

Pakistan On The Edge

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By Ahmed Rashid/Lahore

Pakistan: The Eye of the Storm

By Owen Bennett Jones

Yale University Press, 352 pp., \$29.95

Pakistan: In the Shadow of Jihad and Afghanistan

By Mary Anne Weaver

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 304 pp., \$24.00 (to be published in late October)

1.

September 11 was a defining moment throughout the world, but all the more so in South and Central Asia. While the US and its allies can claim success in their quick military victory against the Taliban and al-Qaeda forces in Afghanistan and in the creation of a new government in Kabul, the Western coalition has been much less successful in dealing with the problems that afflict the region today.

Afghanistan is still a dangerous place. On September 5, there was an attempt to assassinate President Hamid Karzai in Kandahar a few hours after an explosion in Kabul that killed at least twenty-five people. The Taliban and al-Qaeda were among the suspects in both cases. Sporadic terrorist attacks on US forces in the country continue. Nine months after he took office last December, President Karzai is still unable to extend his authority across the country; and he has not been able to control the warlords outside the capital, who grow stronger and more defiant of central authority day by day. Donald Rumsfeld reflected the strangely disconnected attitude of the Bush administration when he described the situation as getting better but admitted that it is still "untidy," and that it "will take time and effort for the government to find its sea legs." That Afghanistan is landlocked and most Afghans have never seen the sea does not seem to have occurred to him.

But Rumsfeld was right in one respect. In a region where dictatorship is the norm, Hamid Karzai is now the most legitimate ruler among most of Afghanistan's neighbors. In June he was overwhelmingly elected as president for the next two years by the Loya Jirga, or traditional tribal assembly. None of the rulers of Afghanistan's neighbors can claim to have achieved a legitimate government through open and fair elections, or even through a process resembling a tribal assembly. Only Iran—one of Washington's bêtes noires—has anything approximating a legitimately elected parliament, and its government is paralyzed by conflict between moderates and authoritarian religious leaders who are blocking free expression.

It is in Afghanistan's neighborhood that the political fallout of US policy is getting worse and more unpredictable. In the five Central Asian Republics, the question of legitimacy has never been more pertinent. The leaders still hold Soviet-style elections in which there is only one candidate—the leader himself. Even then the vote is heavily rigged. Since September 11, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan have allowed the US and some European countries to set up military bases for use in the war against terrorism. Local leaders, such as President Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan, have used their importance to the West as a convenient excuse to step up repression of their political opponents, not only Islamic fundamentalists but moderates who advocate democracy. They continue to reject domestic and international pressures to carry out political and economic reforms. Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan do not have

Western military bases, but they have provided facilities to Western forces; they have not hesitated to use brutal measures against political groups that demand more democracy. (The president of Turkmenistan recently announced that young men between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five would be conscripted to do nonmilitary labor.)

Yet the Western presence—the first in the region since the fourth century BC, when Alexander the Great's Greek armies conquered Central Asia—has inadvertently had surprising results. For the first time since the breakup of the Soviet Union a decade ago we find political opposition to dictatorship, and support of democracy is asserting itself. All the Central Asian leaders are now threatened by the first significant public political movements ever to appear, as well as by underground Islamic movements which are supported by al-Qaeda. Yet the Bush administration, obsessed with its single-track policy of hunting down al-Qaeda, hardly seems aware of this domestic ferment. The Pentagon dominates policymaking in Washington, and its strategy and tactics have changed little since December 2001 when the Taliban were defeated.

Essentially the same small group of US policymakers who conducted the war last October are still making all the critical decisions. The State Department, which is better informed about the region, appears to take no effective part in making policy; nor do other agencies such as USAID, the Treasury, the Justice Department, and Congress, all of which should be pushing for political and economic reform in these states. In recent weeks Congress has been trying to make future US aid to Uzbekistan conditional on political and economic reforms, but there is little support for such a move from the Bush administration.

Such involvement is all the more needed in Pakistan, where the domestic political crisis is now reaching a boiling point but is conveniently ignored by Washington as long as President Pervez Musharraf continues to support the war against terrorism. Musharraf is coming to the end of his three-year military rule and has promised elections on October 10. But if the referendum Musharraf held on April 30 to confirm himself as president for the next five years is anything to go by, then the October elections will be rigged.

In the referendum Musharraf was the only candidate. The government claimed a 50 percent turnout in which 97 percent of voters approved his remaining as president. But all of the major political parties as well as human rights and monitoring groups said this claim was false. In fact, they said, no more than 10 to 20 percent of the electorate voted, while civil servants and soldiers were under heavy government pressure to go to the polls.

The controversy over the referendum and the dramatic slide in Musharraf's popularity have not diverted him from consolidating his rule and powers. On August 21 he added twenty-nine new amendments to the 1973 constitution by presidential ordinance. No future parliament will be able to repeal them. One effect is to install the army as the dominant member of the new National Security Council, which will have the power to oversee the elected government. Musharraf's amendments also allow him to dismiss whatever parliament is elected on October 10. He can appoint whomever he chooses to be Supreme Court judges and military commanders.

Even if Musharraf had not imposed by fiat what amounts to an authoritarian military regime, the election would have been rigged in his favor. Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, the leaders of the two largest and probably the most popular parties in the country—the Pakistan People's Party and the Pakistan Muslim League, respectively—are both in exile and have been kept from running. In early September, after election officials in Larkana, Ms. Bhutto's home town, rejected her nomination, Sharif withdrew as a candidate in protest, raising the possibility that the two parties, which had been bitterly opposed, were cooperating in their opposition to Musharraf. The two parties have been coordinating their allocation of seats to candidates in the elections. But they still face daunting obstacles. Since June, military officers from the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) have been harassing politicians and trying to form a "king's party," whose parliamentary candidates will be loyal to Musharraf; in return the ISI promised to ensure their election. Numerous recently announced laws allow the army to keep the candidates it dislikes from standing for election.

However, there is enormous opposition to almost everything that Musharraf is trying to do; it comes not just from alliances of secular and Islamic parties, but, for the first time, from nonparty groups—organizations of lawyers, women, businessmen, human rights activists, and student and trade unions. While the mainstream Islamic parties have united in their opposition to Musharraf in protest against his alliance with the US, secular parties are opposing him on grounds that his new system will relegate politicians and civic groups to the margins of society for a very long time and give the army a permanent veto over the government.

Musharraf has said that politicians have proved corrupt and incompetent in the past and cannot be given power again

without restrictions imposed by the army. The history of corruption is all too true. Politicians notoriously dip into public funds and demand money in return for favors to businessmen. But for the past three years the army has, in effect, suppressed independent political activity, ensuring that no new generation of politicians can arise except those willing to work under the army's shadow. Moreover, ordinary people, politicians, and the press have been asking the army exactly the question it does not want to hear: Why, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, should there not be democracy and civilian control over the armed forces in order to put an end to decades of political instability and military coups?

A crisis is clearly impending: it may occur just before the elections, when Musharraf will have to allow limited campaigning and party rallies in order to give at least the appearance of normal political life. That may well galvanize the opposition to mount street protests. Or the crisis may come after the elections. This is more likely; even the army's hand-picked parliament is likely to balk at endorsing the supreme powers that Musharraf gave himself on August 21. The politicians who are being excluded from parliament may also mount protests.

Both the army and Washington appear to have forgotten the historical record. In 1984 an earlier military dictator, President Zia ul-Haq, made himself president for a five-year term by holding a referendum endorsed by Washington. He then held elections on a nonparty basis—only hand-picked supporters of the military were allowed to run. But the carefully selected parliamentary leader, Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo, who was presumed by the army to be a political nonentity, declined to do the army's bidding. Zia fired him and dismissed the parliament in May 1988, setting off a crisis that ended abruptly in August when Zia was killed in an airplane crash.

Before Zia, General Yahya Khan, the military dictator in the early 1970s, managed to lose a war with India, with the result that Bangladesh was created in what had been East Pakistan. And before that, General Ayub Khan, who ruled for a decade, was forced to resign in 1969 after widespread street protests. These military dictators at least tried to seek some limited support from civilians. Ayub made alliances with the bureaucracy and with industrialists. Zia sought the support of right-wing Islamic leaders and intellectuals while he pursued the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan on behalf of the CIA.

Musharraf is unique in that he has sought no allies among civilians; he apparently holds them all in virtual contempt. He has managed to alienate every section of civil society including top bureaucrats and politicians and the press, as well as businessmen, lawyers, and social workers. Even after September 11 when his support for the war against terrorism brought him praise from Pakistan's secular parties and from the middle class, Musharraf refused to seek their cooperation. After the rigged referendum of last April his isolation is virtually complete, and the ISI has therefore been having a hard time forming a king's party. Indeed, the ISI's difficulties in mustering visible support for Musharraf does much to explain his imposition of personal and military power through the constitutional amendments he announced on August 21.

With four military dictatorships that have ruled Pakistan for half its political life, the Pakistani military has certainly proved one large historical fact. After each coup the army leaders have tried to reinvent the political system to their advantage rather than return the country to democracy. In each case they failed to get the support of the population. Their attempts to micromanage the political system and elections have always backfired and led to a larger crisis. Yet Musharraf is following his predecessors in carrying out the same sequence of events, refusing to learn from the country's grim historical experience.

This time, however, if the army faces rising domestic political protest and finds its power is undermined, the international and regional repercussions will be huge. Few Westerners seem to realize how grave Pakistan's situation has become. India has become increasingly bellicose. Al-Qaeda cells are firmly planted inside the country. Law and order has broken down as militant groups kill foreigners and Pakistani Christians. The country's economy is in an acute recession, with widespread unemployment. Some 40 percent of the population, or about 56 million Pakistanis, live below the poverty line; their numbers have increased by 15 million since Musharraf took power. There is a deep polarization between the secular democratic parties and the Islamic right wing. The country and the army's future are now at stake, as well as Pakistan's involvement in the war against terrorism.

Musharraf seized power in 1999 by overthrowing the elected government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif after Sharif had tried to fire him as army chief. Pakistan was considered a pariah by most nations until September 11. On taking power Musharraf promised revolutionary reform of the economy and the social system and pledged he would quickly relinquish power to an elected government once corrupt politicians had been dealt with. He proceeded to break each of his promises, not least in failing to improve relations with India and failing to curb the power of the Islamic

extremist groups, who had succeeded in penetrating all of the state bureaucracies. The Pakistani army's fifty-year-long relationship with the US reached rock bottom.

September 11 brought Musharraf and Pakistan back into international respectability after he made a U-turn in national policy. He stopped Pakistan's support for the Taliban, offered Washington military bases to pursue its war in Afghanistan, and began a half-hearted campaign to control Pakistan's own Islamic extremists, many of whom had spent the past two decades fighting for Islamic causes throughout the world.

A few days after September 11, when Musharraf informed Pakistanis of his switch in policy, he tried, in his televised speech, to impress upon them the benefits it would bring Pakistan. He said that the alliance with the US would preserve Pakistan's nuclear program, and allow it to pursue its long-standing desire to secure the Indian-held part of Kashmir and develop the economy with Western aid. In fact Washington had given Musharraf an ultimatum—"You are either with us or against us." The army was not about to undertake collective suicide by going the way of Saddam Hussein, and it was naturally keen to benefit from the credits Washington was now willing to extend to Pakistan.

Musharraf's real obsession, like that of all three military dictators before him, has been his desire to take over Kashmir. Since 1989 an indigenous insurgency in Kashmir has been partially backed by Pakistan; more than 60,000 people have died in attacks by resistance groups and in fighting with the Indian army and police. Musharraf already made one reckless foray into Kashmir in 1999 when, as army chief, he sent Pakistani troops to capture the mountainous border territory of Kargil inside Indian Kashmir, which led to a small-scale war with India. That crisis, made more dangerous by the fact that both countries were armed with nuclear weapons, was only defused when then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, in response to an ultimatum from Bill Clinton, ordered the Pakistani army to back down. The retreat led to an irreversible break in relations between Sharif and Musharraf, who still thinks the conflict over Kargil could have been won by Pakistani troops.

Last spring India and Pakistan nearly went to war again as a total of one million troops from both sides mobilized on their long common border—a situation that has only been partially defused by US and European diplomacy. Further acute tensions can be expected in late September when India will hold elections in Indian Kashmir, which already have been denounced by Kashmiri moderates as rigged in advance. Pakistan and the Kashmiri militants have every intention of disrupting the elections.

By now, after three and a half wars with India (counting the fighting in Kargil), most Pakistanis are fed up with the Kashmir issue and would much prefer that the money spent on the 500,000-strong Pakistani army be spent on roads, schools, and hospitals. But even today, voicing such opinions in Pakistan is considered treasonable by the army, which views Kashmir as a sacred Islamic cause.

However, even if the Bush administration shows no concern about the coming domestic crisis, it should be aware of impending danger. With the military set to rule and dominate Pakistan's security and foreign policies under the veneer of an elected government after October, the army will continue to pursue its dream of securing Kashmir. This will ensure a permanent state of tension with India. The Pakistani army will never wholly curb the militant Islamic groups who have acted as proxies in fighting the army's wars in Kashmir and Afghanistan. Clearly all this has implications for the war on terrorism.

Musharraf's much-publicized crackdown on Islamic militants has really been a crackdown on Arabs and other foreigners belonging to al-Qaeda and on the small Pakistani extremist groups who provide al-Qaeda with sanctuary and safe houses in Pakistan. To the army's credit, 328 of the more than 600 suspected al-Qaeda militants being held in Guantánamo were captured by Pakistani security forces inside Pakistan, although very little is known about who they are and just what they were arrested for. And Musharraf now has to face efforts by the forces both of al-Qaeda and of Pakistani militants to terrorize the pro-Western and Christian population in Pakistan and to assassinate him and other government leaders. These militants want to provoke a war between India and Pakistan and create enough anarchy in Pakistan to enable their supporters in the military to mount a coup.

Yet even these threats have not been sufficient to convince Musharraf of the dangers from within the army. The larger Islamic parties that have been most involved in the fighting in Kashmir, and have large networks there, have barely been touched by the army's crackdown. Their leaders are being held in comfortable house arrest and their armed militants have been told to lie low for the time being. Moreover, since June the ISI has been quietly making deals with these same leaders in order to seek their support in the October elections. Their militant followers know

they will be needed to help disrupt the elections in Kashmir.

As in Central Asia, the Bush administration has so far turned a blind eye to the domestic crisis in Pakistan and the permissive approach the military has adopted toward the Islamic parties. Donald Rumsfeld cannot praise Musharraf enough, so long as he continues to capture al-Qaeda militants and provide US forces with bases in Pakistan. In a throwback to the 1950s and the cold war, Washington's policymakers appear to prefer working with one-man dictatorships in the region to facing the prospect of divided authority, multiple leaders, and parliaments.

US officials say that, because there is no alternative to Musharraf, they are not criticizing his assertion of dictatorial powers or the army's plans to control the October election. Any other military general would, in their view, probably be more sympathetic to the Islamic fundamentalists. The Bush administration believes that, with no charismatic and trustworthy civilian waiting in the wings, an elected government with full powers would be weak, under constant pressure from fundamentalists, and unable to make good on Pakistan's commitments to oppose terrorism.

Here the administration fails to see that there is no satisfactory alternative to free and fair elections. At the very least, the US should be leaning on Musharraf and the army to persuade them to withdraw some of their more outrageous claims to permanent power. Unfortunately, Washington has neither the perception nor the strategy to carry out such a task. If what clearly seems to be an impending crisis erupts in Pakistan, Washington will be caught unprepared and will merely try to undertake day-to-day "crisis management."

2.

These issues make the two books under review all the more important, especially in view of the current lack of perceptive commentary on Pakistan. Owen Bennett Jones, the BBC correspondent in Pakistan during the 1999 coup, has written a concise and highly readable history of the country, which deals with many of the contradictions and problems Musharraf faced after his coup, among them the influence of radical fundamentalists and the dominance of the Taliban in Afghanistan. He intersperses this history with his own carefully detailed reports on critical moments such as the day of the Musharraf coup.

Mary Anne Weaver, a South Asia and Middle East correspondent for *The New Yorker*, has drawn on her superb skills as an evocative journalist to write a very different kind of book— one that, by telling stories and describing scenes, gives a sense of Pakistani life that no amount of dry analysis could convey. She is literally a fireside storyteller, quite capable of entertaining a gathering of Pashtun and Baluchi nomadic tribesmen (with whom she has spent much time). Those who are even remotely interested in Pakistan's coming crisis should read both of these quite different books.

Jones presents the history of the country not through a chronology of events, but through a division of specific issues such as Kashmir, Islamic fundamentalism, and the army. In one of his most revealing chapters, he shows how, faced with US pressure to give up the Taliban after September 11, several army generals told Musharraf he should wait and see before deciding what to do. It took a six-hour meeting with the army's corps commanders for Musharraf to convince them that the overwhelming US pressure and the consequences for Pakistan of saying no or delaying a decision were too great. These divisions in the army are now greater than they were nine months ago, and Musharraf's growing unpopularity is causing much distress in the officer corps, among both neo-fundamentalist officers and nonpolitical professionals who fear the army's prestige is being undermined by their chief's bid to secure more power for himself.

One of Jones's central points is that the complex debates over whether Pakistan should have an Islamic or a secular identity have soured the political scene since Pakistan was created in 1947, and they remain unresolved. He describes well both the various sects within the Sunni Muslim majority and the differences between the Sunni and the minority Shia, who make up less than 20 percent of the population. He makes the important point that the members of the hard-line Deobandi Sunni sect, which is strongly in favor of an anti-American jihad and was the main backer of the Taliban, makes up only 15 percent of the country's Muslims. Most Pakistani Sunnis belong to more moderate sects.

This analysis goes a long way toward explaining why the jihadi groups have never managed to get mass support, and also how some frustrated Deobandis have become sectarian extremists, quite willing to kill Shias and Christians. Jones rightly blames both Sharif and Benazir Bhutto, each serving as prime minister twice in the 1990s, for failing to take on the extremists and describes how each of them pandered to the mullahs for short-term political gains. Bhutto, Jones writes, "consistently failed to confront" the jihadists, while Sharif was "an appalling administrator who consistently favored making grand announcements rather than seriously attempting to implement policies." Jones also gives a

perceptive account of Musharraf's double dealing with the fundamentalists after September 11: he tried to crack down on some opinions while appeasing others.

In his chapter on the Kashmir dispute, based on extensive interviews, Jones gives a particularly strong account of the invasion of Kargil. "To this day," he writes,

General Musharraf refuses to admit that one of his first acts as army chief was to order his men into Indian-held territory in Kashmir and thereby launch the Kargil campaign.

Jones reveals that Pakistani troops entered Indian territory as early as October 1998, six months before the conflict blew up. Both Sharif and Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had already established diplomatic back channels that they used to try to defuse the conflict after it erupted. In fact, before Musharraf launched his Kargil adventure, both leaders had been secretly and seriously involved in trying to resolve the Kashmir dispute.

Jones describes how Pakistan made the decision to respond to India's nuclear tests in May 1998 by carrying out its own. This provoked Western sanctions and international isolation. President Clinton futilely tried to stop Sharif from nuclear testing by offering to write off Pakistan's \$3 billion debt to the United States. Sharif and the army's decision to test was made less out of conviction than from the pressure being exerted by Islamic groups.

However, Jones is inaccurate about China's role in providing Pakistan with nuclear technology in the 1980s. He believes that Pakistan shared its nuclear secrets with China when it was clearly the other way around. Jones also makes no mention of China's huge contribution to Pakistan's missile program, which is reckoned by Western analysts to be ahead of India's since Pakistani missiles are now considered capable of carrying miniaturized nuclear warheads.

Jones is generally dismissive of both Pakistani politicians and the aspirations of Pakistanis for democracy. Clearly Pakistan's leading politicians have been a dismal bunch for the past two decades, but there is an equally strong argument to be made that the constant undermining of the democratic process by the army and the ISI has not allowed a single elected government to complete its term in office and then be removed from power by the voters rather than by the army. Jones reminds us of what Musharraf told the Pakistani public in a speech in January 2000: "I am not going to perpetuate myself...I can't give any certificate on it but my word of honor. I will not perpetuate myself." As his recent constitutional amendments show, he is bent not only on perpetuating himself but perpetuating military rule.

Jones fails to discuss some critical issues, hardly mentioning the national economy, whose lack of growth is central to the country's present predicament. (Pakistan's growth rate of 3.2 percent is significantly lower than that of other countries in the region and its rate of investment relative to GDP is at the lowest it has been since 1966.) Nor does he deal with Islamabad's failed policies in Afghanistan, which since the 1980s have detrimentally shaped Pakistan's politics even more than its interventions in Kashmir. Pakistan's involvement in Afghanistan, and especially its support of the Taliban, have had an effect on every aspect of the present political crisis, including the rise of extremism and the faltering economy. A flood of drugs has entered Pakistan from Afghanistan, while both countries are awash with arms. An intelligence estimate three years ago stated that there were one million weapons in Karachi alone.

Mary Ann Weaver, for her part, concentrates on the consequences of Pakistan's Afghan policy for Pakistan itself. She shows how Pakistan's support for the Taliban and the events since September 11 have mirrored the 1980s, when the Zia regime was the conduit for the CIA's aid to the Afghan Mujahideen in their war against the Soviet Union. The US, she writes, is as guilty as anyone else for the rise of the Taliban. It walked away from both Afghanistan and Pakistan after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, leaving behind, Weaver writes, "tens of thousands of well-trained and well-armed Arab, Asian and Afghan fighters available for new jihads."

This has become a much-discussed theme in the US press, but mostly since September 11. Weaver is able to draw on her reporting in the region during the past two decades to show how Pakistan became entangled with the Taliban regime. She concentrates on Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province, the Pakistani provinces on the Afghan border most affected by the Taliban, and juxtaposes the story of the 1980s with recent events.

What is most useful is her comparison of the two principal military leaders of the last two decades, Zia ul-Haq and Musharraf. Zia, she writes, helped create the jihadi groups in Pakistan which Musharraf inherited. Both leaders disdained civilians and politicians; both carried out dubious referendums to legitimize their rule, and both had US support in doing so. While Zia had two passions, the army and victory in Afghanistan, Musharraf, Weaver writes, has

two passions, the army and victory in Kashmir.

And while Zia, with the help of the CIA, transformed a nationalist Afghan struggle against the Soviets into a holy war by providing US military aid almost entirely to the extremist Afghan Mujahideen factions, Musharraf did the same in Kashmir by rejecting the secular Kashmiri nationalists and backing the Pakistani and Kashmiri fundamentalists. Zia refused to acknowledge publicly Pakistan's help to the Afghan Mujahideen, with the result that the country's foreign policy was enveloped in lies. Musharraf has been equally secretive about Pakistan's support of the Taliban and the Kashmiri extremists.

Weaver repeatedly makes the valid point that while the jihadi groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan are determined to create a theocratic Islamic state, the very idea is alien to the basic Islamic sentiment of most people in both countries, who have always believed in more moderate interpretations of Islam. Weaver is also perceptive about Musharraf's ability to mislead the public and his American sponsors, whether about his 1999 coup or the Kargil invasion. Each time Weaver meets with Musharraf he looks and acts differently, and what he wears becomes important for the message he wants to deliver. He appears one day as the stern officer in military uniform; on another, he wears sporty slacks and an open-necked shirt. "He's a cipher," an army officer tells her. "He can be anything...."

Early in her book Weaver quotes General Anthony Zinni, the former US Marine Corps chief and head of the American Central Command, as saying that "my worry is that Musharraf may be the last hope for Pakistan." By the end of the book she leaves no doubt that Musharraf himself stands in the way of his country's progress. Zinni told Weaver that Pakistan's three worst prospects are that military hard-liners would take over, that the mullahs would take over, or that the country would enter a period of chaos and fall apart, creating another failed state in the region like Afghanistan. He acknowledged that Clinton's policy of isolating Pakistan in the 1990s and ending cooperation with the army was detrimental to the officer corps, in which anti-Americanism increased along with fundamentalism.

Weaver's chapter on Baluchistan, a region of Pakistan little known in the West, brings the reader into a culture of feuds and brutal traditions in which powerful tribal chiefs try criminals by forcing them to walk across burning coals, claiming that only the feet of the guilty will blister. Weaver is one of the few Western journalists to write about the desolate Makran coast of Baluchistan, which is adjacent to the Iranian border where US forces now have military bases. From such accounts, one understands better why the al-Qaeda leaders are still at large.

Much of Weaver's material has appeared in *The New Yorker* over the years and at times the stitching used to make a book of her articles shows. A trip she took in Baluchistan with some Saudi sheikhs hardly seems relevant to her broader story. At times the reader is confused about whether she is writing about the 1980s or the 1990s, or about Benazir Bhutto's first or second government. To make many of her reports on the 1980s relevant today, she would have had to do much more reporting on the recent past. In describing Pakistan, moreover, she constantly uses words such as "anarchy," "breakdown," and "state failure" without defining what she means. She says Pakistan has "lost its way" and could be the next Yugoslavia, without explaining clearly why.

But Weaver tells a story about Musharraf that should be of interest in Washington today. At a dinner he gave for Pakistani CEOs and bank executives to reassure them about his good intentions, a guest asked him about the worsening violence and the lack of law and order in the country. Musharraf did not bother to reassure him. Instead he took out his silver-plated pistol and waved it in the air. "This is how I protect myself," he told his guests. Unless the Bush administration is capable of a more perceptive political strategy in the region, the US may be left with few options except to wave its pistol in the air and fly B-52 bombers around the clock.

—September 11, 2002