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**Understanding Pakistan –
Basic Problems of Pakistani Society and Politics**

To "understand" a country, particularly a foreign one, it is indispensible to know the relevant facts and figures. But this is not sufficient. "Understanding" means to make sense out of something, to arrange and interpret the facts in a way that gives them meaning. It needs context and background, and the country in question to be placed in its own history. It might also help to remind ourselves that the current state of affairs is only one of several options that may have been possible at earlier historic junctures. The job of "understanding" a country like Pakistan is made more difficult because of a danger to fall for clichés or stereotypes: Dramatic events like terrorism and violence, religious extremism and other negative phenomena tend to capture the attention of the observer, and may guide or misguide the analysis. While the problems of violence and extremism in the case of Pakistan are grave indeed, it is advisable not to jump to conclusions. They might be dangerous *illnesses* of Pakistani society, but on the other hand they also may just be *symptoms* of deeper, structural defects. So while terrorism and religious radicalism, for instance, have to be taken extremely seriously in any case, the judgment whether they are the cause or the result of many problems has to be the based on a careful analysis, not on plausibility. The same applies to the causal relationship between the violence and religious extremism: Whether the first is caused by the second cannot be assumed from the beginning, their link has to be analyzed before it can be understood. In this paper we will focus on several key aspect of Pakistani reality: the problems of Nation-Building, the role of political elites and the system of governance, the role of religion in Pakistani society, and finally the role of violence.[1]

Ideological Problems of Pakistani Nation-Building

Pakistan may be more than 60 years old,[2] but it is still struggling with the important and unfinished task of Nation-Building. Ideologically, it has been founded on the "two-nation theory" (proclaiming the co-existence of a "Muslim nation" and a "Hindu nation" in pro-partition India), which has proven useful to distinguish the new-born country from India, and to provide domestic legitimacy. This theory created part of a new Pakistani identity by looking outward, by defining oneself as what one was *not*. The new Pakistan was not, it was different from India. The theory could justify a separation from India and by doing so provide a part of Pakistani identity in the negative. But the two-nation theory was insufficient

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[1] What exactly constitutes and includes "violence" is highly contested. In this article it is used in the sense of intentionally causing bodily harm and in physically destructing property.

[2] In regard to the traumatic separation of India and Pakistan and its ideological results see, among others: Yasmin Khan, The Great Partition – The Making of India and Pakistan, New Haven 2008

and vague in offering a **positive** identity for Pakistan and the Pakistanis: What exactly a "Nation for the Muslims of India" or even a "Muslim Nation" should be never really got clarified beyond political rhetoric. Before the founding of Pakistan religious scholars had raised some quite valid questions. Why a nation for Indian Muslims – why not for all Muslims? From a religious perspective this remained dubious, since separating Indian, Afghan, Arab or Iranian Muslims into separate states could be justified by nationalist reasons, but not by religious ones. So, nationalism – which happens to be a secular ideology – crept into the two-nation theory. This produced another paradoxical problem: What was the basis of this new nationalism, if the nation was defined as a "Nation of *Muslims*"? In no real sense Sindhis, Punjabis, Pashtos and Bengalis were a common "nation", since they did not share a common language, a common culture, and a common history was either "Indian" or defined by British domination, which again was shared with non-Muslims in India.[3]

Closely linked to this unresolved problem in creating a state for the Muslims of India has been the unclear relationship of religion to the new state. While founding farther Muhammad Ali Jinnah presented Pakistan as a *secular* state for Muslims, this was not understood or accepted by many other political or religious leaders or played down for opportunistic reasons. So it never really become clear, what a "state for the Muslims of India" distinguished it from an "Islamic State", which was **not** suggested by Jinnah. From the very beginning, but with much increased force since the reign of Zia ul-Haq this point has produced friction and conflict in Pakistan, instead of unity. The Pakistani project to create a state for Indian Muslims as a nationalist and not religious entity proved difficult to sustain. At least since the separation of East Pakistan/Bangla Desh in 1971 from what today remains Pakistan it became clear that secular Muslim identity was insufficient to keep the country united and that nationalism at least in East Pakistan was a more powerful political identity than Muslim unity.[4] The founders of Pakistan emphasized being Muslim as the base of Nationhood - but implicitly treated Muslim identity as a *cultural*, not a religious one. Such a Muslim state that was not based on Islam was difficult to comprehend by most Pakistani citizens. This weakened secular leaders in Pakistan and provided an important ideological role to religious activists, who wanted to transform the Muslim state into a religious one. Secular politicians tried to use religious discourse and religious groups to strengthen the credibility of the Muslim state, but not to hand over power to them. But the effect of this attempt to instrumentalize religion as a base for secular Nation-Building was to open the door to an attempt of ideological domination of the state by religious groups, while political power remained in the hand of secular elites. This conflict between political and ideological power has since defined most of Pakistani history - and precluded a coherent political-ideological base for its Nation-Building.[5] It has begun at the founding of Pakistan, and was greatly enhanced by continuous conflict with India, by the martial law regime of General Zia ul-Haq, and later by the Pakistani role in the US "war on terror". In all three contexts Islam became more politicized, and secular leadership even more difficult.

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[3] Hilary Synnott, Transforming Pakistan – Ways out of Instability, London 2009, pp. 16-21

[4] France Bhattacharya, East Bengal: Between Islam and a Regional Identity, in: Christophe Jaffrelot (Ed.), A History of Pakistan and its Origins, London 2002, pp. 39-60

[5] Stephen Philip Cohen, The Idea of Pakistan, Oxford 2004, pp. 25-38; for a different perception: Javid Iqbal, Ideology of Pakistan, Lahore 2005

Political Elites, Governance, and Power Relationships

After the establishment of Pakistan the new country was dominated by an informal alliance of civilian bureaucrats, military leaders, family networks of - mostly Punjabi - big landowners and an elite of Muhajir immigrants from India, who took leadership roles in both the civilian and military bureaucracies. Religious leaders were not part of the equation, which to some degree explains their attempts to achieve ideological dominance, and thereby influence. Over time, this alliance of dominant elite groups started to change its character and composition. Civilian bureaucrats lost power since the 1950s, while the military, especially the army, grew in importance. An indication of this power shift was the first military coup in 1958 and the dictatorship of General Ayub Khan. Later in Pakistani history a slow process of further change occurred.[6] Gradually the power of feudal landowners eroded, while equally slow modern industrialists rose in influence. To some degree this shift constituted an process of modernization of Pakistan's power structure. But at the same time the form of this transformation was anything but revolutionary or reformist: Feudal landholders did not disappear or simply lost power, but diversified economically and socially by expanding their activities into modern sectors of the economy. Feudal families also managed to gain and preserve direct and indirect influence in the army and civilian state institutions. In this way the partial opening up of the power structure was achieved in a way that preserved the dominance of key social and political elites. So, many "feudals" modernized their economic base, but not necessarily their previous mentality.

In a sense the Pakistani state after independence had maintained the basic characteristics of the previous, colonial state. After the founding of Pakistan the state proved remarkably similar to the political and administrative structures of the British Raj. The population and especially the poor majority remained politically marginalized, opportunities for participation were missing, and the first elections took place more than 20 years after the establishing of Pakistan. Basically, a small political elite dominated the country, being accountable to no one and dividing power among themselves. The main differences of the Pakistani to colonial statehood were the change of governments by intrigue or coup, and the increasing level of corruption. While the British colonial state had been a system of collective exploitation and repression against a foreign people, the Pakistani one became a tool in the hand of families, individuals and groups to control and exploit their own country for themselves. The lack of accountability and popular participation in the political system led to a de-linking of the elites from the majority of the population, and to the appropriation of the state by selfish private interests.[7]

During the last generation a further development has again modified the dynamics of politics in Pakistan. As a result of economic and social development a new Pakistani middle class has emerged, which is rooted in modern economic sectors, like banks, insurance companies, telecommunications, academics, the media, the legal system and other sectors. Its growing self confidence led to a lively civil society and a NGO community, including an active women's' movement, and to increasing demands for accountability, the rule of law, and a strengthening of democracy. The broad-based lawyers movement against General Musharraf and in support for the rule of law in 2007/2008 and the lively Pakistani

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[6] Christophe Jaffrelot, A Fruitless Search for Democracy, in: Christophe Jaffrelot (Ed.), A History of Pakistan and its Origins, London 2002, pp. 61-94

[7] Ilhan Niaz, The Culture of Power and Governance of Pakistan, 1947-2008, Oxford 2010

journalism are indications of this new trend.[8] On the other hand, the suffocating effects of an incompetent and corrupt secular political system and the intimidating and fragmenting effects of religious extremism are hindering the further development and political maturation of these middle class movements.

The Role of Religion

Religion is an important part of life for most Pakistanis, but most citizens prefer religious parties not to control the state. Many wish that politics would be guided by Islamic moral values, but not by Islamic parties or the *Ulama*. It is no surprise, therefore, that religious parties never came close to win a national election in Pakistan. Only under very special conditions (the US intervention in Afghanistan in 2001) do they manage electoral successes, though only on local or provincial levels. (In the 2002 parliamentary elections the alliance of religious parties managed an unprecedented 12.3 percent of the vote;[9] in 2008 the religious parties won only 1.8 percent of the parliamentary seats.) The emphasis on moral values derived from Islam is not surprising and not necessarily an expression of religious belief, but results from very practical and often quite secular concerns: When corruption is of such appalling dimensions and when the legal system (below the level of Supreme Court) is in such a shocking state of weakness and, again, corruption, the wish for clean and morally acceptable conduct is easy to understand. And since the secular state structures are often neither competent nor clean, people look for alternatives. The concept of *Sharia* law in this context for many Pakistani citizens gains credibility and appeal not necessarily because of theological reasons (which may be added, too), but because it seems to be the only conceivable alternative to a non-functioning and corrupt secular system, which obviously serves mostly power-greedy elites and not the country. Still, the overwhelming majority of Pakistanis see very clearly that a rule by religious elites instead of secular ones (which often pretend to be very pious) would not constitute progress.[10]

In this sense we should distinguish very different roles of religion in Pakistani society. Islam for many firstly is a part of their culture, providing orientation and norms in daily life, defining what is good and bad. This expression of Muslim belief often lacks theological systematization, it is linked to social customs and habits, it constitutes part of a "people's religion" which to many trained *ulama* can seem crude, unsophisticated or even "unislamic". For other people Islam primarily is a system of religious belief, of theological or spiritual guidance, linking the individual to God. And to others still, it might be a means to perceive or express political views. There are more ways of relating to Islam, and though it is obvious they might overlap to some degree, it still is useful to distinguish them.[11]

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[8] Jochen Hippler, Das gefährlichste Land der Welt? – Pakistan zwischen Militärherrschaft, Extremismus und Demokratie, Köln 2008, pp. 124-127

[9] Election Commission of Pakistan, Detailed Position of Political Parties/Alliances in National Assembly General Elections 2002, online: www.ecp.gov.pk/content/GE-2002.htm

[10] For perspectives on very divers aspects of Pakistani religiosity, see: Magnus Marsden (Ed.), Islam and Society in Pakistan – Anthropological Perspectives, Oxford 2010

[11] For a more indepth analysis of the relationship between religion and politics in Pakistan see: Jochen Hippler, Das gefährlichste Land der Welt? – Pakistan zwischen Militärherrschaft, Extremismus und Demokratie, Köln 2008, pp. 234-266

In regard to the relationship of Islam and politics und Islamic political organizations we should differentiate between very distinct kinds of groups. The overwhelming majority of those - and there might me up to 200 - is small and politically irrelevant. Several represent "moderate" Muslim tendencies or *Sufi* spirituality, while others belong to radical or even extremist viewpoints. But even the radical organizations are far from homogenous: Some of them tend to restrict themselves to purely rhetorical radicalism but have no record of the use of violence in political affairs, at least not inside Pakistan. (Often their jihadi rhetoric is put in practice only in some of the neighboring countries or regions, like Afghanistan and Kashmir.) The two main Islamic parties are a case in point. The Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) is a relatively small, but well organized and influential Islamist party with roots in parts of the urban middle class. The JUI (Jamiat-Ulama-e-Islam) on the other hand, which is split in two separate wings, is more orthodox or fundamentalist, with a great following among Pashtos, and represents religious radicalism of poorer and less educated people, often from the countryside. Despite their differences both have been able to cooperate which each other whenever useful, but also had no problem to form alliances with the bigger secular parties. Their theological radicalism contrasts sharply with an often pragmatic approach with strong undertones of cultural conservatism.[12]

Beyond those parties there exists a sector of small extremist religious organizations, which often have developed out of the anti-Soviet Jihad of the 1980s, when the Pakistani government under Zia ul-Haq and the US government supported extremist groups to wage war against the Soviet Union in neighboring Afghanistan. They have never disbanded after the Soviet withdrawal, but shifted their attention to the Indian side of Kashmir, or to confessional (Sunni vs. Shia) clashes in Pakistan itself. When the Pakistani government joint the US "war on terror" after 2001, these groups often turned against the Pakistani government itself and the Pakistani army. Most of those violent religious groups are based either in the Northwestern Province of Khyber Pakhtoonkwa (at the Afghan border) resp. its tribal areas,[13] or in Southern Punjab. They also have developed some following in some of the big urban centers of Pakistan, like Karachi.

While the violent religious groups and the "mainstream radicals" of JI and JUI share many ideological positions, politically they are strong competitors or even enemies, while in some cases some personal overlap and interaction occurs.

A Basic Conflict between Secular-Democratic versus Violent-Religious Groups?

Many Western observers believe the escalation of violence during the last decade to be an expression of a political struggle between secular and democratic forces on the one side, and anti-democratic and religious ones on the other. This perception in regard to Pakistan is quite far from reality.

Firstly, the secular elites are not necessarily very democratic, but often have used democratic procedures when useful, and dropped them when it served their interest better. This applies not only to the Pakistani Army, which despite its Islamist ideology during Zia ul-Haq times (1977-1988) is basically a

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[12] Jochen Hippler, Violence, Governance and Islam in Pakistan, Paper Prepared for the Final Conference "Control of Violence", September 10 – 13, 2008, Center for Interdisciplinary Research (ZIF), Bielefeld University, Germany, online: www.jochenhippler.de/html/violence-_governance-_islam_in_pakistan.html

[13] Muhammad Amir Rana / Safdar Sial / Abdul Basit, Dynamiks of Taliban Insurgency in FATA, Pak Institute for Peace Studies, Islamabad 2010

bureaucratic and technocratic institution, not a religiously based one. General Musharraf, for instance, may have been increasingly dictatorial in his behavior as Army Chief of Staff and as Pakistani President, but he was definitely secular. The Army often has instrumentalized religion and religious groups for power purposes, and to weaken the secular political parties. But it is not driven by religion institutionally, though some individual serving or retired officers from Zia's time are (for instance General ret. Hamid Gul). Also, the secular parties like the PPP, PML or MQM often have behaved less than democratic: The MQM[14], for instance, has a historical record of political violence, and many times has been accused of being "fascist". And the biggest parties, the PPP and PML, have often tried to use religious discourse and symbolism as political tools for opportunistic reasons, therefore indirectly legitimizing the ideology of radical religious groups. It also should be noted that the big, secular parties have absolutely no semblance of internal democracy[15] - they are under full control of a small oligarchy of politicians, generally centered on a person or family. Their corruption and the selfishness of their elites have weakened and undercut democracy in Pakistan, and generally the secular political elites have pursued their narrow self-interest over serving their country or democratic stability.

Secondly, the main religious parties JI and JUI, though ideologically often quite radical, are not any longer plainly anti-democratic as they were before, but have developed an ambivalent relationship to democracy. Despite continuing anti-democratic ideological elements, they at the same time have developed pro-democratic ones. For instance, they have actively participated in the broad movement for democracy and the rule of law against the dictatorship of General Musharraf. And while they have condemned democracy in the past with the argument that political sovereignty would not belong to man, but only to God, now they have added another thought: While they still maintain that God is the sovereign of man, they proclaim that man is exercising this sovereignty through democratic elections in his place. And while God still is sovereign to them, now they often add, that "the Constitution is Supreme". Therefore, an formerly anti-democratic ideology has been transformed into an contradictory one, containing both democratic and anti-democratic trends.

Mariam Abou Zahab and Olivier Roy summarize the politics of the JI like this: „It has always respected the rule of law, in spite of its ideological radicalism which declared Pakistan's status as an Islamic state to be the sole reason for its existence. It was also elitist, advocating "entryism" into the senior civil service and the army, and has never undertaken armed action (inside Pakistan)."[16] And Seyyed Nasr observes from the mid-1950s onwards "an increasing discrepancy between its religious façade and the pragmatic political reality".[17]

Taken together, the main conflict between democracy and authoritarianism is not taking place between the secular and the religious forces, but both inside the secular and the religious camps. This assessment obviously excludes the extremist violent groups like the Pakistani Taliban and some others.

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[14] A useful background is provided by: Oskar Verkaaik, Migrants and Militants – Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan, Princeton 2004

[15] For an overview of Pakistani parties see: Safdar Mahmood, Pakistan – Political Roots and Development 1947-1999, pp. 117-182

[16] Mariam Abou Zahab / Olivier Roy, Islamist Networks – The Afghan-Pakistan Connection, New York 2004, p. 20

[17] Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution – The Jamaat-i Islami of Pakistan, Berkeley 1994, p. 41

Sources of Political Violence

To explain the political violence in Pakistan by referring to a struggle between religious and secular groups misses a few key points. There is not just *one* violent conflict in Pakistan, but several. And some of them have little or nothing to do with religion.[18]

(a) In the province of Baluchistan many parts of the population object to an experience of domination by the Pakistani government, which often also is perceived as a tool of Punjabis to control other provinces. Some of the grievances focus on the exploitation of natural gas from Baluchistan by the rest of Pakistan, again mostly by the Punjab, or on the marginalization of Baluchistan in regard to the construction of the port of Gwadar, on its own territory. Another key point is the behavior of the Pakistani army, which in many cases has been seen as an occupation force. The resulting insurgency is one of the sources of violence in Pakistan, which in this case has little to do with religion. It is more seen as a case of "national liberation" for the Baloch, or as an "anti-colonial" struggle for autonomy or self-determination.[19]

(b) The mega-city of Karachi has suffered political and criminal violence for more than 20 years, in varying degrees. Sometimes it has reached the level of a civil war, with up to 2000 people killed in one year (1996).[20] Most of the violence is not related to religion, but to ethnic and political conflicts. Formerly, the main source of violence has been a conflict between Sindhi speakers and Muhajirs (migrant and mostly urban Urdu-speakers with roots in India), and between different factions of the Muhajir based MQM party. During the last years the Sindhi element became much less important, but Pashto migrants increasingly turned into the main force competing with the MQM and Muhajirs. This conflict has ethnic dimensions, but also includes a mixture of political competition with organized crime. Again, this source of violence is not religious in character, but focuses on conflict around power and resources.

(c) Since the 1980s, in Pakistan has experienced increasing violence between different religious groups, especially between extremist groups from the Sunni and Shia branches of Islam. While this dimension of Pakistani violence obviously and by definition is "religious" in character, two aspects should not be overlooked: One, especially during the 1980s (during the rule of Zia ul-Haq) but also later, this confessional conflict has been skillfully manipulated by - often quite secular - political actors, including the state. In this sense, even the confessional violence has been part of a broader struggle for power, in which religion often was more a tool, than a driving force. This remains true even if the perpetrators of confessional violence would see this differently. And secondly, in many cases the violence between Sunni and Shia extremist groups has been intimately linked to local social and economic conflicts. It is

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[18] Jochen Hippler, Das gefährlichste Land der Welt? – Pakistan zwischen Militärherrschaft, Extremismus und Demokratie, Köln 2008, pp. 208-234

[19] See, for instance: Shahzada Zulfiqar, „We have Launched a Struggle for our Freedom from the Yoke of Punjab's Slavery", in: *Newsline*, September 2004, S. 38; also: Maqsudul Hasan Nuri / Azhar Ahmad / Farhat Akram (Eds.), Balochistan: Tationalisations of Centre-Province Relations, Islamabad Policy Research Institute, Islamabad2010

[20] Kanchan Lakshman, Karachi: Metropolis of Terror, in: South Asia Intelligence Review, Weekly Assessments & Briefings, Volume 4, No. 40, April 17, 2006, online: www.satp.org/satporgtp/sair/Archives/4_40.htm#assessment1

not always easy to determine whether the confessional violence was more the cause or the symptom of socio-economic confrontation.[21]

(d) The main violent conflict, both in regard to the number of victims and political relevance, for nearly a decade is taking place in the province of Khyber Pakhtoonkwa, which was formerly called the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) along the Afghan border. Most of the violence occurs closely to this border, in the tribal areas (FATA).[22] The preconditions for this civil war cum terrorism campaign have been laid during the 1980s, again. In those days the FATA and other areas of NWFP had been used as an staging area to organize the violent struggle against the Soviet and Afghan troops in Afghanistan by the Pakistani and US intelligence agencies. Weapons were shipped to the Afghan Mujahedin via these region, with the active help of local tribes and militia commanders. At the same time, the US, Arab and Pakistani agencies strongly worked to politicize and radicalize the local version of Deobandi Islam, in order to further motivate the fighters and supporters of the anti-Soviet, "American Jihad". After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and American disengagement, the weapons, infrastructure and radicalization did not disappear, but remained in place. When the US intervened militarily in Afghanistan as a reaction to the September 11, 2001 attacks by al-Qaida, the extremist infrastructure first provided support and a safe haven to fleeing Afghan Taliban and foreign al-Qaida fighters on the Pakistani side of the border. And after the Pakistani government of General and President Musharraf joined the US in its "war against terror", it became a direct target of violent action by the local extremist groups. Thousands of Pakistani soldier have been killed by insurgents since then, and many more civilians got killed or injured. The insurgency soon was complemented by a campaign of terrorism, and in this way spread to other parts of Pakistan as well.[23] The most famous victim of it has been former Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto.

The violence in Khyber Pakhtoonkwa to a big degree is an outflow of the Afghan war, and of the presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan which are perceived as an occupation force. But also internal Pakistani factors play an important causal role, especially the close cooperation with Washington, and the weaknesses of governance in the tribal areas and other parts of the country.

Weaknesses of Governance and Deficits in Nation-Building

This point takes us back to a basic dilemma of Pakistan. Pakistan may have many grave problems, both in the economic and the political sphere, and in regard to political violence and ideology. This may be unfortunate, but other countries have also been tested by severe difficulties. The Pakistani case is not so much of concern because of those problems, but because of its limited capacity to actually solve them.[24] If a country does have a functioning, committed and capable government and a effective and legitimate

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[21] S.V.R. Nasr, Islam, the State and the Rise of Sectarian Militancy in Pakistan, in: Christophe Jaffrelot (Ed.), Pakistan – Nationalism without a Nation?, London 2004

[22] International Crisis Group, Pakistan's Tribal Areas: Appeasing the Militants, Asia Report No. 125, Islamabad/Brussels,11 December 2006

[23] Jochen Hippler, Violence, Governance and Islam in Pakistan, Paper Prepared for the Final Conference "Control of Violence", September 10 – 13, 2008, Center for Interdisciplinary Research (ZIF), Bielefeld University, Germany, online: www.jochenhippler.de/html/violence-_governance-_islam_in_pakistan.html

[24] Compare: Anas Malik, Political Survival in Pakistan – Beyond Ideology, London/New York 2011

political system, even grave crises can be overcome. Some problems might not even arise or escalate, while others can be solved. The sad aspect of Pakistani politics is, that the country has great potential in principle, but has been and still is ruled by selfish, corrupt and incapable political elites. These elites are less interested in the common welfare of their society, but primarily in themselves. This applies to the secular and the religious parties, to the socio-economic elites, and to the army alike. These elites have been blocking the progress of Pakistan since independence. They have assured intentioanlly and by incompetence that the Pakistani state could not mature into a functioning and capable system of problem-solving for society, providing the rule of law, justice, economic development and democracy. The vicious cycle of corrupt and incompetent civilian governments and military dictatorships has suffocated both the Pakistani state and society.[25] State structures remain weak and mistrusted by the population. As long as the civilian and military elites of the country are not willing to learn that their role should be to serve their country instead of exploiting it, the grave problems can hardly be solved. The main job that Pakistan is confronting now is to finally be serious with Nation-Building. To build a clean, capable and accountable state which is enforcing the rule of law against everybody, against rich and poor alike, for men and women, for all religious and secular groups, for all provinces, linguistic groups - this is the key necessity if Pakistan is supposed to be successful. And this implies to bring the elites under control of society, instead of allowing them to rule Pakistan like their private property. If Pakistan manages to develop a functioning and legitimate state that the people can accept as their own, the country will became capable to solve the grave problems it is facing. The middle classes, including lawyers, journalists and civil society organizations are crucial. If they can avoid being infected by the feudal and predatory mentality of the elites and transform themselves into a force for reform, Pakistan could step by step solve most of its problems and find a way out of the chronic crisis. But if Pakistan will not tackle this key problem of self-transformation, it will risk to further stagnate and the fabric of the state and of society will weaken even more. In this case, the dangers of violence, of extremism and decay could make Pakistan fail.

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[25] Husain Haqqani, Pakistan – Between Mosque and Military, Washington 2005