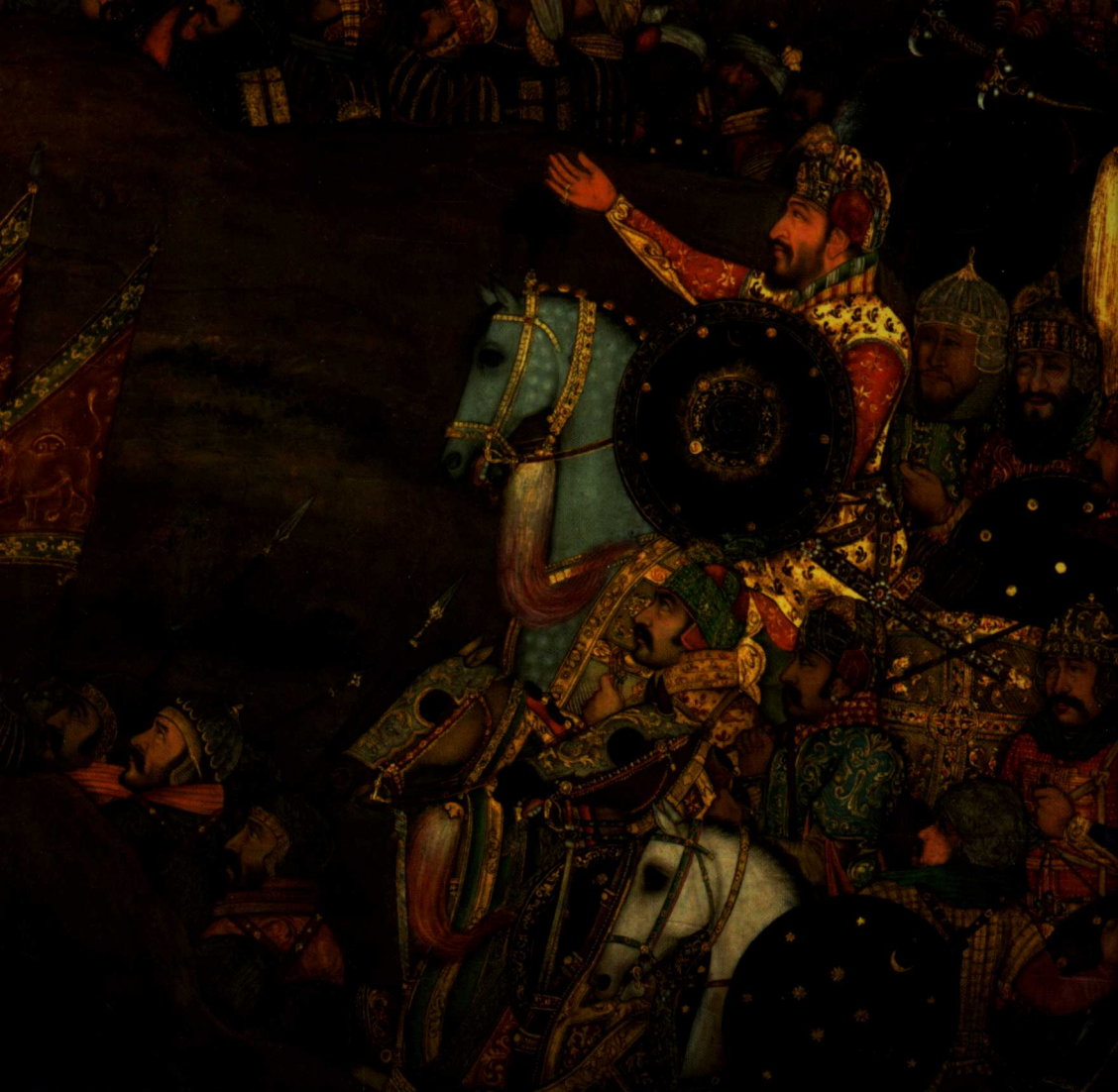

THE IDEA OF PAKISTAN

STEPHEN PHILIP COHEN

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PREFACE

It has taken me forty-four years write this book—the length of time I have been studying Pakistan (and India). My early interests were in the role of the military, but I was unable to visit Pakistan until 1978, as an earlier application for a visa had been turned down by the government of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto.

When I did visit Pakistan for the first time I was surprised to discover that my personal "idea of Pakistan" was wildly inaccurate: not better, not worse, just different. That trip led to a book, The Pakistan Army. Research for that book was made possible by General Zia ul-Haq, who promptly banned it, although he eventually told an aide to "let the professor's book be published." Zia's decision was only one of the many paradoxes I encountered in studying Pakistan, and the mixture of hope and frustration reflected in The Pakistan Army is to be found here as well.

This book is not quite comparable to *India: Emerging Power.* It focuses primarily on internal dynamics, not strategic policy. One important difference between the two states is that Pakistan's domestic and external policies are more entwined than those of India, partly because of Pakistan's more perilous geostrategic position and partly because the dominant Pakistan army looks both inward and outward. Writing this book provided me with the opportunity to extend my knowledge of Pakistan beyond the army and to gain a fuller understanding of the country's political parties, Islamists, civilian elites, and various ethnic, linguistic, and

sectarian minorities. Above all, I have learned more about the contested *idea* of Pakistan.

Many individuals and institutions have assisted me on this journey. First and foremost, I wish to thank those Pakistanis who have given their time in innumerable discussions and meetings. My Pakistani friends have always been courteous and considerate, even when we have disagreed; I hope that they will find here an accurate representation of their views. In particular, I would like to thank Moonis Ahmar, Samina Ahmed, Qazi Hussein Ahmed, Akbar Ahmed, Benazir Bhutto, Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, Mahmud Durrani, Ejaz Haider, Husain Haqqani, Pervez Hoodbhoy, Mushahid Hussain, Rifaat Hussein, Jehangir Karamat, Shaukat Qadir, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, Ahmed Rashid, Hasan Askari Rizvi, Najam Sethi, Aqil Shah, Mohammed Waseem, and innumerable other civilians and serving officers and officials of the Pakistan government. Some Pakistanis may disagree with the arguments and conclusions of this book; I hope that in such cases it will lead to the beginning of a dialogue and not the end of a friendship.

Many Washington friends and colleagues have generously shared their knowledge and special insights. Chief among these are Marvin G. Weinbaum, now of the Middle East Institute and a friend and colleague for forty years; Nisar A. Chaudhry; Selig Harrison; Rodney Jones; Anatol Lieven; Polly Nayak; and former ambassadors Dennis Kux, William Milam, Robert Oakley, and Howard and Teresita Schaffer (whose own Pakistan project helpfully paralleled the writing of this book).

Brookings has provided me with admirable support and a lively intellectual home for over six years, and I would like to acknowledge the special help of my two junior colleagues, Sunil Dasgupta, who provided much of the research support, and Tanvi Madan, who helped bring the book to completion. We have been assisted over the years by diligent and hard-working associates, Azeema Cheema, Meena Mallipeddi, Zaid Safdar, Taylor Sherman, and Moeed Yusuf. Strobe Talbott contributed, among other things, the book's title, and Jim Steinberg provided a meticulous critique. At the Brookings Institution Press, Vicky Macintyre very ably edited the manuscript, while Inge Lockwood handled proofreading, and Enid Zafran indexed the pages. Larry Converse and Susan Woollen were helpful in developing the cover and getting the book to print. Generous

support for the research and writing of this book was provided by the Smith Richardson Foundation and the United States Institute of Peace.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to my own students, past and present, including the hundreds of young Pakistanis, Indians, and Chinese who participated in the Summer Workshops on South Asian Security issues held since 1993 in Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and China. They reinforce the wisdom of the Latin, *docendo discimus* (we learn by teaching).

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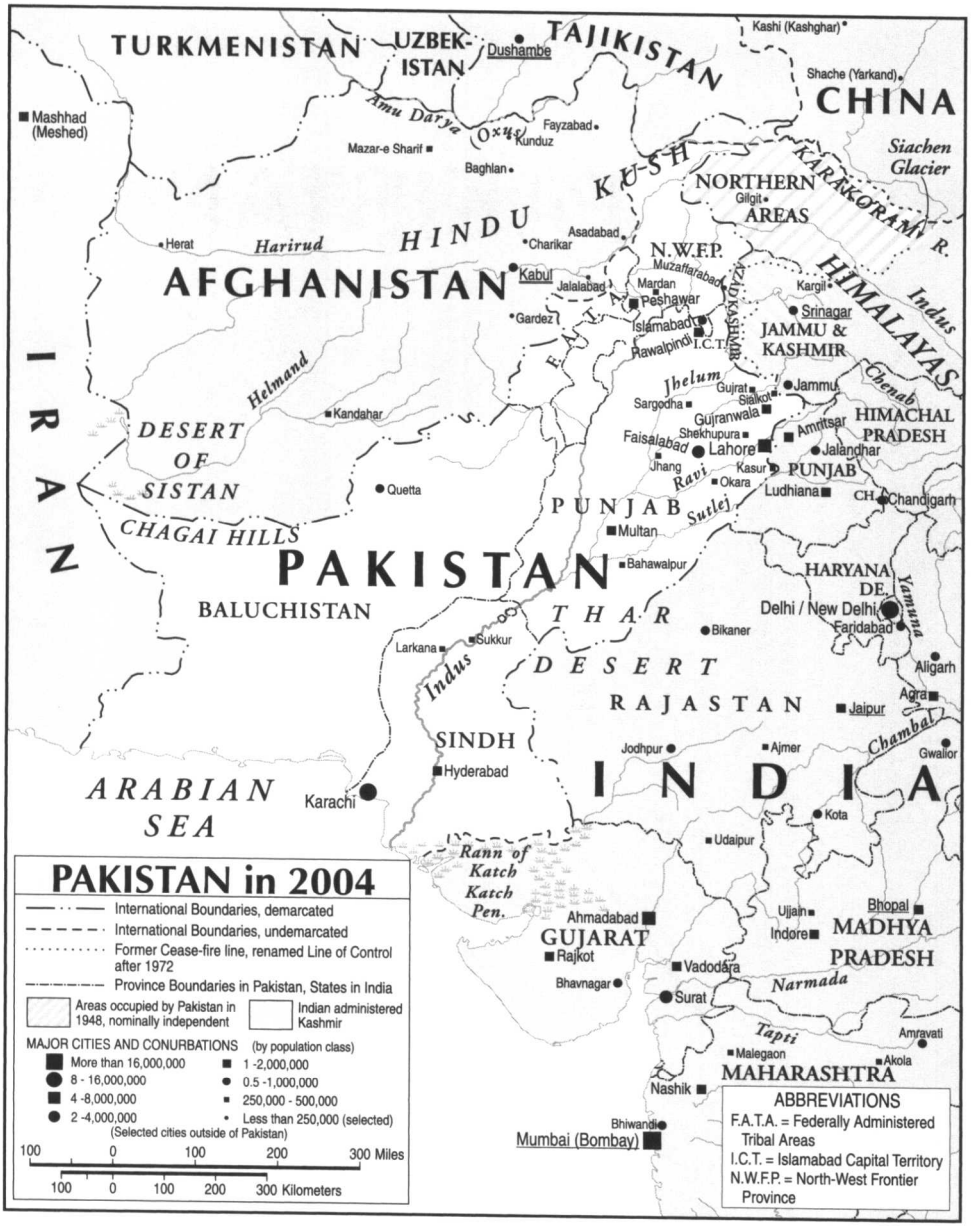
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Bhopal
Ahmadabad
Indore
MADHYA PRADESH
GUJARAT
Rajkot
Vadodara
Bhavnagar
Narmada
Surat
Tapti
Amravati
Malegaon
Akola
MAHARASHTRA
Nashik
Bhiwandi
Mumbai (Bombay)
PAKISTAN in 2004
International Boundaries, demarcated
International Boundaries, undemarcated
Former Cease-fire line, renamed Line of Control after 1972
Province Boundaries in Pakistan, States in India
Areas occupied by Pakistan in 1948, nominally independent
Indian administered Kashmir
MAJOR CITIES AND CONURBATIONS (by population class)
More than 16,000,000
8 - 16,000,000
4 -8,000,000
2 -4,000,000
1 -2,000,000
0.5 -1,000,000
250,000 - 500,000
Less than 250,000 (selected)
(Selected cities outside of Pakistan)
100 0 100 200 300 Miles
100 0 100 200 300 Kilometers
ABBREVIATIONS
F.A.T.A. = Federally Administered Tribal Areas
I.C.T. = Islamabad Capital Territory
N.W.F.P. = North-West Frontier Province

CONTENTS

MAPS

INTRODUCTION

In recent years Pakistan has become a strategically important state, both criticized as a rogue power and praised as being on the front line in the ill-named war on terrorism. The final report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States identifies Pakistan, along with Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia, as a high-priority state.

This is not a new development. In the 1950s and 1960s Pakistan was a member of two American-sponsored alliances, but then drifted away from Washington. In the 1980s Pakistan was a vital partner in evicting the Soviet Union from Afghanistan, even though its covert nuclear program drew much criticism. In 1996 it was one of three states (the others being Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, UAE) to recognize the Taliban regime, which was by then playing host to the terrorist organization al Qaeda. After September 11, 2001, Pakistan was again characterized by American officials as a vital ally, even though it was caught, and admitted to, covertly spreading nuclear technology to a number of states; further, its enthusiasm in tracking down al Qaeda and Taliban leaders was suspect.[1]

Unfortunately, the United States has only a few true Pakistan experts and knows remarkably little about this country. Much of what has been written is palpably wrong, or at best superficial.[2] Over the years, it has become difficult to conduct research in Pakistan's deteriorating security environment, and support for such work has dried up. It is little wonder,

then, that views cover a wide spectrum, with "rogue state" at one extreme—some would call it a potential nuclear Yugoslavia or even the most dangerous place in the world.[3] The flamboyant French intellectual Bernard-Henri Levy called Pakistan "the most delinquent of nations."[4] According to a senior Indian diplomat, it "represents everything . . . in the forefront of U.S. concerns: religious fundamentalism, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction in possession of a failing state, a military dictatorship masquerading behind a pale democratic façade." To Jaswant Singh, former Indian minister of external affairs, Pakistan is "Taliban East."[5] Others, however, notably senior officials of the George W. Bush administration, have praised Pakistan as a misunderstood, but still effective, friend deserving of American support.[6]

To probe beyond the headlines, this book offers a double biography. One biography is that of the idea of Pakistan, the notion that India's Muslims needed a homeland for their protection and to fulfill their cultural and civilizational destiny. The second biography is that of the state of Pakistan, the largely military-dominated entity that now possesses nuclear weapons, has a hostile relationship with most of its neighbors, and is characterized by weak and uneven economic growth, political chaos, and sectarian violence.

I also try to peek into Pakistan's future, to ask whether failure is a strong possibility. If so, would Pakistan dissolve slowly or collapse in a sudden cataclysm? Or would it become an outlaw and threat to the entire world, acting as a base for international terrorism and perhaps sharing its nuclear weapons technology with other states and terrorist groups? Can Pakistan become a normal state at peace with its neighbors and itself?

In the ensuing discussion, I return to questions I addressed at length back in 1985.[7] At that time, I warned that Pakistan could again become its own worst enemy, that highly dangerous futures might be in store, including a repetition of the 1971 catastrophe when Pakistan became the first post–World War II state to break up.[8] Here, I again ask which policies—economic, political, strategic—pursued *now* might avert the worst outcomes and help steer the country in a direction compatible with its own identity and interests, as well as the key interests of the United States and Pakistan's important neighbors. A stable, prosperous, progressive Pakistan could trigger a new spurt of South Asian development, in partnership with India and Afghanistan.

Several factors bode well in this regard. Pakistan's economy was once viewed as a success story, and its governments, though often military in nature, have been relatively moderate and have maintained many political freedoms. For most of its history, Pakistan has oscillated between unstable democracy and benign authoritarianism. It has never had a popular revolution, its levels of political violence (except for the Bangladesh interregnum) have been high but not pathological, and it has always had a cohesive and well-educated political elite. This did not translate into a full-fledged democracy, but then Pakistan did not undergo the excesses of neighbors such as China or Iran, nor, despite its Islamic identity, did it veer toward religious authoritarianism. Pakistan does well in many areas and arguably can still emerge as a successful state and cohesive nation.

Hence it is necessary to take a nuanced view of "failure"—a term widely and imprecisely used to describe Pakistan. The term derives from a sparse literature on recent cases in which states were unable to deliver the most fundamental necessities to their citizens.[9] Most of these entities—Somalia, parts of sub-Saharan Africa, and Afghanistan—were hardly states to begin with and could not withstand the external and internal stresses that stripped away their capacity to provide food, shelter, and security to their citizens. However, surely the term also applies when states are unable to defend against foreign aggression, or, more spectacularly, when they commit genocide against their own citizens? Is it not a failure of the state when its leaders embark upon a ruinous quixotic policy? In short, failure is not a straightforward concept, since even the most advanced and competent states "fail" from time to time, either in relation to their own citizens or as political entities operating in a complex global environment. At least five kinds of failure can be identified:

—*The failure to live up to past expectations, one's own and those of others.* Nations seldom fulfill their high ideals and early promise. Pakistan, created as a haven for Indian Muslims, was to be a stable and prosperous Islamic state. The discrepancy between its early aspirations and contemporary reality is one of the country's more notable features.

—*Failure of vision.* Pakistan's founders expected the *idea* of Pakistan to shape the *state* of Pakistan; instead, a military bureaucracy governs the state and imposes its own vision of a Pakistani nation.

—*Economic failure.* With the loss of the very poor East Wing in 1971, Pakistan expected to gain middle-income status. But the economy did not fire up, and its per capita income today is below that of India.

—*Failure of leadership.* Pakistan has a distinct political and governing class: the "Establishment," a moderate oligarchy that has presided over many political, economic, and strategic disasters, and whose most promising leaders, notably Benazir Bhutto, have by and large disappointed their ardent supporters, creating further disillusionment with the political process.

—*Catastrophic failure.* Failing states, at one time absorbed by imperial powers or neighbors or placed under international trusteeship, today pose a highly visible and serious problem for the world, complicated by refugees and migrants, televised holocausts, and the internationalization of ethnic conflict. An additional concern in Pakistan's case is the possible spread of nuclear weapons, missiles, and Islamic radicalism: a catastrophically failed Pakistan would become a matter of grave concern to many states.

Like their neighbors, Pakistanis themselves are concerned about the country's future.[10] The internal debate intensified after the military again assumed power in 1999. Although some resigned themselves to another spell of military rule, hoping that this time the generals would "fix" the system once and for all, others grew cynical. The coup, they argued, simply represented another failure, adding to the four or five earlier ones.

Yet there is evidence that success and the high expectations of its founding fathers and friends abroad may not altogether elude Pakistan. State *resurrection* is not out of reach, as has been amply demonstrated in Eastern Europe, Latin America, and perhaps most dramatically in Russia—which had failed as the Soviet Union but was able to reinvent itself and take its place as a normal state with reasonable prospects for the future.

In laying out the evidence for this possibility in Pakistan's case, I begin with a historical overview, followed by a more detailed examination of the evolution of both the idea and the state of Pakistan (chapters 1–2), and then a survey of Pakistan's major political and social institutions, notably its military, political, Islamist, and regional elites (chapters 3–6). I also ask how they themselves diagnose Pakistan's assets and liabilities. What are their organizational or ideological imperatives? How do they establish the legitimacy of their own perspectives on Pakistan, and who are their key foreign allies? What policies would they introduce if they were to come to power? Next comes a discussion of some critical demographic,

economic, and educational constraints in Pakistan (chapter 7) and the resulting range of its plausible "futures"(chapter 8). The book closes with some policy options for the United States (chapter 9).

Any study of Pakistan must be careful to see it as it is—not as an evil or blessed twin of India, to which it is often compared—but as a state with its own identity, logic, and future. My approach is to examine the way in which the idea of Pakistan intersects with the hard realities of the state and to determine what this bodes for the future. Pakistan is both interesting and alarming. It could emerge as the pariah of Asia. This is not a welcome prospect, but there are worse: a collapsing Pakistan, spewing out nuclear weapons and Islamic extremists, or even a Pakistan transformed into a truly radical and militant state.

Pakistan: A Short History

Until the arrival of Muslim traders, missionaries, and armies in the late seventh and early eighth centuries, the population of South Asia was primarily Hindu and Buddhist. By A.D. 1100 a number of Indo-Muslim states had been established, and by the sixteenth century the Mughal Empire dominated northern India. The British formally disbanded the empire in 1858, at which time about one-quarter of India's population were Muslims. They were concentrated in East Bengal, the Northwest Frontier, Punjab, Sindh, and Baluchistan, with large Muslim minorities in present-day Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.[11]

India's Muslims slowly adapted to British rule yet maintained their identity, establishing the Aligarh Muslim University (1875) and the Muslim League (1906). The latter, dominated by wealthy landowners and Muslim professionals, was largely secular in orientation, though a basic concern was the fate of Muslims in a mainly Hindu political order. There was no suggestion of a separate Muslim state until 1930, when the Punjabi poet-politician Mohammed Iqbal raised the idea. Three years later a group of Indian students at Cambridge proposed naming it Pakistan. As the prospects for British withdrawal from South Asia increased, the Muslim League, led by the lawyer-politician Mohammed Ali Jinnah (born December 1876, died September 1948), declared its support for the idea of Pakistan at its 1940 Lahore session; one year later the most powerful of the religious—or Islamist—groups, the Jama'at-i-Islami, was founded.

Following negotiations between the British, the secular but largely Hindu Indian National Congress, and the Muslim League in 1946, the state of Pakistan was born on August 14, 1947, and India gained independence on August 15. Pakistan was carved out of five provinces of British India plus some princely states. Under the new boundaries, the provinces of Bengal and Punjab were partitioned, and millions of people had to move. The eastern part of Bengal, which was overwhelmingly Muslim (but with a 15 percent Hindu minority), became East Pakistan, or the East Wing. It was slightly more populous than West Pakistan (together their population was about a quarter of India's). Western Punjab, including the important princely state of Bahawalpur, became the Pakistani province of Punjab. The eastern area, and a number of ethnically Punjabi princely states, became the Indian state of Punjab. West Pakistan also included Baluchistan, the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), and Sindh.

However, India and Pakistan could not agree on the disposition of the state of Jammu and Kashmir and in October 1948 went to war over it, with former comrades now pitted against each other even though Pakistan's higher military command was still entirely British. A cease-fire brokered by the United Nations in January 1949 left about three-fourths of the state, including the prized Valley, in Indian hands. Since then Kashmir has figured in most India-Pakistan crises, including the 1965 war and the miniwar in Kargil in 1999. Obtaining justice for Muslim Kashmiris living in the Indian-administered parts of the state has been a central goal of Pakistan's foreign and security policy for five decades. Pakistan has tried diplomatic, military, and low-level military pressure on India to hold a plebiscite (as recommended in several UN resolutions) or to negotiate a change in the status quo, all to no avail. A fresh approach, featuring diplomacy rather than coercion, began in January 2004 after a summit meeting between Pakistan's president, Pervez Musharraf, and India's prime minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee. In a statement issued before the summit, Vajpayee indicated that he wanted to make a third "and last" effort to normalize relations with Pakistan. After some secret diplomacy between the two countries, President Musharraf stated that the UN resolutions on Kashmir might be set aside in the event of progress on a Kashmir settlement. Subsequently, both states began to ease travel and other restrictions, and an Indian cricket team toured Pakistan, to great popular acclaim in both countries. By July 2004 the India-Pakistan dialogue on

nuclear confidence-building measures had resumed, but with little expectation of a breakthrough, or of rapid movement toward a dialogue on more contentious issues, such as Kashmir.

At independence, Jinnah was appointed Pakistan's governor-general, and his close associate, Liaquat Ali Khan, became prime minister, but neither man had deep roots in the new state. Jinnah was from Bombay and Liaquat had spent much of his career in North India. Then both suffered untimely deaths that threw the country into political chaos. Jinnah succumbed to tuberculosis on September 11, 1948, and Liaquat was assassinated at a political rally in Rawalpindi on October 17, 1951. Toward 1954 the Muslim League, whose supporters were in large part migrants from India, went into decline, losing power in both wings. Control fell to a coalition of émigré politicians, bureaucrats, and, eventually, the army. Also in 1954 the four provinces of West Pakistan were combined into a single administrative entity under a "One-Unit" scheme, to balance the more populous East Wing.

It was not until March 23, 1956, that the Constituent Assembly approved the first constitution, which renamed the state the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. A former soldier, Iskander Mirza, became president under the new constitution, which he abrogated two and a half years later, on October 7, 1958. Mirza was himself displaced in a 1958 coup by General Ayub Khan, beginning Pakistan's long experiment with military rule.

Pakistan has had four spells of direct or indirect military rule and several failed coup attempts. The successful coups were by Generals Ayub Khan (1958), Yahya Khan (1969), Zia ul-Haq (1977), and Pervez Musharraf (1999). Each was justified on the grounds of national security, with the army claiming to be Pakistan's ultimate protector, and each of the generals derided the incompetence or corruption of the politicians. Despite these claims and the variety of military governments, none left Pakistan better equipped to face its multiple domestic and foreign challenges. Of the failed coups, usually by low-level officers (the successful ones were led by the army chiefs), the first was the Rawalpindi Conspiracy of 1951, and the most recent an attempt by an Islamic-minded general and several junior officers in 1995; in 2004 several officers of lower rank were implicated in an assassination attempt on President Musharraf.

After winning 80 percent of the votes in a "yes or no" referendum, Ayub became president on February 17, 1960. He strengthened the