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Pakistan Interview

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Dear Dick:

During three weeks of conversations in Pakistan I interviewed at some length about ten Pakistan officials and former officials, ranging from country 'desk' men to a provincial Governor and former Prime Ministers; a dozen Pakistan editors, publishers, and reporters; a half-dozen educators; a half dozen businessmen; and some 40 members of the High Court Bar who gave me a rough and tumble session I will never forget. Although no one Pakistani covered all of the following points in any interview, I believe this synthesized account of these conversations is a fair reflection of the views of 90% of the educated Pakistanis who think about foreign policy.

Therefore, in the style (but not the content) of U. S. News and World Report:

MARCY: "Mr. Pakistani, a very perceptive and influential foundation in the United States, The Institute of Current World Affairs, has honored me with a fellowship. For a full year I am free to travel, observe, and learn. I am trying to obtain during this year a reasonably accurate understanding of how United States foreign policy looks from abroad. For some years I have seen U. S. foreign policy from the perspective of Washington. This year, on leave from my position with the Foreign Relations Committee of the U. S. Senate, I want to see the U. S. as best I can through the eyes of knowledgeable individuals such as yourself.

"Mr. Pakistani, as you look at the United States from your country, what are we doing that seems good? What are we doing that seems bad? What is the general impact of U. S. foreign policy in the world?"

PAKISTANI: "That is a very general question."

MARCY: "Yes it is. But I want to see what you talk about when I put such a general question."

PAKISTANI: "I understand. Well, the people of Pakistan - those who read and write and think about such things - feel terribly let down by the United States. We long thought of you as our unquestioned ally and helper. Now you are arming our most dangerous enemy, India. Some of us trace our disillusionment to the shift in your policy which took place in 1961 when President Kennedy, a former member of the Aid to India lobby, turned American policy more toward help to the neutrals.

"As allies we felt we were taken for granted. Then when you rushed with unseemingly haste to arm India, we were appalled. No one could seriously believe that the Chinese attack was more than a border incident - and some of us were convinced that India started the whole thing. Yet the United States reacted as though China were ready to move into India to conquer her. You didn't even consult us about arming India, although we were your allies and you had promised to do so. Now India, who has no real friends in all of Asia, who has no real influence in world councils, exercises a veto over U. S. policies in Asia. Tell me, how can the U. S. justify arming India when you get nothing for it? Why, since you stand for self-determination, didn't you insist at least that India agree to a plebiscite in Kashmir?"

MARCY: "I'll leave it up to the Embassy to answer your question. I am here to learn what you think."

PAKISTANI: "Then I'll answer my own question. You rushed to help India because you thought this was a good chance to ensnare her. You couldn't get India to join you in a pact like we did - and we'll still honor our agreements - but you thought little by little you could expand your influence in India. You hope ultimately you will find India forsaking neutrality and socialism. But you are wrong. India will give you just enough lip-service to make you happy. Then she will turn to Russia or China, and probably use the arms you gave her against us."

MARCY: "But India has promised not to use U. S. military assistance against you."

PAKISTANI: "You can't trust the Indians. We know them. We've lived with them for hundreds of years. Already they are using U.S. supplied radar to spy on our every air movement. Here, look at the map.

"But more important, your aid has emboldened them in their brazen attempts to fully incorporate Kashmir and Jammu into India.

"There can be no peace on the subcontinent until the Kashmir question is settled. Surely it's in the interests of the U. S. to have peace here. You could force India even now to settle the Kashmir issue. Although many Pakistani would not agree with me, I think you could simply hold back on your military assistance - just slow it down and insist that any speed-up in aid would be contingent on a Kashmir settlement. Maybe we could even talk about making Kashmir and Jammu the Switzerland of Asia, with independence guaranteed by both parties to the dispute and by the great powers."

MARCY: "I wonder if we could get off the subject of India and Kashmir for a moment. What about China?"

PAKISTANI: "Before we get on that, would you like tea or coffee?"

MARCY: "Coffee, please."

PAKISTANI: "China. The U. S. is being very short-sighted in objecting to the simple things we are doing. All we've done so far is to work out a border settlement and an air agreement. After all, you are working on an air agreement with Russia; why shouldn't we do the same thing with China?"

"For all we know, in ten years China may change its present truculent attitude to one of peaceful coexistence. Chou En-lai and Mao may be followed by Khrushchev types. In any event, don't worry about us going Communist. We're muslims.

"Why doesn't the United States recognize Communist China? She's there."

MARCY: "It's a long story. It involves the U. N. action in Korea, the future of Taiwan, politics, and -- "

PAKISTANI: "Yes, I know. But I can't understand how the U.S. can argue that Taiwan is part of China if China has a nationalist government, and not a part of China if she has a communist government. Your obsession with China is isolating you from nearly every state in Asia.

"Anyway, it looks like DeGaulle has taken this issue in charge."

MARCY: "What about other aspects of U. S. foreign policy? Everything you've said so far indicates we are doing nothing right."

PAKISTANI: "Let's get one thing straight. We know the United States is the world's greatest power. We have no doubt that your strength is much greater than that of Russia and vastly greater than that of China. In fact, you are much stronger than the combined strength of the 50 or more states that have come into existence since the war.

"The irony is that with all your power you are nevertheless finding you must tailor your policies to the will of these new states whose votes outnumber yours in the United Nations."

MARCY: "Why is that?"

PAKISTANI: "I'm not sure why. But the fact is you do. Your weakness is that with all your power and good intentions the new, weak states are dictating your policies. They dictate your policies on aid because they know you pay off the bad boys. You woo the neutrals and take your allies for granted. A man can have only a few good friends. You should stick with your friends. Mercenaries are never there when you need them. You may have principles, but you look like pragmatists. You seem to put short term expediency above moral principle.

"Milk?"

MARCY: "I'll take it black.

"Incidentally, these men who serve tea, are they on the payroll?"

PAKISTANI: "Oh yes. We have about 27,000 in the Central Government alone. We call them peons. They get about 60 rupees (\$12) a month. I wish they would keep themselves a bit cleaner."

MARCY: "Can most of these men read?"

PAKISTANI: "Oh no. That's why we have worked out our system of basic democracy. The peon is represented by the leaders of his village. Something less than 10 percent of the population can read."

MARCY: "Your official statistics show 15 percent."

PAKISTANI: "Our statistics are very poor. Many villages don't report the birth of girl babies beyond the first one or two, for example."

MARCY: "The literate or educated people must be very important, then."

PAKISTANI: "Yes."

MARCY: "Aren't they heavily influenced by the press which seems to me to be unusually antagonistic toward the United States? Maybe I am overly sensitive, but one of your papers practically accused the United States of instigating the recent theft of the Holy Relic, the Prophet's hair, in Srinagar. The press prints stories from Panama with headlines like 'YANKEE COLONIALIST,' and they print exceedingly friendly stories from Peking."

PAKISTANI: "Don't be misled by our press. We use language much stronger than that you are accustomed to. Partly this is because we had to be violent to make our views felt by the colonial powers. There is some carryover, I'm afraid.

"Speaking of the CIA -- "

MARCY: "We weren't!"

PAKISTANI: "Well, the theft of the Holy Relic reminded me of what your people call 'the other Agency'. Publicity about its activities does you much harm here. Much of the publicity comes from talk in Congress; but now I see the CIA is going to publicize itself by releasing information on Russian troubles.

"We have the idea that the U. S. has three groups here in Pakistan - the CIA, the Pentagon, and the State Department - all working at cross purposes. They even get different allowances and

housing and travel expenses. Do you know that in this country AID employees ride first class and State Department employees ride economy?"

MARCY: "I can't believe it."

PAKISTANI: "It's true. You ought to look into it."

"But about the CIA. There are many here who believe that in Vietnam you built Diem up and when you couldn't control him, your CIA tore him down. I am personally sure this did not happen. But many of us believe it to be so and we won't let it happen here."

MARCY: "Maybe you believe this kind of stuff because your press doesn't give a balanced treatment to the news."

PAKISTANI: "If you think our press is bad now, you should have seen it last summer! I believe the press attacks on the U.S. are being toned down."

MARCY: "Would you say Pakistan has a free press?"

PAKISTANI: "There is no censorship, if that is what you mean. But we do have shortages of newsprint from time to time. We may have some limitations imposed to keep the press responsible, but the U. S. can't tell us what to print or not to print - as you have tried on several occasions."

"The same is true about your aid programs. I realize you must have some 'conditions' or 'strings', as we call them, to protect your investments. But I don't like to see us get so dependent on your frozen chicken and other delicacies. We would have been better off to tighten our belts and get along without your recent \$4 million shipment of frozen chickens. You shouldn't dump your surplus problems on us."

MARCY: "But I thought your people need protein and that selling you frozen chicken for rupees which are then used for public works in Pakistan was for your good, not ours."

PAKISTANI: "Oh no. We know it costs you money to store frozen chicken and grain. You should be glad we take it to help you out."

MARCY: "We could burn it, plow it under, or pay not to have these surpluses produced."

PAKISTANI: "You wouldn't. Anyway, we are now getting ready to produce our own chickens. One of our new entrepreneurs who just came back from the States - Maryland, I believe, - is ready to open five chicken factories, or whatever you call them. Each one will handle 8,000 chickens. In ten weeks he'll be in business."

"One other thing. When you have such large amounts of rupees to spend here on projects we agree upon, the fact is that you unintentionally bolster the present regime which isn't exactly a democracy, you know."

MARCY: "What about our military aid."

PAKISTANI: "That has been very helpful to us. But you forget how helpful we have been to you. Of course, your public and Congress thought we were primarily concerned about a threat from the Soviet Union. But we were most concerned about India. What happened was that we gave your country certain base rights here in Pakistan which you use to worry about your principal threat, Russia - you know the U-2 took off from here - and we used your military assistance to worry about our principal threat - India. That's why we have so many tanks for use on the plains and so few weapons for mountain warfare in the area of the Soviet threat."

"As long as the U. S. by its military aid to India doesn't upset the military balance between India and Pakistan, we won't object to your bases here. We both have profited by our past arrangements: you got real estate and we got security. But we are getting worried and you must be uncomfortable sitting on the fence."

"We have been branded in the past by India as lackeys of the U. S. because we took your military aid. We have been threatened by the Soviet because of your bases here. The United States may be able to plot its strategy on a global basis, but we must think and plan on a regional basis."

"India still wants to unify the subcontinent and that would be the end for us. You ask us to equate our very existence with what is only a regional aspect of your policy. What use is your security to Pakistan if we cease to exist in the process?"

"Of course I believe you would come to our defense if we were attacked by India, but some of my colleagues don't believe that. Suppose we were attacked when you were busy somewhere else."

MARCY: "Our conversation always comes back to India."

PAKISTANI: "I know. But it is our main concern. We can't make any real economic progress when so much of our own energy and resources go into maintaining military forces competent to defend ourselves from India. We can't make political progress toward a more representative system of government when we must keep military elements in control to protect us from India."

"We hope internal dissension (balkanization) will occur within India and she will be weakened. In any event, we must settle our issues with India, and perhaps by force. Until that is done this country can't move ahead. If we were confronted by a choice of whether to become a satellite of India or of China, we would choose China."

MARCY: "I have taken far too much of your time. But you were so candid I hesitated to interrupt. I hope you will understand when I say that I must suspend any personal judgment on much of what you have said until I have had similar conversations in India. Thank you very much."

PAKISTANI: "Thank you. I wish you had gone to India first and given us the last chance! Please remember the U. S. can't expect to play a global role without headaches. It would be naive to expect otherwise."

(End interview)

The obsession of the Pakistani people with the threat of India colors its policies toward the rest of the world. I talked with only two Pakistani who were not fearfully concerned with India as a threat. One was the husband of a woman whose family lives in the south of India. The other was a professor whose lucidity of thought was exceeded only by his cautious comment.

I expect three weeks in India will provide some perspective on the preceding synthesis of my conversations in Pakistan. My main conclusion at this point is that it is time to re-examine our relationships with Pakistan to determine what we are buying with our military assistance and whether the purchase is essential to our national interest. It may be. I don't know. In the meantime, I am glad not to be a United States diplomat in Pakistan. They've got trouble.

Sincerely yours,



Carl Marcy

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