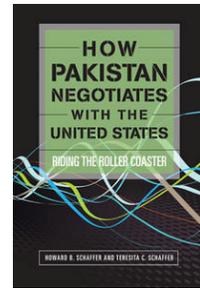


***HOW PAKISTAN NEGOTIATES WITH THE UNITED STATES:
RIDING THE ROLLER COASTER***

PRESENTATION AT USIP BOOK LUNCH, APRIL 12, 2011.

Howard Schaffer:



Good morning. We appreciate your coming to the launching of our book in this beautiful newly-inaugurated USIP building. Until a few minutes before midnight last Friday we wondered if the event would actually take place. Although we doubt that the Congressional negotiators who put the budget agreement together at that eleventh hour had this gathering in mind, we're grateful to them – Republicans and Democrats alike -- for coming through and keeping USIP in operation.

It's good to see many friends and associates here this morning. Many of you know far more about the torturous course of U.S.-Pakistan relations than we do. We look forward to your comments and questions here and later.

Tezi and I, then a married couple of three years standing, first came to Pakistan on diplomatic assignment 37 years ago. Our second son was born at our house in Islamabad. We've been following developments in the country with great interest, often mingled with anxiety, ever since.

We need to stress, however, that ours is not another book on U.S.-Pakistan ties. We have interviewed dozens of people, including both Pakistani and American participants in negotiations. What we've tried to do is to analyze the themes, techniques, and styles that have characterized Pakistani negotiations with American civil and military officials in recent years and to reach some conclusions about how these are likely to shape up in the future. In other words, we've interpreted "negotiations" in the broadest sense: not just what happens "at the negotiating table," but also the way Pakistan has worked out its rules of engagement with the United States, especially during the three periods of especially close engagement: in Ayub Khan's time, starting in the mid-1950s; in General Zia's time, in the 1980s; and since 9/11.

The starting point in our analysis has been our interpretation of the major factors we believe influence the way Pakistanis deal with this country. We concluded that the first and foremost of these is Pakistanis' interpretation of their country's place in the world. This of course includes

their perception of the United States and of the volatile history of U.S.-Pakistan relations. It is this volatility of the relationship that led to our subtling the book “Riding the Roller Coaster.” After some consideration we chose this over “Three Marriages and Two Divorces,” though that title too would have been only too appropriate – referring to the three periods i mentioned a minute ago, and to the unraveling of the relationships we crafted during those periods.

We argue that Pakistanis who negotiate with Americans start from a common geopolitical framework. At its core is Pakistanis’ sense of an existential threat from India, a chronic insecurity that impels Pakistan to seek powerful outside balancers. Pakistan has looked to the United States to fill that role, beginning in 1954 when it joined the U.S.-led Western alliance system designed to contain the Communist powers. And it still does, even as it continues to maintain that this is not its objective in developing a partnership with Washington.

A vital element in this commonly held Pakistani world view is ambivalence and mistrust about the United States, whose perceived unreliability is always in Pakistanis’ minds. They look at the two “divorces” between the United States and Pakistan and conclude that the United States discards Pakistan when it no longer serves U.S. interests. Pakistanis of course recognize that negotiations with the United States are an exercise in asymmetrical diplomacy. They are acutely aware of the disparity in national power and look for ways to turn it to their advantage.

The second factor in Pakistan’s approach to negotiations with the United States is its culture. Pakistanis’ operating style and expectations are shaped by a society in which the most important bonds are personal, relations both inside and outside government are hierarchical, and the less powerful try to turn their weakness into strength. Thus, Pakistanis negotiating with the United States or trying to shape a relationship try to estsablish a personal relationship with key Americans. Several Pakistani presidents were very successful in this effort.

A final major factor in Pakistan’s negotiations with the United States has been the structure of the country’s government and political system, notably its divided authority and the prominent role that the military has played in determining its diplomatic and security relationships.

Taken altogether, these three elements produce what we have called Pakistan's cultivation of the art of the guilt trip. Pakistanis try to make Americans feel a sense of obligation to them. They seek to cultivate and heighten a fear on the part of the United States that failure to honor Pakistan's request will have a strongly adverse impact on American interests. They try to make Americans feel that they are letting them down, as Americans have in the past. They calculate, if not too hopefully, that this strategy can help fend off another American "betrayal." In doing so, they also maintain with varying degrees of subtlety that America needs Pakistan more than Pakistan needs the United States.

Amplifying this approach, the book looks first at the prevailing Pakistani view of how Pakistan and the United States fit into each other's worlds. We analyze the cultural setting in which Pakistani diplomacy is conducted and discuss the character and comparative power of three groups of Pakistani negotiators: military officers, civil servants, and politicians. After dissecting a few key U.S.- Pakistan negotiations in which Pakistan's national leaders were directly involved, we look briefly at how Pakistan deals with the United States when negotiations directly involve India. We conclude with some observations on what our findings mean for the way Americans deal with Pakistanis on major issues as well as on minor matters that, if more sympathetically handled, can help create a better negotiating environment.

Now let me turn over to my co-author.

Teresita Schaffer:

I'd like to look a bit more closely at how the basic themes that characterize this negotiating framework play out in practice.

Let's start with **the practice of creating obligations** – the guilt trip. This happens in large ways and small in many, many encounters between U.S. and Pakistani officials. It was a key theme in the negotiation that took place after Pakistan sent troops into the Kargil area, on the Indian side of the Line of Control in Kashmir, in 1999. The Kargil operation was planned and executed by the army, but they brought the civilian prime minister of the day, Nawaz Sharif, into the decision process, and Sharif had to pick up the pieces when the Indian military responded in force.

A 6-day visit to Beijing designed to enlist Chinese help ended in failure after a day and a half. Sharif turned to Washington. His call to President Clinton asking for a face-to-face meeting elicited the response that he shouldn't travel to Washington unless he was prepared to withdraw. Sharif came. His argument was that the U.S. had a responsibility as a Great Power and as a friend of Pakistan to try to settle the Kashmir issue. He argued that unless Washington intervened to settle Kashmir –implicitly, on Pakistan's terms – it would put him at risk of being overthrown. He compared the modest U.S. role in Kashmir with its enormous efforts on Israel and the Palestinians. The argument was a classic example of using Pakistan's and his government's weakness as a negotiating card, what one observer referred to as “maintaining the lower hand”. Even more characteristically, Sharif made his appeal intensely personal. He placed the first call to Clinton, and once in Washington continued to try to see Clinton one-on-one. He was calling on a personal friend to honor the obligations of friendship.

The appeal to protect the government of Pakistan from its own weakness was classic Pakistani negotiation style – but of course that doesn't mean the concerns he raised were groundless. Indeed, Sharif was overthrown in a military coup four months after his dramatic trip to Washington.

As Howie said, a second theme that recurs throughout our book is **Pakistan's assumption that the United States needs it more than it needs the United States.** Probably the clearest example comes from the negotiations that established the relationship between President Zia and the United States after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan on Christmas Day in 1979. When the invasion took place, Jimmy Carter was president, and Pakistan had been the object of two separate aid cutoffs in a single year, both related to Pakistan's nuclear weapons program.

With the Soviet Army at the Khyber Pass, Carter telephoned President Zia to offer U.S. support for Pakistan. The fact that Carter made the call is significant: on repeated occasions, Pakistan has honored the standard negotiator's dictum that he who asks first is putting himself in a position of weakness. But Carter's negotiations came to naught. The aid and military sales package proffered by Zbigniew Brzezinski was curtly rejected as “peanuts” – apparently not, in this case, an insulting reference to Carter's peanut farm in Georgia but an illustration of the danger of using an idiomatic

expression without having all the implications at one's disposal. More importantly, Pakistan assumed it could do better. As the 1980 election approached, Zia made the calculation that Reagan would win, and would offer better terms. So he in effect walked out of the store to recalibrate the bargaining, based on his judgment that the U.S. would have to come to him.

Come they did, soon after Reagan's election. The aid package Reagan's team offered was four or five times as large as the one he had rejected. To implement it, Reagan worked with Pakistan to get legislation enacted that would make aid possible, establishing a new and higher threshold for Pakistan's nuclear weapons program before the U.S. would require an aid cutoff. This threshold was of course reached in 1990, occasioning the second U.S.-Pakistan "divorce" and ushering in ten years of bad feeling. But Pakistan's decision to bet on its essentiality to U.S. policy worked for a decade before that happened.

A third characteristic is the **tendency not to recognize that the United States too has red lines**. The clearest example of this was the U.S. aid cutoff in 1990. From the beginning of the Reagan Administration, and especially since the enactment of the Pressler Amendment in 1985, U.S. officials had repeatedly reminded their Pakistani counterparts that this legislation would require the United States to cut off aid if Pakistan came to "possess a nuclear explosive device." Pakistan's civilian and military leaders alike were convinced that as long as Pakistan continued to support the Mujahedin in Afghanistan, the nuclear problem could be managed. In this case, both the U.S. and Pakistan misplayed things. The U.S. did not involve its top military and intelligence leadership in its efforts to persuade Pakistan that the nuclear problem was serious; the Pakistani military, looking on the U.S. government as the mirror image of their own, assumed that if the message was not coming from those they looked on as their best friends – the Pentagon and CIA – it must not be serious. When the cutoff became inevitable, in 1990, it came as a terrible shock to Pakistan. One senior official told me "you never told us."

These themes, and the basic framework we've described, are very much in evidence in things that have happened since the book was completed. Take the Ray Davis case. Last January, a person attached to the U.S. embassy in Islamabad – a CIA contractor, it later developed – shot and killed two men in Lahore who he believed were either stalking him or trying to rob him. Over nearly two months, he sat in jail, the two governments

argued over whether he had diplomatic immunity, and the newspapers in Pakistan reverberated with demands for him to be hanged. On March 18, he was released, following a payment of “blood money” to both families as provided for in Islamic and Pakistani law.

There’s a lot one can say about the underlying situation – but let’s just look briefly at how the two governments tried to resolve it. Initially, they tried to have him quietly and quickly released and expelled on the basis that he had diplomatic immunity. It didn’t work. The U.S. had been sloppy both in the claims it made on his behalf and in its paperwork; two people were dead (actually three, including a bystander run over by a would-be rescue car); the foreign minister dug in his heels, accepting his staff’s advice that Davis did not have full immunity, and when he was dropped from the cabinet, his opposition became a cause célèbre; and the army and intelligence service (ISI) were furious that CIA was apparently conducting surveillance against militant organizations friendly to the army. Perhaps more importantly, the U.S. had a talented but brand new ambassador in Islamabad, who hadn’t had time to develop personal relationships, and he relied on the assurances of Pakistan’s president and prime minister, who in the end could not deliver either the army or public opinion. So the cultural setting and the structure of Pakistan’s government were aligned against the kind of settlement the U.S. needed.

The actual negotiations took place behind closed doors and involved primarily CIA and ISI. We are not privy to the details, but what we’ve been able to find out or read between the lines makes clear that this is another case of Pakistan’s military assuming the U.S. needs them more than the other way around, and consequently playing hardball. In the end, the case was settled when ISI became interested in settling it; and the mechanism for settling it drew on Pakistan’s Islamic heritage.

What should U.S. diplomats learn for future negotiations? Four lessons are especially important. **First: the importance of personal relationships** – and of taking the time necessary to develop these. That’s tough for Americans. We are in a hurry, we are scheduled, we want deliverables. (So do the Pakistanis, of course.)

Second: Understand who has authority, and if possible how far that authority goes. We tend to be drawn to the military, a more “can-do” organization than its civilian counterparts. They are necessary but not

sufficient. And in both cases, we need to hear with extra ears, to pick up not just the words but the intent behind them. This applies especially when one's Pakistani counterparts seem to be dissembling or withholding information. One needs to ask why, and assess whether the dissembling is itself a message that needs to be heeded.

Third: Develop incentives and leverage that go beyond aid. If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail. Americans often sound as if they're trying to buy Pakistani loyalty – tough in a culture that prizes honor.

Fourth, and most importantly: Recognize the potential but also the limits of our relationship. The strategic partnership between the US and Pakistan is based on an assumption of shared strategic interests. This is only partly true. Pakistan's focus on insecurity and on India means that its priorities are different from those of the US. Pakistan will pursue its own strategic interests first. In Afghanistan, for example, its first priority is eliminating Indian influence – quite different from our desire to eliminate Al Qaeda influence.

The U.S. and Pakistan have worked together at critical points in our foreign policy for fifty years. Each of the “three marriages ushered in an extended period of close collaboration. This represented both a negotiating and a policy success for both countries. Our hope is that by understanding how we got to the “two divorces,” we can avoid a third one.