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## Consequences of Pakistan's Downfall: Possible Scenarios as Seen by Global Jihad

### General

This document deals with an important publication written by Abu Obeida Abdullah Al-'Adm, a Salafi-Jihadi of Pakistani origin, who analyzes the chances of Pakistan's survival based on an estimate of the country's strengths and weaknesses. The author points to a number of possible scenarios which can be expected to occur on the geo-political and operative plane in the aftermath of Pakistan's downfall. It would seem that the reason for this is to stimulate the Mujahideen into devising a flexible policy and a willingness to cope with the anticipated scenarios, or even to endeavor to influence them. The author stresses that the demise of the Pakistani regime is not an impossible development, in light of the collapse of a number of power bases, such as the factor of religion, which will be discussed at length later on. However, he fears that its downfall will serve the interests of Western countries which seek to neutralize the Pakistani nuclear threat and, on the other hand, will create a new reality for the Mujahideen, who will be confined against their will to a much smaller operational area in Afghanistan.

In the last two decades of the twentieth century, the Pakistani regime strongly supported the Jihad system which led the Mujahideen against the Soviet occupation forces in Afghanistan. This support was expressed through financing, supply of equipment and even in the military training of the Mujahideen. The Pakistani madrassas also fulfilled an important role in this campaign by being a radical ideological hothouse, which influenced and encouraged the students to go on Jihad in Afghanistan. This trend received the blessing of the Pakistani regime. With the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan, Pakistan hastened to support the Taliban regime in this region. It should be stressed that most of the Taliban were educated in Pakistani madrassas.

The supportive policies of the Pakistani government did not last long and changed following the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. The Pakistani regime, headed by Pervez Musharraf who took control of the government during the military coup in 1999, unwillingly changed its attitude towards the Taliban and the madrassas in

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the country, due to the U.S. pressure to keep a close eye on the madrassas, particularly those which housed the Jihadi fighters and the Taliban. For example, the madrassas were obliged to give the government lists of students, the names of their families, study programs, and their internal and external financial sources.<sup>1</sup> On September 20<sup>th</sup> 2003, the regime took more stringent steps by starting a mass arrest campaign of foreign students who were studying at the madrassas. The campaign ended with the deportation of about 1400 foreign students to their countries of origin.<sup>2</sup> The regime also accused 24 religious madrassas of aiding terrorists and attempting to smuggle them out of the Pakistani borders.<sup>3</sup>

This policy significantly eroded the legitimacy and *raison d'être* of the Pakistani regime in the eyes of the Mujahideen, as well as a large part of the nation. As if it wasn't sufficient that the regime had attached itself to a Christian power, which ostensibly sought to destroy Islam's influence, initially in threatening regions such as Afghanistan and Iraq and thereafter in other areas, but it was now beginning to act against its own people and suppress the religious institutions in the country. The bloody conflicts which occurred at the beginning of 2007 between the Pakistani security forces and the faithful of the Red Mosque or the Lal mosque,<sup>4</sup> proved to all that the Pakistani regime was determined to wage an uncompromising war against the Islamic religion. From here onwards the nation removed its popular support of the regime, which retained its power only due to the backing of the army. This turnabout in the Pakistani regime's policy therefore turned it into an object of hatred in the eyes of many of the Pakistani nation.

On September 19<sup>th</sup> 2007 against the backdrop of these developments, Ayman Al-Zawahiri declared the opening of a front against the Pakistani regime, and condemned the actions of the Pakistani army which had destroyed the armed

<sup>1</sup> The Pakistani Education Minister, Asharaf Jahangir, stressed the difficulty in obliging the madrassas to cooperate and reveal details of their management. He stated "we do not have any records of these students nor do we have any information at all regarding their study programs [...]" <http://www.alarabiya.net/programs/2005/10/10/17572.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2005/07/29/15390.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.alarabiya.net/programs/2005/10/10/17572.html>

<sup>4</sup> The Red Mosque served as an armed radical Islam stronghold for many years. It gave support to the Taliban in Afghanistan and resisted the support which Musharraf gave to the U.S. and its war against terrorism. For further details on this see:

[http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?c=ArticleA\\_C&pagename=Zone-Arabic-News/NWALayout&cid=1183484067294](http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?c=ArticleA_C&pagename=Zone-Arabic-News/NWALayout&cid=1183484067294)

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resistance at the Red Mosque in Islamabad.<sup>5</sup> On another occasion, he called Musharraf's forces hunting dogs acting under "Bush's Cross".<sup>6</sup> In June 2009, Mustafa Abu Al-Yazid, a senior member of Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan who was killed in May 2010 by an American drone attack in Pakistan's tribal areas,<sup>7</sup> stressed the organization's aspirations to take control of Pakistan's nuclear bomb in order to attack the U.S.:<sup>8</sup>

"God willing, the nuclear weapons will not fall into the hands of the Americans and the Mujahideen would take them and use them against the Americans".



Mustafa Abu Al-Yazid

The Taliban also understood that the Pakistani regime was not the same as in the past, and did not forget the unlimited support which they gave to the Allies in the destruction of their regime in Afghanistan. The decision of the Taliban to establish a military arm in December 2007 called Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, which would operate in Pakistan, was intended to undermine the foundation of the Pakistani government and, at the same time, to try and take control of the nuclear arms in their possession. Therefore, one can see the increase in the number of armed attacks between the Taliban and the Pakistani army, with most of them being perpetrated in the region of the Swat Valley and Waziristan – Taliban strongholds. It should also be stressed that the Taliban attempted, in cooperation

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/sep/20/alqaida.pakistan>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.el-wasat.com/details.php?id=55539581>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/terrorism-security/2010/0601/Drone-strike-reportedly-killed-Al-Qaeda-No.-3-Mustafa-Abu-al-Yazid>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/2009/06/22/2009-06-22\\_al\\_qaeda\\_leader\\_mustafa\\_abu\\_alyazid\\_wed\\_use\\_nuclear\\_weapons\\_on\\_the\\_us\\_if\\_we\\_coul.html](http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/2009/06/22/2009-06-22_al_qaeda_leader_mustafa_abu_alyazid_wed_use_nuclear_weapons_on_the_us_if_we_coul.html)

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with Al-Qaeda, to attack Pakistan's nuclear facilities. According to a report published in July 2009, in the West Point College Journal, three main attacks on Pakistan's nuclear facilities are mentioned:<sup>9</sup>

An attack on the nuclear missile storage facility at Sargodha on November 1, 2007; an attack on Pakistan's nuclear airbase at Kamra by a suicide bomber on December 10, 2007; and perhaps most significantly the August 20, 2008 attack when Pakistani Taliban suicide bombers blew up several entry points to one of the armament complexes at the Wah cantonment, considered one of Pakistan's main nuclear weapons assembly sites".



**Pakistan's nuclear installations**  
(taken from <http://www.atomicarchive.com>)

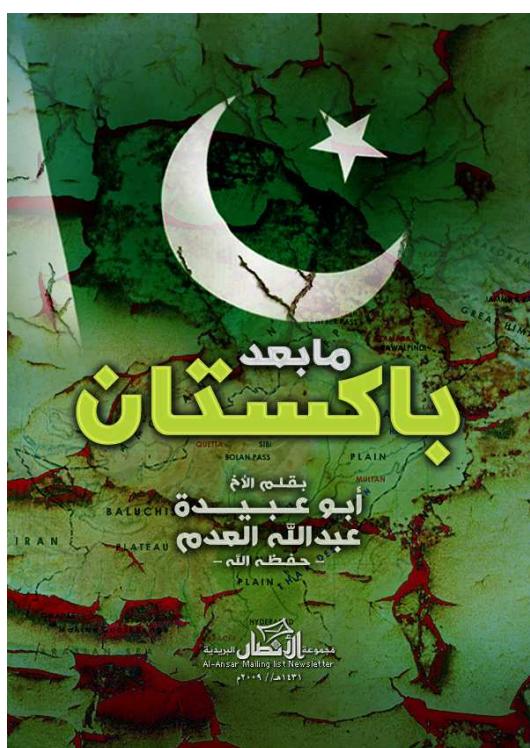
<sup>9</sup> Shaun Gregory, "The Terrorist Threat to Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons", *CTC SENTINEL*, July 2009, Vol 2, Issue 7, pp. 1-4. <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/sentinel/CTCSentinel-Vol2Iss7.pdf>

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**"What after Pakistan" – by Sheikh Abu Obeida Abdullah Al-'Adm**

On February 7<sup>th</sup> 2010, Sheikh Abu Obeida Abdullah Al-'Adm (a Salafi-Jihadi sheikh of Pakistani origin) published a 16 page book entitled "What after Pakistan". The book was distributed on Jihadi forums by a Jihadi media group called "The Ansar Mailing List", which is active on Jihadi forums on the internet.<sup>10</sup> Inter alia, the book stresses the fragility of the Pakistani state and deals with the possibility of its disintegration as a state, including the bond which unites its social fabric.

**"What after Pakistan"****Main Factors for Pakistan's Survival**

The author points to three main factors behind the survival of Pakistan:

- a. The religion factor which is considered to be the most important.
- b. The army: "The only power capable of upholding the unity of the Pakistani state. It is the only barrier between this and disintegration and breaking

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.shamikh.net/vb/showthread.php?t=58620>

up".<sup>11</sup> The author believes that if the army becomes weaker there is a strong possibility for the disintegration and downfall of the country. His perception is that a country as young as Pakistan, which is comprised of a large blend of various ethnic groups, needs a strong unifying power such as the army in order to protect the internal coalescence. However, in the absence of such a power, the country is doomed to failure and disintegration.

- c. Ties to the United States. In his view, this factor is only temporary – for as long as it serves the interests of the U.S. within the framework of its war against terrorism.

### Possible causes for the collapse of Pakistan

The author enumerates the main factors which have a strong likelihood that they will bring about Pakistan's downfall. He believes that they can be divided into four main groups:

- a. "The Loss of the Islamic Spirit and Religious Solidarity", which constitutes the central and most significant factor for the country's survival. The Pakistani regime's present policies strongly sabotage its survival and erode the very foundations of the country. This policy is mainly expressed in four planes:
  1. Giving aid to the American crusade against the Islamic state of Afghanistan.
  2. Deportation of religious zealots, their assassination, arrest and handing many of them over to the crusaders.
  3. Slaughtering, such as occurred at the Red Mosque.
  4. Allocating Pakistani areas for the intelligence requirements of the U.S. and for the offices of Western mercenaries.
- b. Hostility towards the Pashtun tribes, who hold the real power in Pakistan.
- c. Poverty and hunger, which are rife in Pakistan. Forty two million people live below the poverty line. The country's inability to supply the basic existence needs of the people could bring about a revolution.
- d. Isolationist aspirations which are widespread amongst the ethnic groups. The Baluchis, for example, are striving to establish their own country; the Pashtun tribes are striving to return to their lands in Afghanistan; and the immigrants from India, who comprise half of the Sind population, are also exhibiting similar aspirations.

<sup>11</sup> Page 6.

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### Pakistan's remaining survival factors

The author contends that Pakistan today leans on one central factor, which continues to help it to protect its survival – the army and its security establishments, which are known as the ISI.<sup>12</sup> The latter have changed their spots, and have started to exhibit strong hostility towards the Pashtuns and particularly the Taliban. Their weak policies against the Pashtuns and the other tribes in the country will finally destroy the country for a number of reasons:<sup>13</sup>

First, the Pashtun tribes are “the true protectors of Pakistan over the years”. Second, on the day when the order comes, when Pakistan and India are facing each other, Pakistan will be weaker because these same weakened tribes will not be able to help in the war effort and India will be able to easily annex the Punjab region into its territory. Third, the Pashtuns themselves will want to take a bloody revenge on the ongoing regime of oppression against them. Fourth, the depth of the disagreements and the rifts within the Punjabis, the largest ethnic group in the country which is the backbone of the army. Fifth, the principle of the Jihad is gaining momentum within the Pakistani tribes, in addition to the appearance of Punjabi Jihad groups such as “Punjab Taliban” which strongly believes in fighting against the Pakistani army. Sixth, the Pakistani army’s strength is exhausted and the country’s national resources are being depleted, owing to the campaign conducted against the Mujahideen by the regime. The lack of the latter will be particularly felt during a long military conflict with India, which will eventually bring about the downfall of the country.

### Accelerating factors in the collapse of Pakistan

The author claims that in view of this reality, the days of the Pakistani state are numbered and it is on the verge of disintegration. He points to a number of parameters accelerating this phenomenon:<sup>14</sup>

- a. The chaos Pakistan is in from a security aspect, in view of the war waged by the Pakistani regime against the Mujahideen in the tribal areas, and the attack on all that is Islamic in the country. According to the author, the Shiite threat may arise from this, which the Sunni in the country are unaware of.

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<sup>12</sup> There is an additional survival factor in his opinion – the West’s support. But this is only temporary so long as the campaign against terrorism continues.

<sup>13</sup> Page 10.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

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The Shiites constitute 10% of the country's population and throughout its history most of the rulers were Shiite. Thus, the Shiite in the country may behave in accordance with external considerations.

- b. The presence of nuclear weapons in Pakistan. The western countries express an increasing fear of the possibility of atomic weapons reaching the Mujahideen, and therefore call for a division of Pakistan in order to neutralize this threat. The United States has already presented a division map of the country. Israel and India also strive for the neutralization of this threat and that is why they collaborate with the United States in dragging Pakistan into a civil war and a state of chaos that will provide a cause to interfere in Pakistan's affairs and take over the nuclear weapons. Another external player stirring the pot of Pakistan's internal affairs are the private military companies, such as the American Blackwater Company, operating on behalf of the western countries in Pakistan with the purpose of taking over the nuclear weapon and neutralizing it. The author adds that disarming Pakistan of its nuclear weapons will eliminate its deterrence power and encourage India to annex Sindh and Punjab. However India itself is a rising superpower striving to become a leading force in the region, and is perceived by the West as a good alternative to Pakistan due to its conformity with the West's interests: being pro-western, a Hindu and not Muslim country, and being suitable as a regional policeman. The author wishes to stress that "all of this pushes towards the division of Pakistan, and proves that Pakistan is on a path to devastation [...]".

### Possible scenarios following the collapse of Pakistan

The author suggests a number of possible scenarios following the collapse of the Pakistani state, even though he believes that it is difficult to predict the future. In his eyes, the strength of the Taliban movement in Pakistan is increasing, despite the repeat attacks by the Pakistani Army on its strongholds. The Taliban movement is the only one capable of filling the void that will be created following the collapse of Pakistan. However, the new global order will seek to prevent such a takeover and that is why, according to him, it should be taken out of the equation. Following are some scenarios on the geo-political level, as suggested by the author:

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- a. India annexes Sindh and Punjab and part of Kashmir, and their Muslim residents will become its subjects. All of this done with the West's blessing and after the disarming of Pakistan of its nuclear weapons. This development will lead to the immigration of millions of Pakistanis to neighboring regions, and especially to the Sarhad region and to Afghanistan.
- b. The regions of Baluchistan and Sarhad will disengage from Pakistan. Sindh and Punjab and a part of Kashmir will remain as an independent state, but under Hindu rule and influence.
- c. Pakistani Baluchistan will unite with Iranian Baluchistan and will be declared an independent state called Baluchistan.
- d. The Pashtu Sarhad region will be returned to Afghanistan and the Taliban's activity will be limited to the Afghanistan region.
- e. The Sarhad region will disengage from Pakistan and will have an independent government, which will fight the Taliban movement operating within it.



The author also mentions several scenarios on the "practical level" (as appears in the original document, meaning results in the immediate term):<sup>15</sup>

- a. A flaring up of a civil war between ethnic groups, legal schools of thought, and racial groups in Pakistan. The Shiites will constitute the center of gravity and will succeed in establishing an independent state with Iranian support. The fawning Sunni of the Deobandi School will also build themselves a state as well as the Indian immigrants in Karachi and other ethnic groups. Therefore security chaos will ensue, greatly contributing to the power of the Mujahideen.
- b. India will be forced to send in forces to oppress the Mujahideen and the Taliban forces will be busy fighting India. "In this manner they will enter a battle whose scope will be unknown, at least in the near foreseeable future, until the West leaves Afghanistan".
- c. American and western force shall invade Pakistan so as to fill in the void. The author believes that this idea is unlikely due to the U.S. financial crisis and its inability to conduct two wars at the same time.
- d. An American and western invasion limited to several of the Pakistani regions such as Sarhad and Baluchistan, where there is a lot of Mujahideen activity. The author doubts the probability of this scenario as well, due to the fear from "a conflagration of Jihad in the area".

### **Summary and conclusions**

The author assumes that almost certainly the days of the Pakistani state are numbered and that in the near future it is about to enter the pages of history due to the future collapse of its three main support pillars, when the religious factor – the first support pillar – has already collapsed. According to him the legitimacy for the existence of the Pakistani state is safe as long as the regime serves the religion and does not operate against it. However, the government's anti-Islamic policy which is expressed in violent oppression, killings, arrests etc against the Muslims of the country in the name of the "war on terrorism", is its undoing and causes the government to be hated by the people. This policy has already succeeded in causing a shift in Al-Qaeda and the Taliban's attitude towards the government and to bring an all out war against it. According to him, the armed conflict between them and the Pakistani Army, serving as the government's

<sup>15</sup> Page 15.

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second support pillar, only weakens the army and drains its blood. In the end, the government's harsh oppression of the Muslims in the country also contributes to the weakening of the army due to the injury to the strength of the tribes which are supposed to provide the army with manpower. That is why, if and when Pakistan is required to go on a campaign against one of its greatest opponents in the geo-political arena – India – then its military power will be sustained and India will be superior. As a rule, the author ascribes great importance to the army as a support pillar of the government and the state, as it is considered a bonding agent between the various ethnic groups in the country just by its maintaining the country's security. Hence, weakening it is akin to weakening the social cohesion, and would cause an awakening of separatist aspirations on the part of the various ethnic groups. The state's third support pillar, the support of the United States given to Pakistan, is also bound to disappear due to its transience. In other words, the American support of Pakistan may cease the minute the latter stops serving the former's interests. However, he claims that the U.S. and the western countries including Israel and India, aspire to cause deterioration in the state's security so as to provide cause for foreign military involvement in the country to take over the nuclear weapons and dismantle them.

In fact, even though he doesn't say so explicitly, one can learn from the author's statements that the collapse of the Pakistani state is not necessarily supposed to produce positive results for the Mujahideen. This is despite the fact that he believes they are the best alternative and have the best ability to quickly fill the vacuum that will be created. Although their force will increase immeasurably due to the security chaos that will ensue, the damage will be much greater. He predicts a quick takeover by the Taliban, but only for the short term due to the involvement of the West led by the U.S. and India, that will operate to bring down the Taliban rule, mainly due to the fear if them taking over nuclear weapons. He predicts that India shall serve as a "watch dog" for the West over the region, as it is a pro-western, non-Muslim country that is hostile to the Mujahideen. He believes that India will execute its old claim over the Kashmir Region and will annex parts of it, as well as other regions. Additional parts will be torn and annexed to Afghanistan and Iran. Other than that, these ethnic groups will realize their separatist aspirations and will found independent states on the

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ruins of the Pakistani state such as the Baluchis, who will establish a state called Baluchistan. He claims that one should also take into account the aspirations of the Shiite minority in the country who might collaborate with Iran in order to leverage its own interests. However, the Taliban's freedom of action will be reduced and their main battles will concentrate in India.

The power of Pakistan's survival depends, as the author claims and explains, on the combination of the three factors: the religious factor, the military support and the American support. However, as he demonstrated, the first is no longer viable and the other two are about to collapse. With their disappearance the Pakistani state is also bound to disappear, new political entities will rise and a new geo-political reality will be created. India will rise as a hegemonic power and will operate as a "regional policeman", while the Mujahideen will be forced to turn their energy against India, their enemy considered to be just as dangerous.

One should also remember that the booklet constitutes another layer in the extensive Jihadi propaganda campaign against the Pakistani regime. It expresses the hope that Pakistan will collapse, and justifies the necessity of the toppling of the Pakistani rule, while at the same time he believes that the Mujahideen are obligated to pay attention to the new geo-political reality about to be created with the collapse of Pakistan. That is, the Mujahideen must prepare for a harsher reality that consisting of the West's involvement and a reality where India will become a regional hegemonic power.