

## **Pakistan in a Permanent Crisis: Is There a Way Forward?**

International Expert Conference

Heinrich-Böll-Foundation, Berlin/Germany, October 22/23, 2007

### **Conference Paper**

(Christian Fröhlich for the Heinrich Böll Foundation)

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*For further information on attendees please see attached background paper*

#### **Executive Summary**

Pakistan currently faces a level of instability unprecedented since the Musharraf military regime took over power in 1999. This is highlighted by the loss of governmental control over vast territories in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), increasingly in other parts of the North Western Frontier Province (NWFP) as well, and even in Balochistan. Enormous increases of religiously motivated terrorist attacks all over the country demonstrated that Islamic militancy has become a security threat on a national scale and to a certain degree even to the security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons arsenal. Moreover, the situation in the Pakistan/Afghanistan border area hampers consolidation in Afghanistan and even poses an immense terrorist threat to Western societies (not at least Germany) within their own borders. When President General Pervez

Musharraf imposed the state of emergency on November 3, 2007, the crisis went yet to another level.

The conference brought together well known Pakistani experts with German and international representatives of science, politics and the media. Major concern was to elaborate perspectives from within Pakistan upon what the main sources of growing instability and of lacking reform processes are. In essence the conference highlights the situation in Pakistan in a triangular pattern consisting of: (1) The elitist military hegemony that dominates all aspects of the country under primacy of military security; (2) a weak fringe of progressive civil society which is politically demotivated, demobilized and resignating due to its exclusion from political participation and economic prosperity by the ruling elite; and (3) growing religious conservatism and hardcore Islamic militancy which expands on an impoverished and disenfranchised society and by using the vacuum granted by poor governmental policies, and counting on intended support by official security authorities. At the very same time Islamic militancy is brutally attacking both the progressive civil society and the government.

This analysis serves as framework to discuss options the international community may have on a way out of the permanent crisis. In sum the necessity to alter the tectonic balances of the triangular setting is underscored. For that purpose numerous transitions or transformations will be needed. For instance the entanglement between the military (and other security authorities) and Islamic militancy has to be cut, a civil-military alliance against religious radicalism has to be fostered, and progressive civil society needs to be strengthened and politically mobilized. To succeed in the long run, however, a fundamental systemic transformation will be indispensable: the subordination of the military under a democratic and sovereign civil leadership. In that regard only the international community may have some leverage.

By outlining the main arguments of the conference this paper is designed to contribute to a more in depth public discussion of the situation in Pakistan. By doing so the Heinrich-Böll-Foundation intends to enhance problem awareness within society as well as in German and international policy making.

## 1. Military Hegemony as Major Impediment

### *Role of the Military*

The underlying condition in Pakistan is an all-embracing hegemony of the military ruling elite. It dominates virtually every political, economic, social, and even intellectual sphere of the country. The armed forces own vast conglomerates of enterprises, banks, foundations, and universities worth several billion US\$. Moreover, military officers (or retired servicemen) hold key positions in private economy, government, and bureaucracy. The Pakistani economy is directed by the military and thus extensively interventionist. Today the military is biggest employer, biggest land-owner, and biggest logistic-entrepreneur of the country. Pakistan functions as an elitist system with feudal structures. Prime patron and ruling actor is the military and its bureaucracy and by controlling the distribution of gains and rewards it keeps itself in crucial positions all over the nation.

*Ayesha Siddiqa* sees a cyclic tendency in that situation: The elite's influence in all spheres of Pakistan is the source of its power – and this power ensures further influence. That is why *Siddiqa* barely sees a chance for change from inside Pakistan. The military preserves the status quo and profound stakes and interests possessed by the military leadership are pillar for their own private economic prosperity. Against this background the ruling elite has in fact no interest to change political setting or power structure of the country.

However, it must not be forgotten that the military is the only Pakistani organization currently capable of checking religious radicals and militancy. Thus, the armed forces are indispensable for restoring stability both in Pakistan and Afghanistan. By controlling the country's nuclear arsenal the Pakistani military is not at least also a determining factor for regional and even global security.

### *Sources of Power*

The power of the military rests upon three pillars: (1) Domestic grip; (2) self-declared ideological legitimacy; and (3) foreign assistance. The framework of domestic grip and hegemony as first pillar has already been described above. The second pillar implies that the military elite does not see itself as suppressor but as protector of Pakistan. The ideological legitimacy justifies the right as well as the duty to protect Pakistani security, highlights *Wolfgang-Peter Zingel*: The military elite perceives a constant and immense external threat to the very right of Pakistani existence. Thus, the military has the obligation to sustain superior armed forces. This is ensured by managing and controlling the political, economic, and social state system. *Ayesha Siddiqa* points to an even higher level of ideological legitimacy: The military has a self-image of being the defender of Pakistani ideologic frontiers – that is Islam – and it desires to lead and protect the whole Muslim world.

Foreign assistance as third pillar has always been an essential dimension but even more since Pakistan joined the so-called “global war on terrorism” in 2001. Especially extensive blank check support by the U.S. reinforced the military’s hegemony. But also arms deals with China and not at least EU-countries bolstered the position of the military elite. Historically, China can be considered the closest and most steady ally especially in periods of U.S. strategic restraint and desinterest. However, by being the sole foreign partner delivering financial inflow on basis of unconditionality and by internationally backing the military regime the U.S. is currently the most vital external source of assistance. The Musharraf-regime eagerly underscores its importance for Washington by stressing Islamabad’s determination in counterterrorism. Furthermore, the regime presents itself as stronghold that prevents radical Islamism from taking over control in a nuclear armed state. *Pervez Hoodbhoy* assesses this fact as main reason why the military will not cede its sovereignty over the armed forces and especially the nuclear forces to a civil government in the near future.

#### *Foreign Affairs as Struggle for Security – by all Means*

All strategic thinking of the military elite is dominated by perceived external security threats and the strive for security in foreign affairs. Just as domestic affairs are fixed on defense capabilities there is hardly political space to frame foreign policy outside the security scope.

This tradition roots predominantly in Pakistan’s conflict driven record with India. The very foundation of Pakistan in 1947 was a dispute with India. Since then both states fought three full-scale wars, countless border skirmish, and pursued a grim nuclear arms race. For the military elite the conflict over Kashmir remains a strategic liability for Islamabad. India as the hereditary enemy is Pakistan’s core national security threat. *Christian Wagner* stresses responsibilities of the international community that this chronic perception of vulnerability even further intensified during the 1990s until today. In the absence of cold war necessities especially the West uncoupled the Pakistani-Indian security complex (e.i. treating both on an equal level) to the advantage of India. While India mastered globalization and got integrated into international economy it surpassed Pakistan in all socio-economic dimensions. Accordingly, Islamabad lost strategic weight vis-à-vis India what intensified the notion of challenged security.

Even Pakistan’s policy toward Afghanistan is dominated by the India-factor. Islamabad aims at diminishing any Indian influence in Kabul that may lead to a strategic encirclement of Pakistan. For that purpose Pakistani security authorities pursue one of their established strategic features: Using non-state militancy in some sort of proxy-warfare. Whereas Pakistan officially is an ally in counterterrorism at least some factions of the military and the secret services still have strategic connections to the Taliban, al-Qa’ida and other militant groups. They are granted some leeway and breathing room and are even provided with support. This double strategy is a hedging strategy

against a Western and especially U.S. abandonment of Afghanistan which could leave a power vacuum filled by a pro-Indian regime in Kabul. This approach once again takes into consideration the historic record that Western engagement in the region always was limited in time and scope. In perception of Pakistani authorities nurturing the Taliban is an anti-Indian security instrument in a post-Western scenario at the Hindukush.<sup>1</sup>

In sum the conference highlights that the hegemony and predominant role of the military ruling elite in all domestic and external affairs is to be seen as bottle-neck for change. Without transformation in this crucial area transitions in other fields will remain limited. Regardless whether or not there will be a democratically elected Prime Minister in 2008 – the real sovereign of Pakistan remains the military elite. Momentum for transformation may be generated only from outside the self-preserving system. Here the international community is in charge.

## **2. Poor Structures of Progressive Civil Society as Weak Point**

### *Weakness of Progressive Civil Society and Implications*

In contrast to very solid patterns of state institution ruled by the military patterns of civil society are weak. For *Abbas Rashid* this imbalance – especially when it comes to progressive and secular parts of civil society – is a major hurdle for any reform: Large parts of society resigned in prospect of corruption, ever-expanding state authority, and growing Islamic conservatism. As result rather progressive parts of society got demobilized and depoliticized. This lack of progress is evident and problematic especially in the rural areas<sup>2</sup>, as *Rukhshanda Naz* points out. Additionally, she claims that notably in the backward areas of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) (and most of the rest North-West Frontier Province (NWFP)) civil society elements just cannot work due to the lack of protection by governmental authorities.

### *Reasons for Degeneration*

The discussion underscores three main reasons for the weakness of progressive civil society elements: (1) Economic segregation; (2) lack of democratic culture; (3) intended restrictions by the ruling elite.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Pakistani support of anti-Indian religious motivated non-state militancy is most likely in Kashmir and maybe even in India itself.

<sup>2</sup> Approximately two thirds of the Pakistani population lives in the rural parts of the country.

<sup>3</sup> Shortcomings in the education sector did only secondarily weaken the progressive civil society but primarily strengthened religious conservatism. Accordingly, this subject is elaborated in chapter 3 of this paper.

Pakistan's internal structures led to economic segregation of vast parts of the society: Security is the *raison d'être* in perception of the military elite. Thus, domestic prosperity is subordinated to foreign security. This lack of economic development is multiplied by the elitist patronage system. It prevents social mobility into parts of society that benefit from the military economy. The largest parts of society are bypassed by the very chance of prosperity and better living circumstances. Accordingly, frustration led to radicalization on the conservative side and to resignation and eventually political demobilization on the progressive side of society, highlights *Ayesha Siddiqua*.

Several facts abet the lacking (progressive) democratic culture. As *Wolfgang-Peter Zingel* elaborates, Pakistani history has a record of consecutive states of emergency, overthrowings, and unlegitimized governments outside constitutional frames. The role of civil society and the culture of political participation was marginalized ever since. This is reflected in weak political parties as well. Their structures are mostly undemocratic and they have at most limited abilities to fulfill party functions such as political socialization and mobilization, integration of different interests and consensus building, or recruiting political elites. Most entities of civil society are formed along ethnical cleavages. Therefore resolving an issue is not based on the society as a whole but is ethnically defined. This further fragments and desintegrates civil society and thus narrows political common sense for reform.

The military ruling elite of course intentionally includes progressive parts of civil society as well. Opposition – and a civil government – may undermine military supremacy. This would contradict the military's doctrine of controlling all Pakistani resources to ensure combat readiness of the armed forces and of course to safeguard their private prosperity. The government's approach became evident during the state of emergency after November 3, 2007. Immediately afterwards the government dismissed the constitution, openly arrested estimated 1,500 oppositional people, restricted the freedom of press, and threatened to postpone parliamentary elections originally scheduled for January 2008.

### *Signs of Hope*

Despite all restraints some progressive parts of society are still vibrant and even politically active. *Abbas Rashid* assesses the welcoming of Benazir Bhutto (after her return from political exile) by hundreds of thousand people as proof of the societies longing for civil and more secular politics. *Pervez Hoodhboy* points to the enormous civil society response during the October 2005 earthquake relief and especially to the overwhelming lawyer movement after chief justice Iftikhar Chaudhry was suspended in March 2007. Currently this group represents once again the core of civil protest against the state of emergency and the repeated suspension of Chaudhry. Another sign

of hope is the relative openness of the media and information sector. However, this freedom is widely restricted under the November 2007 state of emergency.

### *Benazir Bhutto as Force of Reform?*

The conference experts are ambivalent in their assessments as to how far the former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto may be a driving force for reformation and democratization. On the one hand her agenda has ambitious goals such as accelerate democratization, religious moderation, integration of Western and Islamic values, and economic development especially for lower classes of society. In that regard Bhutto's party (Pakistans People Party, PPP) is one of the most progressive parties in the current setting. Thus, Bhutto mobilizes enormous parts of society, especially secular forces and women. *Rukhshanda Naz* points out that Bhutto is a motivating silver lining particularly for suppressed women in rural areas and the NWFP. Not at least Bhutto benefits from the popularity of her father who led the country in the mid-1970s and had a record of social reform and some democratization.

On the other hand the record of her last two tenures during the 1990s shows virtually none of such progressive ambitions *Pervez Hoodbhoy* and also *Abbas Rashid* are very sceptical that she might have a real agenda beyond that of power politics. Another hindering aspect is the question of legitimacy of the Bhutto-Musharraf deal and a possible government of both actors: Musharraf's reelection as president in October 2007 had absolutely no democratic legitimacy. Bhutto's return to the theatre based on the so-called National Reconciliation Ordinance waiving corruption charges against her. So Bhutto's tenure as prime minister would be overshadowed by a dubious personal record. Finally, Nawaz Sharif is most likely to be excluded from the election which would further undermine legitimacy of the results.

However, *Pervez Hoodbhoy* concludes that Bhutto is one of the better choices Pakistan has. Moreover, it is central that the process of democratization gains momentum with elections and that people are getting politically mobilized. This is the key to accelerated reforms in the future. *Abbas Rashid* seconds that and emphasizes the role of the PPP which is currently the only political organization capable to reinforce a culture of moderation between secular and strongly religious fringes of society and last but not least the military. Yet, the political disruptions of the November 2007 state of emergency underscored the tensions between Bhutto and Musharraf and that a joint government is all but certain.

### 3. Expanding Fundamental Islam as Threat

Ironically, most vibrant parts of civil society can be found in religious entities. Whereas progressive and secular parts of civil society fell back and degenerated fundamental Islam built up far-flung civic structures. Within these structures political goals are pursued with high motivation. Expanding fundamentalism needs to be differentiated in (1) religious militancy and (2) religious conservatism of large parts of society. Both are underlying different conditions and do have different implications.

#### *Religious Militancy and Terrorism*

Militant and terroristic radicalism with religious motivation pose a major and direct threat to stability and security in Pakistan. The country currently suffers from an enormous wave of “Talibanization”. It spreads from the FATA into the whole NWFP, to Balochistan, and even to a national level as the Red Mosque controversy and terrorist attacks all over the country demonstrate. The central government lost authority over vast territories of Pakistan.

One major reason for these enormous capabilities of radicals is leeway and breathing room and even more active support granted by some fringes of the security authorities. As shown earlier the ruling elite pursues a double strategy of being a Western ally in counterterrorism and at the very same time using non-state militancy for own agendas. Next to foreign policy motivations this strategic feature bases on domestic calculations. It is supposed to decrease internal pressure rooted in the regimes alliance with the U.S. Secondly it is a hedging strategy against U.S. abandonment of the region which would leave Islamabad once again on its own with those forces. But Islamabad’s double strategy backfired as the radical forces gained momentum. At some point the authorities lost ability to completely define and restrict the militants maneuvering room.

However, the threat of an Islamic overthrow should not be overrated as *Dietrich Reetz* points out. Only about three percent of Pakistani students are enrolled in religious schools (Madrassas) and radical Islamic parties are estimated not to attract more as 10 to 12 percent of the electorate. Moreover, radical Islamic attitudes are missing in the higher military ranks – as only realistic source for an overthrow. The de-motivation of the military is evident due to its struggle with religious militancy and terrorism. Since early 2006 the military is engaged in an unprecedented campaign in the FATA. Next to the Taliban, al-Qa’ida and affiliated foreign fighters, and so-called “oppositional militant forces” (e.g. drug business, smugglers) the Pakistani troops also have to fight tribes of fellow Pakistani countrymen. The army forces on the ground are increasingly tired of fighting this civil war and of suffering in a war perceived to be fought for Washington only. This ideological



disconnection between the military leadership and the fighting forces may lead to less professional attention to duty by the troops on the ground, analyzes *Ayesha Siddiqi*.

*Pervez Hoodbhoy* sees as particularly problematic that large parts of society are in a state of denial regarding Islamic militancy and terrorism. Most people act as if this is not a threat to themselves, their way of living, or Pakistani future. The terrorist attacks during the celebrations welcoming Bhutto on October 18, 2007, were broadly seen as part of a war radicals fight against the U.S. These acts have not been perceived as what they actually were: Brutal attacks against progressive and secular politics based on democracy.

In short, religiously motivated militancy and terrorism in Pakistan attack both the state system (the ruling elite) as well as every secular and progressive movement in civil society. Thus, these forces are to be seen as most destabilizing factor in the current triangular setting.

### *Religious Conservatism in Society*

Ever-expanding religious conservatism in society poses a more indirect problem to reform processes. It creates breeding ground for radical ideologies, backward attitudes and thus slows down or even prevents further progress. Two reasons rooted in the education sector have special relevance for this conservatism.

First, numbers of Madrassas are rapidly growing. Ironically, these private (and often illegal) Madrassas also represent a civil society reaction toward shortcomings in the public education sector: Decades of governmental neglect created loopholes in which religious fundamental education was able to penetrate. Most people send their children to Madrassas because there simply is no alternative education available. Additionally, pupils are provided with free food which may be a decisive factor for most poor families.

Religious focal points set by public curricula are a second reason as *Pervez Hoodbhoy* argues. Since the late 1970s (under leadership of General Zia ul-Haq) all curricula at all level of public education were framed by over-emphasizing religion. Whole generations including the educational upper-class have been culturally imprinted accordingly. This paved way for growing conservatism and consequently fundamentalism throughout society. *Pervez Hoodbhoy* assesses this ideologization as much more dangerous as Islamic militancy because it hinders modernization of any kind.

## **4. Options for the International Community**

Besides all other questions, the Western interest is to have a stable and cooperative partnership with Pakistan. What gets increasingly evident, however, is the faulty notion that stability may be

generated by supporting an authoritarian regime. This was never in history a sustainable concept and rather led to instability in longer terms. In that regard only the international community – and to a special extent the U.S. – has sufficient leverage to foster change. But to lay the blame on the U.S. alone is pointless: Whereas Washington's engagement might be flawed, Europe's idle engagement by was also wrong.

To get reforms going it must not be forgotten that the military is a major part of the problem but also a necessary part of any solution. Within the current setting coercive pressure on the regime would backfire. The West should pursue a strategy that combines top-down (cooperating with the ruling elite) and bottom-up (strengthening progressive civil society) elements.

The discussed three patterns of military hegemony, weakness of progressive parts of civil society, and expanding religious fundamentalism underscore the need to alter the tectonics of the current triangular setting. Four essential approaches should be pursued: (1) Cut the alliance between the military and religious extremism; (2) vitalize an alliance between progressive civil society and the military elite against religious fundamentalism; and (3) support development and political mobilization of progressive parts of civil society. These transitions do have to include one major transformation to be eventually possible: (4) Downsize the military's influence and subordinate all executive authorities (including armed forces) under democratic civil leadership.

#### *Altering the Military Elites Perception of its Strategic Environment*

Most important insight is that any reform will have to cope with the military and its current role of impeding change. First starting point has got to be the ruling elite's *raison d'être*: Pakistani security.

In that regard it is crucial to ease tensions with India. To gain momentum in rapprochement the dispute over Kashmir as core problem in bilateral relations should be excluded for the time being. Instead accelerated cross-border socio-economic transfers may be fruitful. Such mutual beneficial integration will foster not only prosperity but trust. This may be a future starting point for normalized bilateral relations and eventually for settling the Kashmir dispute. This approach will need extensive international inducements to both actors. Currently improving bilateral affairs may offer a window of opportunity for such strategies.

*Christian Wagner* suggests strengthening civil dimensions of Pakistani foreign policy. For instance the country's location is predestinated to function as major regional trading hub.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The north-south axis could serve as major transit route between the Indian Ocean and Central Asia. The west-east axis would be ideal for energy supply routes. Here the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline project could boost regional economic

Furthermore, Islamabad could be assigned to civil reconstruction projects in Afghanistan. This would give Pakistan a constructive role and interest vis-à-vis Kabul, foster trust, and eventually help to settle the Durand-Line problem. The idea to alter Islamabad's basic prism of foreign relations (e.i. foreign affairs as security and military affairs) inherents the need for a completely new Western approach towards Pakistan: The international community has to guarantee Islamabad a durable partnership and to offer a perspective of belonging. This includes not at least a better integration into world economy and a more balanced approach to both Pakistan and India. The ruling elite has to be convinced of a sustained Western interest in Pakistan even beyond that of being a frontline state in times of crisis – which is this time the “global war on terror“. The U.S. is a key factor in that approach in prospect of Islamabad's high pressure sensitivity vis-à-vis Washington. In long terms, however, China must be part of a coherent strategy as well. So far, Beijing always filled the vacuum of U.S. reluctance to increase own influence by supporting Islamabad. In any way it must be underscored that key instruments in this scenario must not be compulsory measures. Coercion may backfire because it could confirm the regime in its fears of Western abandonment. This would nothing but reinforce the authorities double strategy of nurturing religiously motivated militancy. Only transformed perceptions of Western motivations and of India may impinge the military's strategy of using non-state-militancy as strategic hedging feature.

### *Altering the Internal Situation*

As the external setting is less perceived in terms of security threats domestic prosperity may no longer be subordinated to military defense at every cost. This could foster economic development and socio-economic progress of large parts of society. Such conditions would be a good starting point for international engagement to strengthen progressive civil society.

All strategies will have to fit special Pakistani circumstances. *Rukhshanda Naz* points to the necessity that measures will have to cope with different requirements and conditions on federal, local, tribal, and even family level. Different approaches for different regions of Pakistan may be required. Moreover, any measure seemingly imposed by Western actors will hamper credibility and effectivity.<sup>5</sup>

The conference assesses education as key factor to decrease predispositions for fundamental and radical sentiments within society. The strategy must be to increase quality (implement more

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integration as well as Pakistani-India trust to an unprecedented extend. However, the U.S. is blocking this project due to its conflict with Iran.

<sup>5</sup> For instance are Western-funded non-governmental organizations less accepted by large parts of society and especially in the NWFP.

moderate curricula) and quantity (sufficient availability of public education across the county) of the public school system.

Another central target has got to be political mobilization. Despite all remaining questions may Benazir Bhutto and her PPP be one of the best options currently available. A government consisting of *Pervez Musharraf* (or any other military representative) as president and Benazir Bhutto as Prime Minister might bring together the ruling elite with rather liberal parts of society. However, any fixation on single persons ought to be avoided. The focus should be the process of democratization and political participation to gain momentum. This should be accompanied by opening up the political space. The ban over central entities of civil society such as student unions or labor unions could be revoked. Moreover, support programs may focus on progressive entities beyond implementing charity work (which is nevertheless valuable). The main emphasis should rather be put on political mobilization. Finally, this political mobilization needs to be supported by creating a democratic culture based on the principle of inclusivity. Focal point should be the integration of all parts of society. This has to include religious conservatism as well. The current state of problemsolving strictly along ethnical cleavages will lead to a devastating culture of majority dictatorship.

In the long run it will be essential to alter the civil-military imbalance. In the end there has to be a Pakistani government under a democratic and sovereign civil leadership. Personal stakes and interests which ensure the private prosperity of the ruling military elite remain a central problem hard to be solved. First steps in that direction may be taken by fostering transparency and accountability within all public and private programs supported by international funds, suggests *Ayesha Siddiqi*. Blank check assistance is counterproductive. *Pervez Hoodbhoy* stresses the importance of implementing the rule of law as dominating domestic principle. That would strengthen the judiciary branch as one of the last remaining more or less independent federal actor. Furthermore, it would enforce comprehensive laws already existing and thus cut back for instance illegal Madrassas or radio stations advocating fundamental extremism and religious conservatism. Another proposal is to channel as much as possible of the international interaction with the Pakistani government through its civilian part (which would be in fact any civil prime minister). This may pave way for a real divided government and prevent a civilian puppet on a string designed only to simulate legitimacy for a still military regime.

Together these steps may increase political motivation of progressive civil society and decrease its vulnerability vis-à-vis Islamic fundamentalism. It may also raise the people's awareness that religious militancy and terrorism is a threat to their own future and it could nurture a civil-military alliance against these forces.

Berlin, 21. November 2007

## **Pakistan: Wege aus der Dauerkrise?**

**Eine Fachkonferenz**  
für geladene Teilnehmer  
aus Wissenschaft, Politik und Medien

**Montag 22.10.07 09.30 - 16.30 Uhr**  
**Dienstag 23.10.07 09.30 - 13.00 Uhr**

**auf der Galerie der Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung**  
(Deutsch/Englische Simultanübersetzung)

### Hintergrund

Das Wochenende vom 05. - 07. Oktober wird wohl Eingang in die Annalen der 60 Jahre jungen Islamischen Republik Pakistan finden. Am Freitag ordnete der Oberste Gerichtshof in einer von blutigen Demonstrationen in Islamabad begleiteten Entscheidung an, dass die für den nächsten Tag angesetzten Wahlen zum Staatspräsidenten durchgeführt werden könnten. Allerdings dürfe das Ergebnis von der Wahlkommission noch nicht offiziell verkündet werden, weil das Gericht erst am 17.10. über die Rechtmäßigkeit der Kandidatur von General Präsident Musharraf entscheiden werde.

Am gleichen Tag verabschiedete die Regierung eine „Verordnung zur nationalen Aussöhnung“, zur faktischen Amnestie aller zwischen 1986 und 1999 wegen Korruption angeklagter Politiker. Damit ist am 18. Oktober der Weg frei für eine Rückkehr der seit 1999 wegen Korruptionsvorwürfen im Exil lebenden Ex-Premierministerin Benazir Bhutto. Die hinter den Kulissen ausgehandelte zukünftige Machtteilung zwischen Präsident Musharraf und der auf Lebenszeit gewählten Führerin der *Pakistan People's Party PPP* Bhutto kann umgesetzt werden. Gleichzeitig zur „Verordnung“ wurde am selben Freitag auch die Rote Moschee in Islamabad vor Tausenden Gläubigen wieder eröffnet.

Am Tag darauf siegte Pervez Musharraf mit bis zu 99% Zustimmung bei den Präsidentschaftswahlen. Unter Missachtung des schwebenden Verfahrens bedankte sich der General bereits für die Wahl und kündigte als nächsten Schritt die Einführung von „true democracy“ an. Diese „wahre Demokratie“ sei die Voraussetzung für die nationale Aussöhnung zwischen den Parteien und die Beendigung des Terrors in den Stammesgebieten.

Nur einen Tag später fielen in Nord Waziristan 88 Menschen dem andauernden Bürgerkrieg der Armee gegen militante Neo-Taliban zum Opfer. Diese bislang höchste Zahl von Toten an einem Tag zeigt, dass staatlicher Kontrollverlust nicht nur in der FATA (*Federally Administered Tribal Areas*) bereits Realität ist, sondern auch in einigen Gebiete der Nordwestgrenzprovinz *NWFP* droht.

Internationale

Zusammenarbeit

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## Aktuelle Problemstellung

Die eingangs geschilderte Lage vermittelt nur einen Ausschnitt aus der pakistanischen Wirklichkeit, die von Widersprüchlichkeiten und gesellschaftspolitischen Ungleichzeitigkeiten bestimmt wird. Als Land mit der zweithöchsten Wirtschaftswachstumsrate in Asien investiert Pakistan gleichzeitig nur 3% des Staatshaushalts für Bildung - eine der niedrigsten Raten weltweit. Es gibt exzellente intellektuelle Inseln in der Gesellschaft, aber gleichzeitig eine tiefe Kluft zwischen der Zivilgesellschaft und dem parlamentarischen System, so dass sich kaum politische Reformkräfte jenseits der dynastisch geprägten Parteien bilden. Über allem dominiert seit Jahrzehnten die Armee den Staat, die Wirtschaft und die Gesellschaft. Das pakistanische Militär verfügt über ein schlagkräftiges Nuklearwaffenpotential, das in kein internationales Kontrollsystem eingebunden ist.

Diese Komplexität erschwert nach Auffassung vieler Experten seit Jahren eine rationale Befassung der deutschen und europäischen Politik mit der 162 Millionen Einwohner zählenden Islamischen Republik Pakistan. Das mediale Interesse an Pakistan ist zudem meistens reaktiv und von Verzerrungen gekennzeichnet.

## Zielstellung und Ablauf der Fachkonferenz

Zum Zeitpunkt der Konferenz wird Benazir Bhutto gerade nach Pakistan zurückgekehrt sein; der Oberste Gerichtshof wird seine Entscheidung über die Rechtmäßigkeit der Wahl General Präsident Musharrafs verkündet haben. Die verschiedenen Optionen der Machtverteilungen nach den Parlamentswahlen, die für Januar 2008 vorgesehen sind, werden sich dann bereits klarer abzeichnen. Die Fachkonferenz soll im aktuellen Bezug zu dieser entscheidenden Phase der pakistanischen Politik die Bedingungen für einen notwendigen demokratischen Neubeginn des Landes erörtern.

Anlässlich dieser Konferenz lädt die Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung renommierte Persönlichkeiten des öffentlichen Lebens aus Pakistan zu einem offenen Dialog mit deutschen und internationalen Experten aus Wissenschaft, Politik und Medien ein. Der Schwerpunkt des Programms liegt auf der Präsentation und Erörterung pakistanischer Perspektiven, die in Deutschland eher selten Gehör finden. Konzeption und Ablauf der Fachkonferenz bieten genügend Raum für Nachfragen und ausführlichen Austausch.

Die im Programm genannten Fragestellungen stellen keine abschließende Aufzählung dar, sondern kreisen die Themenkomplexe ein und laden zur gemeinsamen Diskussion ein. Die Konferenz soll zu einer aussen- und entwicklungspolitischen Strategie gegenüber einem Land mit Schlüsselfunktion für die Befriedung der Region beitragen.

## Zu den eingeladenen Experten aus Pakistan gehören u.a.:

### **Dr. Ayesha Siddiq,**

Politische Analystin, Kolumnistin und Autorin des Buchs „Military Inc. - Inside Pakistan's Military Economy“

### **Prof. Pervez Hoodbhoy,**

Professor und Dekan an der Qaid-e-Azam Universität Islamabad und politischer Kolumnist und Publizist

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