

PROMINENT ECONOMISTS' THOUGHT

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A NEW PAKISTAN: MAYBE!¹

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I want to share a thought experiment. Let's change Pakistan from a federation of four provinces to a union (state) of 20 regions. Why abolish the provinces? Well, for at least three good reasons: they are a colonial legacy; they are culturally and ethnically heterogeneous; and they promote "provincialism" because one of them dominates the political and administrative structure of the country. The present system does not reflect the regional and ethnic aspirations of the people; it disempowers them; and it is inefficient and inequitable in delivering the services that people need and deserve. The proposed regions comprise contiguous districts with ethnically similar communities of common interests (Appendix I). The regional system, as it empowers the ordinary people, will make politicians and civil servants far more accountable to their constituents. Greater accountability also means cleaner governance. The system will also make the delivery of services more efficient and equitable.

I. Structure of State Institutions

A. Elected Offices

1. **Central Government:** It will be formed on the basis of votes cast by members of the National Assembly. The National Assembly will consist of two chambers. The first chamber (the House) will have 400 members directly elected by the eligible voters. The number of seats in the House should be changed after every census. Each constituency should have the same number of eligible voters to elect one House member. The number of constituencies in each Region will depend on its share in the country's population of eligible voters. The House's mandate will be for no more than four years and no House member will serve for more than two terms. The second chamber (the Senate) will have 100 members, five from each Region. Senators will be directly elected by the eligible voters in each Region. Each Senator will serve for no more than two terms of six years each. One-third of the Senate seats will be contested every two years.
2. **Regional Government:** It will be formed in each Region by an elected council. The size of the Regional Council will range from 40 to 90 seats depending on the Region's population:

Up to 5 million	40-50
>5 to 9 million	50-60
>9 to 14 million	60-70
>14 to 19 million	70-80
>19 million	80-90

The number of seats should be changed after every census. Each constituency should have the same number of eligible voters. Each district will be allocated the seats in the Regional Council on the basis of its share in the Region's population. The Council's term will be fixed for four years. No elected member will serve more than two terms. A Council member can be recalled by voters in her/his constituency through a well-defined procedure. The members of each Regional Council will elect an Executive Committee—the number of members to be determined

¹ I am grateful to Dr. Nadeem ul Haque and Professor Syed Nawab Haider Naqvi for their valuable comments on an earlier draft.

by each Council—to run the administration of the Region. The chairperson of the Executive Committee will be called the Chief Regional Councillor. The Regional Council will hold quarterly sessions (i.e. four sessions in a year), each of which should last for no more than five days. Every year, five Regional Councils will come for vote.

3. **Local Government:** It should be divided into (a) city government and (b) non-city government (Union Councils).
 - (a) **City Government:** For every city with a population of 100,000 and more, there should be an elected City Council based on a ward system. The chairperson of the Council (the Mayor) and Councillors should have their own administration, but the police and judicial services should be provided by the Regional Council. The term of the City Government should be for no more than three years. No elected member should serve for more than two terms. Every year a quarter of the cities in each Region should be up for vote.
 - (b) **District Government:** Outside the cities in each District, eligible voters should elect members of the Union Councils who will in turn elect representatives for the District Councils in each Region. The term for the Union Councils and District Councils will be no more than three years. No elected member should serve for more than two terms. Every year a quarter of the Union Councils in each Region should be up for vote.
4. **Office of the President:** Members of the National Assembly and the Regional Councils will elect the country's President (Head of State) for a term of no more than four years. No person will serve this office for more than two terms.

B. Judicial Offices

1. **Supreme Court:** Its structure should remain the same, but it should serve only as the final appellate (constitutional) court in the country. The Supreme Judicial Council should include the Chief Regional Judges from five different Regions in rotation every year and representatives of the Bar and other prominent professions.
2. **Regional Courts:** Each Region should have an appellate court comprising three judges, one of whom should be the Chief Regional Judge.
3. **District Courts:** Their structure should remain unchanged.

C. Administrative Offices

1. **Civil Service:** The aim is to establish a decentralised civil service system, comprising well-trained civil servants who are professionals in their field of specialisation. The Central Government should hire people for various positions through a Public Service Commission. For the training of selected candidates, the Commission should give contracts to universities on a competitive basis. The training period should be left to the universities. The Public Service Commission should give to the contracted universities the training requirements for the official cadres, finance and economy, accounts, agriculture, energy, water and power, environment, public health, and administrative services (domestic and foreign). Each university contract should be for no more than five years. The Regional Governments should also follow this model for the hiring and training of the civil service personnel required to serve the Regional Councils and District Councils. The administration of each Region will be headed by a Commissioner and that of the District by a Deputy Commissioner. In the civil service, there will be no transfer of personnel between the Central and Regional Governments and between the Regions. Transfers will be allowed between Districts within a Region. All civil service personnel will be accountable to the elected officials in the Central Government and Regional and District Councils. The process of accountability will be subject to due process and according to standardised procedures.
2. **Police Service:** Each Region should have its own police service distributed across districts and cities within the Region. It should have a Regional Police Commission comprising representatives from the police service, elected officials, and the general public. There should be a National Police Academy for the training of the police personnel of all ranks. The Academy should be the joint responsibility of the Central and Regional Governments. Each Region should have a Police Commissioner and each District should have a Deputy Police Commissioner as heads of police in their jurisdiction. The police personnel will be subject to transfers between the Districts in each Region but not between the Regions. All police personnel in a Region will be accountable to the elected Regional and District Councils. The process of accountability will be subject to due process and according to standardised procedures.

D. Independent Offices and Entities

The Central Government should have three independent offices: (1) an accountability office for a clean and transparent system of governance in the country, (2) an office to address public complaints about services of government entities, and (3) an office for the audit of public accounts. Each Region should have two independent offices: one to address public complaints about the civil service and police and the other for the audit of public accounts. No ministry or department of the government should interfere in the affairs of universities and research institutes, regulatory bodies, public media (TV and radio), public-sector enterprises, the State Bank, and the national election commission.

II. Responsibility and Authority of Governments

1. The Central Government will be responsible for the departments of defense, internal security (interior affairs), foreign affairs, industries, international trade, banking and finance, environment, science and technology, water and power development, railways and aviation, and inter-regional affairs. The Central Government will have the authority to levy tax on (i) income and wealth of individuals and businesses, (ii) goods & services, and (iii) imports and exports. (The State Bank should be an independent entity for monetary affairs.)
2. The Regional Government will be responsible for the departments of law and order (home affairs), health, education, agriculture (crops and livestock), industries, trade, irrigation, transport infrastructure (roads, etc.), housing, and sanitation. It will have the authority to levy tax on agricultural land, urban and rural property and impose water charges.
3. The Local Government will have the subsidiary responsibility for law and order (police), health, education, trade, agriculture, irrigation, roads, and sanitation.

III. Distribution of Financial Resources

1. The total tax revenue of the Central Government should be divided into two pots: 35 per cent in one pot to run the affairs of the Central Government and 65 per cent in the other pot to finance the Regional Government. The share of each Region from the second pot will be based on its (a) share in the total population, (b) level of development, and (c) contribution to the national exchequer. A National Finance Commission will determine the distribution of resources. The representatives of the National and Regional Governments in the Commission will be assisted by advisors and professional staff.
2. The total revenue of each Region, including transfers from the Central Government, will be divided between the Regional Government and the Local Government in the ratio of 40:60. The share of each District will depend on its (a) share in the population of the Region and (b) level of development. Each Region will have a Finance Commission for this purpose. The District Council will likewise determine the share of each Union Council from its income (revenue).

Remember this is a thought experiment. I am sure there are many severe gaps to be filled. Also, I have no idea how much this experiment might cost and if that cost is worth the outcome. Maybe it's altogether a bad thought!

Appendix I

Proposed Twenty Regions of Pakistan

Balochistan Regions (Four)	34 districts	12.34 million
1. Nasirabad and Sibi Divisions	11 districts	2.63 million
2. Qalat and Makran Divisions	9 districts	3.66 million
3. Quetta and Rakhshan Divisions	5 districts	3.03 million
4. Zhob Division	9 districts	3.04 million

(Notes: The districts of Qilla Abdullah and Pishin are shifted from Quetta Division to Zhob Division.)

Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Regions (Four)	33 districts	35.63 million
1. Hazara Division	7 districts	5.33 million
2. Kohat, Bannu and D.I. Khan Divisions	11 districts	8.67 million
3. Malakand Division	8 districts	8.61 million
4. Peshawar and Mardan Divisions	7 districts	13.02 million

Punjab Regions (Six)	36 districts	110.01 million
1. Dera Ghazi Khan Division	4 districts	11.01 million
2. Faisalabad and Sahiwal Divisions	7 districts	21.56 million
3. Gujranwala Division	6 districts	16.12 million
4. Lahore Division	4 districts	19.40 million
5. Multan and Bahawalpur Divisions	7 districts	23.73 million
6. Rawalpindi and Sargodha Divisions	8 districts	18.19 million

Sindh Regions (Six)	29 districts	47.88 million
1. Hyderabad and Banbhore Divisions	8 districts	9.04 million
2. Karachi I	3 districts	7.38 million
3. Karachi II	3 districts	8.67 million
4. Larkana Division	6 districts	7.74 million
5. Mirpurkhas and S. Benazirabad Divisions	5 districts	7.90 million
6. Sukkur Division	4 districts	7.15 million

(Notes: Karachi Division is split into two Regions: Karachi (I) comprises the districts of Karachi East, Korangi and Malir and Karachi (II) includes the districts of Karachi Central, West and South. The district of Naushero Feroze is shifted from Shaheed Benazirabad Division to Sukkur Division. The district of Shikarpur is shifted from Sukkur Division to Larkana Division. The district of Dadu is shifted from Hyderabad Division to Larkana Division.)

Appendix II

Administrative Units and Population of Pakistan

Divisions: 30

Districts: 133

Population: 207.78 million (2017 Census)

(Note: Federal Capital is included in the number of districts and population of Pakistan)

Balochistan (7 Divisions and 34 districts)

1. **Makran:** Gwadar, Kech, Panjgur
2. **Nasirabad:** Jaffaerabad, Jhal Magsi, Kachhi, Nasirabad, Sohbatpur
3. **Qalat:** Awaran, Khuzdar, Lasbela, Mastung, Qalat, Shaheed Sikanderabad
4. **Quetta:** Pishin, Qilla Abdullah, Quetta
5. **Rakhshan:** Chagai, Kharan, Nushki, Washuk
6. **Sibi:** Dera Bugti, Harnai, Kohlu, Lehri, Sibi, Ziarat
7. **Zhob:** Barkhan, Duki, Loralai, Musakhel, Qilla Saifullah, Sherani, Zhob

Population (in million)

1. Makran Division	1.49
2. Nasirabad Division	1.59
3. Qalat Division	2.17
4. Quetta Division	3.76
5. Rakhshan Division	0.75
6. Sibi Division	1.04
7. Zhob Division	1.54

Total Population of Balochistan 12.34

Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (7 Divisions and 33 districts)

1. **Bannu:** Bannu, Lakki Marwat, North Waziristan
2. **Dera Ismail Khan:** D.I. Khan, South Waziristan, Tank
3. **Hazara:** Abbottabad, Battagram, Haripur, Lower Kohistan, Mansehra, Torghar, Upper Kohistan
4. **Kohat:** Hangu, Karak, Kohat, Kurrum, Orakzai
5. **Malakand:** Bajaur, Buner, Chitral, Lower Dir, Malakand, Shangla, Swat, Upper Dir
6. **Mardan:** Mardan, Swabi
7. **Peshawar:** Charsadda, Khyber, Mohmand, Nowshera, Peshawar

Population (in million)

1. Bannu	2.66
2. Dera Ismail Khan	2.80
3. Hazara	5.33
4. Kohat	3.21
5. Malkakand	8.61
6. Mardan	4.00
7. Peshawar	9.02

Total Population of K-P 35.63

Punjab (9 Divisions and 36 Districts)

1. **Bahawalpur:** Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan

2. **Dera Ghazi Khan:** D.G. Khan, Layyah, Muzaffargarh, Rajanpur
3. **Faisalabad:** Faisalabad, Chiniot, Jhang, Toba Tek Singh
4. **Gujranwala:** Gujranwala, Gujrat, Hafizabad, Mandi Bahauddin, Narowal, Sialkot
5. **Lahore:** Kasur, Lahore, Nankana Sahib, Sheikhpura
6. **Multan:** Khanewal, Lodhran, Multan, Vehari
7. **Rawalpindi:** Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Rawalpindi
8. **Sahiwal:** Okara, Pakpattan, Sahiwal
9. **Sargodha:** Bhakkar, Khushab, Mianwali, Sargodha

Population (in million)

1. Bahawalpur	11.46
2. Dera Ghazi Khan	11.01
3. Faisalabad	14.18
4. Gujranwala	16.12
5. Lahore	19.40
6. Multan	12.27
7. Rawalpindi	10.01
8. Sahiwal	7.38
9. Sargodha	8.18
Total Population of Punjab	110.01

Sindh (7 Divisions and 29 Districts)

1. **Banbhore:** Badin, Sujawal, Thatta
2. **Hyderabad:** Dadu, Hyderabad, Jamshoro, Matiari, Tando Allah Yar, Tando Mohammad Khan
3. **Karachi:** Karachi Central, Karachi East, Karachi South, Karachi West, Korangi, Malir
4. **Larkana:** Jacobabad, Kambar Shahdad Kot, Kashmore, Larkana, Shikarpur
5. **Mirpurkhas:** Mirpurkhas, Tharparkar, Umer Kot
6. **Shaheed Benazirabad:** Naushero Feroze, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sanghar
7. **Sukkur:** Ghotki, Khairpur, Sukkur

Population (in million)

1. Banbhore	3.56
2. Hyderabad	7.03
3. Karachi	16.05
4. Larkana	6.19
5. Mirpurkhas	4.23
6. Shaheed Benazirabad	5.28
7. Sukkur	5.54
Total Population of Sindh	47.88

Federal Capital (Islamabad) **2.01**

Proposed Regions of Pakistan

Balochistan

1. Nasirabad and Sibi Divisions
2. Qalat and Makran Divisions
3. Quetta and Rakhshan Divisions
4. Zhob Division

Punjab

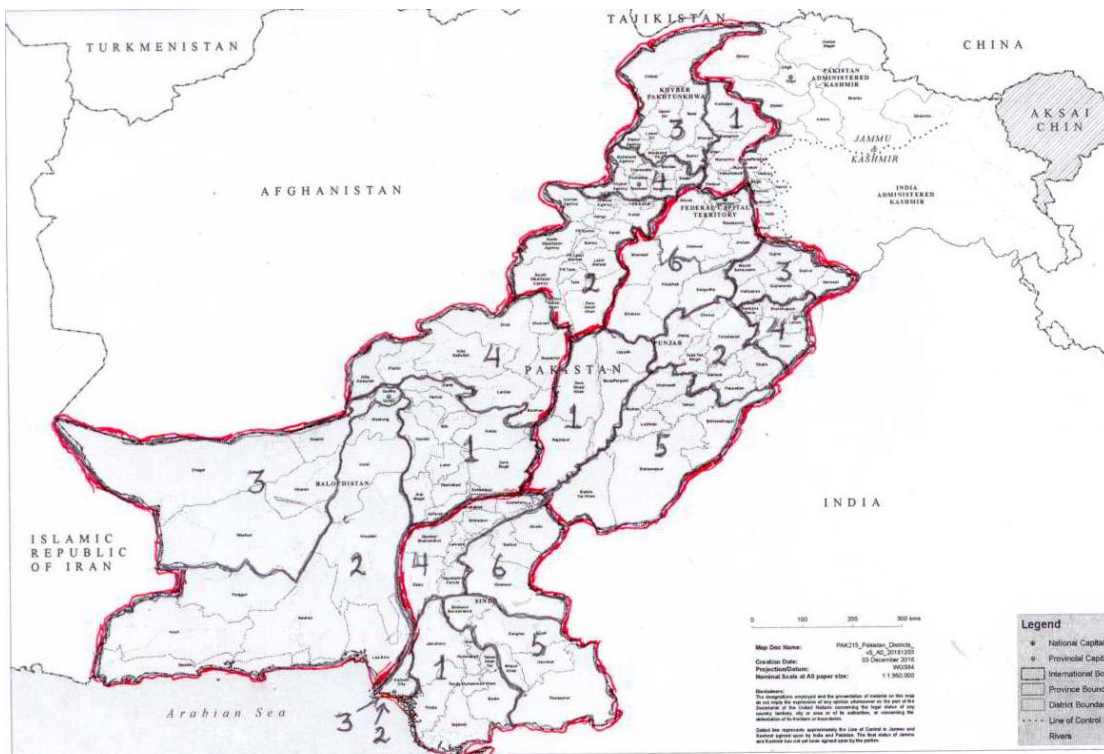
1. D.G. Khan Division
2. Faisalabad and Sahiwal Divisions
3. Gujranwala Division
4. Lahore Division
5. Multan and Bahawalpur Divisions
6. Rawalpindi and Srgodha Divisions

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

1. Hazara Division
2. Kohat, Bannu and D. I. Khan Divisions
3. Malakand Division
4. Peshawar and Mardan Divisions

Sindh

1. Hyderabad and Banbhore Divisions
2. Karachi I
3. Karachi II
4. Larkana Division
5. Mirpurkhas & Sh. Benazirabad Divisions
6. Sukkur Division



BALUCHISTAN

1. Nasirabad and Sibi
2. Qalat and Makran
3. Quetta and Rakhshan
4. Zhob

KHYBER-PAKHTUNKHWA

1. Hazara
2. Kohat, Bannu and D.I. Khan
3. Malakand
4. Peshawar and Mardan

PUNJAB

1. D.G. Khan
2. Faisalabad and Sahiwal
3. Gujranwala
4. Lahore
5. Multan and Bahawalpur
6. Rawalpindi and Sargodha

SINDH

1. Hyderabad and Banbhore
2. Karachi I
3. Karachi II
4. Larkana
5. Mirpur Kha and Shahee Benazirabad
6. Sukkur

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