

Pakistan's Army Has a New General: Policy Implications

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Introduction

Pakistan has a new army chief, General Qamar Javed Bajwa. As with every such transition, American and international scholars and policy analysts are hopeful that this army chief will be different from his predecessors. The tendency towards confirmation bias that "this general will be different" is driven by the fact that Pakistan's army has long dominated the country's domestic and foreign affairs. As such, the army—not the elected civilians—presides over numerous issues that are of key concern to the U.S. government, including: nuclear weapons and employment doctrine; relations with key Islamist militant groups (*inter alia* Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), Haqqani Network, Afghan Taliban); and bilateral relations with India; bilateral relations with Afghanistan; among numerous others.

This essay takes on the circulating wisdom that Bajwa will somehow be a positive change for the institution he runs and the major policy levers he will control. It first assesses the issue of the balance of power between civilian politicians and the army. Here, it is argued that the army's views of these issues are pre-eminent and will remain so for the policy-relevant future. While there may be some light between the inclinations of the army and

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the civilian government on some of these issues, ultimately the army's preferences dominate. It is difficult to parse what—if any—role Pakistan's citizens play in shaping these policies, in large part because the army has an inordinate role in shaping Pakistanis' beliefs about critical national security affairs. The result of the army's perduring and tenacious efforts to shape public opinion is that Pakistanis generally accede to the assessment of the army and tend to support the army in its various activities.

After assessing these structural issues, there is a more temporal assessment of what we may expect from recent leadership changes in the army, most notably the recent retirement of Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Raheel Shareef, and the appointment of Lieutenant General Qamar Javed Bajwa as Pakistan's 16th COAS. Also briefly anticipated are what may be expected from the next general election scheduled for 2018. Ultimately, it is concluded that we should expect no significant positive change from Bajwa's leadership, and offer arguments that he may be even more aggressive with respect to domestic and foreign policies. At this juncture, it is difficult to discern who may emerge as the prime minister in 2018; however, it is unlikely to matter because the army will retain the ability to coerce that prime minister to do its bidding. It is concluded with a brief discussion of the implications of these arguments for American policy.

Civil-Military Relations: Is Past Prologue?¹

Pakistanis and analysts of Pakistan have long remarked, with more truth than hyperbole, that “generally countries have armies; but in Pakistan, the army has a country.” Brigadier (Retd.) Abdurrahman Siddiqi observed the progressive subordination of Pakistan's “national identity and interest” to the “growing power of the military image.”² By way of explanation, he suggests that because:

There is no other institution to rival the military in organization and discipline, above all, in its control of the instruments of violence, its image...reaches a point of predominance and power (...).sort of [P]russianism is born to produce an army with a nation in place of a nation with an army.³

Because the Pakistan army is the largest and dominant service, “military dominated” in fact means “army dominated” even though Pakistan does

¹This section is taken from: Fair, C. Christine. *Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army's Way of War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

²Siddiqi, Abdurrahman (Brig. Retd.). *The Military in Pakistan: Image and Reality*. Lahore: Vanguard, 1996.

³Siddiqi, *The Military in Pakistan*.

have an air force and a navy as well as an array of paramilitary organizations. The other services do not participate in governing the country. Pakistan's generals (i.e. army chief, director of the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI), and the corps commanders) step in overtly or covertly when they believe that the civilian order has failed and that the army's intervention is required by virtue of its duty to the nation. The army also correctly believes that Pakistan's citizenry will welcome the intervention. In fact, Pakistanis generally have approved when the army chief seizes power and ousts popularly-elected leaders. Pakistan's encounters with military rule have followed a similar pattern.⁴ The army chief seizes the government, suspends the constitution, issues a "Provisional Constitutional Order" (PCO), dismisses the parliament and requires the Supreme Court to justify the coup under the principle of the "Doctrine of Necessity" (Wolf-Phillips 1979). The complicity of the Supreme Court is profoundly important. Those justices that prefer to uphold their original oath to defend the Constitution are simply replaced with justices who will acquiesce. Because the election commission draws from the higher judiciary, when elections are at last held, they are conducted under the auspices of officials drawn from a highly-compromised cadre of judges.

Perhaps reflecting the army's understanding of the democratic preferences of their citizenry, Pakistan's military leaders have all sought to govern with a patina of democracy, albeit under the army's control. Thus, within a few years of the coup, the army chief, with the help of the intelligence agencies, cobbles together a "King's party," which draws from established mainstream political parties and new entrants seeking to take advantage of the military regime's patronage. In addition, the military uses its intelligence agencies to fashion an opposition of choice, usually comprised of Islamist political parties. Confident of an electable King's party and an Islamist opposition of choice, the regime holds invariably manipulated elections to install the King's party in government. The ensuing pro-military parliament then ratifies the various extra-constitutional orders issued by the army chief as president.

⁴See International Crisis Group. *Building Judicial Independence in Pakistan* (Asia Report No. 86), November 10 2004, accessed April 25 2017. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/pakistan/building-judicial-independence-pakistan> and *Elections, Democracy, and Stability in Pakistan* (Asia Report No. 137), July 31 2007, accessed April 25 2017. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/pakistan/elections-democracy-and-stability-pakistan> and *Winding Back Martial Law in Pakistan* (Asia Briefing No. 70), November 12 2007, accessed April 26 2017. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/pakistan/winding-back-martial-law-pakistan> and *Reforming the Judiciary in Pakistan* (Asia Report No. 160), October 16 2008, accessed April 26 2017. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/pakistan/reforming-judiciary-pakistan>.

This is an interim move before the army regime must collapse completely, partly due to the pressure of the military itself, and partly due to the popular unrest and concomitant public distrust that develops toward the military government. The army retreats from formal power and permits a weak democratic restoration. In Pakistan, even though constitutionalism and democracy have never fully fructified, Pakistanis do not embrace military authoritarianism over long periods of time. The army can govern directly only for limited periods of time, and only with the façade of democratic institutions. This is largely because the army fails to manage the state any better than the civilians they ousted, and because the army itself begins to resent the politicization of the force and missed promotions (and thus forced retirements) of senior generals, which arise from the army chief's refusal to leave his post. Eventually, the public demands a return to democracy—howsoever imperfect or limited—and the army obliges in principle.

In the past, the army could be confident that democracy would remain under its thumb, because Pakistan's military dictators left constitutional legacies that enabled the army to manipulate political affairs. For example, while the army was hesitant to allow Benazir Bhutto to become prime minister after Zia ul Haq's death, it was confident that it could keep her and her government in line due to a Zia-era constitutional measure: Article 58(2)(b) of the 1973 Constitution enacted with the Eighth Amendment. This provision allowed the president to dismiss the prime minister and the provincial chief ministers; dissolve the national and provincial assemblies; nominate judges to the superior judiciary; and appoint chiefs of the armed services. With the Eighth Amendment, Zia shifted the balance of power away from the position of the prime minister to that of the president.

Throughout the 1990s, no parliament served out its term due to early dismissal by the president under 58(2)(b). This occurred with the connivance of the military (e.g. Benazir Bhutto's ouster in 1990 and that of Nawaz Sharif in 1993) and without (e.g. Benazir Bhutto's ouster in 1996 due to differences with President Farooq Leghari, also of the Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP)). No civilian government could muster the two-thirds majority to repeal this amendment until 1997 when Nawaz Sharif returned to power. With its repeal, Pakistan again returned to a parliamentary form of democracy, but the interregnum was brief: Musharraf restored 58(2)(b) when he seized the government in October 1999. The so-called "58(2)(b)"

remained in place until the Eighteenth Amendment was passed in April 2010 and again returned Pakistan to a parliamentary democracy.⁵

This antagonistic relationship between the military and the democratic parties is more reciprocal than it may seem at first blush. When opposition political leaders request help with weakening their opponents, the military often obliges.⁶ Because of this collusion between the military, politicians, judiciary, and bureaucracy, the first quasi-civilian government to serve out its entire five-year term was that elected under the auspices of President Musharraf. It should be noted that Musharraf had every incentive to keep this parliament in place as long as it served his purposes. In June 2004, Musharraf dismissed Prime Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali, who came into office following the October 2002 elections conducted under Musharraf's government. Musharraf replaced him with Shaukat Aziz, the American Citibank executive, who remained in that capacity until November 2007. In March 2013, when the previous PPP-led government stepped down to give way to a care taker government and fresh elections in May, it was the first wholly civilian government to serve out its term and be replaced by a constitutionally elected new government.

Given the army's ability to bring down a civilian government through direct or indirect intervention, few politicians are willing to take on the army. Most prefer to defer to the military in exchange for the chance to remain in power.⁷ There were a few notable historical examples of civilians who challenged the military. One example of this is the democratically-elected but highly autocratic government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who served as prime minister from 1973-1977. Bhutto managed to take advantage of the army's weakened position due to the national belief that the army was responsible for the loss of East Pakistan in the 1971 war. However, by 1978, the army was back in power.⁸

Another example is that of Prime Minister Muhammad Khan Junejo, appointed Prime Minister by General Zia ul Haq following the 1985 elections, which were held on a non-party basis. Zia's amendments to Pakistan's constitution had weakened the powers of prime minister,

⁵Jaffrelot, Christophe, *A History of Pakistan and Its Origins*. London: Anthem Press, 2002. And Shah, Aqil. "Pakistan's "Armored" Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 14, no. 4 (2003): 26-40, and Hoffman, Michael. "Military Extrication and Temporary Democracy: The Case of Pakistan," *Democratization* 18, 1 (2011): 75-99.

⁶Siddiq, Ayesha. *Military Inc.: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy*. London: Pluto Press, 2007.

⁷Siddiq, *Military Inc.*

⁸Ibid.

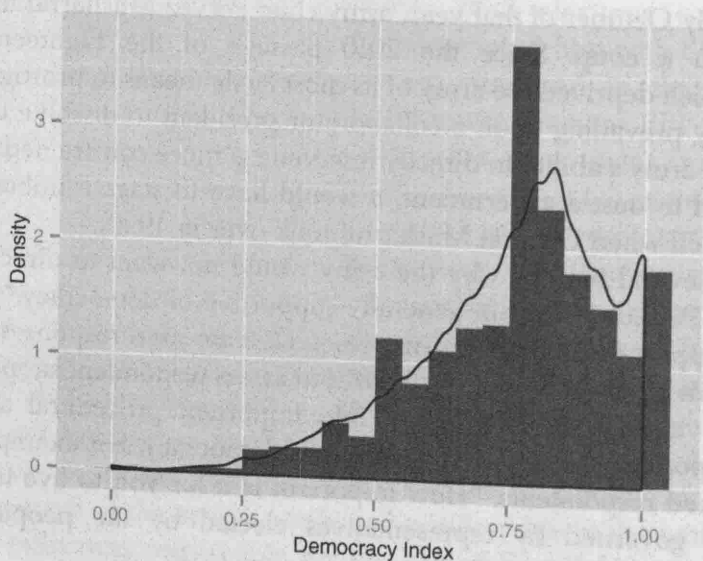
bolstering his confidence that Junejo would be an easily controlled puppet. But Junejo infuriated Zia by demanding the end of martial law, refusing to let the parliament rubber-stamp Zia's various ordinances, and signing the Geneva Accords in April of 1988, thus ending the conflict in Afghanistan without specifying who would govern after the Soviet departure. After receiving the last tranche of assistance from the U.S. in May 1988, Zia dissolved the parliament and dismissed Junejo (Haqqani 2005). Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif also went against his generals in the fall of 1998, when he sought to normalize relations with India after their reciprocal nuclear tests earlier that year with his Lahore Bus Diplomacy initiative. The army undermined this effort by launching the Kargil War in winter and spring of 1999. By October of that year, army chief Pervez Musharraf had ousted Sharif in a coup. Since the 2010 passage of the Eighteenth Amendment, which deprived the army of its most facile means to prorogue a government by prevailing upon a collaborator president to dissolve the government, the army's ability to directly intervene is more constrained. If the army wanted to oust a government, it would have to stage a military coup (as happened when General Musharraf took over in 1999).

Yet there are several reasons why the army would not want to directly intervene. First, Pakistanis remain generally supportive of democracy.⁹ To assess overall support for democracy, my research team used responses to six questions from a survey we fielded in 2012 to assess respondent support for democratic values. These items tap into important procedural and ideological components central to the concept of democracy. For example, enumerators asked respondents, "How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed by representatives elected by the people?"

⁹Our survey expanded and improved upon an earlier effort by Fair, C. Christine, Neil Malhotra and Jacob N. Shapiro, "Democratic Values and Support for Militancy: Evidence from a National Survey of Pakistan," *Journal Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 58, No. 5 (August 2014): 743-770. The data used here were derived from a face-to-face survey of 16,279 Pakistanis, which included 13,282 interviews in the four main provinces (Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), and 2,997 interviews in six of seven agencies in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, or FATA (Bajaur, Khyber, Kurram, Mohmand, Orakzai, and South Waziristan). The survey was fielded in January and February 2012 in the four main provinces and in April 2012 in the FATA, an area that is home to numerous active militant insurgencies. The overall response rate was 71%, with 14.5% of households contacted refusing to take the survey and 14.5% of the targeted households not interviewed because no one was home. As shown in Figure 1 below, support for democratic values is high in this sample of Pakistanis, with scores on the index heavily skewed toward 1 (mean = 0.75, sd = 0.18). See Fair, C. Christine, Rebecca Littman, Elizabeth R. Nugent, "Conceptions of Shari'a and Support for Militancy and Democratic Values: Evidence from Pakistan," *Political Science and Research Methods*, published online January 31, 2017 (doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2016.55), 20 pgs.

Response categories included “extremely important,” “very important,” “moderately important,” “slightly important,” and “not important at all.” While the concept of democracy is also complex and may be multi-faceted, a factor analysis confirms that the questions in this index capture a unidimensional concept of democratic values in Pakistan. We combined the six democracy questions into an index, scaled from 0 to 1. As Figure 1 (below) shows, there are high levels of support for democratic values among Pakistanis.

Figure 1. High level of support for democratic values among respondents



Source: C. Christine Fair, Rebecca Littman, Elizabeth R. Nugent , “Conceptions of Shari’a and Support for Militancy and Democratic Values: Evidence from Pakistan,” *Political Science and Research Methods*, published online January 31, 2017 (doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2016.55), 20 pgs.

As noted above, the Pakistan army cares very much about what its populace believes.¹⁰ Therefore the army invests significant effort domestically to cultivate support for itself and concomitant disregard for civilian authorities. To do so, the army arrogates to itself a pre-eminent role in shaping Pakistan's educational curricula, textbooks, and the publicly and privately-owned media.¹¹ Second, the army is considerably occupied with domestic insecurity, while also managing key relationships with the United States, China, Afghanistan, and India. Third, no matter how suboptimal it may find Nawaz Sharif, it has no less-odious alternative to him and his Pakistan Muslim League at present. Neither the Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) nor Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) are more palatable alternatives. Fourth, should the army intervene as it did in 1999, it will likely provoke sanctions from the United States, which is an important supplier of security assistance, though that assistance has declined in recent years. Finally, the army can accomplish what it wants with the current set up by undermining the prime minister, using a relatively new set of tools it developed first to weaken the PPP-led government and then to undermine Nawaz Sharif after his sweeping victory in 2013.

¹⁰President and General Musharraf was angered by the polling efforts of the International Republic Institute (IRI), which documented decreasing support for the army and for Musharraf in particular. He had previously boasted of their survey efforts when their results indicated support for the dictator. Under pressure, IRI ceased publishing the results of their surveys. The army also likes to publicize its popular standing among Pakistanis (i.e. see Haider 2015). See Sethi, Najam. "Chronicle of a result foretold," *Friday Times*, February 15 2008, accessed April 25 2017. <http://www.najamsethi.com/chronicle-of-a-result-foretold/> and "Musharraf is criticised in survey," *BBC News*, Dec. 13 2007, accessed April 25 2017. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7141911.stm and Haider, Irfan. "Army the most trustworthy institution in Pakistan, survey reveals," *The Dawn*, October 21 2015, accessed April 25 2017. <http://www.dawn.com/news/1214367>.

¹¹Farooq, Umer. "General Perception," *The Herald* (Dec. 3 2012): 39-43 and "The Image Makers," *The Herald* (Dec. 2012): 44-45 and Kohari, Alizeh. "Power Projection," *The Herald* (Dec. 2012): 51-53.

Sabri, Zahra. "A Textbook Case," *The Herald* (Dec. 2012): 47-50 and Yusuf, Huma. "Conspiracy Fever: the US, Pakistan and its Media," *Survival* 53 (August 2011): 95-118. And Haqqani, Husain. *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military*. Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005.

The Army's New Playbook: Short-leashing Democracy¹²

The army's current means of short-leashing democracy were manifest in its efforts to hobble the PPP-led government through a combination of judicial activism and orchestrated street theatre once the 18th Amendment was ratified. One of the levers it used was the enmity between then-Supreme Court chief justice, Iftiqar Chaudhury, and President Zardari, which originated in 2008 when the PPP failed to support Chaudhury, whom Musharraf had ousted in March 2007. Zardari understood that Chaudhury would strike down an agreement that Musharraf had forged in late 2007 with his slain wife, Benazir Bhutto, while she lived abroad. That agreement—the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO)—suspended all corruption charges against PPP politicians by allowing them to contest elections. The NRO did not extend amnesty to the PPP's main rival, the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN).

The logic of the NRO was simple. Bhutto's popularity at the ballot box would restore Musharraf's dwindling legitimacy: she would serve as prime minister and he would remain on as president. Nonetheless, the NRO did not work for Musharraf because Bhutto was killed in a suicide attack in December 2007, and many believed Musharraf or his government was responsible. Musharraf's power waned despite U.S. support and in the fall of 2007, he resigned as army chief (but not as president) and appointed Ashfaq Parvez Kayani as his successor.

Nonetheless, the NRO still paved the way for a PPP victory in the 2008 elections. Since neither the PMLN nor the PPP had the votes to form a government on their own, and fearing that a failure to form a government would further undermine democracy and politicians in Pakistanis' eyes, the PPP and PMLN made the odd decision to form the government together. The coalition between the two longstanding nemeses was short-lived: the PMLN pulled out when the PPP resisted reinstating Chaudhury, and went on to launch massive protests against the PPP. Many observers believe that the months-long impasse was resolved by the then-COAS Kayani, who, fearing that the standoff between the two parties would cause the government to collapse, persuaded Zardari to reinstate the chief justice.

¹²Fair, C. Christine. "The Pakistani Military's New Coup Playbook: Democracy Is Still on a Leash in Islamabad," *Foreign Affairs*, March 14 2013, accessed April 25 2017. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/pakistan/2013-03-14/pakistani-militarys-new-coup-playbook> and "Still Standing in Pakistan: The Protest, the Military, and What Comes Next," *Foreign Affairs (online)*, September 3 2014, accessed April 26 2017. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/pakistan/2014-09-03/still-standing-pakistan>.

Once reinstated, Chaudhury voided the NRO and ordered the government to reinstate all pending cases against Zardari and other PPP politicians. The Supreme Court used these cases to enervate the PPP. In this way, the court pushed out Zardari's Prime Minister, Yousuf Raza Gillani, in 2012 and held his successor, Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf, at risk until the government dissolved in 2013 for general elections. Although the court justified its dogged pursuit of the party as a sign of its commitment to the rule of law, its rationale was suspect. Politicians notorious for corruption fill the ranks of every Pakistani political party. And Chaudhury himself, despite his oath to uphold the constitution, swore at least two oaths to Musharraf.

Judicial activism against the PPP government tended to peak when the army believed it had a viable (non PMLN) alternative to the PPP. (The army would not tempt the strength of the government when the only other option was the PMLN, which had a soured relationship with general headquarters). Notably, during 2011 and 2012, Supreme Court efforts to prosecute PPP figures coincided with the sudden rise of Imran Khan, who was widely believed to have army backing. At the height of his popularity, Khan drew large crowds that spanned both genders as well as various age and ethnic groups. His self-proclaimed "tsunami" reinvigorated the electorate, and mobilized them on the themes of corruption, restoring Pakistani sovereignty, opposition to U.S. drone strikes, and scaling back military cooperation with the United States.

While Khan was successful in luring away prominent politicians from the PPP, the PML-N, and (both?) their vote banks, it soon became clear that Khan could not win enough votes to form a government without playing coalition politics, which he declined to do. With Khan's prospects dimmed, the court returned to relative quiescence until the sudden arrival, in January 2013, of Muhammad Tahirul Qadri, who had ties to two previous military rulers, Mohammad Zia ulHaq and Musharraf. While few Pakistanis had even heard of the Canadian religious scholar, he managed to marshal massive crowds to protest the PPP's purported corruption. Many Pakistanis wondered about the provenance of the "martyrdomproof container" in which he moved about. The fortified mobile residence offered resistance to high velocity ammunition and improvised explosive devices; even Pakistani police and politicians did not have such secure conveyances. Qadri's rapid rise, extensive funding, and access to Pakistan's media provide strong evidence that he also enjoyed the support of the army.

Qadri and his followers camped out in front of the parliament, and insisted that the government end its term early to form a caretaker government in consultation with him and the army. Although many of his complaints were reasonable, his methods were outrageous. Many Pakistanis feared that the army planned to use the weeklong confrontation to justify a coup, but such a move was never likely. Instead, the army was biding time using an unelected and unelectable Canadian citizen to bring the current government to its knees. It was no coincidence that the Supreme Court took the opportunity to order the arrest of the prime minister as the Qadri drama unfolded.

Pakistanis gave a deep sigh of relief when it was all over. The popular interpretation of these events is that the politicians managed to sideline Qadri and undercut a coup in the making. In fact, what Qadri managed was a soft coup on behalf of the army. Qadri coerced from the government an agreement to dissolve the parliament before March 16, even though the parliament's term was set to expire on March 18. As a Canadian citizen, Qadri had no right to demand that a popularly elected government dissolve prematurely. Yet, with the support of his allies in uniform, he was able to dictate terms. This episode—and the bizarre accord it produced—tainted the legitimacy of the 2013 electoral transition by demonstrating that the army still held democracy's leash. The government dissolved on March 16.

The army executed a similar drama in the early days of the newly-elected Nawaz Sharif government in 2014. The army was disquieted by his election for several reasons. First, Pakistanis were starting to get a taste for democratic transfers of power. Although the general election that brought Sharif to office was not pristine, it was the first time that one democratically-elected administration had completed its term and then handed power over to another democratically-elected administration. As noted above, throughout the 1990s, the military had always cut elected officials' tenures short. Analysts were hopeful that, as democracy became more routine, the military would have an increasingly difficult time intervening with coups.

Furthermore, it was troubling for the army that the Sharif government won a solid majority. Given this position of relative strength, Sharif sought to assert some modicum of civilian control over the country's over-grown military. Sharif assumed personal oversight of the defense and foreign affairs portfolios, which had previously been left to the military. He was vocal about pursuing better ties with India, and spoke of abandoning the age-old strategy of cultivating terrorism in Afghanistan for "strategic depth"

against India. He also promised to negotiate with the Pakistani Taliban, which has savaged the country for over a decade. The army, for its own reasons, wanted to launch a selective operation against the group in Pakistan's North Waziristan area. Finally, Sharif has insisted on trying Musharraf for treason.¹³ The army's generals understood that a case against their former leader would put them all on trial. All three of these objectives undermined core army equities.

Whereas previously, the army could rely upon a complicit Supreme Court justice, the new Supreme Court Justice, Nasir-ul-Mulk, had little to no appetite for the activism of his predecessor. Pakistani analysts suspect that army re-mobilized the street drama that it had choreographed during the PPP government; namely, by supporting months-long protests in the capital led by Imran Khan and Mustafa Qadri. Again, Pakistanis feared a coup. Instead, army chief, Raheel Sharif, "agreed to mediate in a bitter stand-off between the government, Khan and Qadri—who [brought] thousands of their followers to Islamabad."¹⁴ The army used this drama to coerce Nawaz Sharif's acquiescence to the army's preferences and forego his own goals. Additionally, throughout Nawaz Sharif's tenure, Sharif made various overtures toward India, each of which were followed by terrorist attacks in India by Pakistan-sponsored terrorist groups (i.e. LeT and JeM). This chilled Indian enthusiasm for Sharif's overtures.

The persistent ability of the army to restrain the prime minister is illustrated by a cluster of events in October 2016, when Cyril Almeida, a senior Pakistani journalist, reported in *Dawn* (an English-language daily newspaper) that Pakistan's civilian leadership told the military that it should "act against militants or face international isolation."¹⁵ Almeida indicated that the civilian leadership had a heated exchange with the army against the backdrop of intensifying conflict with India. After a stunning assault by Pakistan-backed terrorists associated with LeT had taken place on an Indian military base in Uri (Kashmir). More generally, Almeida's article

¹³The courts could point to two instances. The first was in 1999, when Musharraf launched a military coup and ousted Sharif from government. The second was in 2007, when Musharraf suspended the constitution. Sharif has demanded that Musharraf be tried only for the 2007 offense.

¹⁴Boone, Jon. "Pakistan 'soft coup' fears as army chief holds talks with protest leaders," *The Guardian*, August 29 2014, accessed April 25 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/29/pakistan-army-chief-talks-khan-qadri>

¹⁵Almeida, Cyril. "Exclusive: Act against militants or face international isolation, civilians tell military," *The Dawn*, Oct. 7 2016, accessed April 25 2017. <http://www.dawn.com/news/1288350>.

suggested that Nawaz Sharif was trying to “push back against the military to gain some space in the country’s defense policy and foreign affairs.”¹⁶

Reportedly, this move by the Nawaz Sharif government stemmed from growing pressure from China, which began pushing back on Pakistan’s request to undermine India’s effort to ban Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) chief, Masood Azhar, at the United Nations (UN) by placing technical holds on the move in the Security Council (Jamal 2016). The prime minister’s younger brother and Punjab Chief Minister, Shahbaz Sharif, complained to the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief, General Akhtar, that whenever the police detain persons with terrorist group ties, the ISI works to free them. Nawaz Sharif also asked the ISI chief that “fresh attempts be made to conclude the Pathankot investigation and restart the stalled Mumbai attacks-related trials in a Rawalpindi antiterrorism court.”¹⁷ In addition, a PML-N parliamentarian Rana Muhammad Afzal asked, “Which eggs is Hafiz Saeed [LeT’s leader] laying for us that we are nurturing him?” during a meeting of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs.¹⁸

The response of the civilian and military leadership to Almeida’s article is telling of who actually wields the power in Pakistan over security policy, and those domestic policies that inform them. The civilian government responded to the report by repeatedly denying its accuracy, denouncing it as an “amalgamation of fiction and fabrication”, and by adding Almeida’s name on the Exit Control List (ECL), a move which barred him from foreign travel.¹⁹ Pakistanis believe that this decision was made not by Nawaz Sharif’s government, but by the army. While the army may have tolerated the civilian government’s efforts to assert itself in national security affairs, it was not going to endure such a challenge being made public.²⁰ Moreover, to underscore that the army and the ISI it controls is in charge of these matters, the ISI chief refused on multiple occasions to attend

¹⁶Jamal, Umair. “After Dawn: The Civil-Military Chasm Deepens in Pakistan,” *The Diplomat*, October 13 2016, accessed April 25 2017. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/10/after-dawn-the-civil-military-chasm-deepens-in-pakistan/> and Dawn. 2016. “China extends hold on Indian bid to ban Jaish chief Masood Azhar at UN,” *The Dawn*, Oct. 2. Available at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1287545>.

¹⁷Almeida, Cyril. “Exclusive: Act against militants or face international isolation, civilians tell military,” *The Dawn*, Oct. 7 2016, accessed April 25 2017. Available at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1288350>.

¹⁸Khatta, Inamullah. “Why aren’t we taking action against Hafiz Saeed, PML-N lawmaker asks,” *The Dawn*, Oct. 6 2016, accessed April 25 2017. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1288400>.

¹⁹Almeida, “Exclusive: Act against militants” and Jamal, “After Dawn.”

²⁰Jamal, “After Dawn.”

parliamentary meetings scheduled to address the India-Pakistan situation after LeT's attack on the Indian army base at Uri.²¹ From the army's point of view, civilian demands for the ISI to keep away from law enforcement's efforts to act against militants are tantamount to conceding to New Delhi's demands. This reflects the long-held strategic position of the army and the ISI of cultivating these groups as tools of foreign policy, irrespective of the domestic costs they may impose.

Leadership Changes: What Can We Expect?

What can analysts expect from the newly-appointed army chief, Bajwa? First, I patently reject the interpretation that Sharif appointed him because he would be more amenable to civilian governance.²² Sharif made this mistake in 1998 when he forced General Karamat to retire and replaced him with Musharraf, who ousted Sharif in his 1999 coup. Moreover, there is no evidence to support the assertion that Bajwa is any more democratic than his predecessors. Instead, I assess that his appointment reflects the shared views of the civilian and military leadership about the current threats facing Pakistan: namely the importance of making progress on the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and managing increasingly fraught ties with India as it explores options to punish Pakistan for its persistent use of terrorism in India.

Bajwa has extensive experience managing Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan affairs, as he had served thrice in Pakistan's X Corps, which is responsible for the area along the Line of Control with India. The X Corps also includes the Force Command Northern Areas in Gilgit. Bajwa's experience in confronting India in this terrain will be a natural benefit, given India's recent increased assertiveness in the wake of Uri. Moreover, Bajwa's experience is doubly important because residents of Gilgit-Baltistan, who fear displacement and environmental degradation, are not enthusiastic about CPEC, which is anchored in the north with ground lines of

²¹Ibid.

²²Durrani, Fakhar. "PM wanted to appoint pro-democratic military expert as army chief," *The News International*, November 27 2016, accessed April 25 2017. [https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/168024-PM-wanted-to-appoint-pro-democratic-military-expert-as-army-chief-TheNewsInternational-National+\(Pakistan+News++The+News+International\)](https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/168024-PM-wanted-to-appoint-pro-democratic-military-expert-as-army-chief-TheNewsInternational-National+(Pakistan+News++The+News+International)).

communication connecting to Khashgar in China.²³ In August 2016, angry locals protested the planned CPEC-related activities and the state responded by arresting some 500 men.²⁴ The army and civilian government alike are vested in CPEC fructifying. Additionally, under Chinese pressure, Pakistan is considering making the area a normal province and dispensing with its special constitutional status.²⁵ Thus Bajwa's expertise in managing dissent in Gilgit-Baltistan is desirable all both parties which are vested in CPEC's success.

CPEC is anchored in the south of Pakistan to the Gwadar Port project in Balochistan and the associated development initiatives there. Since 2005, Balochistan has been in a state of renewed insurgency and much of Baloch ire is derived from the developments at Gwadar and the exclusion of Baloch from the benefits thereof. Baloch fear that as the state continues to bring in Punjabis and non-Baloch to work on the Balochistan projects, the

²³Wolf, Siegfried O. "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and its impact on Gilgit-Baltistan," SADF In Focus, No. 25. November 24, 2016. http://sadf.eu/new/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/FOCUS.25.SOW_CPEC_.pdf; Azad, Raja Muhammad Atif. "Whither environmental assessments?," *The Express Tribune*, May 16, 2015. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/887045/whither-environmental-assessments/>; "CPEC and Gilgit-Baltistan," *Gilgit Times Online*, January 18, 2016. <http://gilgittimes.com.pk/cpec-and-gilgit-baltistan/>.

²⁴Chen, Liu Chuen. "Gilgit-Baltistan locals protest against arrest of 500 men by Pakistani security forces," *India Today*, August 13 2016, accessed April 25 2017. <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/gilgit-baltistan-protest-pakistan-security-forces/1/739607.html>

²⁵See inter alia Mahmud, Ershad. "Gilgit-Baltistan: A province or not," *The News on Sunday*, January 24, 2016. <http://tns.thenews.com.pk/gilgit-baltistan-province/#.WQIubvnyUk>; "Federal cabinet approves recommendations to 'mainstream' FATA," *The Dawn*, March 2, 2017. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1317961>. Some analysts have suggested that this move would problematize Pakistan's position on Kashmir by giving India an excuse to make further moves to integrate that portion of Kashmir under its control by removing its special constitutional status. Like India, which affords Kashmir special constitutional status, Pakistan too has preserved special status for Gilgit-Baltistan as well as the so-called Azad Kashmir awaiting "final resolution" of the territorial dispensation of all disputed territories of Jammu-Kashmir. I believe this argument is fallacious. Any move that India makes to regularize Kashmir will follow the compulsions of domestic politics. In early 2016, Ayesha Siddiqi (cited in AFP 2016) suggested that such a move could even signal Pakistan's willingness to have peace in Kashmir. Her optimism was obviated by later events of 2016. This argument was and remains flawed. After all, Pakistan ceded part of the disputed territory to China in 1963. This had no impact upon Pakistan's claims to Kashmir.

Baloch will become an ethnic minority in their "own province."²⁶ (My own surveys of Balochistan suggest that this may already be the case²⁷). Baloch insurgents have attacked Chinese personnel in the province and have sabotaged gas pipelines, attacked security forces, and targeted so-called "settlers," which usually refers to Punjabis who have moved to the province.²⁸ Presumably, Bajwa will be better positioned to manage the security challenges that threaten CPEC at these two important anchors in the north and south. Bajwa's experiences in Balochistan include his commission in the 16 Baloch Regiment and work as an instructor at the Command and Staff college in Quetta. I share Foizee's assessment that Bajwa's task "is to make sure that the process of making CPEC a reality remains uninterrupted."²⁹ Given his background, Bajwa will likely aggressively work to ensure CPEC's success, even if it results in greater brutalities against its opponents in Gilgit-Baltistan and in Balochistan.

We should also expect him to continue taking an aggressive posture on India and Kashmir as well. In fact, Bajwa may be more aggressive towards India for at least two reasons. First, his experience in FCNA may not only predispose him to be a hardliner towards India due to the inevitable loss of soldiers that occurs from altitude sickness, occasional firing between forces and other deaths that can be indirectly or directly attributed to the force posture there; but his experience there will better equip him to be more aggressive. Second, Pakistan's media facilitated an insidious "whisper campaign" that Bajwa is an Ahmadi or that he has relatives who are

²⁶Wani, Shakoor Ahmad. "The Changing Dynamics of the Baloch Nationalist Movement in Pakistan." *Asian Survey* 56.5 (2016): 807-832; \Samad, Yunas. "Understanding the insurgency in Balochistan." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 52.2 (2014): 293-320; Kupez, Mickey. "Pakistan's Baloch Insurgency: History, Conflict Drivers, and Regional Implications." *International Affairs Review* 20(3), 95-110; Khan, A. (2009). Renewed ethnonationalist insurgency in Balochistan, Pakistan: The militarized state and continuing economic deprivation. *Asian Survey*, 49(6): 1071- 1091.

²⁷Fair, C. Christine and Ali Hamza. "Rethinking Baloch Secularism: What the Data Say," *Peace and Conflict Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (2017). <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1405&context=pcs>.

²⁸Human Rights Watch. "We Can Torture, Kill, or Keep You for Years': Enforced Disappearances by Pakistan Security Forces in Balochistan," July 18, 2011. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2011/07/28/we-can-torture-kill-or-keep-you-years/enforced-disappearances-pakistan-security>.

²⁹Foizee, Bahauddin. "The Real Reason Bajwa Was Appointed Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff," *The Diplomat*, December 21 2016, accessed April 25 2017. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/12/the-real-reason-bajwa-was-appointed-pakistans-chief-of-army-staff/>.

Ahmadi.³⁰ While he was still one of four contenders for COAS, several religious hardliners began objecting to his promotion based upon these rumors. If this whisper campaign did not have the imprimatur of the army or its intelligence agencies, those media outlets facilitating this rumor would have been charged with criminal activity. The fact that no such punishment ensued is an important signal that this campaign was an "inside job." It is immaterial whether he or his family is Ahmadi because this rumor can resurface at any time. Any sign of weakness vis-à-vis India or Afghanistan, and any willingness to act against some of the militant assets groomed by the deep state, can always be attributed to his ostensibly Ahmadi connections. Thus, I expect that Bajwa will be even more hawkish on these issues than his predecessors because of these rumors.

It is difficult to say what impact the 2018 elections will have on Pakistan's positions regarding national security affairs and foreign policy. First, it is not clear who could possibly be the frontrunner in those elections. The Nawaz Sharif's PML-N is mired in scandal and weakened by the military. The PPP's young chairman, Bilawal Bhutto (who is Benazir Bhutto's son), is seen as incompetent and even buffoonish. Imran Khan still energizes a significant base of young voters but his support for the Pakistani Taliban has not endeared him to the Pakistani military and ISI. Indeed, some of these policies have alienated his erstwhile supporters. His detractors refer to him as "Taliban Khan." While Imran Khan has been useful to the army as a tool to weaken Sharif, he is too unpredictable and unreliable to be the army's choice for prime minister. It is my assessment that the army will be very active in manipulating the electoral outcome by interfering selectively in voter registration and issuing identity cards, frustrating the ability of candidates to run, orchestrating party defections, and manipulating the security environment.

The most likely desired outcome would be a fractious coalition-government that resulted from the deeply flawed 2008 elections, during which I served as an election observer. In the 2013 elections, in which I was also an observer, foreign observers had difficulty deploying due to the security environment. I see no reason why the 2018 elections would be a

³⁰Ahmedis suffer extreme persecution in Pakistan because they do not accept the ordinal finality of the prophethood. Worse than being considered nonbelievers (kufar, pl. of kafir), they are considered to be apostates (murtadeen, pl. of murtad). In 1974, under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Ahmedis were declared to be non-Muslim. Given this law and the perception that they are murtadeen, they can be punished with death if they refer to themselves as Muslims (i.e., call their places of worship "mosques," say Muslim prayers, etc.).

more propitious environment for election observation missions. For all of the reasons already noted, whoever becomes the prime minister is largely immaterial for questions germane to U.S. national security interests.

Implications for US Policy

International observers tend to look at the appointment of new army chiefs and even new prime ministers with the expectation that some things will change, perhaps for the better. Unfortunately, there is very little scope for such optimism. The strategic interests of the army have been remarkably durable over several decades, and the assets it has cultivated to manage them (militancy under a nuclear umbrella and rent seeking based upon the country being too dangerous to fail) have been similarly enduring. Thus, army chiefs differ very little in their appraisal of Pakistan's goals or in the tools that they apply to achieve them. Over time, civilian leaders have consistently demonstrated very little ability to affect change for at least two reasons. One, most civilian leaders tend to share many of the views of the army as do the voters who elect them. Second, when civilian leaders do desire different outcomes or to use tools other than those honed by the army, they are undermined by the army, which controls most levers of influence and which enjoys more influence over opinion-shaping instruments in the country.

In summation, it is my assessment that the United States should not anticipate major changes for the better from the appointment of Bajwa or from whatever government the 2018 election produces. In fact, under Bajwa, Pakistan could be even more aggressive because his personal and professional stakes are much greater.