

Perspectives on the 2010 floods in Pakistan

Arshad Ali, Nadia Sarwar and Mohammad Waqas Sajjad *

Pakistan, a country at war with itself, found itself at war with nature last year. Unprecedented flooding in the hot summer led to a plethora of problems that the country was unprepared for. And given the scale of issues, pertinent questions needed to be asked. From analysing the affected livelihoods, loss of life and infrastructure to addressing the concerns of a large displaced population; and from effective relief efforts, the roles of internal and external groups to concerns of rising conflicts and effects on the ongoing war in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the challenge facing the State, the civil society and foreign donors was remarkably unique.

Less than a year down the line, while the situation is far from stable, many challenges have been met as a nation, often divided on ideological, social and political realms, united in the face of disaster. And persevered. In this collection of three essays, various facets of the multidimensional nature of the floods are addressed. Starting with a statistical analysis of the devastation caused to different geographic areas and social, physical and economic sectors, it moves on to discuss the role played by the United Nations, as the single most organized and omnipresent organization, in addressing the state of affairs, before analysing more ‘strategic’ impacts on the war on terror, the role of foreign aid, and of religious charities, in the third and final essay.

Part I: The floods of 2010 – a statistical analysis¹

The floods that began in the north-west of Pakistan in July 2010 followed the heaviest monsoon rains that the country had seen for 80 years. The devastation soon swept south along the Indus River, destroying agricultural land and entire villages and leaving millions of people vulnerable to starvation and disease, not to speak of the thousands dead and several million left homeless. Government reports show that over 18 million people have been affected by the deluge; over 11000 villages and 1.74 million homes have been destroyed or damaged. The death toll stands at 1,985. According to UN experts, 2.7 million people in Khyber

* *Arshad Ali is Research Associate, the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad. Nadia Sarwar is Research Fellow, the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad and Waqas Sajjad is Acting Director (South Asia), the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad*

Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 5.3 million in Punjab and over 6 million in Sindh have been affected.²

The floods have ravaged about one-fifth of the agricultural infrastructure, livestock and crops in the country. They have severely damaged houses, buildings, roads, bridges, railway track, irrigation systems, small dams and power installations. Moreover, 2.4 million hectares (24% of the 9.7 million hectares sown in 49 of the 81 affected districts) of cultivated area has been washed out.³ According to Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani, 79 out of 124 districts - 24 in KP, 19 in Sindh, 12 in Punjab, 10 in Balochistan and 7 each in Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) - have been affected badly.⁴ Details of the losses are given in the table below.

Agriculture is the main source of revenue and livelihood for approximately 80 percent of the people in the affected areas. The floods have run through the most fertile and productive lands and eliminated sources of livelihood for subsistence farmers and herders.

Pakistan flood losses (as of January 10, 2011)

Province	Deaths	Injured	Houses Damaged	Population Affected
Balochistan	54	104	75,596	700,000
KP	1,156	1,198	284,990	3,800,000
Punjab	110	262	497,700	6,000,000
Sindh	411	1,235	876,249	7,274,250
AJK	71	87	7,106	200,000
GB	183	60	2,830	100,000
Total	1,985	2,946	1,744,471	18,074,250

Source: NDMA, PDMA, GBDMA, FDMA at <http://www.pakresponse.info>

Agriculture costs

Agriculture is the main source of revenue and livelihood for approximately 80 percent of the people in the affected areas. The floods have run through the most fertile and productive lands and eliminated sources of livelihood for subsistence farmers and herders. Moreover, primary agricultural infrastructure such as tube wells, water channels,

household storages, animal sheds, personal seed stocks, fertilizers, various agriculture machinery and equipments have also been destroyed and are likely to take years to be rebuilt.⁵

The disaster came just before the harvest of key standing crops such as rice, maize, vegetables, sugarcane and fruits.⁶ The floods have washed away over half a million tons of wheat stock stored by families and destroyed at least 3.6 million hectares of standing crops.⁷ According to the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the damages to the sector are likely to be in the range of Rs.250-350 billion. But these figures seem to be an underestimate as they exclude damages to minor crops and thus, the destruction of corn, rice, sugarcane, vegetable crops and fish farms and livestock is unaccounted for. According to initial estimates, total agricultural losses are about \$3 billion.⁸

Livestock

Livestock is a source of bread and butter for most of the affected families. For low income households, animals can serve as a store of wealth, provide draught power, organic fertilizers for crops and become a cheap source of transport. The death of animals is a huge loss for poor families as the cost to replace them is equivalent to many years of earning. World Bank and Asian Development Bank estimates show that 1.5 million large and small animals and 10 million poultry have been lost; these figures include distress sale as well.⁹ The total cost to livestock and poultry animals is around \$450 million and \$100 million respectively.

Sindh was the most severely hit province where 250,000 large animals, 300,000 small animals and nearly 5 million poultry have been destroyed.¹⁰ According to initial reports, 15 percent of all livestock in Balochistan, potentially over a million small and large animals, have been affected. Moreover, about 725,000 medium and large animals in KP have required emergency feed and veterinary support. There was high risk of disease spreading among weakened animals and thousands of poultry farms and aquaculture businesses have also been destroyed.¹¹ Livestock losses in all provinces are tabulated below:

Damage to Livestock (head of livestock)								
Provinces	Died in Floods	Indirectly Affected	Sold at Low prices	Animal Sheds Destroyed	Fisheries	Poultry farms/ birds	Govt. Veterinary	Extension Dept. Field Offices
Punjab	62 765	4 361 000	9 800	10 700	916	459 000	13	17
Sindh	54 064	7 376 115	NK	33 000	NK	NK	9	0
KP	105 042	739 429	NK	NK	23	NK	NK	NK
Balochistan	51 740	1 621 144	NK	NK	NK	NK	NK	NK
AJK	723	228 000	1 900	2 700	NK	NK	NK	NK
Total	274 334	14 325 688	11 700	46 400	939	459 000	13	17

Source: Preliminary damage assessment in the agriculture sector, the Agriculture Cluster, September 2010, www.pakresponse.info/assessments/AgricultureCluster_Preliminary%20Damage%20Assessment%20in%20the%20Agriculture%20Sector_Sept2010.pdf

Since this is a major source of livelihood, donors and governments have been successful in their efforts to some extent by providing emergency feed, de-wormers, and veterinary supplies to save the livestock of approximately 85,000 households.¹² This will in effect save finances in the coming years.

Crops

Crops are also an important source of revenue for the poor. Pakistan's government estimates that 23 percent or at least 3.6 million hectares of standing crops have been destroyed. The cereal crops of the kharif season account for approximately 35 percent of annual national cereal production and have been badly affected in most of the flooded areas. Other main crops of the season are cotton and sugarcane that, together with rice, account for a large proportion of the country's export earnings and are important cash crops for farmers.¹³ According to the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, the crop losses are estimated to be \$2.8 billion for the fiscal year 2010. This includes cotton with a 16 percent loss of \$835 million, rice with 23 percent loss of \$660 million, sugar with 13 percent loss of \$226 million and fruits, vegetables and legumes with a 21 percent loss of \$1.14 billion.¹⁴

Concerns were raised that food shortage will be a major worry in certain areas of the country. However, the government of Pakistan and donors have provided quality wheat seeds, fertilizers and farm implements

to approximately 200,000 affected farming households. Moreover, efforts were made by the governments aiming to clear flood fragments in preparation for the Rabi (winter) planting season that produces the main staple crop of the country. The total damages to crops are shown in the following table.

Field Crops (damage in hectares)										
Provinces	Cotton	Sugarcane	Rice	Maize	Pulses	Fodder Crops	Summer vegetables	Others	Other Orchards	Province Total
Punjab	315 769	64 467	72 086	2 782	50 865	110 565	5 005	14 410	688	661636
Sindh	99 930	20 072	217 074	0	0	3 934	6 044	7 284	3 150	357488
KP	206	41 986	36 542	92 206	6 807	0	8 137	391	4 745	191020
Balochistan	0	0	41 455	15	0	4 932	35 722	10 245	0	92369
AJK	0	0	113	9 474	0	0	1 296	182	177	11242
Total	415 905	126 525	367 270	104 476	57 673	119 431	56 204	32 513	33 758	1 313 755

Sources: Preliminary damage assessment in the agriculture sector, the Agriculture Cluster, September 2010, www.pakresponse.info/assessments/AgricultureCluster_Preliminary%20Damage%20Assessment%20in%20the%20Agriculture%20Sector_Sept2010.pdf

Irrigation

Irrigation is the main source of water for about 80 percent of the country's farmers to feed their farmlands. The floods have severely affected irrigation systems all over the country and extensive damage and losses to canals, agricultural tools and machinery, including water mills, has been reported. The KP assessment report notes that widespread damages occurred to almost all types of irrigation infrastructure in ten assessed districts and almost 6249 irrigation structures were either partially or completely destroyed.¹⁵ In addition, more than 256 irrigation schemes in Baluchistan have been damaged.¹⁶ This infrastructural destruction will likely have a substantial impact on all crops, including vital cereal crops of the Rabi planting season.¹⁷ Given the high costs of rebuilding the canal network, it is not clear how soon the process will be complete.

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Irrigation infrastructure					
Provinces	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Tube wells / Others	Total
Punjab	55	64	5166	10200	15 485
Sindh	NK	NK	433	NK	433
KP	14	332	2601	437	3384
Balochistan	NK	NK	NK	NK	NK
AJK	132	NK	NK	NK	132
Total	201	396	8 200	10 637	19 434

Sources: Preliminary damage assessment in the agriculture sector, the Agriculture Cluster, September 2010, [www.pakresponse.info/assessments/Agriculture Cluster_Preliminary%20Damage%20Assessment%20in%20the%20Agriculture %20Sector_Sept2010.pdf](http://www.pakresponse.info/assessments/Agriculture%20Cluster_Preliminary%20Damage%20Assessment%20in%20the%20Agriculture%20Sector_Sept2010.pdf)

Currently the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, NDMA, FAO and WFP are dealing with issues related to food security, agriculture, livestock and livelihoods. During the Rabi season, the agriculture cluster reached 750,000 of the 2.3 million agriculture dependent households that were affected by the floods. These households received a combination of wheat seeds, fertilizer, oil seed, and crop and vegetable packages and around 652,000 households continue to receive agriculture assistance, including livestock support and cash-for-work.¹⁸

Infrastructure

The physical infrastructure of the country has been badly damaged as well, causing billions of dollars of losses to the national treasury. According to government estimates, 1.74 million houses, 10,000 schools, 517 health facilities, 1000 bridges and 9 percent of the national highway systems have been affected.¹⁹ In addition, railways tracks in Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Sukkur and Karachi divisions were left in poor condition and have suffered Rs. 4 billion worth of losses.²⁰ According to initial estimates, the Pakistan Electric Power Company has reported a loss of Rs 4 billion to its installations. The cumulative losses of the Water and Power Development Authority and Pepco exceed Rs13 billion.²¹ Moreover, hundreds of kilometres of power and gas lines have been ripped off across the country.

According to UN estimates, more than 4.3 million people have been affected and more than 181,000 homes destroyed in KP alone. Apart from the aforementioned infrastructure damages, secondary data reveals that 1757 villages in Punjab, 368 villages in Balochistan and 2,889 villages in Sindh have been severely affected during the floods.²² Sindh has so far

lost Rs 450 billion rupees (\$5.25 billion) in government infrastructure, crops and private property. Thousands of rice mills, cotton mills, and cottage industries have also gone down.²³

Food Security

Before the flood, 77 million people were facing hunger, 45 million were malnourished and 36 percent of the population was below the poverty line.²⁴ Food insecurity, which was already severe in many areas, is expected to increase further as the floods have affected the country's breadbasket province, Punjab. Since most poor people depend on agriculture, the floods have left them in need of emergency food supplies. Thus, concerns have been raised regarding low food production - especially wheat - next year.²⁵ In essence, loss of household properties, food stock and the damage to standing crops will further increase food prices, increasing food insecurity at the household level.

The government has established a Food Security and Agriculture Working Group to coordinate activities during the recovery phase. The food cluster has succeeded in providing emergency food rations to over 3 million people in August, 6 million people in September and 7 million people in October 2010.²⁶

GDP growth

The impact of the floods on national economy is likely to be huge, leading to unemployment, migration, poverty and other economic and social ills. There were varying estimates of how much economic loss has been caused. According to Prime Minister Gillani, the country's economic growth will drop 2 percent because of the floods. Agriculture is the main pillar of the Pakistani economy, making up some 23 percent of the GDP and supporting millions of households; officials and experts expect agricultural costs to reach billions of dollars, thus greatly exacerbating the GDP growth of an already fragile economy.

Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves depend on the export sector. The country's export target for this year had been \$21 billion, of which agriculture and textiles were expected to account for nearly three-quarters. According to textile industry officials, almost 3 million bales out of 14 million bales of cotton targeted this year have been lost and this will negatively affect 25 percent large-scale manufacturing and ultimately have an adverse impact on exports.²⁷

This will result in lower economic growth and some extreme estimates note that there could be zero GDP growth in 2010-11 while inflation could rise sharply to 25 percent.²⁸ However, Prime Minister Gillani has allayed such fears and said that the national economy is expected to grow 4 percent this year, but that it might end up at 2.5 percent, which will also cause unemployment to rise and affect the incomes of thousands of families²⁹.

Displacement

Natural disasters are the greatest cause of population displacement. The floods of 2010 caused the largest number of displaced people since the country's independence and affected more people than all recent major disasters throughout the world including the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the 2005 Kashmir earthquake and the 2010 Haiti earthquake. Information Minister Qamar Zaman Kaira said that 20 million people had been affected and 7.5 million of them had been displaced.³⁰ The PDMA has additionally stated that a total of 7,277 villages are affected due to floodwater, leaving over 7 million people displaced in Sindh alone.

The danger was that if these people were not quickly rehabilitated, their long-term presence in cities would have caused great stress on the social life of urban areas in the country.

Most people have taken shelter in government schools and relief camps where provincial education authorities report that 1.2 million individuals have settled in.³¹ There were 3,606 relief camps across the country including 748 in KP, 327 in Punjab, 2473 in Sindh, 28 each in Baluchistan and Gilgit Baltistan and 2 in AJK. About 121,000 tents and 110,500 tarpaulins were provided to 1.2 million people. The danger was that if these people were not quickly rehabilitated, their long-term presence in cities would have caused great stress on the social life of urban areas in the country.

Health

Hospitals and health clinics have also been destroyed due to floods. Assessments showed that at least 436 health facilities had been damaged or destroyed. These health units were the primary providers of basic health services mainly in rural areas. Moreover, the health workforce was also affected. For instance, it is estimated that at least 35,000 Lady Health Workers (LHW) have been displaced.³² But the most serious concern was

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that most of the flood affected areas were facing severe problems of diarrhea, acute respiratory infection, skin diseases and suspected malaria as there has been a continuous increase in suspected malaria, acute diarrhea, acute respiratory infections and skin diseases in these regions. Moreover, approximately 485,000 pregnant women were among the affected population, and 50,000 were expected to require some form of specialised healthcare.³³

Province-level survey data highlights that before the floods, malnutrition was already high in Pakistan and 27 percent of children under five were malnourished in Baluchistan, 13 percent of in the KP, and 17 percent in Punjab. For the 20 million flood-affected people, access to safe drinking water and safe sanitary facilities were also inadequate and as a result, waterborne diseases, malaria, skin diseases, respiratory infections and malnutrition have increased; this ratio is very high among the 8.6 million children who make up roughly 50 percent of the total affected population.³⁴

In Sindh alone, different diseases spread in relief camps and the situation all over Pakistan was not much different. Indeed 186,407 people, especially children, were reportedly suffering from diarrhoea, 34,449 from gastroenteritis, 173,592 from acute respiratory infection, 129,265 from malaria, 196,580 from skin disease, 3,855 from head stroke, 76,413 from eye infections and 298,814 from other diseases have been treated in all flood affected districts. Moreover, 295,610 patients were vaccinated for different diseases and 66,352 were provided Hepatitis vaccinations. Besides this, 426 deliveries were reported in relief camps and 355 cases of snake bites also came up.³⁵

Education

The floods have created considerable implications for the future of education in Pakistan. Initial estimates show that the total number of damaged schools stands at 8151 and 5603 schools have been used as relief shelters for about 1.2 million people.³⁶ The number of schools affected from the floods is given in the following table:

	AJK	Balochistan	FATA	Gilgit/ Baltistan	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Punjab	Sindh	National
TOTAL Secondary Schools Damaged/Destroyed	21	25	7	8	52	141	121	375
<i>Completely Destroyed</i>	2	2	3	1	9	19	54	90
<i>Partially Damaged</i>	19	23	4	7	43	122	67	285
TOTAL Middle Schools Damaged/Destroyed	47	37	14	25	81	264	97	565
<i>Completely Destroyed</i>	16	1	2	6	20	34	43	122
<i>Partially Damaged</i>	31	36	12	19	61	230	54	443
TOTAL Primary Schools Damaged/Destroyed	126	495	155	46	737	2,412	5,417	9,388
<i>Completely Destroyed</i>	20	25	30	12	197	604	2,627	3,515
<i>Partially Damaged</i>	106	470	125	34	540	1,808	2,790	5,873
GRAND TOTAL Schools Damaged/Destroyed	194	557	176	79	870	2,817	5,655	10,348

Source: Joint Damage and Need Assessment conducted by ADB and WB commissioned by GoP

There was a need to provide temporary school structures as well as school supplies such as tents, school-in-a-box kits and recreation kits for fully damaged schools to ensure continuation of education during the transition period from tents to permanent buildings especially for the displaced families. The government has taken several steps for the rebuilding of these schools through its education cluster. Overall achievements of the cluster have included the repairing of 866 flood-affected schools in KP, Balochistan, Sindh and Punjab. Moreover, about 3,067 temporary learning centres have been established, reaching out to almost 285,000 affected children of which 39 percent are girls.³⁷

Aid

Since this natural disaster was bigger than any recent disaster, there was a dire need of aid to Pakistan both at national and international levels. Approximately Rs. 2 billion has been collected in the PM's Relief Fund and \$953.7 million has been pledged by donors, of which \$142.47 million has been received.³⁸ The World Bank has increased flood aid worth \$1 billion while the IMF has approved \$450 million in emergency financing

to help Pakistan with its worst-ever humanitarian disaster.³⁹ The loans were concessional and carry no interest payments.⁴⁰ According to a UN report, so far 70 percent of the UN flash appeal of \$460 million has been funded while additional direct donations and pledges amount to \$1 billion.⁴¹

The U.S. headed the list of donor countries with a commitment of \$200 million, followed by the U.K., Saudi Arabia, the European Union, Germany, Canada and the UN. Saudi Arabia has quietly bypassed the U.S. as the single largest aid donor in real terms, with over \$140 million.⁴² Although China also faced natural disasters in the year 2010, it donated an additional RMB 60 million emergency humanitarian aid, bringing its total relief aid to more than RMB 130 million (\$20 million).⁴³

Iran was among the first countries to send relief goods to Pakistan and has dispatched 8 cargoes weighting 500 tons together. Moreover, Iran has also allocated a sum of \$100 million as relief assistance to the flood-affected people of Pakistan,⁴⁴ and has sent 500 physicians, nurses and relief workers to provide medical services as well.⁴⁵ India's decision to increase its flood relief assistance to Pakistan from \$5 million to \$25 million has also placed it among the top-ten donor countries.⁴⁶

Donor	Funding (US\$)	% of Grand Total	Uncommitted pledges (US\$)
United States	433825302	32.9%	0
Japan	246863950	18.7%	0
Private(Individual & organizations)	106979444	8.1%	100000
European Commission	103535908	7.9%	0
United Kingdom	78954825	6%	0
Australia	47816168	3.6%	0
Canada	47801077	3.6%	0
Central Emergency Respond Fund (CERF)	41980782	3.2%	0
Norway	36988765	2.8%	0
India	26094092	2%	0
Sweden	23699592	1.8%	0
Germany	22585765	1.7%	0

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Netherland	16223174	1.2%	0
Spain	13806394	1%	0
UN agencies	9912786	0.8%	0
Denmark	8772211	0.7%	0
Finland	7113331	0.5%	0
Belgium	6721832	0.5%	0
Italy	4610841	0.3%	0
Saudi Arabia	4158904	0.3%	90841098
Austria	3982423	0.3%	0
UAE	3919207	0.3%	0
Russian Federation	3570000	0.3%	0
Luxemburg	2945342	0.2%	0
New Zealand	2182680	0.2%	0
Others	12944754	1%	1063532
Grand Total	1317989549	100%	92004628

Compiled by OCHA on the basis of information provided by donors and appealing organization, http://fts.unocha.org/reports/daily/ocha_R5_A905___1104250206.pdf

* Funding = Contributions + Commitments

Over 4.3 million people have been assisted with food rations in 54 districts in KP, Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan and AJK. Along with government and UN agencies, over 50 organisations are involved in food relief efforts. Since the inception of the flood response, it is estimated that more than 50,000 metric tons have been distributed to people in need.⁴⁷ Both national and international organizations involved in relief activities and the funding position of these organizations is given below.

Sector	Amount (million)	%
NDMA	108.94	12.25
GOP	159.17	17.89
UN	412.84	46.41
NGO/INGO	189.09	21.26
Unclear	5.29	0.59
Total	889.58	98.54

Source: EAD Islamabad

Economic Affair Division (EAD) Funding Position Organization Wise (as of August 27, 2010)

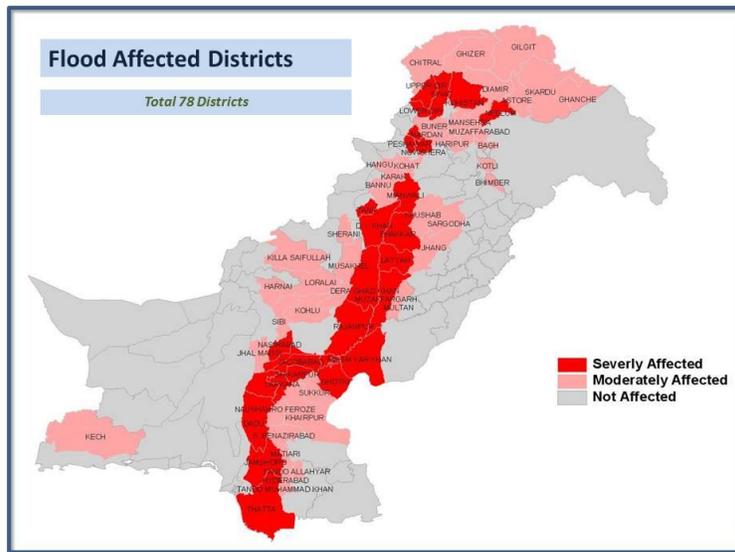
The government has also distributed the *Watan* cards to flood affected families, entitling each family to Rs. 20,000 as compensation payment. National Database Registration Authority (NADRA) has taken the responsibility of registering eligible households for this scheme.

In all, the damages caused by floods are multidimensional, affecting social, political and economic sectors. For a successful process of rehabilitation and recovery, the response too needs to be multidimensional. As examined in this paper, agricultural and infrastructural re-establishment and livelihood opportunities for the affected masses should be foremost in the minds of policy-makers and analysts alike. Moreover, there should be short-term and long-term targets covering all areas of the country if a smooth post-disaster transition to sustained development is to ensue.

Part II: U.N. response to Pakistan floods⁴⁸

Facing disaster upon disaster, whether man-made or due to forces of nature, seems to have become the fate of Pakistan. In a new chapter in this ongoing story, with the country already struggling against militancy and radicalization as well as a weak economy, a new catastrophe came up in the shape of unprecedented summer floods last year.

Heavy rainfall that started on July 22, 2010 plunged Pakistan into deeper trouble and devastated all provinces. To gain some insight into the scale of disaster, statistics are worth mulling over. According to government officials, the summer 2010 floods killed over 1,760 people and caused extensive damage to infrastructure. Crops worth \$1 billion were damaged according to the World Bank figures. In addition, as per UNDP official figures, nearly 20 million people and an area as large as Italy and larger than more than half the countries in the world – some 100,000 square kilometers - was adversely affected and 1.6 million were left damaged. The floods have indeed left Pakistan to deal with what has been nothing short of a national tragedy. The map below shows the areas affected by March 27, 2011.



Source: <http://www.pakistanfloods.pk/images/latestmap.jpg>

The United Nations (UN) showed complete solidarity with the people of Pakistan in that hour of need and its response was commendable. The UN has played, and continues to play a critical role by raising awareness among segments of the international community and in mobilizing aid besides taking part in relief activities itself. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon took personal interest in the situation, visiting Pakistan on August 15, 2010 to see the situation, and saying that, ‘I will never forget the destruction and suffering I have witnessed today. The scale of the disaster is so large so many people, in so many places, in so much need.’⁴⁹

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Furthermore, in his remarks to the UN General Assembly Meeting on “Strengthening of the Coordination of Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Assistance of the United Nations, including Special Economic Assistance”, he said that ‘Pakistan is facing a slow-motion tsunami; it is a global disaster, a global challenge. It is one of the tests of the global solidarity in our times.’⁵⁰ His comments helped in developing a clearer picture of the destruction and displacement of people and led to further support from non-UN actors.

Before Ban Ki-Moon's visit, the UN launched an appeal of \$460 million for the flood victims but the response was sluggish and not very generous. UN's financial tracking system stated that as of August 9, 2010, the international community had committed less than \$45million, with an additional \$91 million pledged.⁵¹ However, after the submission of the Secretary General's report to the General Assembly, donor response improved. The UN noted that it had received \$307 million, or about 70% of the \$460 million that it had appealed for in August.

UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Ms. Valerie Amos announced another \$10million in aid from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).⁵² She called on international donors and governments to provide more funds; on visiting Pakistan, she surveyed the devastation and said that, 'It is one of the biggest disasters we have faced...We can and we must continue to save lives and alleviate sufferings.'⁵³ Similarly, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Mr. Antonio Guterres, visited the flood stricken areas and hoped that the world community would continue to respond with more generosity to new UN appeals.

Apart from these high level official visits, UN aid agencies along with other international aid organizations have helped Pakistan greatly in relief efforts and are still playing a vital role in easing the miseries of the affected population. The following agencies have been prominent in this regard.

UN World Food Program (WFP)

In its immediate response, the WFP reached out to some 430,000 people in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and around 3 million displaced people all over the country, delivering food rations to those affected. The WFP distributed monthly family food rations comprising nutritious ready-to-use food supplements for children too.

The WFP planned to assist families and help meet food needs as the people rebuild their livelihoods through such schemes such as the school meal programmes. It aimed to provide logistical expertise and mobilize its network in Pakistan to help the government and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reach farmers with seed kits and other tools to support the rehabilitation of damaged agricultural land and infrastructure.⁵⁴

The WFP heads the UN Emergency Logistics Cluster – meaning that other agencies need its expertise to transport goods and people in difficult

conditions. Simon Hacker, coordinator of the WFP's Logistics machine in Pakistan, noted that his team's hard work has resulted in four-hub air operations that have helped the WFP and other UN agencies in making regular deliveries of things to the north and south, including an air bridge to the southern city of Jacobabad which had been cut off by roads for several weeks.⁵⁵

The WFP has been providing food assistance to around 5.2 million flood affected people across the country. In the south, in the struggling communities that lie along the Indus River to the north of Hyderabad, it delivered emergency food packages that included basket full with wheat flour, pulses, salt, oil and special nutritional products. WFP planned to scale up its support for community projects aimed at rebuilding vital infrastructure and is targeted food assistance towards the wider recovery of villages and communities through projects like 'food for work' and 'cash for work.'⁵⁶ Clearly, the work being done by the WFP is extensive, comprehensive and collaborative and cuts across several sectors.

UN World Health Organization (WHO)

The World Health Organization has been working alongside government health authorities and its partners in providing all kinds of assistance. In response to the floods, WHO operated about 1200 mobile health teams in affected regions. These clinics provided services in medical consultations, vaccinations, maternal and child care, management of non-communicable diseases, and health education. It has been reported that up to 2 million people have received medical care through these units.⁵⁷

WHO's regional director Dr. Hussein Gezairy himself visited the southern part of Pakistan and observed the provision of health facilities. WHO has given medicines to partners to cover the potential health needs of 703,000 people in Punjab, including 57 emergency health kits, 63 diarrhea disease kits and 150 vials of anti-snake venom.⁵⁸ Moreover, it mobilized its resources to prevent a second wave of deaths from various diseases, with diarrhoeal disease centres treating a 30% increase in numbers over the last year. Given the conditions of many camps as well as in the areas where dirty and polluted waters continue to wreak havoc of a different nature, WHO ensured that its activities are enhanced as the demand rises.

UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

In its immediate response to monsoon 2010 floods, the FAO placed a well-established team with over 100 national and eight international staff in the five flood-affected provinces at seventeen locations. The team was supported by technical experts covering areas such as livestock production, animal health, plant production, irrigation, gender, fisheries and forestry.

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The FAO distributed supplementary animal feed and veterinary support to 57,000 families in Kohistan, and also planned the same for 12,600 families in Nowshera and Charsadda districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. UNFAO field offices in Sukkur (Sindh) and Multan (Punjab) provided logistical support for joint assessments and hosting humanitarian partners involved in the flood response. The FAO also led the process of evaluating agricultural damages and formulating a rehabilitation plan. It plans to get to 800,000 families with a focus on early recovery and rehabilitation needs in the areas of crops, irrigation, livestock, animal health, aquaculture, and forestry.⁵⁹

The FAO has spent \$54 million of international donor funding by buying and distributing quality wheat seeds as part of its emergency intervention that began in August 2010. With this investment, a crop worth of \$190 million in wheat flour is expected to yield enough food for at least six months for half a million poor rural households. As part of its immediate response to the floods, the FAO also led the UN's agriculture cluster, incorporating over 200 organizations and reached 1.4 million farming families across Pakistan. The FAO has saved the lives of almost a million livestock by providing temporary shelter and enough de-worming tablets and dry animal feed for nearly 290,000 families. The aid agency is also supervising a thousand cash-for-work schemes by which workers are paid to clear irrigation canals blocked with silt and flood debris. FAO is also planning to distribute quality rice seeds to almost 250,000 families for the forthcoming planting season.⁶⁰

UN High Commission For Refugees (UNHCR)

UNHCR also responded vigorously in its capacity to help the flood victims; this is not surprising since one of the greatest fallouts of the floods is the refugee situation. The UNHCR assisted the government by providing tents and non-food items (NFI) and has facilitated more than 335,000 people in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh with the provision of 20,000 tents, 78,000 plastic tarpaulins, 105,000 blankets, 75,500 sleeping mats, 23,000 kitchen sets, 43,000 jerry cans, 36,000 plastic buckets, 26 MT soaps and 42,000 mosquito nets. Additionally, some 5,000 NFI kits and 4,000 tents were provided to Punjab and Sindh. UNHCR also set up two out-posted mobile units in Swat and Kohat in order to simplify the distribution of relief items and assess the situation better.⁶¹

As part of its shelter programme, the UNHCR funded the construction of 500 one-room shelters in Baluchistan for flood displaced people and provided emergency shelter to nearly 2 million people as part of the joint humanitarian effort by the end of January 2011.

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UN Development Programme (UNDP)

The UNDP Director for Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific Ajay Chhibber paid a visit to the flood-stricken areas and said that “what is happening in Pakistan is not just about recovery and rehabilitation of life; it is also about restoring hope and building futures.” UNDP worked out a \$100 million early recovery programme within the overall context of the UN response. Priority areas comprised revitalizing livelihoods through such means as monetary grants and ‘cash for work’ programmes, rebuilding community and local governance infrastructures, providing vital public services and reducing risk in future.⁶³ This programme was intended to help people become self-reliant, resume income-generating activities, return home and regain a sense of normalcy, making it a first step towards full recovery. The UNDP is actively assisting Pakistan’s various disaster management agencies as well.

The UNDP is helping flood-affected areas people in reviving livelihoods and basic infrastructure through job creation, and strengthening of local government offices. It has helped people in building new houses in Sindh; these houses have solar lanterns and solar water heaters while communal places are lit by solar street lights. They were built by local communities through cash-for-work schemes, which offer a means for people to earn a living while rebuilding their communities.⁶⁴

UN and its partners on September 17, 2010 made their largest-ever natural disaster appeal of \$2.07 billion so that the process could continue. Previously, the largest natural disaster appeal of \$1.49 billion had been made for the Haitian earthquake victims earlier in the year.

UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF, like other UN aid agencies, has assisted Pakistan in dealing with the flood crisis. It has, along with Pakistani authorities, helped in repairing wells and drinking water sources and provided chlorine tablets for water purification.⁶⁵ It delivered hygiene kits, water tankers and high energy biscuits; repaired 73 tubewells that benefit 800,000 people and supported the setting up of 24 medical camps facilitating approximately 1 million people.⁶⁶

UNICEF delivered a chartered airliner carrying 100 metric tonnes of emergency relief items that included health kits, nutrition supplies, midwifery kits and tarpaulins for flood-affected families.⁶⁷ Another vital contribution was the setting up of 'temporary learning and recreational centres' in each camp for displaced people where children could learn in safe environments; caregivers in these centres taught basic primary-school subjects through semi-structured learning but also encouraged artistic expression and recreation. Each location was given a school-in-a-box kit providing essential teaching and learning materials for children in emergency settings. According to a UNICEF official, the main purpose of these is to help re-establish learning as a first step in the direction of restoring normal schooling following such an emergency.⁶⁸

While the aforementioned agencies are actively helping the affected population, the UN and its partners on September 17, 2010 made their largest-ever natural disaster appeal of \$2.07 billion so that the process could continue. Previously, the largest natural disaster appeal of \$1.49

billion had been made for the Haitian earthquake victims earlier in the year. The appeal seeks funding for agriculture, camp coordination and management, community restoration, coordination, education, food, health, logistics, nutrition, protection, shelter, and water, sanitation and hygiene.

According to UN officials, this \$2 billion appeal will help the UN to deliver aid to 14 million people over a 12-month period. In addition, the UN also held a high level ministerial meeting on Pakistan at its headquarters in New York on September 19, 2010, to show solidarity with the people of Pakistan in this difficult time. It was chaired jointly by the Mr. Ban Ki-Moon and Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Quershi.

Conclusion

The commitment and leadership shown by the United Nations during and after the disaster in Pakistan is appreciable. All of its agencies are playing their part in facilitating the vulnerable people distraught by the floods and revised funding appeals have also been launched after assessing damages.

The scale of destruction is so large that it will be difficult for Pakistan to cope on its own. The country needs enduring help from the UN as well as other members of the international community to provide a new life to its flood-affected population. Although donors have begun to respond generously to UN appeals, the response is still slow and inadequate. As the aid operation now moves from its emergency phase to 'early recovery' to rebuild homes and restore livelihoods, the UN needs quick and substantial help from governments around the world. It is critical that the donors facilitate the UN both technically and financially. With hundreds of thousands of people still living in temporary camps and the massive damage caused to infrastructure, property and livelihoods, it will require the best efforts from the UN and its partners in the coming months and years; the global community should not, as Ban Ki-Moon stated, 'let this natural disaster turn into a man-made catastrophe.'

Part III: Strategic impacts of the floods in Pakistan⁶⁹

While there is no 'good' time for a natural disaster, the floods of 2010 came at the worst possible time for Pakistan. Suffering economically and involved in a seemingly endless battle against militancy, the country has also been trying to create a more balanced foreign policy. Since relations

with, say India or the U.S., directly influence internal policy debate, this has become an essential paradigm of stability. Given Pakistan's oft-quoted strategic and geographical importance, currently manifest in the situation in Afghanistan and its linked but separate military operations in Pakistan, there is a need to assess the impact of a natural disaster of such magnitude using this broader strategic domain.

In this paper, such considerations of the floods will be analysed keeping in view firstly, aid dynamics and delivery since the discourse on development aid is largely taken to be part of the strategic narrative. Secondly, the impact on the security environment and potential for a rise in popular militancy encompassing the alleged threat of religious charities, which is an issue that was brought up specially, but not exclusively, by the western media will be addressed. And thirdly, a brief speculative discussion on possible future trends will be provided.

Aid delayed

Initial national response and a realization of the scale of the deluge came slow at best. Relevant authorities were clearly not prepared to face such a catastrophe and internal rifts meant that it took some time before the floods became more than back-page news in the international media. Thus the corresponding international aid response was lacklustre and slow off the mark.

Understandably, comparisons have been made with the response to other recent natural disasters in order to gain perspective. The floods, we were told, impacted more people than those affected by the Asian tsunami and the Haitian earthquake combined. In fact they may well have been the 'worst natural disaster in modern memory', requiring the 'largest aid effort in modern history.'⁷⁰ And yet, the aid response had been 'lamentable',⁷¹ as had been the initial media coverage.

A report published by the Brookings Institute, a U.S.-based think tank, calls the limited media coverage 'puzzling'. In its analysis of major global English-language print and media broadcast, it concludes that the floods have been covered 'far less' when compared with other major disasters. While other reasons are also cited, the report stresses that,

The negligible media attention in the English-language press is certainly a factor in the limited support for flood victims from private individuals, foundations and corporations, especially in the U.S. Americans are traditionally very generous in reaching into their pockets to respond to

disasters and have time and again supported U.S. charities as illustrated by the \$644 million raised within the first 19 days after the Haiti earthquake and the \$587 million raised within three weeks of Hurricane Katrina. As of August 17, private donations had only reached \$1 million, prompting George Soros to direct his foundations to help fill this gap with \$5 million in relief assistance.⁷²

Pakistan's image problem has been blamed as the primary factor for such a poor response. The major aspects of this are: one, perceptions of mismanagement, corruption and incapacity of the government, and two, a threat of terrorism and militancy that is assumed to pervade the Pakistani society.

Pakistan's image problem has been blamed as the primary factor for such a poor response. The major aspects of this are: one, perceptions of mismanagement, corruption and incapacity of the government, and two, a threat of terrorism and militancy that is assumed to pervade the Pakistani society. And as the floods began, state incapacity coupled, with a visible presence of some banned religious charities allegedly affiliated to militant groups only led to these perceptions being strengthened.

While Pakistan was blamed for not 'marketing' itself better,⁷³ in what is a frustrating but realistic, if also crude assessment of how global aid mechanisms function, this is not the only cause for a slow and limited aid response. Other factors include theoretical perspectives that deem the admittedly low amount of aid as adequate given the global financial recession that caused a 'donor fatigue'; this point-of-view assesses that the aid system is simply not designed to deal with more than one major disaster in a given year – and that position has already been taken up by the Haitian earthquake.⁷⁴

Moreover, the very nature of floods makes it difficult to gain immediate attention. Unlike 'one-time calamitous events' such as earthquakes, floods are 'creeping affairs' that take time to build up and create an impact.⁷⁵ And unlike the casualties of other recent natural disasters, the lives lost in the floods made up a comparatively small number; and again it is the number of deaths that immediately appeals to the philanthropic eye and not the numbers 'affected', in what is a more ambiguous and abstract concept.

The irony was that the very reason for the need of foreign financial assistance became instead a reason for the lack of it. The State is not capable enough to deal with the situation – and donors are wary of providing huge amounts to a government considered incapable.

The destruction of livelihood and infrastructure will take decades of post-crisis reconstruction. If the oil spill in the U.S. was Obama's Katrina, the floods presented a Herculean task for the Pakistani State and one that dwarfed any imaginable comparison at the time. The gap between State capacity, information, competence and resources, and the scale of the disaster became shockingly visible. The irony was that the very reason for the need of foreign financial assistance became instead a reason for the lack of it. The State is not capable enough to deal with the situation – and donors are wary of providing

huge amounts to a government considered incapable. Pakistan's image problem remains a major factor and perceptions of government incapacity and widespread terrorism, in the words of one analyst, led to a discouraging aid response since 'the world community particularly the West considers that Pakistan stand between 'military and militancy.'⁷⁶

The exact amount of aid can only be speculated upon since much of it comes from unofficial and private sources and there exist a number of groups working in the rehabilitation process. This brings us to perhaps the more important aspect of aid: its deliverance. Given the sheer number of stakeholders – NGOs, state institutions, religious organizations, media teams, student groups and the military - and the significance of relationships between state and non-state actors in Pakistan, the domestic strategic concerns that arose as a result of the floods also necessitate attention.

Military, NGOs, and government

A distinct outcome of the floods was a general dependence on civil society groups and the military. Mistrust and allegations of corruption on the government aside, this also encompasses a more serious problem of low visibility, as other institutions including NGOs and religious charities took precedence in people's eyes.⁷⁷ More specifically, it was the army as the single most well-organised and resourceful institution that garnered respect, attention and support. Some attempted to play up this situation,

hinting at a stronger political role for the military again. However, as rightly noted by one observer, this was a time when ‘normal politics is on hold’ as ‘the very nature of the response almost necessitates a prominent role for the military.’⁷⁸ If anything, the desire to gain political leverage using the circumstances was seen to be in bad taste.

Growing recognition and concern led to high-profile visits that included UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon and his personal appeals for ‘unprecedented’ help to avert a destruction that is ‘beyond imagination’.⁷⁹ Indeed the UN remained at the forefront for highlighting the plight of the people and warning that delayed help could lead to disastrous consequences.⁸⁰ Pledges were made and much aid distributed, but an evident reluctance to simply hand over financial help was observed as donors preferred to avail the civilian sectors and provide goods rather than cash.

While suggestions of greater military role in politics and calls for a social revolution came from some political groups may be dismissed as the unorthodox politics of opportunistic times, they did take attention away from the real work at hand.

This role of NGOs has had its critics, including Pakistan’s premier.⁸¹ However, donors’ collaborations with these civil society organisations as well as with the military shows that a diverse set of bodies is required to reach out to communities in need of attention. Moreover, the nature of many private donations, i.e. in kind rather than in cash, necessitates an existing network and structure for distribution, a characteristic that obviously makes NGOS, charities and the military a reasonable and understandable preference for many private donors.

For a country not unfamiliar with political upheavals, this could have led to some discord, and as mentioned above, there were people trying to take advantage. While suggestions of greater military role in politics and calls for a social revolution came from some political groups may be dismissed as the unorthodox politics of opportunistic times, they did take attention away from the real work at hand. This was something that the government could ill-afford as the aftermath of the floods provided it with an opportunity to regain trust that had been palpably lacking.

The armed forces instead took the plaudits when it came to comprehensive nationwide management of flood relief efforts. Physical and material resources available to the military make this unsurprising and suggestions that it took the place of the government are countered by claims that it is in fact an agent of the State working at its behest.⁸² Such technicalities may be lost on the common man, for whom the army became a trustworthy and reliable avenue of support amid speculative and exaggerated reports that fell just short of predicting a military takeover.⁸³ Of more immediate concern to the military were its operations against militants and that may well have been the primary concern of the U.S. and its allies when it came to aiding Pakistan during the floods.

War, terror and charity

Arguably the most important geopolitical and strategic impact of the floods covering both internal and external dynamics, relates to the situation preceding them by a number of years. Operations against militants in some parts of the country had been dominating headlines since some time before the waters came pouring, and the country was berated for not doing enough, most prominently on its reluctance to carry out large-scale operations in the North Waziristan region. Needless to say, with the military's leadership in the flood relief, this was delayed indefinitely.

With this comes the question of whether the ongoing fight against militancy is bound to suffer as well. While there were initial concerns that the army's role in flood relief could derail its war efforts, they turned out to be largely misplaced, even though there were reports that delays and new strategies being applied in various regions were are 'the first sign of the strain the countrywide flooding has put on Pakistan's armed forces, which are overstretched in dealing with a virulent insurgency.'⁸⁴ These remained, however, marginal concerns and did not prompt panic. And indeed,

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months down the line, there has been no reason to suggest that the floods have detracted the army's long-term plans.

At the centre of the relief efforts was the support provided by the U.S., which becomes important in the current phase of political and military alliance accompanied by public anti-Americanism. While not the only major donor, its role is unique. Indeed it led relief efforts and whatever the veiled criticisms of ulterior motives, the distinctly humanitarian must be lauded. Keen to prove commitment to a people that had only recently and predictably shown strong anti-American feelings,⁸⁵ the U.S. was first in line with effective and quick assistance. The hope was that this could be an opportunity to win 'hearts and minds'. But this can only be successful to a very limited extent given that the sentiment rife in the country was largely due to war efforts that continued unhindered – even as the floods began and U.S. aid was flowing in, drone attacks, a major bone of contention, also continued. Moreover, with the rise in the number of drone strikes, civilian casualties dressed up as collateral damage, and the case of Raymond Davis dominating headlines in the succeeding months, relief efforts of the U.S. have not achieved the strategic goals, even if the humanitarian goals were achieved.

Even a dip in anti-U.S. sentiment should be studied with caution since, as a survey after the 2005 earthquake exhibited, there was a temporary period when a slightly better opinion of the U.S. came about in Pakistan after its post-earthquake relief efforts. If there is a similar trend now, then going by very recent history, this too was likely to be ephemeral – and that in fact has turned out to be true. Moreover, with American aid being visible more in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province that attracts U.S. strategic interests, motives again come into question.⁸⁶

With this also came the concern that the floods will distract the war effort in Afghanistan. NATO supplies were slow to reach Afghanistan along lines that provided the necessary links between the two countries.⁸⁷ However no serious limitations surfaced and there was no evidence to suggest that the situation in Afghanistan was affected by the floods in Pakistan. Indeed, even as the delivery of supplies goes, there have been since other incidents that show the cleavages in Pakistan-U.S. ties, where Mother Nature cannot be blamed.

There was also the issue, perhaps more exaggerated in the international media, of religious charities winning support of a decimated public, which was likely to turn to militancy, or at least radicalism, as a result of the floods. While slowly losing interest in the matter –

understandably since their fears did not appear to be grounded in reality – this was initially a major concern for many analysts. State failure, the argument went, is going to lead to a victory for the terrorists. An editorial in the New York Times for instance, echoes the threat for Pakistan, and by implication for the world, in the following words:

It [the presence of religious charities] also is a strategic threat — to the stability of Pakistan’s nuclear-armed government and to American efforts to suppress Al Qaeda and other extremists wreaking havoc on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. These groups are eager to use the crisis to sow more resentment toward Islamabad and Washington and win new adherents for their nihilistic cause. The world, especially the United States, must not blow this one. We worry it already could be doing that.⁸⁸

One such charity is the Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), the alleged philanthropic wing of the Lashkar-e-Tayyiba. Just as in the 2005 earthquake, its presence was visible, widespread and constant – it was on the field in some areas even before government bodies could begin a relief process. This caused significant concern and sporadic instances of orphaned children being ‘recruited’ were also reported. However, while the hysteria need not be dismissed unequivocally, it remained an exaggeration at best. Moreover, it blurred the fact that many legitimate religious charities were also working along with the few banned ones. Both, however, note that it was the absence of the government that necessitated that the void be filled.⁸⁹ And with the widespread support that groups within Pakistan’s religious civil society have, their almost ubiquitous presence was not surprising.

Given the scale of devastation, any help provided was welcomed. And even if resources were available, it was of utmost importance that they be distributed to the right people. That requires trained and committed personnel and a distribution network - something that organisations such as the JuD, for better or worse, provided, much to the chagrin of many other groups. And even if the concerns are taken as valid, which to an extent and for individual cases they might be, things need to be taken in perspective.

One, there is the almost completely ignored aspect of the thousands of workers, who might be motivated simply by philanthropic intentions with no awareness of any alleged possible ties between groups’ hierarchy and militants. They may not even have religion, let alone extremist, inclinations. Two, the Pakistani public is generally against militant groups as has constantly been exhibited in broad surveys.⁹⁰ JuD is perceived to be

a well-functioning charity organization and that is what explains its support among the masses since many of the regions affected by the floods, where religious charities may be functioning, have never had the 'concept of terrorism' leave alone a history of militancy.⁹¹ And three, any support is likely to be welcomed by people; and while it can plausibly lead to grudging respect, it does not altogether cause a recruitment drive.

The U.S. has been involved in relief efforts deeply, and it is unthinkable that overnight anti-Americanism will turn to pro-Americanism. The help is welcomed, praised and respected just as it was after the earthquake. Similarly, the JuD also commanded much respect during the earthquake efforts, but as the last five years have not shown any reported instances of large-scale recruitment for militant groups or diminishing anti-Americanism, it is quite likely that the floods of 2010 will also not lead to either JuD or the U.S. being able to garner mass support from people who are simply trying to rebuild their lives.

That religious groups have an effective nationwide network is an established fact. Indeed with tens of thousands of people being fed and sheltered by, among others, the Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation (allegedly an offshoot of the JuD) the concern is that armed militants might seize this opportunity to stage a 'comeback'.⁹² However, with the multitude of groups at work – with human rights activists, youth, students, social workers and NGOs all involved – distinct militant fallout is hard to imagine.

A more balanced view by Adil Najam rightly presaged that militant groups were unlikely to gain mass support although attacks against government structures would be likely to increase. Similarly, at least in the short-term, religious charities cannot compete with aid from the U.S. or help from the state – it is the long-term sustained effort that will end up defining a future role for militant charitable groups. In the words of former CIA Chief of Station in Islamabad, Bob Grenier, "I don't see the situation posing a great opportunity for radical organizations such as JuD to gain mass appeal at the expense of the government and of the Army for their response to the crisis. I suspect that radical Islamic organizations are themselves overwhelmed by the scope of the calamity."⁹³

It is pertinent to note that the unprecedented devastation will inevitably lead to a transforming effect in many parts of the country if not the entire nation. Without a concentrated effort to provide alternate and diversified employment, shelter and food, chances are that a social upheaval will occur. Growing frustrations could catalyse a shift towards an environment

that is conducive to a social drive towards militancy. And for that long-term situation to be avoided, government institutions need to regain trust and show quick results. Already we find some trends in place and others are speculated upon. And with social, economic, political and demographic changes in place, this transforming effect of the floods may well end up defining the future for Pakistan.

Trends

With the cumulative effects of various crises, a transforming effect is certainly in place. As the waters raged all over the country, affecting one-fifth of the population, there were fires raging in other parts. It is unreasonable to suggest that instances of madness such as the one witnessed in the public lynching in Sialkot that occurred at the same time, and other signs of anarchy are direct consequences of the floods. But it is also unreasonable to not make any connection at all. The fact remains that a weak state, failing civilian institutions, dismal response to the floods, political infighting at the worst of times, and mistrust and perceptions of corruption all led to a significant country-wide unrest among an already agitated and frustrated public, leading to people taking the law in their own hands.

The fact remains that a weak state, failing civilian institutions, dismal response to the floods, political infighting at the worst of times, and mistrust and perceptions of corruption all led to a significant country-wide unrest among an already agitated and frustrated public, leading to people taking the law in their own hands.

And so we saw a state of anarchy, or at least impending anarchy. To reiterate the obvious, the floods had no direct impact on for instance, the mob lynching of two brothers in Sialkot, or a killing spree in Karachi, or bombings on Shiite processions during the month of Ramadan, or even on the nationwide despondence at alleged corruption in its fabled cricket team. But connections can be made, and connections have been made, and these connections are understandable. All these are signposts for drastic action that needs to be taken before complete anarchy ensues and ideological and class-based belligerence ends up defining the future of this country.

One livelihood option that has been omnipresent in Pakistan has been that of rural and small-town male migration to urban centres and to the Gulf. In the post-flood situation, the former is likely to be a key emergent trend that will lead to severe economic and especially social imbalances.

And yet there are appearing trends that are likely to exacerbate the situation, and these come as a direct result of the floods. A bleak economic outlook that was already dismal has become even worse. On the one hand is the overall economic situation of the country that encompasses rising inflation rates,⁹⁴ a notable reduction in GDP due to the destruction caused by the floods,⁹⁵ and the corresponding expenses in relief and long-term reconstruction that has caused some civil society groups to call for debt cancellation.⁹⁶ On the other hand is the less statistical but more drastic corresponding concerns of inflation on goods of everyday need, food insecurities, unemployment and lack of livelihood opportunities. Clearly,

the emerging twin trend of poor national economic situation and people's frustrations as a result is a primary threat that Pakistan faces.

One livelihood option that has been omnipresent in Pakistan has been that of rural and small-town male migration to urban centres and to the Gulf. In the post-flood situation, the former is likely to be a key emergent trend that will lead to severe economic and especially social imbalances. Here as well, multiple corresponding sub-trends are likely to arise. Gender issues, insecurities and issues in female-headed households in rural families as the male leaves to seek employment elsewhere, are an understudied segment of the discourse on migration in Pakistan. Issues of culture and 'pardah' have caused some, perhaps unavoidable, concern among those displaced by the floods,⁹⁷ and similar intangible problems are likely on a larger scale once the narrative of a post-flood situation emerges.

What all this embodies is widespread social unrest. The immediate outcome of the floods has seen unavoidable circumstances and problems for the displaced people and how the long-term implications of food insecurities, employment, livelihoods and health concerns are dealt with will possibly become the defining factor in carving Pakistan's future. And with the security situation worsening, such are the conditions that will

determine whether the implausible concerns of masses turning to militancy will end up being the unlikely reality of tomorrow.

For all the negatives, there are also some positive signs and even some hopes of finding ways to create opportunities for success in the worst of conditions. The floods showed again a spirit of nationhood as scores of NGOs, charities and philanthropic bodies were privately funded and volunteerism reached an all-time high. And with a distinctly religious and spiritual public that has often attributed such natural events to God's plans and pointed to inward deficiencies, there is also a tendency to look to the future with hope. And so we find that it might well be that the public show of support, spirit of revival and charity, and helping brethren in the time of need, leads to a more unified Pakistan. And even if that is an irrational hope, it needs to be seized and targeted if some good is to come out of a remarkably despondent state of affairs.

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