

“No American, No Gun, No BS”

Tourism, Terrorism, and the Eighteenth Amendment

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In August 2001, a young rock climber in Yosemite National Park told me his dream was to go to Pakistan for first ascents of big rock walls along the Baltoro Glacier. Pakistan was hot on the international climbing scene. Then came September 2001. Like most other tourists, I skipped Pakistan in 2002. In 2003, when I returned to see for myself what the situation was, Pakistani friends greeted me warmly and told me that tourists were “like someone both holy and noble,” a rare and seemingly endangered species. But the “9/11 wars” took their toll on Pakistan. Violence increased, foreign governments issued travel warnings, and the overall environment for tourism deteriorated. By February 2011 the situation had become so tense that a European friend in Pakistan sent me an email stating that whenever he went to a hotel or took a taxi, he had to first say, “No American, No Gun, No BS.” The fallout from the Raymond Davis case meant that any foreigner in Pakistan was a subject of suspicion, and Americans were the most suspicious of foreigners.¹ The arc of international tourism in Pakistan has changed dramatically, and it is not easy to be a tourist in Pakistan today.

The war on terrorism in Pakistan and terrorism’s war on Pakistan are the obvious factors in the steady erosion of Pakistan’s tourism market.² But there are also important demographic and structural issues. Analyzing what Pakistan tourism actually is, why it exists, and how it figures in Pakistan’s economy helps one understand the dilemmas facing Pakistan tourism as it charts a new direction under the Eighteenth Amendment to the constitution.

Pakistan Tourism—The Official Picture

Pakistan joined the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in 1976; it prepared its first national tourism policy in 1990 and its second in 2010.³ Pakistan has a National Conservation Strategy that emphasizes the interdependence of tourism and conservation. In 2004, the Government of Pakistan gave tourism its own ministry. NGOs, scholars, and the private sector have identified and highlighted the tourism and ecotourism potential of Pakistan (Kreutzmann 1996; Mock and O’Neil 1996), discussed approaches to sustainability (Mock 1999; Lama and Sattar 2002) and published guidebooks (Mock and O’Neil 2002). There is an Ecotourism Society in Pakistan, and many Pakistan tour operators incorporate ecotourism principles into their offerings. In 2011, Himalayan Holidays (Pvt) Pakistan won the 2011 Responsible Tourism Award for its offerings in Kaghan and Astor.

The *National Tourism Policy 2010* accords well with the UNWTO statement on Millennium Development Goals: “to promote the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.” The UNWTO highlights tourism as “a key to development, prosperity and well-being” (UNWTO 2010). The scope of Pakistan’s policy recognizes tourism’s role in poverty alleviation, sustainable economic development, and promotion of regional harmony, and emphasizes the need to ensure environmental sustainability and active participation of all sectors. The policy encompasses the Millennium Development Goals of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, ensuring environmental sustainability, and establishing a global partnership for development. Tourism in Pakistan, according to a December 2010 World Bank study, has the potential to increase employment, raise income, preserve bio-cultural assets, and diversify the economy. The foreword to the *National Tourism Policy 2010* glowingly describes Pakistan as “a land of adventure, nature, culture and history where every tourist has something to get himself entertained, enjoy, explore and experience.” But the policy also recognizes that this potential has not been realized, and the World Bank report points to an “increasingly negative perception about Pakistan” as the main brake on any progress in the tourism sector.

The *National Tourism Policy 2010* and the Ministry’s *Tourism in Pakistan—2009* cite statistics that show tourists are coming to Pakistan. From 2008 to 2009, according to the UNWTO 2010 edition of *Tourism Highlights*, international arrivals to Pakistan actually increased 3.9 percent to almost 855,000, in contrast to a worldwide decline of 4.2 percent and a South Asia regional decline of 1.5 percent. And, although the U.S. dollar value of tourism receipts declined a modest 1.2 percent, the Pakistan rupee value increased 15.6 percent.

But if Pakistan’s tourism potential is “unrealized,” then what is the source of the statistical expansion of tourism to Pakistan?

Table 9–1. Foreign Tourist Arrivals and Receipts 2000–2009 for Pakistan

Year	Arrivals^a (thousands)	Percent Change over Previous Year	Receipts^b (US\$ millions)	Percent Change over Previous Year
2000	556.7	28.8	84.4	10.5
2001	499.7	–10.2	92.2	9.2
2002	498.7	–0.3	105.4	14.4
2003	500.9	0.6	135.6	28.6
2004	648.0	29.4	185.6	36.9
2005	798.3	23.2	185.3	–0.2
2006	898.4	12.5	260.1	40.4
2007	839.5	–6.6	276.1	6.2
2008	822.8	–2.0	243.5	–11.8
2009	854.9	3.9	240.6	–1.2

^a FIA, Ministry of Interior ^b State Bank of Pakistan

Who Are the Tourists?

Understanding who the tourists are is a first step in understanding tourism in Pakistan. However, defining a tourist is as difficult as describing what tourism is. The global tourism industry boasts that it contributes over US\$1 trillion, which is about 5 percent annually, to worldwide economic activity. Hence, it is not surprising that the UNWTO offers a very broad definition of *tourism* as “the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes” and differentiates tourism along a topology of borders as inbound tourism, outbound tourism, and domestic tourism. Such typologies do little to elucidate what it is to be a tourist and to engage in tourist activities, nor do they readily differentiate between tourists and other “travelers” such as refugees or displaced persons (Salazar 2004, 86).

Given Pakistan's report of tourism growth during the recent global economic downturn, it is not surprising to see that the Ministry of Tourism adopted the UNWTO definition of *tourist* and distinguishes just two categories; foreign tourism (that is, inbound tourism) and domestic tourism. The Ministry of Tourism narrows the definition to exclude economic migrants "seeking gainful employment" or "following an occupation," but adds the interesting qualifier for foreign tourists that "all Overseas Pakistanis traveling on foreign passports whose usual place of residence is outside the country . . . fall within this definition." This revealing definition offers a new perspective of what it means to be a tourist in Pakistan. One can be a Pakistani yet still be a tourist in one's native country. The Ministry of Tourism definitions then turn to the economic aspect of Pakistanis as tourists in Pakistan, employing a typology of tourist activity delineated along economic lines into low-revenue tourists and high-revenue tourists—a typology worth quoting: "Tourists visiting friends and relatives (VFR) in Pakistan do not spend much on lodging and boarding and are described as low revenue tourists."

Foreign Tourists

The Ministry of Tourism reports that in 2009, 44.3 percent of all foreign tourists came from Europe, but that "a sizeable percentage were ethnic Pakistanis holding foreign passports visiting for VFR purposes" (Ministry of Tourism 2009, 7) and are classified as low-revenue tourists. Although the report does not explicitly state that the 19 percent of foreign tourists who came from the United States and Canada were also ethnically Pakistani, it is reasonable to assume they were. (Discussion later in this chapter about the destination of foreign tourists in Pakistan further supports this assumption.) These North American tourists would also stay with relatives and friends and not spend much on hotels or meals. An additional 21 percent of foreign tourists came from South Asia. These three areas generated almost 85 percent of Pakistan's foreign tourism in 2009, most of which is classified as low revenue.

Foreign tourists were 71 percent male and 55 percent age 16–40. The Ministry of Tourism reports that "more than three-quarters of foreign tourists visit Pakistan for family visits (56 percent) and business (21.4 percent)." The average foreign tourist in 2009 stayed about twenty-five days and spent \$11 per day. These statistics show that Pakistan's foreign tourists are quite different from foreign tourists elsewhere in the region and in the world. Tourists elsewhere typically seek destinations different from their everyday environment, making tourism "the business of 'difference' par excellence" (Salazar 2004, 85). Pakistan's foreign tourists are not very "foreign." Rather, they are overseas Pakistanis visiting friends and family and conducting business with associates in Pakistan. They tend to match Pakistani society, where mobility is higher for younger males.

Pakistanis Traveling Abroad

Outbound tourism is not part of Pakistan's official tourism typology. It receives

only an oblique reference in a discussion of the “travel balance,” that is, the earnings from incoming foreign tourism minus the “foreign exchange consumed by Pakistani nationals on religious travel for Umrah and Hajj” (Ministry of Tourism 2009, 19). In 2009 this was a negative balance of \$776.37 million. This religious travel clearly falls within the admittedly broad UNWTO definition of tourism, but in Pakistan, it is the Ministry of Religious Affairs that is responsible for pilgrimage outside Pakistan. In the rest of the Muslim world, including Saudi Arabia, religious travel is tourism, but not in Pakistan. Although inbound tourism and outbound (religious) tourism are linked economically, administratively, and structurally, they are kept separate in a sort of “sacred-secular” duality. In 2009, according to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and reported on the hajinformation.com website, there were about 160,000 Pakistani Hajj pilgrims⁴ at a standard cost of Rs. 200,000 per person and 272,000 Pakistani Umrah pilgrims. These tourists are big business for Pakistan Hajj and Umrah operators. Travel, from whatever motivation, is an important engine for economic opportunity and heritage preservation.

Domestic Tourism

Pakistan’s definition of domestic tourism is also quite broad, encompassing anyone away from home for more than one day but less than six months, excluding those traveling to earn money at their destination. This typology does not distinguish tourists from other internal migrants, such as persons displaced by natural disaster or security operations, or health and education migrants. Data on internal migration is patchy, outdated, and lacks analysis linking it to livelihood strategies, according to a report prepared by the Centre for Public Policy and Governance (CPPG 2011). Domestic tourism statistics for Pakistan interestingly appear to parallel the increased mobility of young Pakistanis noted by the CPPG report. In 2009, the Ministry of Tourism estimated 46 million domestic tourists, 54 times the number of foreign tourists, approximately equivalent to 25 percent of the population of Pakistan. They are predominantly male (72 percent) and between 16 and 40 years of age (55 percent). Twenty-one percent are students. The Ministry of Tourism does not offer any estimate of the economic activity generated by this internal movement. However, it records that 52 percent travel for “social calls,” 76 percent travel by road, and 75 percent stay with friends or family. Only 16 percent stay in hotels or guest houses (Ministry of Tourism 2009, 20–21).

These tourists also fall into the category of low-revenue tourists. Their numbers are enormous; about half of the men in Pakistan and most of the men under forty. The effect is significant, even if no figures capture the actual economic impact. Yet are they actually tourists? The statistics seem to speak more to Pakistan internal migration, especially young male mobility, rather than describing recreational tourists traveling for leisure to attractive destinations or cultural centers. Analyzing this massive internal movement as tourism is likely not the best approach to understanding its motivations and its

effects on socioeconomic, cultural, and political transformation in Pakistan. Yet the sheer scale of this mobility does show that Pakistanis are able and willing to move freely within the country. Deriving benefit from their movement through tourism requires mitigating security concerns along roads and at destinations, improving access, and strengthening infrastructure. Such steps would help not just tourism, but most other economic spheres in Pakistan.

Regional Tourism Comparisons

In the Asia Pacific Region, Pakistan received 0.5 percent of the total tourist arrivals and 0.2 percent of the total tourism receipts in 2009 (UNWTO Tourism Highlights 2010). As a percentage of GDP, Pakistan tourism ranks among the lowest in the region, ranging between 0.7 percent and 0.5 percent of GDP (UNESCAP, §25) and at just 0.3 percent in 2009 (Ministry of Tourism). Although Pakistan GDP has shown continual growth, as has GDP of other countries in the region, tourism receipts as a percentage of GDP have stagnated, which is in contrast to the rest of the region. Tourism in Pakistan is not the major industry it is in other countries, no matter how broadly and inclusively the government defines tourism. In 2009 it ranked number 19 among Pakistan's top twenty industries, just above carpets and rugs. Tables 9–2 and 9–3 offer regional comparisons:

Table 9–2. International Tourism Receipts (in US\$ millions)

Area/Country	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Bhutan	\$8	\$9	\$10	\$9	\$8	\$8	\$13	\$19	\$24	\$30
India	\$2,949	\$3,010	\$3,718	\$3,342	\$3,300	\$4,560	\$6,307	\$7,652	\$8,927	\$10,729
Indonesia	\$4,255	\$4,352	\$4,975	\$5,277	\$5,797	\$4,461	\$5,226	\$5,094	\$4,890	\$5,833
Malaysia	\$3,237	\$4,403	\$5,873	\$7,627	\$8,084	\$6,799	\$9,183	\$10,389	\$12,355	\$16,798
Maldives	\$303	\$314	\$321	\$327	\$337	\$402	\$471	\$287	\$512	\$586
Nepal	\$248	\$229	\$219	\$191	\$134	\$232	\$260	\$160	\$157	\$234
Pakistan	\$556	\$492	\$551	\$533	\$562	\$620	\$765	\$828	\$919	\$900
Sri Lanka	\$369	\$414	\$388	\$347	\$594	\$709	\$808	\$729	\$733	\$750
South / Southwest Asia	\$12,318	\$10,280	\$13,570	\$15,986	\$18,502	\$21,059	\$25,893	\$30,838	\$31,632	\$35,788
Southeast Asia	\$23,457	\$28,016	\$30,469	\$31,134	\$32,987	\$29,442	\$37,852	\$39,481	\$49,803	\$62,408

Table 9-3. International Tourism Receipts as Percentage of GDP

Area/Country	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Bhutan	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%	1.9%	1.5%	1.3%	1.8%	2.3%	2.7%	2.4%
India	0.7%	0.7%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%	0.9%
Indonesia	4.1%	2.8%	3.0%	3.3%	3.0%	1.9%	2.0%	1.8%	1.3%	1.3%
Malaysia	4.3%	5.4%	6.3%	8.2%	8.0%	6.2%	7.4%	7.5%	7.9%	9.0%
Maldives	56.1%	53.3%	51.4%	52.3%	52.6%	58.1%	60.7%	38.3%	55.9%	55.5%
Nepal	4.7%	3.9%	3.5%	3.1%	2.1%	3.3%	3.2%	1.7%	1.6%	1.9%
Pakistan	0.7%	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%
Sri Lanka	2.3%	2.6%	2.3%	2.2%	3.5%	3.8%	3.9%	3.0%	2.6%	2.3%
South / Southwest Asia	1.3%	1.1%	1.4%	1.7%	1.8%	1.7%	1.8%	1.8%	1.6%	1.5%
Southeast Asia	4.9%	5.0%	5.1%	5.4%	5.1%	4.1%	4.7%	4.4%	4.6%	4.8%

Source: UNESCAP (2010)

Pakistan Tourism revisited

Drilling down into the statistics presented in the *National Tourism Policy 2010*, a more nuanced picture of Pakistan tourism emerges. Pakistani men mostly under age forty come to Pakistan or travel within Pakistan mostly to visit family and friends but also to conduct some business. They stay in homes in urban areas and do not spend much per day, usually going out to eat or doing some shopping. This is Pakistan's tourism market. It is a fairly steady market, because the exigencies of family and relationships within Pakistani society will always induce people to visit on important occasions whenever possible.

Pakistan tourism overall is motivated by familial, societal, and religious factors and carried out by Pakistani nationals or overseas Pakistanis, who are mostly younger males. It has a substantial financial component and, because it is motivated by a sense of duty and obligation, it is less susceptible to disruption from concerns about safety or security. This tourism, inbound, outbound, and domestic, is the core of Pakistan tourism.

This core is quantifiable and consistent, motivated by identifiable and measurable factors, and performed by a readily recognizable segment of the nation. The who, why, where, and how are discernible, but what is not evident is how tourism is being harnessed to benefit the nation in line with Millennium Development Goals.

Instead, we see tourism organized along insular lines of family, community, identity, and religion.⁶ It occurs because society and religion require it. It is less affected by global politics and has little direct relevancy to Millennium Development Goals and to models of tourism that link conservation and development.

Pakistan employs a broad generic definition of tourism but has modified it to include overseas Pakistanis. This allows Pakistan to claim to be an active participant in the global tourism industry, while at the same time claiming that Pakistan's tourism potential is unrealized. Pakistan's spectacular mountain landscape and rich cultural heritage, viewed from the perspective of the global tourism industry, offer broad-based income-earning opportunities that could increase employment, diversify the economy, and preserve bio-cultural heritage. Yet the steps needed to realize this are not taken. Regulatory barriers hinder tourist entry and movement, inadequate infrastructure prevents reliable travel to tourist destinations, and the overall security perception is not attractive to tourists. Instead, Pakistan encourages overseas Pakistanis to visit as tourists. Pakistan, through its lack of action in promoting recreational leisure tourism by western middle-class travelers who seek "difference," is signaling that it does not want that kind of tourist. Western governments, through travel warnings, signal that they do not want their citizens going to Pakistan as tourists.

Tourism and Remittances

In several important ways, the core of Pakistan tourism parallels Pakistan's overseas remittance pattern. As the following statistics show, they actually appear to be linked. This linkage, I suggest, offers an explanation for why Pakistan needs a steady flow of overseas Pakistanis arriving as tourists and is willing to forgo earnings that might come from western recreational tourists.

Remittances play an important role in Pakistan's economy, contributing 4 percent of GDP annually since 2004 (Ahmed et al. 2011, 179). According to the State Bank of Pakistan, in 2010–11 the main sources of overseas remittances were:

- Saudi Arabia
- The United Arab Emirates
- The other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, and Qatar)
- The United States
- The U.K.
- Other European Union countries, and
- Canada

Pakistanis working in the Gulf region typically hold Pakistan passports. Pakistanis working in the United States, the U.K., the European Union, and Canada are more likely to hold non-Pakistan passports. As one recent study notes, "Pakistanis settled in western Europe and North America are important sources of remittances to Pakistan" (Ahmed 2011, 179). In 2009, 32 percent of overseas remittances came from Europe and 22 percent came from North America (Migration Policy Institute 2010).

The pattern of remittances from Europe and North America matches the pattern of international tourist arrivals from Europe and North America. In 2009, 275,351 international tourists arrived from the U.K., representing 32 percent of all tourist arrivals. In the same year 117,465 arrived from the United States, representing 14 percent of all arrivals. Arrivals from Europe (including the U.K.) represented 44 percent of arrivals, and Canada represented 5 percent of all arrivals (Ministry of Tourism 2009). Overall, 63 percent of international tourists come from Europe and North America. These arrivals are not leisure tourists but rather are people of Pakistan origin visiting friends and relatives. When they cannot visit, they send remittances—55 percent of all foreign remittances—to Pakistan. As tourists, neither their numbers nor their economic effects are very significant—less than 0.5 percent GDP, barely enough foreign exchange to support Hajj and Umrah. But as senders of remittances, their effect is substantial, contributing more than 2 percent of GDP.

Another important aspect of remittances is that they “are stable . . . and tend to go up when the economy suffers recession as a result of financial crisis, natural disaster or political conflict” (Ahmed 2011, 176). Pakistan international tourism arrivals also appear relatively stable, despite major natural, financial, and political shocks.

These characteristics of remittances accord well with Pakistan’s international tourism, which, I have argued, is at its core predominantly Pakistanis visiting friends and relatives. They also accord with Pakistan’s divergence from regional and global tourism trends.

Pakistan and World Tourism

Pakistan’s core tourism pattern is not typical of that throughout the world. The UNWTO reports that worldwide, 51 percent of tourism is for leisure, recreation, or vacation. In Pakistan the percentage of foreign tourists with this motivation is 14.7 percent. Worldwide the percentage visiting friends and relatives is 27 percent, but in Pakistan it is 56 percent. Pakistan tourism is mostly about VFR and social calls. The leisure segment of the international tourism trade is not visiting Pakistan. “Pakistan,” notes the Ministry of Tourism, “is not a leisure tourist destination and very few tourists come to Pakistan to visit archaeological or historic sites, or for sports, study, or health” (2009). The (unintended?) irony of this statement is matched by a recent World Bank report on tourism which notes that “currently, cultural tourism in Pakistan does not seem to play a role proportionate to its richness” (World Bank et. al. 2010, 56).


The foreword to the Ministry of Tourism’s *National Tourism Policy 2010*, however, envisions a Pakistan tourism that could be something else: “Pakistan possesses splendid tourist attractions: lofty mountains, beautiful valleys, ancient civilizations, living oldest and modern cultures, natural tourist attractions, sacred places of worship of almost every religion, places of historical interest, virgin beaches, deserts, fertile plains and a lot more.” Pakistan’s tourist attractions are indeed splendid and unique and give Pakistan a competitive advantage for high-revenue leisure tourists. But these attractions are not what motivate Pakistan’s core tourism. Pakistan’s inherent competitive advantage is not realized.

Cultural tourists visiting archeological and historic sites, adventure tourists visiting mountain regions, and eco-tourists visiting Pakistan's wide range of ecological zones are economically desirable high-revenue tourists who provide direct economic input into local economies. As a case in point, the Ministry of Tourism estimates that more than half of the total income earned in the tourism sector is earned in mountain areas of Pakistan, where job opportunities are scarce (Ministry of Tourism 2009, 20). But neither Pakistan's six World Heritage Sites (Moenjodaro, Taxila, the Takht-i Bhai complex, Thatta, the Rohtas fort, and the fort and Shalamar Gardens in Lahore), nor Pakistan's spectacular mountain landscape (with ten of the world's twenty-five highest peaks) are by themselves enough to sustain high-value tourism. International tourism to Pakistan's cultural sites has dwindled despite World Heritage designation, and although Pakistan's mountain area, Gilgit-Baltistan, is relatively peaceful and secure, difficulty of access and the overall security perception have steadily eroded international tourist arrivals so that "only the most determined adventure tourist arrives" (World Bank 2010, 53).

Regional Aspect of Adventure Tourism

The divergence of adventure tourists from the core of Pakistan tourism is readily observable in the figures for international tourists in Gilgit-Baltistan, the center of adventure tourism in Pakistan. In 2009, just under 8,000 international tourists visited Gilgit-Baltistan, of whom half were from China,⁷ with the rest from Japan, the United States, Germany, the U.K., Korea, and Spain (Ministry of Tourism 2009, 50–52). Recall that 275,000 U.K. passport holders and 117,000 U.S. passport holders arrived in Pakistan that year. Those tourists did not visit Gilgit-Baltistan. The figures for Gilgit-Baltistan look more like a typical roster of international climber nationalities.⁸

But these "die-hard" fans of Pakistan are no longer coming. The number of mountain climbers visiting Pakistan declined 35 percent in 2008, 32 percent in 2009, and 34 percent in 2010, equalling the disastrous 2002 season (Ministry of Tourism 2009, xvi). Trekking saw a similar drastic decline. In 2002, to encourage high-revenue mountain tourists, Pakistan cut the fee for mountaineering expeditions in half and raised the height limit for peaks that could be climbed without a permit from 6,000 meters to 6,500 meters. These regulatory easings yielded an increase in mountain tourism. However, since 2008, numbers have declined despite continuation of the fee reduction and height increase. Tables 9–4 *Pakistan Mountaineering* and 9–5 *Pakistan Trekking* show Pakistan's mountaineering and trekking numbers.

Year	Expedition Arrivals	Total Climbers
1994	50	393
1995	59	384
1996	56	408
1997	57	500
1998	50	320
1999	64	461
2000	59	351
2001	70	482
2002	27	n/a
2003	53	441
2004	58	603
2005	67	475
2006	78	n/a
2007	83	799
2008	78	521
2009	43	335
2010		234

Year	Trekking Parties	Total Trekkers
1994	128	697
1995	129	823
1996	166	912
1997	197	1,102
1998	165	950
1999	184	803
2000	168	861
2001	244	1,318
2002	n/a	n/a
2003	n/a	n/a
2004	238	1,604
2005	251	1,443
2006	n/a	n/a
2007	n/a	n/a
2008	173	630
2009	134	470

Source: Ministry of Tourism

*Source: Ministry of Tourism (2010)
and Alpine Club of Pakistan (2006)*

For mountaineers and trekkers, the Baltoro Glacier, with seven of the world's twenty-five highest peaks, including K2, is an incomparable destination. Over 70 percent of all mountaineers and organized trekkers visiting Pakistan come to the Baltoro Glacier⁹. These are high-revenue tourists who generate employment. Trekking groups typically hire two to three porters per trekker,¹⁰ plus a guide and cooks. Mountaineering expeditions typically hire eleven or more porters per climber, plus a guide and cooks (Mock and O'Neil 1996). These groups stay in hotels, travel on domestic flights, and hire local vehicles, as do international cultural tourists visiting the Hunza valley on the Karakoram Highway. Cultural destinations, such as the Baltit Fort in Hunza and other projects completed by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture have received numerous international awards and offer attractive destinations for high-value

international tourists. But tourists cannot reach these destinations—access is too difficult. Over 40 percent of all PIA flights to Gilgit and Skardu are canceled every year; the Karakoram Highway, once touted as the eighth wonder of the world, is in such bad repair that the journey from Islamabad now takes twenty-four hours in the best of circumstances; and access from China via the Khunjerab Pass is now blocked by the landslide dam and lake at Attabad north of Hunza (World Bank 2010, 58). Upgrading the Gilgit and Skardu airports to allow instrument landings would address access issues and promote both international and domestic tourism, but so far the Civil Aviation Agency has not implemented this recommendation.

Tourism and Terrorism

Gilgit-Baltistan itself remains a relatively peaceful area, with occasional, mostly low-level sectarian violence. Civilian deaths from terrorism are rare in Gilgit-Baltistan, and even rarer are attacks against foreign tourists¹¹. In the rest of Pakistan, however, civilian deaths from terrorism have risen dramatically, with 1335 in 2007 almost doubling to 2670 in 2009 (National Counter Terrorism Center 2008,26; 2010,18). Above all else, the volatile political and security situation in Pakistan is the main obstacle to attracting high-value international tourists.

The Ministry of Tourism's *National Tourism Policy 2010* recognizes security as the top constraint on tourism, an observation echoed by Javed Burki, who notes that “domestic terrorism [has] increased to the point that almost all

foreign travel has stopped” (Burki 2010, 1) and by the World Bank, which dryly notes that “actual progress in the tourism sector largely depends on the stability in the country” (World Bank 2010, 183). Although government statistics seemingly show that foreign tourist arrivals have increased, this is misleading. What has slowed dramatically is high-value leisure and adventure tourism, despite Pakistan’s unique mountain attractions and rich cultural heritage.

What Pakistan’s tourism statistics show is that overseas Pakistanis returning to visit family and friends form a stable core, resistant to shocks, that contributes a steady 0.3–0.5 percent annually to GDP. These overseas Pakistanis also provide a shock-resistant flow of remittances that contributes 4 percent annually to GDP. This core is, perhaps paradoxically, linked to the United States and the European Union, from which 54 percent of remittances and 63 percent of international tourist arrivals originate.

Pakistan’s tourism policy must be understood in light of these statistics; policymakers cannot be unaware of these linkages. Pakistan, despite the optimistic statements in Ministry of Tourism documents, does not have in place an effective program to promote any part of Pakistan as a safe destination for international leisure and adventure tourists. Nor has the government resolved regulatory issues, such as making thirty-day landing permits available on arrival, a policy that is on the books but is not implemented. Pakistan does, however, have a full-fledged Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and an Overseas Pakistanis Foundation to support overseas Pakistanis and maintain separate counters for their special handling at arrival and departures lounges at international airports.¹² The importance of overseas Pakistanis is highlighted by a recent statement of the Secretary of the Election Commission of Pakistan, reported in the October 17, 2011 *Express Tribune*, that they be allowed to vote in Pakistan’s elections. And, apparently, Overseas Pakistanis also serve the useful role of allowing Pakistan to claim that tourists are coming.

Tourism and the Eighteenth Amendment

Given Pakistan’s consistent inability to promote tourism at a national level, it would seem that the devolution of tourism to the provinces under the Eighteenth Amendment of the Constitution would be a positive step.¹³ A 2010 study in the *Lahore Journal of Economics* comments that “basic services are better provided by governments that are closer to their intended beneficiaries. The decentralization of the government’s authority should help in addressing the problem the country faces as the number of people living in absolute poverty increases” (Burki 2010, 14). Putting the provincial administrations and tourism stakeholders in charge of tourism in their province would seem to do exactly that. But will it?

Under the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, the National Finance Commission distributes a major share of government revenue to the provinces. This revenue is to support the devolved ministries, one of which is The Ministry of Tourism. The two key issues for success of devolution of tourism

are autonomy and resources. Will provincial administrations have sufficient autonomy to be able to manage, promote, and grow tourism effectively? For Gilgit-Baltistan, this is a crucial issue. More important for this financially impoverished area, will the Gilgit-Baltistan administration have sufficient resources and the capacity to carry out these tasks? For example, Pakistan's international environmental treaty obligations, such as the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species and UNESCO World Heritage, which are directly relevant to tourism, mandate federal coordination. These responsibilities cannot be fulfilled on a provincial level.

So far, the signs are mixed. Resources were already being withdrawn from tourism prior to devolution (*Express Tribune*, June 1, 2011), and tourism officials felt the government had little interest in promoting and developing tourism (*Dawn*, October 10, 2011). As devolution drew near, Senator Pervaiz Rashid, a member of the Senate Standing Committee on Culture and Tourism, commented that tourism "is just not government's priority," and that "stronger, clearer support from the government . . . does not seem [to be] coming" (*Dawn*, February 28, 2011).

Whether the necessary resources will be provided remains to be seen. If they are not, as Burki has noted, “the autonomy promised by the [Eighteenth] Amendment will remain illusory” (Burki 2010, 8). Given the shortage of resources on the national and provincial levels, the impact of the devolution of tourism is not certain. Moreover, as of June 2011, the federal government had reportedly made no allocation to the provinces for tourism funding as required under the Eighteenth Amendment (*Express Tribune*, June 4, 2011).

For Gilgit-Baltistan the situation is even more dire. Gilgit-Baltistan lacks authority to raise revenue of its own and is totally dependent on grants from the federal government to meet all its expenses (World Bank 2010, iv). Resolving the constitutional status of Gilgit-Baltistan by declaring it a province of Pakistan would resolve this challenge. However, it would also define borders for what is still a disputed territory between Pakistan and India, making this unlikely. The federal government recently denied Gilgit-Baltistan’s request for a share of the annual National Financial Commission award on this basis (*Express Tribune*, December 1, 2011). For Gilgit-Baltistan there has been no fiscal devolution.

For Pakistan’s international treaty obligations relating to tourism, the Economic Affairs Division (EAD) of the Government of Pakistan recently announced that it will assume responsibility for UNESCO and other treaty obligations (*The Business Recorder*, July 8, 2011). Yet the mechanism for coordination with the provinces is not clear, and the means and level of EAD support of Pakistan efforts under these treaties remain to be seen.

Can the provincial governments, particularly Gilgit-Baltistan, mount an effective campaign to promote Pakistan as a safe and positive destination for international tourism? Structurally, it seems doubtful. The existing government capacity held in the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) will likely be lost as PTDC employees are not being transferred to the provinces, and PTDC itself is being disbanded (*The News*, June 16, 2011). For Gilgit-Baltistan, the lack of resources and local autonomy is especially challenging. The 2011–12 Gilgit-Baltistan Annual Development Plan allocates a mere 0.9 percent of the federally provided budget to tourism (Planning and Development Department 2011). Overall, the decentralization approach is fragmented in concept and seemingly precludes a coordinated effort to promote the country as a whole. Such an effort seems essential in Pakistan, and models could be taken from experiences in Malaysia, Thailand, India, and elsewhere. Such countries have national tourism promotion boards that present a positive country image and highlight destination desirability. International donor support for the tourism sector could boost those regions of Pakistan that remain relatively free of terrorism and provide an investment opportunity that has a reasonable chance of successful return. The steps toward autonomy offer an opportunity, but that opportunity will be lost without a coordinated campaign to capitalize on Pakistan’s tourist resources and restore the image of peace and recreation for the mountains of Pakistan. Such a campaign would serve as an antidote to pervasive stereotypes of Pakistan and Afghanistan and their inhabitants as dangerous and inhospitable.

Notes

1 Raymond Davis, a CIA operative working in Pakistan under diplomatic cover, was arrested in Lahore on January 27, 2011, after shooting and killing two Pakistani men following him on a motorcycle. Davis maintained they were trying to rob him. News reports indicated the two men may have been Pakistan intelligence agents assigned to follow Davis. The Wikipedia article on the incident, available online, has links to all major media reports.

2 For more on the Pakistan public's attitudes toward militant attacks inside Pakistan, see Fair 2009. For a discussion of the trust deficit and policy divergences between the Pakistan and U.S. governments and their effects on the war on terror, see Siddiq 2009.

3 The 2010 national tourism policy appeared in draft form but was not officially adopted due to the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

4 Saudi Arabia limits Hajj pilgrims from any given country to 1 percent of the Muslim population of that country ("Holy Cities Vital for Saudi Drive to Boost Tourist Numbers," *Gulf News*, May 6, 2011, 29).

5 Highest Pakistan GDP growth was 2005 (7.7 percent) and 2004 (7.4 percent) and lowest growth 2008 (1.6 percent) and 2001 (2.0 percent) (World Bank 2011).

6 The crucial role of kinship in Pakistani society and politics has recently been highlighted by Anatol Lieven (Lieven 2011, 12–19, 211–24).

7 The Chinese visitors include trade delegations, those working in trans-border trade, and possibly some engaged with the expansion of the Karakoram Highway (KKH). Few, if any, are adventure or leisure tourists.

8 Actual figures are 7,728 total international tourists, with 3,755 from China, 722 from Japan, 338 from the United States, 328 from Germany, 324 from U.K., 292 from Korea, and 214 from Spain.

9 In 2012, mountaineers returned to Pakistan in force, with 51 expeditions and 329 climbers, underscoring the unique attraction and comparative advantage of Pakistan's Karakoram peaks (Alpine Club of Pakistan 2012).

10 The Ministry of Tourism sets porter rates. For 2011, porter wages were Rs. 455 per day plus a Rs. 650 allowance for clothing and food. Additional allowances are paid when crossing passes over 4,000 meters.

11 However, in 2012 sectarian violence spiked as Sunni militants dressed in Pakistan army uniforms stopped a bus checked passengers identification cards, and singled out and executed the Shi'ite passengers on the spot. Gilgit-Baltistan residents are now afraid to travel the Karakoram Highway, further impacting their access to employment, education, and health care (Gregory 2012).

12 For more information, see the opf.org.pk website.

13 The Eighteenth Amendment was signed April 19, 2010, by the president of Pakistan. The Ministry of Tourism was transferred to the provinces at the end of March 2011 (*The News*, April 1, 2011).

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