

The War on Terror

Assessing US Policy Alternatives on Pakistan

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Transcending the Past

Over four years of constructive US engagement with Pakistan's military dictatorship, since the catastrophic 9/11 events, have failed to produce the fundamental and necessary transformations in Pakistan that would justify continuation of such a policy. It is significant that these four years of continuous effort and massive investment in Pakistan – while they have helped 'turn around' the economy, with large benefits accruing to the dominant elite in the country – have only seen a spread of disorder in the country, a further erosion of institutions and the structural foundations of democracy, and a failure to implement the most basic reforms necessary to effect a political turnaround, and to expand democratic spaces. Indeed, there is mounting evidence of a consolidation of authoritarian tendencies and a proclivity to use excessive military force against increasingly restive populations – who have benefited little from the generous

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flow of international aid – in wide areas of the country, particularly in Balochistan, the North West Frontier Province and Gilgit-Baltistan.

There is also strong and cumulative evidence that the Pakistani power elite, located in the regressive military-*mullah*-feudal combine, is yet to abandon terrorism as a tactical and strategic tool to secure what it perceives as the country's quest for 'strategic depth' in the region. Despite the numbers of 'al Qaeda terrorists' arrested and handed over to the US – a large majority of whom have proven to be of 'zero value' – and the fact that the Pakistani state and Army have taken selective action against particular groups of Islamist terrorists, particularly those who have turned against the state, who have attacked President Pervez Musharraf and senior Army and Government functionaries, and who have engaged in sectarian terrorism within the country, it is the case that Pakistan continues to support and encourage the activities of a wide range of terrorist and Islamist extremist organisations. This is particularly the case with organisations that are active in Afghanistan – including remnants of the Taliban – and in India. Moreover, Pakistan continues to exploit Islamist extremist mobilisation to secure its perceived objectives in the wider Asian region, notably in Central Asia.

Despite cosmetic policy changes and some tokenism – including formal bans on a number of terrorist organisations (overwhelmingly unenforced) – many prominent Islamist terrorist organisations continue to operate with a high measure of freedom in and from Pakistan. Further, the processes of Islamist radicalization, both through the *Madrassa* (seminary) and the school education system,¹ continue apace, and none of General Musharraf's promised reforms have reached effective fruition.

¹ See, Ajai Sahni, "Why do they hate us?" *South Asia Intelligence Review*, Vol. 2, No. 38, April 5, 2004, http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/sair/Archives/2_38.htm; *The Subtle Subversion: The State of Curricula and Textbooks in Pakistan*, Sustainable

Pakistan has also played an active and prominent role in the growth of Islamist radicalism and terrorism in and from Bangladesh, another theatre of urgent concern in the South Asian region. There is increasing evidence, moreover, of a rising trend in operational cooperation between Pakistani and Bangladeshi intelligence agencies and *jihadi* organisations, particularly in their efforts to target India. A number of recent terrorist attacks and arrests in different parts of India, including the suicide attack at Hyderabad on October 12, 2005, the attack at the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore on December 28, 2005, the Diwali bombings in Delhi on October 29, 2005, and the Mumbai serial bombings of July 11, 2006,² among others, have exposed evidence of joint Pakistan-Bangladesh operations and terrorist modules. This pattern of collaboration and networking compounds the dangers within the region, and acts as a force multiplier for Islamist terrorist organisations seeking to project their capacities internationally.

There is, consequently, a need to ‘reverse lines of action based on earlier views’, and to radically revise US policy on Pakistan in particular, and South Asia in general, to bring it in line with evolving US geostrategic perspectives and thinking. It is important to recall, within this context, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice’s observation (in the context of the Middle East) that “we must transcend the doctrines and debates of the past and transform volatile *status quos* that no longer serve our interests”, to create “a balance of power that favours freedom.” Secretary Rice rightly notes that “stability without democracy will prove to be false stability”, and argues that “the fundamental

Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, www.sdpi.org; Yvette Claire Rosser, *Islamisation of Pakistani Social Studies Textbooks*, New Delhi: Rupa, 2003.

² See Kanchan Lakshman, “India: Darkness and Light,” *South Asia Intelligence Review*, Vol. 5, No. 25, January 1, 2007, www.satp.org/satporgrp/sair/Archives/5_25.htm; Kanchan Lakshman, “Mumbai: Terror Tuesday,” *South Asia Intelligence Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1, July 17, 2006, www.satp.org/satporgrp/sair/Archives/5_1.htm#assessment1.

character of regimes matters more today than the international distribution of power... In these societies, it is illusory to encourage economic reform by itself and hope that the freedom deficit will work itself out over time.”³

There is urgent need, today, to bring US policy to bear directly on the objectives of altering the ‘fundamental character’ of the regime in Pakistan, and of transforming the ‘volatile *status quo*’ there.

Pakistan’s Destructive Dynamics

It is useful, within this context, to recognize certain aspects of the essential character and dynamic of the state and power structure in Pakistan, as well as its underlying and deeply entrenched social, political and cultural pathologies.

There is an increasing realization among informed experts – including many who are sympathetic to Pakistan – that “There are compelling reasons why Pakistan’s comprehensive strategic makeover will not happen.”⁴ Chris Fair, for instance, notes, among other factors, the dilatory approach to the collection of firearms, failure to suppress financing of terrorism, highly selective targeting of terrorist organisations, and extremely half-hearted efforts on education, including *Madrassa* reform; and a host of liabilities arising from Pakistan’s fiscal weakness and

³ Condoleezza Rice, “The Promise of Democratic Peace: Why Promoting Freedom is the Only Realistic Path to Security”, *The Washington Post*, December 11, 2005. Secretary Rice notes further, “How could it have been prudent to preserve the state of affairs in a region that was incubating and exporting terrorism; where the proliferation of deadly weapons was getting worse, not better; where authoritarian regimes were projecting their failures onto innocent nations and people?” Secretary Rice was writing in the context of the Middle East, but her observations apply equally and acutely to Pakistan.

⁴ Robert Wirsing, “Pakistan’s Transformation: Why it will not (and need not) happen,” Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu, Vol. 4, No. 2, January 2005, www.apcss.org/Publications/APSSS/Pakistans%20Transformation.pdf.

pervasive dearth of resources, including human capital, facilities, infrastructure, and effective bureaucratic culture.⁵ Ashley Tellis has underlined the sheer sweep of transformations that would be required for the “transformation of Pakistan as a state.” This would require, he notes, “not only strategic, economic, and political reform but also the revitalization of Pakistani society... (to include) correcting gender inequalities, containing ideological mobilization, improving civil society, and selectively expanding state control.”⁶ Robert Wirsing rightly notes that “Transformations on this scale have been witnessed in few, if any of the world’s fifty-odd Muslim states; and the societal overhauls implicit in them have almost never been realized – certainly not in a time span reckoned in anything less than decades – anywhere else in the non-Western world.”⁷ Wirsing concludes that it is, consequently, necessary to “brace for continuity in Pakistani behaviour, to take a more sceptical view of Pakistan’s commitment to reform...”⁸

It is useful, here, to briefly list some of the most significant elements of the causal dynamic that yields this assessment.

- The first and most significant of these is the ‘ideology of Pakistan’ and the nature of the military-*mullah*-feudal combine that has dominated the power structures of the country virtually since the moment of its creation. The seeds of Pakistan’s difficulties are located in the very circumstances of its creation, and its construction of national identity out of an ideology of religious exclusion and hatred of others.

⁵ Christine Fair, “The Counterterror Coalitions: Cooperation with India and Pakistan,” Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2004, http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2004/RAND_MG141.pdf.

⁶ Ashley J. Tellis, “U.S. Strategy: Assisting Pakistan’s Transformation”, *The Washington Quarterly* – Vol. 28, No. 1, Winter 2004-05, pp. 97-116.

⁷ Wirsing, “Pakistan’s Transformation: Why it will not (and need not) happen.”

⁸ Ibid.

- These ideological proclivities have been infinitely compounded by the patterns of political mobilisation and institutional transformation that have taken root in Pakistan, and their exponential escalation under the policies followed since the Zia-ul-Haq regime. Today, a radical Islamist ideology has become central to the Pakistani Army, the country's educational system – not just the *Madrasahs*, but also the state prescribed 'public school' and university curricula – governance, law, political mobilisation, society and culture. To reiterate, moreover, terrorism and the ideologies that breed it, thrive within closed and authoritarian societies. To the extent that these prevail, they systematically undermine and destroy the very potential for the emergence of democratic institutions and processes.
- Despite the illusion of an 8 per cent growth rate, Pakistan's economic vital statistics remain fragile. The savings rate, at around 15 per cent of GDP, compares adversely to the average of 20 per cent for developing countries. The economy is overwhelmingly agrarian, with the manufacturing sector contributing barely 17 per cent to the GDP. Despite the infusion of significant foreign aid, the Government remains in chronic deficit to the tune of about 10 per cent of the GDP. It is useful, moreover, to recall that current aid is future debt. Present growth figures, further, do not translate into any significant augmentation of national production capacities and do not address the profound structural infirmities of the Pakistani economy. Per capita income and poverty figures do not reflect the actual reality of the ground in Pakistan. Mahbub-ul-Haq's *Human Development Report in South Asia* had noted that, while less than one-third of Pakistan's people

are income-poor, nearly one-half suffers from serious deprivation of basic opportunities of life.⁹

- Absent a dramatic, indeed stupendous, expansion of production capacities – contingent on a radical restructuring of the entire political economy, including the culture of governance, the dominance of and cornering of national resources by the Army, the patterns of extremist political mobilisation – and a colossal extension of infrastructure, it must be clear that the Pakistani economy will abjectly fail to absorb the addition of nearly 90 million to its population by year 2020 to its current population of over 160 million.
- To reiterate, the heart of Pakistan’s failure lies in the persistence of the militarized Islamist-fundamentalist and quasi-feudal state in Pakistan and this problem cannot be resolved by any process of negotiated reforms, or liberal funding of developmental programmes. Rather, given the structure of power and the collusive institutional framework that prevails, each dollar of aid or relief to Pakistan releases a dollar of domestic resources for further militarization, radicalization and extremist religious mobilization.

Addressing Enduring Pathologies

Given these circumstances, the broad contours of a strategy to secure US interests in the South Asian region would need to include some of the following lines of approach.

- ▶ The first principle that needs to be abandoned is the idea that democracy can be engineered or orchestrated through the agency of a military dictatorship – however well-intentioned or efficient such a regime may be. In this context, John Stuart Mill’s reminder is key: “Evil for evil, a good despotism... is

⁹ Mahbub-ul-Haq and Khadija Haq, “Human Development in South Asia,” Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 17.

more noxious than a bad one...”¹⁰ All ‘despotisms’ or forms of authoritarian rule are crippling to the spirit of a nation and a people, and militate directly against the capacities for democracy, including the institutional underpinnings of democracy. There has been a steady erosion of the institutional structure of democracy in Pakistan under the Musharraf regime through the packing of the administrative and educational structure with military personnel, the intimidation and manipulation of the judicial system, the rigging of elections, the systematic decimation of popular political parties, and the opportunistic and malignant alliance between the Army and Islamist extremist political formations. Worse, the sphere of violence and intimidation in politics has been steadily extended across the spectrum: Islamist extremist violence, anti-state political and sub-nationalist violence, sectarian, social and gender violence, and increasing state repression.

- ▶ Democracy itself is the only preparation or training a people may have for democracy, and it is under freely elected governments that the skills and capacities for such governance are developed. Any measures that help ‘stabilize’ or strengthen the Musharraf regime, or any successor military regime, consequently, directly undermine the possibility and potential for democracy in Pakistan.
- ▶ Democracy in Pakistan, however, has never escaped the stranglehold of military domination, and the mere restoration of democratic form will go no distance in neutralizing the social and political pathologies that underlie the structure of power in the country. It is useful to recall, for instance, that the ‘democratic’ Governments of the post-Zia-ul-Haq era have been as supportive of terrorism within the region as have been the preceding and succeeding military regimes,

¹⁰ John Stuart Mill, “Considerations on Representative Government,” 1861.

and the broad and predatory nature of Pakistan's foreign and domestic policies has never been substantially altered, nor has any regime sought to bring about reforms that would secure a greater measure of equity and a wider sphere of rationality in education and politics, and that would dismantle the existing feudal order in the country. Significantly, moreover, Pakistan has always sought to achieve its foreign policy objectives within the neighbourhood through the deliberate and pre-planned use of force, including terrorism.

- ▶ The Islamist extremist ideology is the central pillar of the military-feudal-fundamentalist combine that has ruled Pakistan since its creation. The problem of religious extremism and terrorism in Pakistan can only be resolved through the 'deconstruction' of the present Pakistani state, and by disempowering this combination of forces through a fundamental 'regime change' that goes well beyond a change of leadership, and comprehends a change of ideology and systems of governance.¹¹
- ▶ Pakistan has harvested an enormous price for its supposed 'cooperation' with the US in the war on terror, and in this it has combined deception and blackmail – including nuclear blackmail – to secure a continuous stream of concessions. As one study notes, "The US war on terror has effectively legitimized a rent-seeking military regime that has given its support, tacit or otherwise, to terror activity..."¹² The pattern of US support to Pakistan in the post-9/11 period, while it may have secured certain limited short-term US objectives, has gone far in deeply undermining long-term US goals in the South Asian region.

¹¹ K.P.S. Gill, *Brief on Islamist Extremism & Terrorism in South Asia*, January 2004, Institute for Conflict Management, New Delhi, pp. 5-6.

¹² "A New US Strategy for South Asia: Going Beyond Crisis Management", *The Stanley Foundation*, Draft Report of the Detailed Discussions of the 44th Strategy for Peace Conference, October 16-18, 2003, Airlie Center, Warrenton, VA.

Strategic Coherence

If this trend is to be reversed, short-term US policy must be consistently reconciled with a coherent projection of long-term objectives.

Current US policy on Pakistan seeks incremental changes in various components of the system, working towards ‘greater democracy’, containment of Islamist extremist forces, and a diminishing role for the military. The policy ignores the fact that, not only are civil institutions in Pakistan weak, the Army has powerful incentives to keep such institutions weak, and has entered into a long-standing arrangement with Islamist extremist forces to consolidate its hold over the affairs of the country. Repeated assurances and some symbolism notwithstanding, this process has continued into the more than six years under the Pervez Musharraf regime – and for over four years since the 9/11 attacks. Over this period, Musharraf has emerged as a ‘minimal satisfier’, meeting the formal requirements of compliance with the US and international community’s demands on democratization and the containment of extremism and terrorism, even as he ignores their substance. In some measure, the very nature of such demands is problematic, since their content is substantially subjective, “leaving room for endless arguments about what constitutes compliance and how it is to be measured”.¹³ More significantly, many of the objectives simply do not lend themselves to ‘incremental reform’.

There can, for instance, be little possibility of ‘incremental reform’ of the Islamist extremist and terrorist forces in the country. Any effort to absorb them into the ‘mainstream’ political system results in an increasing radicalization of that system, rather than a moderation of the radical elements. The case of the

¹³ Gregory F. Treverton, *Framing Compellent Strategies*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2000, p. xiv.

Madrassas is comparable. Adding science, English language, and computer courses to their existing curricula – itself a task that Musharraf has failed to achieve – will not result in the blossoming of a scientific and rational mindset among their students. Rather, to the extent that the radical Islamist content of these curricula remains unaffected, this would produce a stream of English speaking and progressively technically competent cadres for Islamist terrorist organisations, infinitely compounding the dangers to the West, and particularly to the US. It is important to note, here, that the *Madrassa* alumni, while they do contribute significantly to the violence within the South Asian region, are yet to make their mark on Western theatres of Islamist terrorism, simply because the *Madrassa* graduate lacks the skills, the knowledge and the capacity to function in these alien cultures. To the extent that this ‘competence gap’ is bridged, increasing numbers of *Madrassa* graduates will become available for operation in Western theatres. Liberal funding for ‘*Madrassa* reforms’, consequently, contributes directly to Western vulnerabilities to Islamist extremist terrorism.

Efforts at ‘incremental reform’ of various component systems within the broad dynamic of the Islamist extremist and militarized politics of Pakistan fail to accommodate the sheer size and complexity of the system, and the impossibility of monitoring compliance. US compelling strategies must, consequently, target the “enduring strengths and weaknesses”¹⁴ of the larger system, to secure clearly defined objectives that comprehend the fullest restoration of democracy, complete military subordination to civil authority, constitutional government and rule of law, and the dismantling of the Islamist terrorist infrastructure and its feeder mechanisms – the *Madrassas*, components of the school and

¹⁴ David J. Andre, “Competitive Strategies: An Approach against Proliferation,” in Henry D. Sokolski, Ed., *Prevailing in a Well Armed World: Devising Competitive Strategies Against Weapons Proliferation*, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, Undated, p. 8.

university curricula, the wider network of radicalized social and cultural institutions, laws and practices that have systematically promoted religious fanaticism and hatred throughout society. Such a strategy would require:

- The targeting of the Army and the *Jihadi*-fundamentalist complex, as well as the feudal elite that constitutes the primary support-base for these, as the direct objects of a sustained strategy of compellence.
- An end to the system of concessions and aid that has unintentionally but systematically rewarded predatory and irresponsible policies on the part of successive Pakistani regimes, and particularly the current Musharraf regime.
- The imposition of unbearable costs on Pakistan – and particularly targeting its power-elite – for policies and practices that fail to adhere to norms of civilized governance, that encourage or support terrorism and extremism, and that lead to the expansion of the sphere of authoritarian and unaccountable governance. The ‘denial of deniability’ must be an integral aspect of assessments and policies in this regard, and, given the country’s past and ongoing record in promoting Islamist extremism and terrorism, a presumption of continued involvement in such activities would be justified unless overwhelming and unambiguous evidence to the contrary is manifestly available.
- The progressive demilitarization of Pakistani governance, politics and society, and a continuous and measurable extension of democratic spaces. This will require a staged process within which a collapse of the power of the military in the country is engineered, and will not be achievable as long as such power survives in sufficient measure to dominate the system. Crucially, it must be recognized that demilitarization and democratization cannot be secured through the agency of an all-powerful Army in Pakistan.

- The imposition of greater rationality on Pakistan's power projections. Pakistan has, for too long, harboured expansionist ambitions both to its North and its East, and has enormously encouraged the American misconception that the region cannot be stabilized without Pakistan's cooperation and active support. There is need for an intensification of the US strategy for the stabilization of Afghanistan, and a rejection of the idea that the country cannot be stabilized without Pakistani cooperation; indeed, it is Pakistan that is directly undermining Kabul's authority and stability, and will continue to do so indefinitely, since a stable Afghanistan has immediate implications for the stability and status of Pakistan's North West Frontier Province (NWFP), over which Afghanistan has never formally accepted Pakistan's rights. A strong Afghanistan, consequently, would directly augment the existential threat confronting Pakistan; subverting Kabul's authority, therefore, remains a survival imperative for Pakistan. By imposing prohibitive costs on Pakistan for its support to terrorist and subversive activities in Afghanistan, the US would secure three crucial objectives: stabilize Afghanistan; speed up the end of terrorism and warlordism in the region; force Pakistan to abandon its duplicitous policy on terrorism.
- Pakistan's utility in the Global War on Terror is progressively diminishing, despite the continued presence of surviving al Qaeda and Taliban forces on its soil. Further, Pakistani ambiguity in taking action against terrorism and a continuous strategy of deceit on this account undermine the significance of any future Pakistani role in this War. Moreover, al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden have progressively lost their centrality in global Islamist terror – though they retain their iconic status and possibly the residual capacity to execute singular and catastrophic terror strikes – and there is

limited justification for continued and overwhelming investment in Pakistan on this basis; the continuance of such investment would, consequently, require assessment on other grounds. Pakistan's status as a 'frontline state' and a strategic partner in the Global War on Terrorism should, in the immediate future, be brought under review. If such compulsion does not secure greater compliance on US objectives, such status – and the benefits that have arisen out of it – should be incrementally revoked.

- Within this context, the underlying premise of the current US approach to the Kashmir issue is that, since Pakistan has repeatedly initiated violence, it evidently invests far greater significance to this issue, and to the people of the disputed region, than does India – the *status quo* power – and must, consequently, be appeased with some concessions. A reassessment of this position is now in order, and would have significant salutary impact as a compelling strategy against Pakistan. Crucially, Pakistan's claims over the territory occupied by it – despite the denial of basic political and human rights in Pakistan occupied Kashmir, including Gilgit-Baltistan – have never been contested, and the dispute has, in US perceptions, largely been limited to the areas under Indian administration. The question of the legal status and the rights of the people of the Pakistan administered areas of Kashmir – specifically what is referred to as Azad Kashmir and the Northern Areas – needs to be taken up with the Government of Pakistan.¹⁵
- One Pakistani commentator has noted that, “In the final analysis, it is the internal consolidation of state and society

¹⁵ Ajai Sahni & Saji Cherian, “Gilgit-Baltistan: The Laws of Occupation”, *Faultlines: Writings on Conflict & Resolution*, New Delhi, Vol. 18, January 2007, pp. 155-84.

that would restore self-esteem”¹⁶ in Pakistan, and diminish the role of the extremist and authoritarian forces in the country. The possibility of such ‘internal consolidation’ has been visibly receding over the more than six years under the present regime and powerful correctives are now overdue. It is useful to recall, in this context, that when the power-elites in Pakistan – under the present regime – were presented with an existential choice after the 9/11 events, they had little difficulty reversing a long-standing policy on Afghanistan. The failure of present ‘carrot and soft stick’ policies on Pakistan is rooted, not in the incapacities of the regime in the country to secure certain ‘unpopular’ objectives, but rather on the failure of US policy makers to unambiguously define the ends they seek and the ambiguity that has been permitted to surround the indices of their attainment. Future compelling strategies must address these lacunae, denying spaces for the current tactic of formalism and minimal satisfaction which have been used as a cover for the persistence and consolidation of pathological policies and trends within the Pakistani establishment.

Escaping ‘Ugly Instability’

The ‘ugly instability’ that currently prevails in South Asia jeopardizes critical US interests in the region, and cannot be allowed to persist indefinitely. This instability is accentuated by the international proclivity to impose a contra-factual parity between Pakistan and India, and efforts to secure a ‘balance’ between the two. Such a perspective militates against the realities of the ground, and also undermines the increasing sphere of convergent interests between the US and India; this is of

¹⁶ Tanvir Ahmad Khan, “Challenges Ahead”, *The Dawn*, Islamabad, January 2, 2006.

particular significance in view of China's growing power in the Asian region, including its dramatic thrust into Central Asia. A visible US 'tilt' in India's favour would have powerful compellent effect on Islamabad, and would impose a far greater measure of rationality and realism there than any set of incentives and concessions possibly could. The emerging strategic partnership with India is securely based on a multiplicity of shared values and interests – unlike the opportunistic alliance of the unwilling that is the current arrangement with Pakistan.

The radical transformation that is necessary within Pakistan's power structure – both for the country's own future and for the South Asian region in general – cannot be secured unless the Pakistani leadership and elite are convinced that their present course of action is unsustainable and will confront them with a proximate existential choice regarding the country's future. US compellent strategies should seek to convey precisely such a choice in the immediate future, predicated on the demands for the restoration of democracy, the dismantling of terrorist and extremist networks, and the subordination of the military to civil authority. As long as the US seeks to retain a client-patron relationship with Pakistan, such a strategy cannot be implemented, and present contradictions will persist.

While it is the US that would need to design and initiate such a compellent strategy, it is not the case that the entire onus for transformation must fall upon America. Indeed, the building up of a coalition and coordination with other countries that can be prevailed upon to share this vision would be an integral element of the compellent strategies envisaged. American leadership in any such initiatives would, however, remain an imperative, in the absence of any other influential nation or bloc evolving such a strategy, as also in view of the centrality of US interests and influence in the region.

Finally, action in this direction has generally been impeded by a number of false dichotomies – ‘Musharraf or the Taliban’, the military or anarchy, etc. – and the imagining of scenarios of collapse, chaos, and worse, an Islamist terrorist takeover of the country and more dangerously of its nuclear assets. These doomsday scenarios are based on a fundamental misunderstanding of the processes of transition, which are generally conceived of as a one-time event, rather than the gradual re-engineering of the structures of power in Pakistan envisaged by the notion of targeting the “enduring strengths and weaknesses” of the larger system. The ‘one-time’ approach takes the structure and equations of power as a given; the ‘process’ orientation targets these structures and equations, seeking to alter the balance of power in favour of a schema that is consistent with US strategic objectives and goals, on the one hand, and norms of civilized international discourse and internal democracy, on the other. To be sure, the latter approach has its own imponderables and uncertainties, but these are far removed from the false dichotomies and catastrophic projections that characterize the ‘singular event’ approach.