PRESIDENT FOR A DAY

FLOODINGS

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TOPIC - FLODDINGS

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HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Pakistan, officially called The Islamic Republic of Pakistan, is located in South Asia. It borders on Iran and Afghanistan to the west, China to the North, India to the east and the Arabic sea to the south. Asif Ali Zaedari is the current president (since 2008) and the capitol city is Islamabad, in the northern part of the country.

The river Indus flows, down, through the country into the so-called Indus-Valley. They valley is cultivated and wheat and cotton are primarily being grown there– both goods are of great importance to the economy of the country. The rest of the country, however, consist mainly of mountains and is relatively barren.

With its 796.095 km2, Pakistan is almost 19 times as large as Denmark – with a population exceeding 190.000.000, it is almost 32 times that of the Danish population. 95% of the population are Muslim (75% Sunni and 20% Shia) while the remaining 5% are e.g. Christians or Hindu. The official languages in Pakistan are Urdu and English.

Pakistan is divided into several areas; Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sindh, The federal district of Islamabad, a Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA), Azad Kashmir and Gilgit–Baltistan.

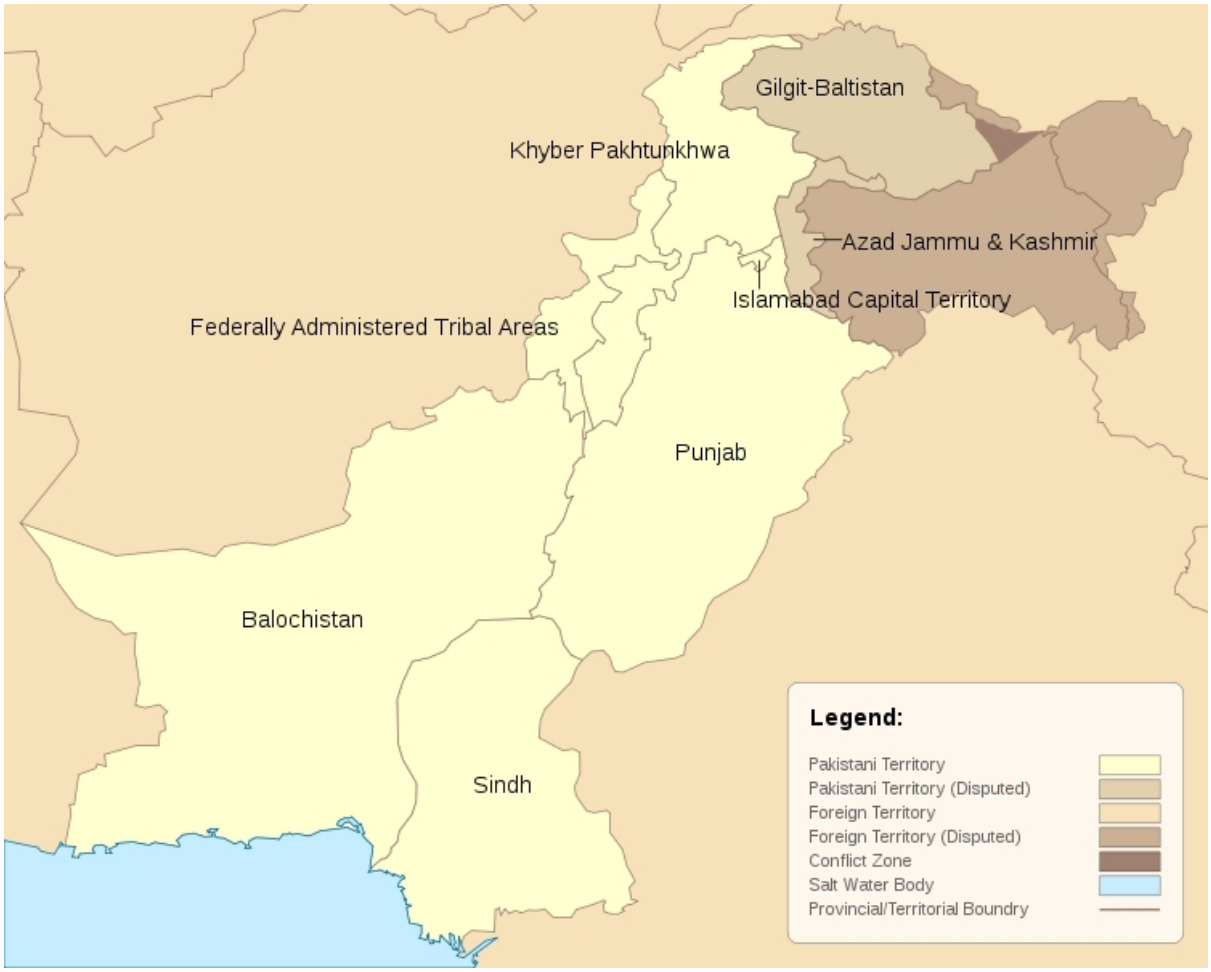
SITUATION

Independence

Pakistan emerged in 1947, when the former India (under British rule) became independent, and was separated into two independent countries; India and Pakistan. The idea was that Pakistan was to be a country for the Muslim people while India was for the Hindu people. The name, 'Pakistan', means "the clean country", which was a reference to a country populated exclusively by Muslims. In fact, non-Muslims were driven from the country (assuming that they had not already fled), following the separation.

The Cashmere Conflict

The Cashmere province, which, at the time, did not yet belong to either country, became an area of great strife between India and Pakistan. The fighting resulted in a separation of the region, where Pakistan today rules over the areas known as Azad Cashmere and Gilgit-Baltistan. The fighting is still smoldering and the region is affected by the disturbances which, from time to time, re-kindle – maintaining the tense relations between Pakistan and India. For Southern Asia, the matter is also complicated, as both countries possessing nuclear weapons.



http://www.ecoearth.org/view/article/172618/

Political situation

Pakistan is a democracy with a president elected by the people – Asif Ali Zardari. However, he does not garner much affection from the people – and the military in the country is remarkably powerful. It is said, that the military possesses the 'real' power in the country. In the meantime, Islamic fundamentalists are be- ginning to win the sympathy of the population by providing emergency aid in the wake of the flooding of 2010 – matters such as this, for instance, further causes the affection towards the president to wane. The worst-case scenario is that the fundamentalist groups, who are gaining increasing public support, will cease control and, eventually, gain access to the nuclear weaponry.

Foreign Relations

Pakistan has always been hopping back and forth between allies and considered rather random in their decision-making, in that respect.

> *Since the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001, Pakistan been considered an ally of the USA in its 'war against terror'. As such, they have been warring al-Qaeda in the Pakistan areas bordering Afghanistan. This war has not been popular in Pakistan, and the alliance has, allegedly, been due to a large pressure from the USA.*

The unpopularity with the war, among the Pakistan populace, results in a bit of skepticism from the USA – this, in particular, when it comes to the loyalty of the Pakistan people. This, specifically, in regards to May 2011, where the (formerly) most wanted man in the world, Osama Bin Laden, the al-Qaeda leader, was tracked down as residing in Pakistan, where he had, presumably, taken up residence for quite some time.

A natural side effect of the Pakistan alliance with the USA is, naturally, that the Taliban, and al-Qaeda, are quite displeased and have performed several acts of terrorism against Pakistan. The Pakistan relations to China, however, are good and there are many examples of the two nations supporting on another during friction. E.g., China is on Pakistan's side, in regards to the Cashmere-province conflict against India – and the support from China is highly revered in Pakistan, providing a great base for the Pakistani-Chinese friendship.

The Pakistan people are, traditionally, much more friendly towards China, than they are towards the Americans - 9 out of 10 Pakistanis sees China as a partner while only 2% of the population sees them as an enemy, according to a study from 2012.

The floodings

In July 2010, Pakistan experienced the worst flooding in 80 years. An unusually heavy level of monsoon rain caused the Indus-river to overflow, which flooded roughly one fifth of the entire country. Bridges, houses, roads and fields were destroyed and a vast number of people were left with no home or possessions. More than 1400 people perished and close to 20 million people were affected by the flooding.

The Punjab region, which normally produces the majority of food for the country, fell victim to great devastation, which, by itself, was a major catastrophe. More than 200.000 cattle drowned, the crops that were to be harvested were ruined and many food storages were washed away.

Since infrastructure had been ruined, it was hard for emergency aid to get around– and the lack of clean water resulted in a large breakout of Malaria and Cholera. Many people fled to camps, where the odds of getting help were greater– however, with so many people in one place, the risk of diseases, like Cholera, spreading like wildfire were tremendous.

The lack of help was perceived as incompetence from the government and further augmented the rising discontent of the populace. As previously mentioned, this lack of action from the government made it possible for fundamentalist Taliban-sympathizers to win the sympathy of the people by marking their presence in different areas. They used this situation to their advantage by helping out the population with emergency aid which had messages printed on them, slandering the government.

Refrence:

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