convert from both teachers and fellow students. Christians students are sometimes schooled by the parents never to mention Jesus or get into religious debates, or to give pat answers like 'I am a Christian, I don't know about your prophet, I can only talk about Jesus'. Minority teachers are often afraid to teach material that has Islamic content in case they are accused of blasphemy. Islamic content is not confined to religious studies, but spills over into a great many subjects. Minority children are often forced to clean the toilets, and even do teachers personal cleaning, like their houses or underwear. There are also reports of Christian and other minority students completing their school courses successfully but being denied their certificate of completion so that they cannot enter college education.

- Pakistani textbooks routinely overlook the contributions of minority communities and personalities to the

history and social and cultural life of Pakistan, and use defamatory and untruthful language about the beliefs and practices of minority religions. This attitude is shared by many teachers, and the problem appears to be getting worse, not better. There is concern that the UK taxpayers money is being used to subsidize this discriminatory education via the literacy program sponsorship.

- Minorities also face discrimination in employment. Even for menial jobs, they will usually have to pay a bribe, and then usually face considerable pressure to convert. Some are denied promotion or fired after refusing to convert. Nationalization programs forced many Christians in particular out of educated jobs, impoverishing the communities further, and trapping many in menial cleaning jobs. Christians are routinely described as 'chuhras' or 'sweepers', a derogatory term equivalent to 'dirty nigger'. Their very touch is often seen as contaminating, and they and other minorities are sometimes required to have separate drinking and eating utensils and to drink from separate water containers. Sanitation jobs are often advertised as for Christians / non-Muslims only. Even though many in such jobs work for the state, they are deliberately denied civil servant status and associated benefits by the device of firing them and rehiring them at regular intervals so they are forever 'temporary' workers. Another stratagem to stop minority workers gaining permanent status in state jobs is to accuse them of theft and get them fired.

- Many minority women work as maids in the homes of Muslim families, and

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# MAIN STORY

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***“In the private sector, minorities are often systematically denied full pay and otherwise treated in a discriminatory fashion. Demanding full rights is likely to get you fired.”***

***“In rural areas, this has led to Christians and other minorities to be seen as slaves, who are sometimes ‘sold’ along with agricultural property and their debts to new owners.”***



they are pretty much always the first to be accused when items go missing. They are also very vulnerable to rape and sexual assault by their male employers, as well as general abuse and maltreatment. In one case, the entire Christian population in a village was only allowed to remain on the condition that the women maids did not withhold sex from their Muslim employers, and were expelled when some Christian men complained.

- In the private sector, minorities are often systematically denied full pay and otherwise treated in a discriminatory fashion. Demanding full rights is likely to get you fired. In one case, Christian brothers demanding full pay and other promised bonuses were fatally poisoned by their employer. One corrupt bus company made it a practice to force minority staff to do illegal acts, to the point of trying to force Christian managers to assassinate former directors in dispute with the current

directors, and it also made it a practice to fire those who refused and then bring charges of theft, blasphemy and other crimes to keep them quiet.

- In rural areas, employers are often also effectively landlords, making minorities especially vulnerable. Employers often loan money to employees for necessities such as medical care or weddings. It is common practice to charge high rates, but there is often one rate for Muslim employees and an exorbitantly higher rate for non-Muslims. Changing of conditions and increasing interest rates by orders of magnitude are also common, and this discrimination is also practiced by general money lenders. In rural areas, this has led to Christians and other minorities to be seen as slaves, who are sometimes ‘sold’ along with agricultural property and their debts to new owners. In fact, in some cases, Muslim landlords and farmers expect and try to force Christians to work for free for them, even when

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they have no debt. Refusal can have dire repercussions. In some cases, outstanding loans have been 'redeemed' by kidnapping and raping the women in the family, and in a few cases partially met by forcing the 'debtor' at gunpoint to 'donate' a kidney to the growing black market organ donor business.

- The widespread practice of bonded labor facilitates this attitude. Bonded labor is technically illegal, but is still widely practiced, particularly in the brick-making industry, and religious minorities form a high percentage of bonded laborers – effectively slaves. Loans for medicine and survival turn into chains of servitude, with such victims being kept in private prisons often, given virtually no food, and families can be kept enslaved for whole many generations in this way. In some cases, 'owners' – and this applies to more mainstream landlords who have given loans - have abused their position by seizing other family members or family property and not deducting it from the debt, or not accounting for pay withheld against the debt.

- Minority communities are often targeted economically. Discrimination in and of itself has economic effects, but extremist groups also target minority groups for funds, extorting protection money under the guise of 'jizya', a Sharia concept whereby minority religions are deemed to enter into a covenant with the Islamic administration whereby they pay a tax that guarantees certain levels of religious freedom and safety. Criminal gangs use this concept to justify their extortion of money from vulnerable minority communities.

- The concept of Jizya is closely linked to a concept of communal responsibility. The actions of just one member that are considered to violate the agreement, the whole community is held responsible and liable for the consequences. This is applied on a broader international scale, and so, for instance, Pakistani Christians are often targeted for violence to 'punish' them for actions by Western states which are deemed Christian states, in the same way that Muslims states are wholly Islamic.

- Such a concept means that events, particularly blasphemy charges, can be staged or manipulated to spark a kind of pogrom or economic warfare. Other causes can include a minority religious person standing up for their rights. In general, these attacks are more likely when a community is deemed to get above itself – either Christians attracting converts and interest from Muslims, or a community or family becoming more prosperous than the Muslims around them, thus upsetting the social order and ideology where Muslims must be dominant, or an Imam wanting to suppress a local church that has services at the same time as Muslim prayers. Christian communities seem to be a particular target of these kinds of attack. Typically, Islamic Madrassas and mosques will organize the attacks using mosque loudspeakers to call for Muslims to defend Islam against the infidels, and whole communities are burned, vandalized, looted and destroyed, with especial care taken to destroy all means of economic livelihood and wealth generation or retention, as well as religious books and items. ■

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### Doctor Massouda Jalal

Minister of Women's Affairs from October 2004 to July 2006. The only woman candidate in the Afghan presidential election, 2004. Doctor Jalal is a pediatrician, teacher at Kabul University, and a UN World Food Programme worker. She also is the head of the Jalal Foundation.

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: A Day of Accountability to Women

Today, the women of Afghanistan join the international community in honoring the sacrifices and achievements of women in all dimensions of life.

We salute every mother who put her life on the line to ensure the continuity of life. We honor all housekeepers and domestic workers whose invisible, unpaid and unrecognized work at home enables family members to go on with their own activities in life. We pay homage to women working as farmers, entrepreneurs, miners, fishers, civil servants, economists, engineers, architects, etc. who have to contend with multiple burdens, discrimination, and sexual harassment unlike their male counterparts.

We are proud of our female activists, political leaders, police, soldiers, diplomats, artists, media personalities, youth and girls who endure actual and potential sexual and physical violence, some of whom have been murdered

in the course of defending our dignity and rights. To the women in prisons, in dungeons, hospitals, and perilous and violent situations, we share to you our prayers and love. You are the reasons why we joined the One Billion Rising. We pledge to continue to rise until violence is taken out of our lives.

Today is a day of reckoning and accountability. Afghan women should recall where we stood a decade ago in the hands of the Taliban so that we may remain united in resisting its resurgence in the contemporary times. With the return of extremism, we cannot afford to be divided and complacent. Our only weapon is our solidarity and defiance to become subjects again of extremist oppression. Let us resolve to work harder to reject the dominance of talibanism into our lives. Oppression of women in any form is an offense that should not be allowed to rule wherever we are.

Let's keep our government aware and responsive to its obligations toward us. Today, send your messages to your leaders, government officials and representatives and remind them to act with dispatch on long-standing issues of violence against women, poverty, illiteracy, discrimination, poor health, and suppression of rights, personal power and autonomy. Let us remember the strength of our vote and resolve to select public officials who are committed to the well-being of the female constituency. Let us support our sisters who are in positions of power and fighting for our rights. Let us bring up our girls in a way that they will not tolerate subordination; and our boys to become allies in protecting our rights.

To all the women of the world and the men who stand by us in this lengthy journey of peace and empowerment, we offer bread, wine, prayer, justice and roses! Happy women's day! ■

## Some thoughts on waste-water management: The opportunity of a lifetime

Disclaimer – This article is looking merely at the technical and non-human aspects of development, which naturally lead to the human aspects of it, improving living conditions for people.

Why would someone relate waste-water and development rates of a country? Nowadays, the development stage of a country, of its society, can be accessed through many different criteria.

From GDP, to Bhutan's GNH, all take different approaches on the matter, and a complicated matter this is. But there's more to it than statistics. Risking being a little cliché, I'd say that development is not only related to technical solutions, money or economical growth, but it is the ability of making the best out of every resource available and the respect for what and who is around us. Being such a mix of hardly accessed factors, one area arises as a potential key to solve the equation.

The way nations dispose their waste is one interesting indicator of their development. Someone once said "You can easily judge the character of a man by how he treats those who can do nothing for him".

Waste is commonly regarded as the useless remains of our activities. Therefore its disposal was not one of our main concerns until the 20th century. The perception of pollution is something easily grasped by those who come across it.

Being something evident to the untrained eye, tackling it becomes crucial to the image of a country. The way it is, not only removed from view, but also, transformed into something useful is quite revealing on the attitude the people have towards pollutions, in its various forms.

Though many improvements were made in recent years, one area is still quite unexplored: recycling grease disposed in waste-waters. Grease, as is commonly known, has more to it than being a hardly removed residue from most human activities – It has an outstanding energy potential.

Managing waste-waters can become a useful, responsible, profitable and empowering activity. ■



**João Moreira Pires**  
Programme Manager in  
Less Means More  
Student of Industrial Engineering  
and Management  
Universidade Nova de Lisboa

***“The way nations dispose their waste is one interesting indicator of their development.”***

## The Editor suggests: “Arthashastra”

### *Kautilya's* Arthashastra



**Title:**

“Arthashastra” - meaning something like “The science of wealth”

**Author:**

Kautilya (also known as Chanakya or Vishnu Gupta), who was the Chief Adviser of the Mauryan Emperor Chandragupta and his son Emperor Bindusara.

**Date:**

4th century b.C.

*Translated into English by*

**R. Shamasastri**

This is a book of surprises. A classic of the Indian literature and thinking, “Arthashastra” was written by the Chief Adviser of two Mauryan Emperors. It could be seen as a treatise about the arts of war and economic policy, but it is much more than that. “Arthashastra” is about ethics and the duties each person is obliged to incorporate depending on its role in society. I leave you with one of his most famous passages, which is about corruption vices and solutions:

“Each department shall be officered by several temporary heads.

Just as it is impossible not to taste the honey or the poison that finds itself at the tip of the tongue, so it is impossible for a government servant not to eat up, at least, a bit of the king’s revenue.

Just as fish moving under water cannot possibly be found out either as drinking or not drinking water, so government servants employed in the government

work cannot be found out (while) taking money (for themselves).

It is possible to mark the movements of birds flying high up in the sky; but not so is it possible to ascertain the movement of government servants of hidden purpose.

Government servants shall not only be confiscated of their ill-earned hordes, but also be transferred from one work to another, so that they cannot either misappropriate Government money or vomit what they have eaten up.

Those who increase the king’s revenue instead of eating it up and are loyally devoted to him shall be made permanent in service.”

As we see by this transcription (pages 93 and 94), these writings are still interesting and useful nowadays. I highly recommend the reading of the whole book. ■

***“It is possible to mark the movements of birds flying high up in the sky; but not so is it possible to ascertain the movement of government servants of hidden purpose.”***



**SOUTH ASIA DEMOCRATIC FORUM**

Avenue des Arts, 19 - 2nd floor  
1210 Brussels Belgium

[antonio@sadf.eu](mailto:antonio@sadf.eu)    [www.sadf.eu](http://www.sadf.eu)