

Pakistan

CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

Pakistan was part of England's Indian Empire until 1947. Pakistan's provinces were always a part of the greater Indian cultural area, even though the northwestern part of India that became Pakistan was mostly Muslim. When the Indian independence movement began under Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru in the early part of the 20th century, Mohammed Ali Jinnah and others feared that their Muslim identity would be threatened by the Hindu majority in India. They demanded that a separate country be carved out for Indian Muslims. On August 14, 1947, when the British left India, Pakistan became an independent nation.



Initially, Pakistan consisted of two separate parts:

West Pakistan and East Pakistan. It was a traumatic birth, however, as announcement of the partition sparked widespread killings (up to a million people died) and one of the largest migrations of people in world history. The partition resulted in a dispute over whether India or Pakistan would control the region of Kashmir. Pakistan fought wars with India over this issue in 1949 and 1965, losing each time, and the area is currently part of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan went to war with India again in 1971, this time over the future of East Pakistan. Pakistan's defeat in that war led to the creation of the independent country of Bangladesh.

Domestically, Pakistan has been through long periods of military dictatorship. The country shifted to democratic governance after 1988. Even then, political instability in Pakistan continued. Pakistan's governing coalitions never managed to stay in power very long. Over a ten-year period, two rival political leaders, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, alternated as Prime Minister of Pakistan.

In 1999, the military staged a coup. Chief of Staff General Pervez Musharraf named himself Chief Executive of the government and dissolved parliament. A referendum was held in 2002, which confirmed Mr. Musharraf as President of Pakistan until some time in 2007 and enlarged the president's power. Next, handover from military

Flag



The green color represents the traditional color of Islam, but has come to mean prosperity. White symbolizes peace; the crescent, progress; the star enlightenment.

Pakistan: Facts

Capital	Islamabad
Government	Federal Republic
Government Head (Prime Minister)	Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani
Economy	Capitalist
Independence	1947
Area (sq. km)	803,000
Population (millions)	172
Adult Literacy	49.9%
Pop. Growth Rate	2%

Source: CIA World Fact book. Military data for year 2005 and Military % of GDP for year 2007. All others for year 2008. GDP figures are in Purchasing Power Parity. Tuberculosis data for year 2006 and Health Care % of GDP for year 2005 from WHO.

to civilian rule was accomplished in 2002 when parliamentary elections were held. The country can be called a democracy again, but one in which the President held more authority than the other two pillars of power, the parliament and the court system. For example, the President can dismiss the parliament at any time.

Compared to some of the drama of recent years, politics in Pakistan stayed relatively stable for five years. But as President Musharraf's term was about to expire in the fall of 2007, the political scene began to unravel. There was a controversial re-election of President Musharraf in October. When many questioned the validity of the election results, Mr. Musharraf declared a state of emergency. He suspended the constitution and jailed some Supreme Court Justices who disagreed with him. In December, Benazir Bhutto was assassinated while campaigning as an opposition candidate for the general elections. This was the final straw for most Pakistanis. In the parliamentary elections in February 2008, the President's political party was soundly defeated. Its numbers continued to dwindle as party members jumped ship to join one of the parties that won. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) won the most seats in the National Assembly but not enough to rule alone. The PPP formed a coalition government with the Pakistan Muslim League-N party. Without any popular or political support, Mr. Musharraf agreed to resign in August 2008. This paved the way for the late Ms. Bhutto's husband, Asif Zardari, to be elected president in September 2008. The next elections will be held by 2013.

PAKISTAN TODAY

A developing country, Pakistan is located in South Asia between India and Afghanistan. It is slightly less than twice the size of California. Due to both internal and external political conflicts, the country remains impoverished and underdeveloped. Pakistan has challenges with its main neighboring states. An ongoing dispute with India over the territory of Kashmir continues to cause tensions to flare up between the two countries on an intermittent basis. In a show of force, both countries set off nuclear atomic weapons tests in 1998, alerting the world that both possessed such dangerous weapons. A terrorist bombing in India in late 2008 has again increased tensions between these two neighbors.

Since 9/11, Afghanistan has been ground zero for the

fight against the terrorist group al Qaeda. The group's leader, Osama bin Laden, along with other al Qaeda members, are thought to be hiding in the mountainous region along the Afghanistan/Pakistan border. The region is only nominally controlled by the central government of Pakistan. The regional tribes that inhabit the areas are fiercely independent.

After 9/11, former President Musharraf agreed to join the US war on terror. He provided invaluable support to the US by sending the Pakistani military into the border tribal areas to search for al Qaeda members. In return, the country's international status has been upgraded. Sanctions imposed after their nuclear weapons tests have been waived. The country has been receiving billions of dollars in aid from the US government for its military, as well as loans and debt forgiveness. Such largesse has helped the economy in recent years. But it has also brought the war on terror too close to home, with 600 Pakistanis killed in suicide bombings and other insurgent attacks in recent years. Mr. Musharraf's fall in popularity can be partially blamed on his willingness to wage war on fellow Muslims.

Human Rights

The human rights situation in Pakistan continually changes. Until 1988, Pakistan was a military dictatorship under which many human rights violations occurred. In 1988, the country became a democracy and allowed political freedom. However, Pakistan's suppression of both terrorist activities and ethnic guerrilla movements has been denounced as heavy-handed. Its alignment with the US, forcing it to battle fellow Muslims, has been questioned. In addition, women's rights and the rights of religious minorities are often ignored. Finally, a large percentage of the population lives in poverty and has no access to education, so social and economic rights are not guaranteed.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan estimates that in 1999 there were about 15 million working children in Pakistan employed in brick factories, agriculture, carpet factories, restaurants, furniture factories, and sports industries. They also work as domestic laborers where they are often exposed to mental and physical abuse. In many cases, they are kept in virtual imprisonment. The International Labor Organization has been strongly critical of the lack of action by the Paki-

stani government. The country has signed the [ILO Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention #182](#) but not [Minimum Age Convention #138](#).

Pakistan has no federal law on compulsory education, and the government has insufficient resources to ensure universal education. In 2000, financial constraints forced the Pakistan government to cut education expenditures. However, the US has contributed to Pakistan's education sector, providing an estimated \$10 million. This is a significant amount compared to the three-year average annual education budget of \$35 million. It is also meant to counteract the void in the educational system that has been largely filled by the madrassas. These religious schools, primarily for boys, provide basic reading and writing skills and focus on the teachings of the Koran. Unfortunately, the madrassas, often run by Islamic [fundamentalists](#), have become a breeding ground for Islamic militancy. They also partly account for the education gap between males and females. By only teaching about religion, they deprive students knowledge about other subjects such as math and science.

Domestic violence against women in Pakistan is a serious issue. It is estimated that more than 1,000 women a year are killed in karo kari, or honor killings. Their alleged crimes include refusing an arranged marriage, seeking a divorce, adultery, asking for their legal inheritance, or otherwise “offending” family honor. These killings are more common among relatively wealthy families with tribal backgrounds. The practice had been dying out until 1977, when a military dictatorship overthrew the government.

General Zia ul-Haq eliminated traditional Muslim legal penalties for men who falsely accuse women of morality crimes, and he allowed tribal laws to replace laws on civil marriages in some areas of the country. Under Nawaz Sharif, sha'ria, or Islamic legal codes, gained equal status alongside civil law. Also, there are restrictions on the admissibility of women's testimony in court. This is also true for non-Muslim citizens.

Human trafficking is a problem in Pakistan. Women, and children are targets for labor and sexual exploitation. Often victims of trafficking begin as voluntary migrants to Gulf States, Iran, Turkey, and Greece in search of labor opportunities but end up in involuntary servitude with their employers. In 2008, the government established a national plan of action to combat traf-

ficking in persons. It provides education for police officers, attorneys and judges and approves a special entity to coordinate its anti-trafficking response. Following the October 2005 earthquake, the government sent federal Anti-Trafficking Units to earthquake-affected areas of the country to prevent the trafficking of orphaned or otherwise vulnerable children. Despite these efforts, [NGOs](#) report that at the local level, Pakistani officials often charge victims of trafficking with crimes of prostitution or irregular migration rather than seeing them as victims of trafficking crimes.

Religious minorities often face discrimination in education and employment and are frequently subject to violence and harassment. In these situations, police often refuse to intervene against such actions or to charge those who commit them. Since Pakistan began supporting the US [war on terror](#), there has been an increase in violence against Christians in the country. An attack on a church in Islamabad in 2002 killed five and wounded 46, many of them foreign diplomats and their families. The violence is not limited to foreigners. Attacks directed at Pakistan's Christian minority killed about 30 and wounded 100 in 2002.

Environment

The biggest environmental problem in Pakistan is water pollution and the lack of safe tap water. Raw sewage, industrial wastes, and agricultural runoff contaminate the water supply. Pakistan's major water supply, the Indus River, is very polluted. In addition to water pollution, air pollution has also become a major problem in most cities. Other environmental problems include deforestation, soil degradation, and desertification.

Little attention was paid to pollution and environmental issues in Pakistan until the early 1990s. In international environmental conferences, Pakistan argues that [developing countries](#) cannot prioritize environmental protection over development. The country is exempted from [emissions](#)-reduction requirements under terms of the [Kyoto Protocol](#). However, Pakistan has not signed or approved the Protocol. It needs aid and technology from developed countries in order to solve its energy and environmental problems. Frequently the country has looked to Japan for help in this regard.

How can impoverished countries like Pakistan reduce

their ecological footprint when they have so many other pressing needs? The answer may lie in rethinking the assumption that such change must happen at the federal government level. Grassroots efforts at the local level are having an impact in the US and elsewhere. A good example is the adoption of the UN-backed Green Cities Declaration by Pakistan's capital city, Islamabad. At a conference in 2006 in San Francisco, the city representatives were given guidelines to follow in the areas of energy, waste reduction, urban design, transportation, environmental health, and water. In each issue area they are proposing reductions and improvements to the present model that will affect change. Some of the reductions will be met by the simple use of energy saving light bulbs or a "just say no to plastic bags" campaign. Others are changes that developed countries take for granted, such as the use of trash cans in public areas, markets, and shops. Presently public trash cans are not available in many developing countries, so litter is dropped anywhere, such as on the lawn of a park after eating lunch there.

Like many countries with nuclear capabilities, Pakistan is increasing its reliance on nuclear power to fulfill its energy needs. It has five existing nuclear power plants, one under construction and two new ones proposed. Nuclear power plants do not contribute to GHG emissions, which creates a powerful benefit to the planet in their increasing use. But there are issues of concern with nuclear power. Radioactive waste needs to be stored for thousands of years, and no nuclear power country has yet finished building a long-term storage facility. Recognized environmental leaders France and the UK have been quietly polluting the English Channel with radioactive runoff from their plutonium reprocessing plants. If these problems exist in the developed world, it is likely that the nuclear waste storage and pollution issues also exist in developing countries.

General health conditions in Pakistan are poor but slowly improving. The average life expectancy (64 years) is one of the world's lowest; however, it has risen in recent years. Likewise, its infant mortality rate (67 per 1,000) is one of the world's highest, but it is substantially lower than it was ten years ago. Pakistan spends about 2.1% of its GDP on health care. Public health services are meager and government funding pays for about 20% of the total. This means that the generally poor population must pay for health services from its own sources. The result is that about 45% of the population does not have access to medical care. There is

Pakistan: Health

Birth Rate	28/1,000
Death Rate	8/1,000
Life Expectancy - Male	63
Life Expectancy - Female	65
Infant Mortality	67/1,000
HIV/AIDS Cases	74,000
HIV/AIDS Prevalence Rate	1/1,000
Tuberculosis Rate	181/100,000

less than one hospital bed for every 1,000 people. There is one doctor for every 2,000 people.

The World Bank is helping educate Pakistanis to prevent an AIDS epidemic in Pakistan. It has supported community-driven projects to improve access to water supply and sanitation. The incidence of AIDS in the adult population is reported at about 1 per 1,000. The incidence of tuberculosis is 181 per 100,000, one of the highest in the world. This is again due to the low level of preventative medicine and basic treatment available to most people in the country.

Economy

A poor, heavily populated nation, Pakistan began pursuing market-based reform policies in the 1980s. Pakistan has a large agricultural sector, notable for having the world's largest continuous irrigation canal system. The country possesses considerable economic potential. It has substantial natural gas reserves, and industrialization has grown over the past years. However, markets are over-regulated, many of the state-run industries are inefficient, and the entire system is wracked by corruption.

Pakistan's economy is beset by many structural problems. The population is poor, with a large percentage (50%) illiterate. Government revenues are anemic, with most taxes uncollected. Tensions with India force much of the money the government collects to be devoted to defense spending and debt payments. This leaves very little money to spend on the country's social problems and to encourage growth.

In 2000, former President Musharraf brought in an excellent economic staff that continued the progress of economic reform. They succeeded in imposing a highly unpopular and much protested sales tax on all retail

Pakistan: Economics

GDP (billions)	\$412
GDP Per Capita	\$2,400
GDP Growth Rate	5.3%
Unemployment	5.6%
Inflation Rate	7.6%
Exports (billions)	\$18
Imports (billions)	\$29
External Debt (billions)	\$39

trade. The President threatened to imprison tax evaders and debt defaulters. However, revenues only increased by a small amount.

Prior to 9/11, an already struggling economy was handicapped by economic sanctions imposed in 1998 by the G7 when Pakistan tested secret nuclear weapons. But after 9/11, economic sanctions were waived due to Pakistan's support for the US war on terror. The country's economy began to percolate due to the flow of foreign assistance and debt forgiveness. Since 2001, poverty levels have decreased by 10%. The government was able to add a 52% increase in social services spending for 2007. GDP growth rates had been in the 6-8% annual range for a number of years. But the global economic slowdown and heightened security costs will probably depress growth in Pakistan for 2009. Because Pakistan must import so much of its basic energy needs, when those prices go up, it is hard for the country to maintain a balance between imports and exports. When import costs become too high, which happened in 2008, the country's economy can be negatively affected. With higher commodity prices, inflation can become a problem in Pakistan. It was in the 10-11% range during much of 2008.

Foreign trade is a vital part of the economy because of the need to import a variety of products. Its principal exports are rice, cotton and textiles. The country has extensive but untapped energy resources. Lacking capital and the political will to develop these resources, Pakistan must spend a great deal to import oil to meet its energy needs. Pakistan has recorded trade deficits for much of its independent history. Privatization has helped Pakistan add \$3 billion to its treasury in recent years, as state run companies were sold to private investors. But privatization has been slowing in recent

years. Income tax as a source of revenue has been wildly inefficient, with only 1.5% of the population paying any taxes. Only 17% of Pakistanis file tax returns.

Pakistan is reliant on foreign aid and loans to reduce its debt, maintain social spending, reduce poverty, and carry out economic reforms. Economic sanctions imposed after Pakistan's nuclear tests in 1998 slowed the amount of foreign aid, but it has resumed strongly since Pakistan's cooperation with the US over the war in Afghanistan. The government's cooperation helped it secure a number of bilateral grant packages that amounted to \$1.16 billion. The US gave Pakistan a \$600 million grant, rescheduled payments on \$3 billion of debt, and pledged \$3 billion for the years 2005-2009 in economic and military aid.

In the post-9/11 period, the influx of funds from the war on terror encouraged an increase in foreign direct investment. In addition, the global crackdown on terrorism had several unexpected benefits for Pakistan's economy. Anti-terrorist measures aimed at closing funding channels for terrorists have forced more Pakistanis who send money home to use conventional banking channels instead of money lenders. With more money held in banks, Pakistan's foreign reserves soared to a record \$13 billion a few years ago. In addition, many overseas Pakistanis returned home due to the fear of persecution abroad, adding 1,000s of educated, relatively wealthy people to the economy. Others have invested their money domestically rather than overseas, feeling unwelcome in the West or fearing their assets could be frozen in terrorism investigations. Initially such investments helped the Karachi Stock Exchange soar 112% one recent year.

Now Pakistan is paying a price for the political turmoil of 2007-08. A decline in FDI and capital flight are pulling funds out of the economy. Between the worsening economic picture and multiple changes in leadership, foreign companies are becoming reluctant to make long-term financial commitments

With its foreign reserves declining, and the value of the country's currency in freefall, the Pakistani government sought loans from Saudi Arabia, the US, and China. But the three countries offered no help. Reluctantly, President Zardari had to request a loan from the IMF. Because the IMF forces countries to institute austerity measures which are unpopular with the general public, many developing countries have tried to avoid

seeking funding from the IMF in the last few years. Pakistan's IMF loan was approved in November 2008 for \$7.6 billion.

Security

Since its creation, Pakistan has found itself at the center of regional crises, often caused by great power rivalries. Pakistan is important to the Islamic world, as it is the country with the second largest Muslim population (behind Indonesia). It is also the first country founded as an Islamic state, and the first, and so far the only, Muslim country to acquire nuclear weapons. Pakistan borders India, Iran, Afghanistan and China, and is located near the former Soviet Republics of central Asia. This geographical location gives it significant strategic importance.

Founded during the partition with India in 1947, Pakistan's security situation has often been dominated by its tense and frequently hostile relationship with its giant Hindu neighbor, India. These tensions have included three wars with India between 1947 and 1971, all of which Pakistan lost. Cold War politics entered the region when India leaned toward the Soviet Union, and the US responded by forging closer ties to Pakistan. This became especially important when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1978. Pakistan saw its own security directly threatened and worked with the United States in a policy of support for the Mujahadeen, or holy warriors, who fought, and ultimately defeated, the Soviet Union.

Civil war in Afghanistan followed the Soviet departure. Pakistan found growing instability on its border as hunger, lawlessness, drug trafficking, and massive movements of refugees continued in Afghanistan. Pakistan, searching for a reliable government that it could influence, supported the fundamentalist Taliban movement that eventually succeeded in taking over most of Afghanistan in 1996.

Current security concerns center on three related issues. The first issue is bilateral relations with India and the search for a solution to the volatile issue of Kashmir. The second issue is the instable nature of neighboring Afghanistan and related US expectations for Pakistan. The third issue is balancing cooperation with the US with domestic pressures to end this relationship.

Pakistan's troubled relations with India stem from contention over possession of the border region of Kashmir. The dispute dates from partition and has proven so far to be an unsolvable problem. Pakistan wants India to relinquish control of the only Muslim-dominated area in India. Minor border skirmishes between Indian and Pakistani troops are a way of life in the region. The situation became even more volatile in 1998 when India exploded its first nuclear device. Pakistan then exploded its own device within days. Security experts fear that if a conflict were to erupt between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, it might escalate to a nuclear war.

India and Pakistan massed one million troops along the 1,700 mile-long border in the spring of 2002 as tensions rose over a terrorist attack in Kashmir that killed 32 people. This followed an attack in 2001 on the Indian Parliament building by alleged Pakistani militants. Recent elections in the disputed Indian states of Jammu and Kashmir brought to power a state government that has taken a softer stand and eased the repression against separatists. In 2004, the leaders of India and Pakistan held a three-day peace summit. A cease fire was eventually signed and ties had been improving between the two countries until a new terrorist attack occurred in November 2008. The important industrial city of Mumbai, India, was held hostage for three days by 10 terrorists. The attack killed 163 people in two luxury hotels, a railway station, a tourist restaurant, and a Jewish center as well as other sites. Indian authorities insist they have proof that the 10 gunmen were citizens of Pakistan trained by retired Pakistani military men. While Indians are rightfully angry over this incident, tensions are not as explosive as they were after the 2001 terrorist attack. The stronger ties created between the two countries since 2004 are credited with a lower response level this time around.

Up until 9/11, relations with the US cooled following

Pakistan: Security (Armed Forces)	
Military expense as % of GDP (2007)	3%
Military expenditures (millions)	\$3,848
Military expense per capita	\$23.32

Pakistan

the Soviet retreat from Afghanistan. They grew worse when the US imposed sanctions following the 1998 nuclear tests. The US has also accused Pakistan of aiding North Korea's nuclear program in the late 1990s. Many observers believed that America would turn away from Pakistan and forge closer ties with India as a counter to its growing rivalry with China. But Pakistan's relationship with the US changed dramatically with the events of 9/11. Despite fierce domestic opposition, former President Musharraf became an essential, although hesitant, partner in American efforts to destroy the al Qaeda terrorist network and Afghanistan's ruling Taliban. An unstable Afghanistan has the potential to foster religious tension and related lawlessness in Pakistan. It could also spark a new refugee crisis.

It is suspected that al Qaeda and Taliban members are hiding in parts of Pakistan close to the Afghani border. This may be where Osama bin Laden is hiding. It is an area effectively autonomous from central government control. Pakistan claims it has now turned over 600 al Qaeda or Taliban members to the US. But despite direct Pakistani military operations in the area, the US, Afghanistan, and NATO forces are concerned that the problem is getting worse. In 2008, without acknowledged government approval, the US began bombing targeted militants inside Pakistan. Each bombing elicits public outrage. A contributing factor to the worsening situation in the tribal border areas was former President Musharraf's agreement to a cease fire in 2006. This was supposed to allow tribal chiefs to expel militants without the Pakistani army doing it for them.

Instead, it allowed the militants to build up their resources, get rid of moderate tribal chiefs, and consolidate their power. Typically the Taliban rule by fear. They behead rival tribal leaders or pro-government officials, blow up bridges and schools for girls, and insist that women wear burqas.

Up to now, the Pakistani government has walked a fine line between the US and the economic support it provides vs. domestic anger at the growing insurgency within Pakistan's borders. Islamic militants in Pakistan receive support and sympathy from many members of the military, the secret service police, and regional governments. Keenly aware of how the public turned against Mr. Musharraf due to his stand against the militants, leaders of the new government are reluctant to take the same path. But they desperately need the US economic support being provided.

The greatest concern for the rest of the world is what happens to the nuclear weapons Pakistan possesses if the new regime turns away from cooperating with the West. The US has spent \$100 million since 9/11 to add safeguards to the production facilities. But the Pakistanis continue to be secretive about locations and weapon production in their country. So the US has to take it on blind faith that the improvements have been made. Pakistan continues to refuse to sign the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to allow any type of inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Thus Pakistan will continue to be at the forefront of global security issues in the foreseeable future.