

# PAKISTAN

Nichole Sobecki (EPIIC'06, Exposure'05-08) covers Turkey for *GlobalPost*. A graduate of Tufts University, she took six months away from her studies to work as a correspondent for the *Daily Star*, Lebanon's English language news-paper based in Beirut. During that time she covered an uprising at Nahr al-Bared refugee camp where Islamic militants fought a violent and lengthy battle against the Lebanese Army. She also shot and edited "The Luckiest Man: Gun Violence in Urban America," a documentary, and "Shooting for Peace," which explores several grassroots initiatives to reach people affected by AIDS, unsanitary water conditions, and civil war in Uganda. In 2008, she traveled to Pakistan where she photographed the aftermath of the assassination of Benazir Bhutto and the volatile tribal region bordering Afghanistan.

BETWEEN BHUTTO AND  
THE BORDER

NICHOLE SOBECKI

"Since the birth of Pakistan, crisis has followed crisis in rapid escalation. Millions of lives were sacrificed to create this country. Pakistan is said to be the dream of Mohammad Iqbal and the creation of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the Quaid-e-Azam. Was anything wrong with the dream or with the one who made the dream come true?"

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*Zulfikar Ali Bhutto*,  
written in a 1978 letter to his daughter

Since its initial birthing pains – gaining independence through a brutal war with India – Pakistan has faced innumerable challenges: four coups in its 60 years of independence, rampant corruption, and waves of economic and political unrest. But the last two years have been tumultuous even by Pakistan's standards.

Once described by President Eisenhower as 'the most allied of US allies,' today Pakistan is a state riven with conflict. Pakistan's wide, largely ungoverned tribal areas have become an untouchable base for Islamic militants to attack Americans and Afghans across the border. Inside the tribal areas, Taliban warlords have taken near-total control,

pushing aside the Pakistani government and imposing their own brutal form of Islam. On top of that, the country has a substantial arsenal of nuclear weapons and is in a constant state of tension with India.

There have been some changes. It's fledgling civilian government, the first since 1999, is being led by Asif Ali Zardari, who was elected based on a tide of emotions that swept the country after his famously popular wife, Benazir Bhutto, was killed by a bomb at a campaign rally. And then there is the Obama Administration's new policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan that plans to hurl a lifeline towards Zardari.

Without doubt difficult security calculations remain. But from the peddler in Karachi to Washington's elite, there remains a common interest: to avoid a failed Pakistani state.



1 . PAKISTAN, JANUARY 2008.

A billboard, featuring the former opposition leader Benazir Bhutto, leader of the Pakistan People's party, seen in the Liari district of Pakistan's largest and most populated city, Karachi.



2 . PAKISTAN, JANUARY 2008.

A boy stands in a market in the Liari district of Karachi. Pakistan, once described by President Eisenhower as 'the most allied of US allies,' is today one of the poorest nuclear-armed states and riven with conflict. Created in 1947, upon Partition of the British Raj, as a homeland for the Indian Muslims, over the years the country has become an Islamic state. A frontline ally in the US-led war on terror, Pakistan also faces Islamist terrorism on its own soil.



### 3. PAKISTAN, JANUARY 2008.

The defaced image of former opposition leader Benazir Bhutto attached to the back of a rickshaw in Karachi. The Taliban follows a ferociously literal interpretation of Islam that prohibits the depiction of faces in illustration or photograph. These strictures are often carried over into the public sphere in the form of scratched out movie and political posters.



4 . PAKISTAN, JANUARY 2008.

Heroin addicts outside of Peshawar. Pakistan has some of the highest rates of addiction to heroin in the world and, in Peshawar, the smuggling of heroin and hashish is a major part of the local economy in the city. During the 1980s the torrent of heroin transformed Pakistan into a "narco-state", with heroin profits making military intelligence independent of central control. Today, with an arms pipeline going in and a drugs pipeline coming out of Afghanistan, Pakistan continues to suffer the effects of the legacy of conflict in the region.



5 . PAKISTAN, JANUARY 2008.

Men pray at a mosque in the center of Peshawar. With over 99 percent of the population of Peshawar Muslim, the nature of the city is overwhelmingly Islamic. Outside of the majority, who practice a peaceful adherence to an Islamic faith, there exists a darker undercurrent. Situated near the eastern end of the Khyber Pass, Peshawar is a gateway from Pakistan to Afghanistan. As the administrative center for the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), an area that has been used by the Taliban to regroup, reorganize and rearm, Peshawar heralds a contradictory role in Pakistan's turbulent political make-up.



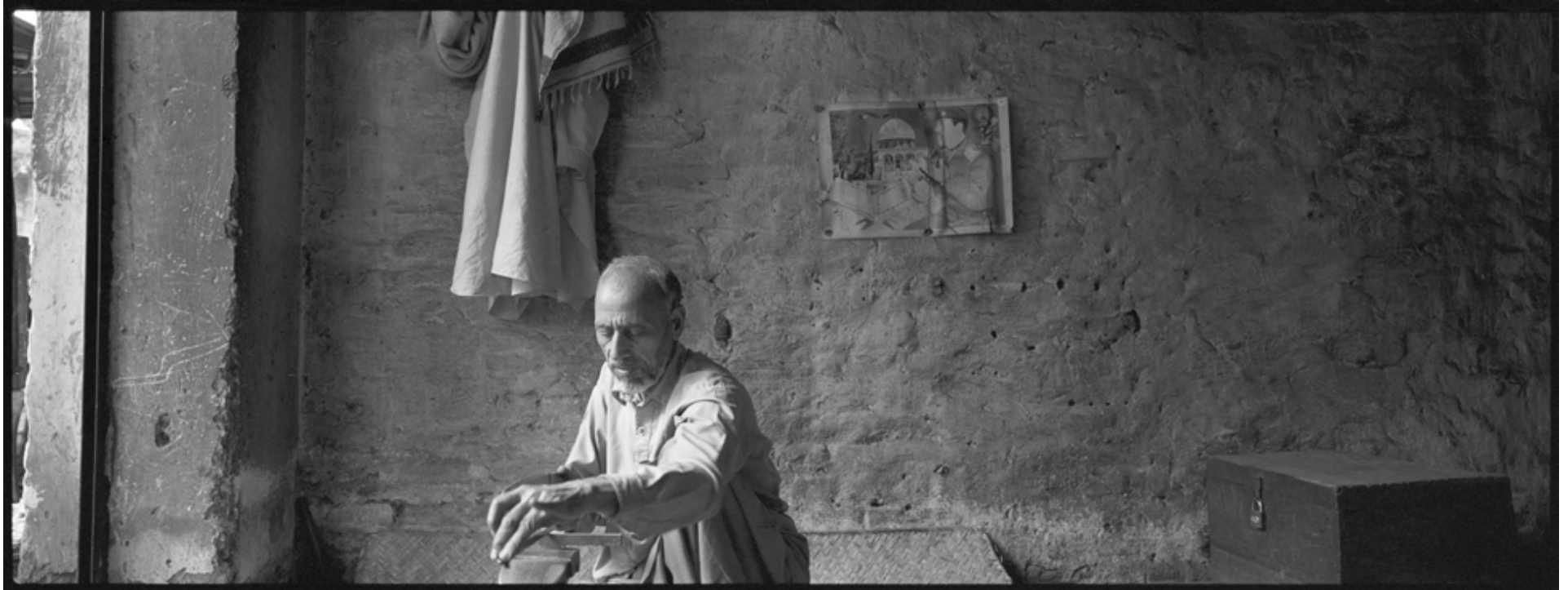
6 . PAKISTAN, JANUARY 2008.

A man stands in an alley where trash is being burned in the Liari district of Karachi, Pakistan, where supporters of Benazir Bhutto, the opposition leader, had taken to the street after her assassination.



7 . PAKISTAN, JANUARY 2008.  
A group of women walk through an alley where trash was  
being burned in the Liari district of Karachi, Pakistan.





8 . PAKISTAN, JANUARY 2008.

A man files the barrel of a gun at a gun market in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). A print of Saddam Hussein in uniform hangs on the wall behind him.



9. PAKISTAN, JANUARY 2008.  
A man sits in a gun market in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). A guard stands outside the market stall holding a rifle.



10 . PAKISTAN, JANUARY 2008.  
A gun merchant tests a weapon at a gun market in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), whose lawlessness is affecting nearby Peshawar.



11 . PAKISTAN, JANUARY 2008.

An Afghan mother and child on the road outside of Peshawar. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 Peshawar served as a political centre for anti-Soviet Mujahideen, and was surrounded by huge camps of Afghan refugees. Peshawar managed to assimilate many of the Pashtun Afghan refugees, while many other Afghan refugees remained in camps awaiting a possible return to Afghanistan.



12 . PAKISTAN, JANUARY 2008.

A boy runs through a cemetery on the outskirts of Peshawar holding a kite. In Persian “Peshawar” means high fortress and, as the Islamic insurgency pours out of the adjacent tribal regions into the city, Peshawar is becoming increasingly important not only to the future of Pakistan but equally to the success of the US-bolstered Karzai regime in Afghanistan.