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Posudek vedoucí na magisterskou práci Richarda Zábranského: „The Bush Administration and Pakistan: Utilitarian Partnership?.“ IMS FSV UK, ZS 2012/2013, 61 s.

In this master's thesis, Richard Zábranský is focusing on an analysis of the U.S.-Pakistan relations following the changes of security environment after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. The author is following the dynamics of the relationship between Islamabad and Washington during the Bush administration, underscores diverging interests and security priorities and points out that even substantial U.S. assistance to Pakistan was not an effective tool of eliciting full-fledged cooperation of Pakistan in achieving broader U.S. security goals. The author concludes that there was a lack of long-term vision for the U.S.-Pakistan cooperation and that President Bush was willing to subordinate some of U.S. values to the present need to include Pakistan in the anti-terrorism coalition. According to the author, the mindset in the White House was that there was no other option but cooperation with Islamabad, as author quotes Colin Powell saying that “whatever action he (i.e. Bush) took, it could not be without Pakistan's support” (p. 22).

The author starts with outlining the dynamics of the South Asia – he draws attention to the Afghanistan-Pakistan links and Pakistan-India rivalry. Pakistan's interests vis-à-vis India and Afghanistan play an important role as they had ultimately influenced the extent and the quality of cooperation between Washington and Islamabad. The author particularly underscores the issue of Kashmir, which is one of the major drivers of Pakistan's foreign policy interests. In his analysis, he raises questions over how much the Bush administration took into account the complexity of the regional dynamics when making political decisions in waging the War against Terrorism in Afghanistan. The author concludes that for most of his two terms, George W. Bush subordinated all his Administration's foreign policy goals, as outlined in the National Security Strategy, to the War on Terrorism. This explains the gap between the stated NSS goals and the actual policy towards Pakistan that the author repeatedly points out.

The author explains some of the drivers of Pakistan's domestic and foreign policy. On p. 2, he claims that “Pakistan has developed a strategy of using its security apparatus to support extremists in order to prevent possible strategic encirclement by pro-Indian forces. Pakistan thus builds its strategic depth by forging close ties with militants who are willing to carry out illegal tasks in neighboring countries. As a result, Pakistan can influence affairs in Afghanistan and India-controlled Kashmir.” While Pakistan's hedging vis-à-vis India as well as its effort to preserve its regional influence is evident from Islamabad's behavior, the author does not address the fact that Pakistan's leadership has repeatedly denied using the strategic depth approach.

The author claims that at the very beginning, Pakistan had to be coerced into cooperation with the U.S. While it is true that after 9/11, Pakistan was presented with U.S. demands which could be interpreted as an ultimatum, it must be also said that the situation after the terrorist

attacks was also seen as an opportunity for Islamabad to arise from international isolation and sanctions. To some extent, the offer of U.S. cooperation was seen as a chance to gain access to U.S. military and economic assistance, which in fact ensued.

The largest portion of the thesis is dedicated to an analysis of the pattern of economic and particularly military assistance, which composed large majority of the total assistance delivered to Pakistan. After parsing through statistics, the author concludes that the assistance decreased when the U.S. focus shifted towards war in Iraq and then increased again with response to rising insurgency in tribal areas. On page 36, the author points out that development aid, which could be used to improve the quality of life of the Pakistani people, composed only 6 percent of the overall U.S. support in 2001-2004. Only after the severe earthquake in Kashmir did the U.S. approach to development aid started to change. It becomes evident, as the author correctly underscores, that the U.S. did not intend to assist with development of Pakistan – no nation-building was taking place in Pakistan. Non-military aid to Pakistan was aimed primarily to assist with “debt relief, balance of payments, and direct budget support...moderate the consequences of the War in Afghanistan” on e.g. Pakistan’s exports and its unemployment rate (p. 37).

The author also claims that the large volume of military aid in fact supported the authoritarian regime and the strength of the Pakistani military. He points out that from a long-term perspective, “a stable Pakistan with democratic government would have been in the interest of the United States,” but Washington needed Islamabad’s cooperation at that particular moment. Confirming the fact that interests and values do not always go hand in hand, Washington pursued its interests in cooperation with Musharraf and Pakistani military despite its crucial role in maintaining undemocratic character of government. The Congress implicitly agreed by waiving Democracy Sanctions (p. 42). While many scholars pointed out the discrepancy between approach to Pakistan and the values U.S. tends to promote, the author does not elaborate further on Bush’s response to such criticism.

The author points out that in many cases, it was difficult to monitor how Pakistan used the aid, as there were often no strings attached to force Pakistan towards transparency and disclosure. On p. 39, he points out that “Bush administration did not pay attention to assistance oversight and conditionality until mutual cooperation deteriorated”. In fact, the U.S. continued its assistance despite evident Pakistan’s double-play and fraud in using the assistance. The author however does not elaborate much on Bush Administration’s reactions to these findings. Were there any internal discussions in the White House proposing adjustments to the mutual cooperation? Increased oversight only came around 2007 when the security situation has worsened and many inside and outside the Administration started raising questions about the effectiveness of money spent on Pakistan’s cooperation while Islamabad clearly did not seem to be committed to eliminating the insurgent groups.

In the last chapter, the author describes the limits on Pakistan’s cooperation with the U.S., which were particularly related to Musharraf regime using the cooperation to enhance its own position and power. Typical of this behavior was Pakistan’s continuing proliferation of WMDs and Musharraf’s ambiguous approach towards militant islamistic groups. As the author points out, “Musharraf banned some terrorist groups, others were left alone” (p. 45). Those left alone most probably had links to the ISI, including the Taliban, which the ISI had previously supported. In this respect, Pakistan seems to have been thinking in the long-term – as the author points out, Pakistan continues to support proxys which will enable it maintain influence in the region once the U.S. forces depart the region (p. 45).

The author concludes that Bush administration needed Pakistan's cooperation in its involvement in Afghanistan, however, from the very beginning, it underestimated (or decided to ignore) Pakistan's independent streak. Soon, it became evident that Pakistan's cooperation would be limited by Pakistan's interest to maintain its position and influence in the region. The author also points out that Bush policy towards Pakistan represented a diversion from U.S. values, most significantly democracy, rule of law, transparency etc. and in effect propped Musharraf's authoritarian regime and contributed to further islamization of Pakistan, which – from the long-term perspective – is bound to cause further complications in the region. Some analysts, although not necessarily the author, consider this a wasted opportunity in bringing change to Pakistan (and thus make Pakistan more stable in the long term), had the U.S. built in more conditions to provided assistance and had it more successfully pushed on Musharraf to implement political changes.

All of the above supports the author's claim that the U.S. cooperation with Pakistan was serving solely the purpose of waging the war against Al Qaeda in which Pakistan was indispensable. The Bush Administration was willing to turn blind eye to the character of Musharraf's regime as well as abuses of assistance out of concern that Pakistan's instability or lack of cooperation would jeopardize U.S. "crusade" against Al Qaeda. The fact that much later, Osama bin Laden was found hiding in Pakistan whose territory had to be violated by U.S. forces in order to capture the Al Qaeda leader is a proof that Bush strategy was very short-sighted.

At closing, the author provides a comprehensive table with cost and benefit analysis of the benefits and drawbacks arising from the U.S.-Pakistani cooperation. From the table, it is evident that the cooperation brought short-term benefits, but from long-term perspective, most of the U.S. goals were fulfilled only partially or were not fulfilled at all.

The thesis includes multiple tables and graphs. The list of bibliography is sufficient and the author uses sources from the most contemporary Pakistan experts as well as primary resouces. It is evident that he himself is trying to conceptualize the entire complex regional interplay of interests and influences. With respect to grammar and style, there are occassional typos, which however can be considered minor in the entire scope of the text.

I am proposing the following questions for defense:

How does the author respond to Pakistan's repeated denial using the strategic depth approach? How did George W. Bush respond to criticisms that the aid his administration provides to Pakistan was in effect upholding undemocratic government and potentially used to fund terrorist groups with closed ties to ISI? How did he respond to the discrepancy between the interests/values outlined in the NSS and the reality of U.S.-Pakistan cooperation? Was there any internal debate among the decision-makers to address evident Pakistan's double-dealing? Were there alternative approaches to Pakistan debated (approaches which would take into account e.g. the authoritative character of Musharraf's regime)?

In conclusion, the thesis fulfills all the requirements established for master's theses, and therefore I recommend the thesis for defense and propose final grade **excellent to very good depending on the author's responses to the above-mentioned questions.**

In Prague, January 17, 2013

Jana Sehnalkova