

OPINION

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Pakistan: On the move politically, economically

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first in a two-part series on Pakistan, which celebrates its day of independence today.

Syed Naved Aftab & Fayyaz ul Haq
Guest Columnists

For a country that is situated in a geographically important place and the only ally America has in the Sub-Continent, it is surprising how few Americans know about Pakistan. All the average American seems to know about Pakistan is its nuclear program. But Pakistan is a country which has its own distinctive people, culture and way of life.

Perhaps what makes Pakistan so important on the world's political scene is its location. It borders a communist super power, China, on the north. On its east is the Soviet Union's strongest ally, India. On its west is Afghanistan.

The USSR is a mere 10 miles from its northwestern boundaries, but for all practical purposes, because of the invasion of Afghanistan, it touches borders with the Soviet Union in a physical sense. The Arabian Sea which leads to the Gulf of Hormuz — the main stream of world oil flow — touches the port city of Karachi, which makes Pakistan more than just an interest to the United States and the Soviet Union.

Pakistan represents a variety of ethnic groups mostly of Caucasoid stock who can trace their heritage back to the nomads who migrated to this part of the world out of the steppes of Central Asia after 2000 B.C. These were followed by the Persians, Greeks, Pushtuns, Mogals and Mughals. All these different people lent to the rich culture of the Sub-Continent.

In the late 8th Century came the Moslems who not only bent their own distinct life style to this part of the world but also introduced and preached their religion. Thus developed a new class of people apart from the others in this area who established their empire in South East Asia and ruled the area from the 12th Century until they gave way to the British in the 19th Century.

These Moslems, revolting against the British Empire, fought for and gained an independent country — a country where they could freely practice their religious beliefs and live their own lives — a country called Pakistan.

The different backgrounds of the people can perhaps best be seen in the national language, Urdu, which is a mixture of many different languages, such as Arabic, Turkish and Persian. The major regional languages are Sindhi, Punjabi, Baluchi and Pushto, corresponding to the four provinces which make up Pakistan. Due to the influence of British colonization, Pakistan borrowed heavily from British thought in setting up the country — which is evident in its politics and educational system.

Ninety-seven percent of Pakistan's 83,200,000 population (1981 census) are Moslems. Most of the other 3 percent are mostly Christians. All the religious minorities are guaranteed complete religious freedom in the Constitution.

At the time of independence Pakistan was an underdeveloped nation. All the major industries in undivided India had best set up in India. As such Pakistan was economically hard pressed to meet its urgent domestic need to keep pace with the world which was advancing technologically at a phenomenal rate.

Considering it had to start from scratch, Pakistan's development in the past 38 years has been heartening. At the time of independence, Pakistan was providing raw materials to the industries in India. But today Pakistan has evolved its economy into a more integrated and diverse program and hence made it more dependable. It processes, manufactures and exports many goods such as textiles, sports equipment and surgical materials, from its own raw materials. It is among the 10 major cotton exporting nations in the world. It is also the fourth largest rice exporting nation. Another major crop is wheat which is largely used to meet domestic market needs.

Among the mineral resources are coal, low-grade iron ore and petroleum.

However these petroleum deposits are too small to meet the industries growing need for fuel. Most of this deficiency is made up by the large resources of natural gas. Although seven fields containing enormous deposits of natural gas have been discovered, Pakistan is diversifying to more dependable energy sources.

In this context, the nuclear program is extremely important in order to provide local industries the strong foundation on which they can base the country's economic future.

The backbone of Pakistan's economy is agriculture with 3/4th of the country's population living off the land, the major land resource is the fertile, alluvial soils of its eastern lowland which is irrigated by the Indus River and its tributaries.

Due to this heavy dependence on land, Pakistan has one of the largest, most sophisticated and efficient canal systems in the world. It also has a great potential in hydro-electric programs with some of the largest dams in the world including the Tarbela and Mangala.

Since the opening of the steel mills at Pipri last year, the heavy and small industries of Pakistan that were previously dependent on imports of raw materials have been given a boost. This has allocated the interest of the private sector in Pakistan that competes for local and foreign markets.

Pakistan is eager to make the most of the micro chip revolution. There is no duty on importation of computer equipment and accessories and emphasis is placed on many aspects of basic and applied research in the private sector and the defense establishment.

Pakistan is marching ahead, knowing its most important asset is the upcoming generation. As long as this resource can be capitalized through education and productive jobs, it will continue to bolster its economy against the intensely competitive world market.

Syed Naved Aftab and Fayyaz ul Haq are members of the Pakistan Club at Texas A&M.

Mail Call

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.

One way Ireland not the right way to go

EDITOR:

For the benefit of those who missed the notice:

On August 12, after many years of consideration, Asbury, Spence and Ireland streets become one-way. This to relieve the traffic bottlenecks that occur a few times each day. Since Asbury and Spence are narrow streets with no controlled access to University Dr. it seems reasonable to make them one-way coming into the campus, since the main problem is trying to leave the campus by crossing University Dr.

But Ireland St. is a wide 2-lane street with controlled access to University Drive via a traffic signal. Making this street one-way off of the campus in no way lessens the bottle neck that forms during the rush periods. (I refrain from using the word "hour" since the "rush" never lasts for more than 20 minutes.)

It will probably increase the traffic problem, since people on Asbury and Spence will have to use Ireland when leaving the campus.

So why make Ireland a one-way street when it will only be making it more inconvenient for the driver? Why implement this change when in a short time 30,000 people, not familiar with this change, arrive on campus? Why not leave Ireland St. alone and postpone the change for another month so that the returning students and visitors for home football games can be informed? Until these people know what is being done it will not be safe to use these streets.

Anthony Tripp Bryan

Red tape monster attacks A&M students

EDITOR:

Has Texas A&M become a red tape, bureaucratic society to you?

Today, I went to East Kyle to play basketball, but to my dismay, I was not allowed entrance because I did not have a current Texas A&M identification card. However, I did have in my possession 1) a paid fee slip for Summer Session II 2) a fee slip for the Fall of 1985 that had been marked "paid" on that same day 3) a current Texas Driver's License. This identification said I was enrolled at the present time, and I would be enrolled in the fall. Even with all the identification I did have, I could not enter. Something is severely wrong!

People ask me what I think of A&M. I used to say, "A&M is a friendly, people-oriented place." Today, my view has changed. A&M is now a place where your number and your card are all-important. Rational thinking and common sense are no longer a part of the process at A&M. A giant, ugly monster has grown. It is time that A&M attempts to recall what made it into what at one time was a great place. At the present time, this institution is not being all that it can be to its students.

Robert Stanfield Class of '87

Simple cure for AIDS

EDITOR:

Modern living presents us with some complex health problems. Medical research seeks solutions, but — once science and the media raise awareness of the threats — society at large has a good track record for finding ways of minimizing the immediate dangers.

We were told of a link between tobacco and various cancers. Millions of us responded by giving up smoking.

We were told alcohol was injuring our unborn babies, damaging our livers, and making us fat. Millions of us responded by giving up the bottle.

Now that the human tragedy of screen star Rock Hudson is front page

news, may I propose a way to curb AIDS epidemic? A way I hear from its desperate victims advocating...

Bill Hough Class of '88

Nicaragua explained

EDITOR:

After reading Karl Pallmeyer's article of August 2, I feel compelled to bring light some facts about the current situation in Nicaragua. Since the 1979 Sandinista victory two moderate members of the Junta have resigned in frustration due to the Marxist path taken by the cohorts. One of these former members, Arturo Cruz, heads the Coordinating Committee of the former Sandinista group.

In the so-called free elections, Coordinators along with five moderate parties refused to participate in Sandinista harassment and censorship. Furthermore every European democracy, save the Netherlands, refused to send official observers to validate the procedure. In 1982, Sandinista defense minister and war hero Eden Pastora resigned in disgust and took up arms against former comrades.

While some Contras are undoubtedly former members of the Sandinista national guard, many others are reputed Miskito Indians and disillusioned Sandinistas who feel their leadership lost touch with the revolution's principles.

They fight against an army which is armed and trained by the same CIA advisers responsible for the blood wars in Angola and Ethiopia. These advisers also train Marxist guerrillas are trying to topple the duly elected government in neighboring El Salvador.

To blame the Reagan administration for aiding the Contras and not mention the millions of dollars arming the Sandinistas by Cuba is hypocrisy at its best.

Mr. Pallmeyer might claim that the situation in Nicaragua was blinded eye. To this I say, better blinded eye than one that sees only what it would like to see.

Andrew Whelan '87

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