

The NATIONAL STRATEGY FORUM REVIEW

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Publisher's Note

The National Strategy Forum (NSF) has focused on the strategic importance of Pakistan for the past several years, including an article that appeared in the Fall 2009 *National Strategy Forum Reviewed* titled “American Foreign Policy Towards Pakistan.” Since then, the U.S.-Pakistan relationship has worsened, most recently by Pakistan’s loss of face and American anger related to the killing of Osama bin Laden in a Pakistani military town.

Based on our long-standing interest in Pakistan and its relationship with the United States, members of the *National Strategy Forum Review* Editorial Board conducted a series of telephone interviews with Pakistani VIPs. The objective would be “Strengthening the U.S.-Pakistan Relationship.” This was done in a series of in-depth discussions during the period February-April 2011.¹ We have also asked the former President of Pakistan, General (Rtd) Parvez Musharraf, and Imran Khan, a philanthropist and activist leader of a leading Pakistan political opposition party, to contribute their views on the U.S.-Pakistan relationship.

Our Pakistan contacts—former government officials, military and ISI officers, academics, journalists, members of the judiciary and bar, and business and commerce executives—expressed a consensus that Pakistan is in decline. However, this could be reversed, but only with a frank recognition of the similarities and differences in strategic objectives between the U.S. and Pakistan. The conference discussion reported here focuses on Pakistan’s perception of its internal problems and opportunities, many of which have a U.S. policy dimension.

Two quotations from colonial America during the Revolutionary War, expressing the colonies’ relationship with France and England, serve as a reminder of how states interact in times of crisis and define the contemporary Pakistan-U.S. relationship.

John Adams: “France kept their hand under our chin to prevent us from drowning, but not to lift our heads out of the water.”

George Washington: “It is a maxim founded on the universal experience of mankind that no nation is to be trusted farther than it is bound by its own interest.”

¹ The National Strategy Forum would like to thank the Pakistan Strategy Forum (www.pakistanstrategyforum.org) for arranging the logistics of these telephone interviews. The NSF has no affiliation with this organization.

With these thoughts in mind, the following report and policy recommendations reflect our understanding of the U.S.-Pakistan relationship and may be helpful as a guide for new directions.