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Transcript

The Media in Pakistan: Security Challenges

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Gareth Price:

Welcome to Chatham House everyone, and welcome to this meeting looking at the media in Pakistan. I am delighted to welcome two distinguished journalists to the meeting. Elizabeth Rubin is an independent journalist who has covered South Asia and Pakistan for numerous publications, including the *New York Times Magazine*. She has reported from conflict zones around the world including Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Balkans, and she was commissioned by the Committee to Protect Journalists to conduct an independent investigation into the dangerous conditions facing members of the news media in Pakistan. The outcome is this report, *Roots of Impunity*.

Ahmed Rashid is a Pakistani journalist and one of the world's foremost experts on Pakistan and Afghanistan. He is the author of five books, including *Pakistan: On the Brink* and the bestselling *Taliban*. He contributes to the *New York Times*, the *Financial Times*, and the *Washington Post*, among others. *Foreign Policy* included him in its list of 100 Top Global Thinkers in 2009 and 2010.

Our speakers will discuss the challenges faced by journalists in Pakistan and argue that although the media is robust and the industry is growing, the ability of journalists to investigate vital stories is severely curtailed by deteriorating security and failures of justice when journalists are murdered. This event is on the record, and before turning to our speakers, we have a short video outlining key issues addressed in the report.

[Video]

Gareth Price:

We'll now turn to Elizabeth first, who will talk for ten minutes or so, followed by Ahmed, and then we'll move to Q and A.

Elizabeth Rubin:

Thank you so much for coming. I wanted to talk a little about the Wali Khan Babar case. The reason I chose to really go in depth on that in the report – he was killed in Karachi – is that unfortunately his murder opened up so much of the many problems not only that journalists face in Pakistan, but the Pakistani justice system, the relationship between the judiciary and the government and politicians and how all of that actually works.

The police actually did a very good job. They found the people who murdered him. There were five guys who were involved in a very systematic plot, and they all belonged to the MQM. The leader of the MQM, as many of you may know, lives here in London and has asylum. I suppose because we're in London I am bringing this up. All the journalists I spoke to, they would talk about the Taliban, they would talk about the ISI, but they would not go on the record to talk about the MQM. They're absolutely petrified. They all have dealings with them. Many of the newsrooms in Karachi are dominated in some way by the MQM, and to an extent they'll say, look, the MQM makes Karachi work. In case you don't know, it's the Muhajir Party, and they present themselves as a kind of bulwark against Islamic extremism, that they stand for women's rights, for democracy. Many of the Pakistanis I spoke to said that one of the problems they feel is that the British and the US, in particular, but really the British, perceive the MQM as doing some of the work for them against the Islamic extremists in Karachi. For the MQM, it's a matter to them of survival, because the Pashtuns have been coming into Karachi after the flooding, after the bombings, and the demographics are changing in Karachi. Given that the Muhajirs don't have land, don't have their own province so to speak, this is home.

In looking at what happened to Babar and why he was killed, I spoke to journalists about what was happening in the prosecution. They said, well, the two prosecutors have disappeared. I said, what happened? Well they had to flee and they're actually in the US. So I caught up with them in the US, where they had come just to get away for a while.

The reason they had gotten away is they had just tried to do their job. Part of what they were trying to do is go after Islamic extremists because the cases came to them. They were the prosecutors in the Anti-Terrorism Court. They were also prosecutors in the Rangers case. It was a case that was caught on video: six Rangers were seen shooting an innocent anonymous civilian. The Interior Minister Malik came and gave a big statement defending the rangers, and everything was there on the video. The two prosecutors, Buriro and Mirza, interviewed all the witnesses on the government side, and they went ahead with the case. Everyone came to them and said, do not go ahead with this case, you will be in serious trouble and your families will be in serious trouble.

Nevertheless they did, and they won. The Rangers were indicted. Then they left to come to the US on a naval training course...I don't know if you all remember the Kerry-Lugar Act, by which the US was giving money to the civilian part of the government to try to bolster the civilian government. So

they came to get some training in the US. On their return, once again they were called into the office of the ISI, who asked them, why did you talk about the Rangers case? Why did you go there? Who invited you? Who are you working for? It's interesting because every one of these cases, including Aatif who was killed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has so much to do with the Pakistan-US relationship. The prosecutors were caught up in that. They were seen as somehow giving information to the Americans and somehow siding with the Americans, somehow dishonouring the Pakistani military. So they came under threat for that.

Then the Wali Khan Babar case comes up. The clerks within their own court told them, look, we are informants for the MQM, and we know that if you prosecute this case, you may be killed or your families will be. Please leave it. So even within the courts, the clerks, the people working in the bureaucracy, they are all reporting back to the MQM. Eventually they were fired. They were going to have a meeting with the ISI and journalists in Karachi told them, don't go to this meeting. Either you will be turned and made into informants, or you will maybe be disappeared. Again, they left the country. That's when I caught up with them.

Very similarly, the case with Mukarram Khan Aatif, who was killed, you don't know whether it was the Taliban or the Intelligence. But he was working for VOA [Voice of America]. He reported on the attack by the US on a Pakistani outpost. As many of you probably know, after that the US refused to apologize for killing 24 Pakistani soldiers. This was after Raymond Davis, after the Osama bin Laden raid, and the ties between the US and Pakistan were cut. Aatif was in a two-way radio with Washington in an interview, and he described that the Taliban base, or the Taliban themselves, were not that far from Salala, the check post which is the army base. Now as all of you probably know, the Frontier Corps is largely Pashtun. Sometimes the Taliban use their bases, sometimes they are families; sometimes they are intimidated. There is not that much of a border between those two parties. The Americans, who had been blocked from going into Pakistan, come under attack. I spoke to the commander of the Special Forces. Basically they came under attack and rather than firing back and leaving it at that, they went and chased down every single person who was firing at them and killed them. Some of them were insurgents; some of them were Pakistani soldiers. The Pakistanis knew exactly what happened; the Americans knew what happened, and there was no way to breach this because of pride, anger, and the dissolution of this relationship.

Once again, a journalist was caught in the middle of it. I think if you look at the killings of every one of these journalists that's what you're going to find. They are caught in an undeclared war between the US and Pakistan, or the relationship between the parties, the MQM and the Intelligence. Until that identity crisis in Pakistan is resolved, it is going to be very hard for journalists to operate freely and have these cases prosecuted where the persecutors are brought to justice.

Ahmed Rashid:

Thank you very much for allowing me to be here. One of the reasons why I am here is because I am on the board of the Committee to Protect Journalists. I think this is a really incredible report – I don't know of any other report that has come out on the Pakistani media in the last fifty years, frankly.

Let me try to put this in some kind of context. As you know, the Pakistani media has been faced with threats right from the very conception of Pakistan. It has not just been military dictatorships that has tried to crush the media or tried to threaten and abuse the media. If we go back to Ayub Khan in the '50s and '60s – he put hundreds of journalists into jail. Zia ul-Haq flogged journalists. But the civilians were no better. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto also put a lot of journalists into jail and treated them very badly. So did Nawaz Sharif in his earlier reincarnation as Prime Minister. He also put journalists into jail and in fact handed them over the ISI. The ISI at that time, to their credit, refused to accept them, and refused to take responsibility for jailing journalists. So we have had this terrible situation where we have very weak civil society. Our institutions of parliament, judiciary, civil society, NGOs are very weak. The media has taken on a role that is much greater than perhaps it is really prepared to do. It is perhaps not intellectually prepared to do it but it is forced into this role to play a much bigger role than the media would normally play.

At the same time, you have had massive attempts by the military, by the ISI, to bribe, cajole, threaten, harass, and ultimately even kill journalists who have been trying to do their jobs. These are the kinds of tensions that the Pakistani press has lived with. You have people who are part of the establishment, who are paid informants for the establishment – journalists, that is – and you have journalists who have been resisting. Even within the journalist community, there has been this incredible tension between the two. I think the tragedy has only been expounded by 9/11 and the War on Terror. That, and along with the fact that we had a military regime under Musharraf, has given the military and the intelligence services a freedom to act with total impunity,

which we never saw before. We would never have considered, before 9/11, the fact that the military or the ISI might be accused of killing journalists. You would have the military and the ISI flogging, jailing, harassing, forcing into exile but you would not have the idea of journalists being killed.

Secondly, you would not, before 9/11, have this idea of journalists being killed by political parties. It is very well known what the MQM is doing in Karachi. The fact that even today, with all the harassment that is on, every single TV station has to relay Altaf Hussain's frequent speeches from London in full – and if there's any break or if they break for adverts or anything like that, the MQM will jump on that TV station and tell them why they did. And burning down these TV stations or anything like that is quite common. The elections in Karachi, where for the first time the MQM has been dealt a very strong body blow by a variety of parties but particularly by Imran Khan and the PTI, has led to a huge spate of abuse by Altaf Hussain against the press. He publicly threatened them from London, to break the arms and legs of journalists who dare to criticize him – that's a quote. Now, Pakistanis are outraged at the British government – that the British government should be allowing somebody like that. What would happen if somebody threatening David Cameron was sitting in Pakistan, somebody with that kind of political clout? What would the British government do about that? There is real outrage at the moment. We are historically known as being anti-American. The anti-British feeling is really mounting, and the silence of the British government – the fact that the largest aid is given by Britain, and yet there is complete silence given by Britain on this whole question of what Altaf Hussain is doing in England, why he was given British citizenship, and why he is allowed to continue making speeches like this. Pakistanis generally find that really outrageous.

As far as the ISI is concerned, the War on Terror has given them a kind of mandate that no political government has been able to match or face up to. I think the biggest tragedy is that the last People's Party government basically surrendered the entire policy making or decision making to the army and the ISI. That gave them more clout than ever before. Now we have the new government of Nawaz Sharif. It is going to be very interesting to see what kind of relationship he will have with the military. Is he going to try to assert himself, for example, in key foreign policy issues like India, Afghanistan – areas that Asif Zardari's government had allowed the army to basically take all the decisions on. To their credit, the People's Party did initially try, when they won the elections, to talk about improving relations with India. They were quickly snubbed and they never pursued it any further. But most critical is the complete control over Afghan policy. The military has been pursuing this dual

policy, which is now completely out in the open, of on the one hand trying to help the Afghan government and even now, recently, trying to help broker peace between Afghanistan and the Americans, the Taliban and the Americans, etc. But on the other hand, at the same time, allowing the Taliban sanctuary in Pakistan, allowing them to continue the war effort against the Afghan government and the Americans, using all the logistics, the recruitment, the suicide training. So much of this has been done in Pakistan without any kind of hindrance to these efforts.

I think this control that the military now has, partly the result of mistakes made by the former civilian government, is so overwhelming that it gives them a kind of mandate to do whatever they want. Many of the cases that Elizabeth has exposed deal with this double dealing that the military has been involved in. For example, Hayatullah Khan, who was killed in the tribal areas for disclosing that drones had been used to kill Pakistanis on the Pakistan side of the border, whereas the military was saying, no, it was fighter bombs, and vice versa. Journalists who have been trying to report have been caught up in this dual policy.

Now I think things have improved. We have seen a change in the leadership of the ISI in the last year. Compared to the last general who was in charge of it, there have been far fewer incidents of harassment and arrests and everything else happening. Nobody knows, but I hope there has been some kind of rethink going on in the military and the ISI because that is not the way you treat a fellow Pakistani journalist and the media. This gives the military an incredibly bad name.

I think there are many things that we need to do. If you read this report, there are several recommendations which are very important. I think the most important thing the Nawaz Sharif government can do to show its good intentions is to reopen, if not all twenty-one cases of these unresolved murders, then at least to open some of the most important ones. Certainly start off with the three that were highlighted in the video. These cases need to be reopened. They need to be re-examined. Secondly, reports have been made by the Musharraf government and the Zardari government on the deaths of several of these journalists, including Saleem Shahzad. A very extensive report was written. These reports need to be made public if there is to be any kind of credibility afforded the government.

The other thing is that I think there has to be a code of conduct exercised by the ISI and by the civilian intelligence agencies which is better known to journalists and made public so that journalists know what is in the national

interest and what is not in the national interest, etc. There is no code of conduct. There is no accountability of any of the intelligence agencies, unfortunately, in Pakistan right now. Their growing power is of huge concern. You cannot build a democracy on the basis of an intelligence agency which is actually deciding on foreign policy, on the media, and on all sorts of other issues.

The other issue is what the press has been chasing up for a long time: the right to know. We need a decree by Parliament so we can have access to government files. This has been blocked by the Defence Ministry, in other words by the military, for over ten years. We haven't seen much progress, except right now the interim government did pursue this and there is a bill that is now being forwarded in the Senate in the next few days for discussion. The Senate is not the law making House - that is the Lower House. We don't quite know what the military and the Defence Ministry are going to do about it. For example, a very critical question that most people want answered is: what is the budget for the military? We have never been told in sixty-seven years what the budget is for the military, how much is spent on the intelligence services, how much is spent on the nuclear programme, etc. We get a round figure. We don't get any kind of breakdown ever. Secondly, there is a very comprehensive UN action plan for journalists and I think the government should attuned to that and perhaps follow it up and open it up. I think what this report does is give recommendations to the international community and to this new government, and I hope we will start amending some of these awful deaths and harassments that have taken place.

Q&A

Question:

Recently we have seen that there are journalists' unions in Pakistan. When the Saleem Shahzad case arose, we saw that journalists' unions protested against the ISI and organised sit-ins. Do you think this phenomenon will continue, and will these unions challenge the agency?

Ahmed Rashid:

I think right now everyone is in a wait and see attitude – wait to see what this government does, wait to see how the military reacts. I don't think anybody is going to take any pre-emptive action right now. We've just been through this period of interim government. There seemed to be very little military interference in this interim government, which was a very positive thing and which led to free and fair elections - despite a bit of local rigging that went on in Sindh and Karachi and other places – but I don't think there was the kind of institutional rigging that we saw in 2002 under Musharraf. As I said, I think the ISI's new chain of command over the last one year has acted differently than what we had before under General Pasha, when there was a much greater degree of not just harassment – remember the Hussain Lakhani case, or issues that made the ISI extremely controversial both nationally and internationally. I think we have seen a much lower profile of the intelligence agencies, and I hope that continues. I still think some kind of code of conduct is needed, and that code of conduct needs to be conveyed to the media – that there are rules and regulations within the intelligence agency which govern the behaviour of the intelligence agencies towards the media.

Gareth Price:

Can I just follow that up? You mentioned the interim government. One of the more surprising things in Pakistan recently was the appointment of a journalist as the interim Chief Minister of Punjab. Did you read anything into that?

Ahmed Rashid:

There were two journalists actually: the information minister was also a journalist. It's a reflection of the growing role of journalists. One might dispute

that either one of these two journalists was neutral, or that they shouldn't have been chosen, or whatever the case may be. But I think it's a reflection of the growing role of journalists, and how journalists are better known sometimes than politicians or army generals, or anyone else.

Elizabeth Rubin:

It happens in the US as well – there's a crossover between politicians and journalists, and sometimes journalists step into politics and go back. It doesn't necessarily have to have corrupt implications.

Question:

What role can the foreign media play to be useful in highlighting what's going on in the Western media? Or is the foreign media in the same difficult position in that, while they will not necessarily be killed, but as we've recently seen in the case of *New York Times* correspondent Declan Walsh, thrown out? Can you tell us about the relationship between the foreign media and domestic media?

Ahmed Rashid:

This is the one black mark. He was thrown out without any explanation whatsoever. And we still don't have any explanation as to why he was thrown out. Maybe the *New York Times* has been given some explanation privately, but certainly the Pakistani media and other elements of the foreign media have not been given any explanation. Frankly this is no way to behave. This is all about the kind of code of behaviour that I'm talking about and what is so needed. You can't deal with the foreign press in this arbitrary manner on the eve of the interim government stepping down and the new government coming in – to throw out someone without any explanation whatsoever. Certainly the risks remain. It is going to be very important to show what this civilian government is going to do to ensure that instances like Declan's eviction do not happen under its watch and that if it does happen explanations are given and the journalist has a right of reply.

I think the foreign media should be writing on these issues. I think they're vitally important. Certainly this report could be highlighted more by the foreign media. But it's also up to foreign governments. The stunning silence of the British government – let me remind you, after the death of Saleem Shahzad, the Americans responded immediately. Within twenty-four hours, Hillary

Clinton, the State Department, everybody had come out. It took three months for the European Union and the countries of the European Union – except the Scandinavians, who came out very fast – to condemn the murder of Saleem Shahzad. And the British even then did not condemn the murder. I've talked about the British action regarding Altaf Hussain and the MQM. It is pitiful that the European Union, which stands for human rights and all the rest of it, cannot come out and openly condemn the killings of journalists in Pakistan. It takes not just three months but persuasion by the Pakistani media - delegation after delegation going to meet the embassies in Islamabad before they came out with anything. That is what is pitiful.

Elizabeth Rubin:

I would just add that when it comes to the MQM it's not just the British. I had a conversation with the former Ambassador to Pakistan who, when I talked about the MQM, said, well that's just a cult. As though this is really not something to be taken seriously, when for anybody living in Pakistan the MQM is a formidable enterprise. Not only that: they are as powerful if not more powerful than the Islamic militants. As Ahmed says, it has to come from government as much as it has to come from journalists. Declan was living in Pakistan. But I do think foreign journalists have an advantage which is to say that they can go in, do reports, and come out, and they're fine, and they can go back. The idea that you go in and report on something and you won't be able to go back isn't true. You can get in to issues that Pakistani journalists can't or will only be off the record, and I think it's absolutely worth doing.

Question:

What about the role of social media? Do the so-called freedoms inherent in social media perhaps bypass some of the threats faced by more traditional journalists?

Elizabeth Rubin:

I don't speak Urdu so I can't go into exactly what is going on, but what I've noticed is that a lot of what is not discussed in the news is widely distributed on Facebook. There is a huge and lively discussion about everything that is going on – all of the killings, the extrajudicial killings. Certainly the killing of the Rangers – that would not have been such a crisis for the government had it not been for YouTube. Same thing with the executions in Waziristan. There

is no question that it has circumvented the mainstream media and forced the mainstream media to deal with these issues in a way that's very powerful.

Ahmed Rashid:

I might just remind you that YouTube is still off in Pakistan. This is a huge blow to trying to see anything or understand anything. There are ways to get around it but you have to be savvy to do that. If you're an ordinary person going to an internet café, you can't view these videos. Culturally, all the young people creating music and art and everything are going on YouTube, and it's off. The issue is that YouTube will not take off this video that blasphemed the Prophet. But the point is that, unfortunately, what needs to happen is that the government of Pakistan needs to be in dialogue with YouTube and draw up an agreement, which apparently YouTube has done with many countries in the Muslim world. Pakistan has not done it. It needs to be done quickly so we can restore YouTube.

Question:

Do journalists have access to Waziristan and the tribal areas?

Elizabeth Rubin:

Absolutely there is a media blackout in Waziristan. [On the issue of the difficulty of acquiring a visa to visit Waziristan and the tribal areas] There are certain ways around it to go to Peshawar. For Waziristan, I think that even if they allowed you, there would be many journalists who wouldn't go anyway. But there are many who would, and the fear tends to be more about what the government will do. The only way around it is to use local journalists, and they are under incredible pressure from every side. They are in an impossible situation. In Waziristan it's even worse. The foreign media that does have local language programmes, like Radio Deewa – they can't have transmitters in Pakistan. I think the BBC's transmitter is in Oman. There is not even local media allowed in Waziristan. But remember, the FM stations, when the Taliban was around, were stoking the Taliban, with the rise of the Taliban in Swat – then there was no problem with the FM stations. There is a lot of hypocrisy around what is allowed, what isn't allowed, who is controlling what is allowed. Why shouldn't there be local radio stations for the people in Waziristan to know what is going on in the next community? That is from the government.

Ahmed Rashid:

What I find really tragic about the duality of the military's policy in Waziristan and the tribal areas is that in FATA...the population of FATA is four million people. Two million have fled either into very tightly controlled refugee camps or to faraway places like Karachi and Dubai and other places. By and large, most of these two million people are anti-Taliban, which is why they fled. A lot of them are in favour of drones. A lot of them are openly anti-Taliban. But even their point of view is not expressed at all. So we get a lot of government-sponsored tribesmen who are allowed to bring their families to Islamabad and demonstrate against the Americans and against the drone attacks in front of Parliament. But if you are anti-Taliban, and you have fled FATA because you are anti-Taliban, you will never be allowed to demonstrate in front of Parliament about the fact that the Taliban have destroyed your farm, your country, your village.

The fact that half the population is anti-Taliban is very seldom mentioned. It's not mentioned at all by the government, and it's very seldom mentioned by the media. Part of the reason is that a lot of those people living outside FATA now are very scared. They are scared of the Taliban and they are scared of the military. We have a very complicated situation in which the people in Pakistan and those abroad are being fed a totally false narrative as to what is going on. The fact is that a lot of the local people loath the Taliban, and if they were not being pressured by these various elements, they would come out much stronger against the Taliban. Reporting this becomes even more tricky.

Elizabeth Rubin:

I think underlying that is a problem that is somehow very difficult to talk about, which is the larger Pashtun problem - what role they have in Pakistani society, the reluctance of the Punjab-dominated military to integrate them fully into the country in the way the Pashtuns want to be integrated. There has to be some reckoning with this ethnic problem, which is all over the country. I haven't seen any attempt for that to happen.

Gareth Price:

Elizabeth, you've worked in a lot of conflict-affected states in your career. How do the challenges faced by journalists in Pakistan compare or contrast to those in other states in which you've worked?

Elizabeth Rubin:

Interestingly, I think [the media in Pakistan] have a much harder time than the media in, for example, Afghanistan, despite the fact that in Afghanistan you are in what is virtually a country at war. I think it's the power and the pressure of this military and intelligence duality and the fact that Pakistan is in a very strange relationship to the War on "Terror." It creates challenges for Pakistani journalists that the Afghans don't face. I can't talk about the whole world – let's not go to Mexico, where it's very difficult to be a journalist – but in that region, Pakistanis are really caught between a rock and a hard place.

Ahmed Rashid:

I'd just like to add that I think there's an enormous amount that all of you, especially those at think tanks and human rights groups and the media, can do to really highlight this problem. We are at a very decisive moment. We've got a new government. I think the government would like to do the right thing by all sections of society. It needs to be pushed to do the right thing. We don't want to roll everything back and go back to the situation that existed two or three years ago. I hope there is going to be some kind of light at the end of the tunnel as far as Afghanistan is concerned with possible dialogue with the Afghan Taliban. That could lead to a breakthrough with the Pakistani Taliban, possibly, down the road. But it is very important that the media is able to report freely in Pakistan.

Question:

What is the situation of the media in Balochistan?

Elizabeth Rubin:

Balochistan is a bit of a black hole. It used to be possible to go to Quetta. To go outside of Quetta is virtually impossible certainly for foreign journalists. Mohammed Hameed, the BBC journalist and novelist, talked about how it's not only the fear, but also the incentive for media outlets to push the Baloch case is not very great because there is no advertising, on top of everything else. Hamid Mir famously went and did these shows about the disappearances in Balochistan, and he even he, who has the prominence that he does, came under enormous pressure and threats. He had a conversation with Zardari about if he could stop these people from coming after me, and Zardari said, no, I can't.

I wanted to go [to Balochistan], and I couldn't go. There were a couple of journalists who were killed. One of them was the editor of a Baloch newspaper.

Ahmed Rashid:

I think the journalists in Balochistan have suffered particularly. Nationalist journalists – not separatists or insurgency-based journalists, but just Baloch nationalists – have been disappeared, and some of their bodies have turned up. The press is under huge pressure in Balochistan to the extent that not just Balochis but also non-Balochis living in Quetta, who make up the bulk of the journalists reporting for the national daily and the national TV news channel, are even too scared to report on what's going on. So there is a complete news blackout from Balochistan. They're scared either because they'll be made to disappear by the military or the intelligence agencies or the Frontier Corps, or they're scared of the separatists and the extremists. We don't even have accurate reporting from Balochistan in the mainstream media. Forget the Balochi media or the Sindhi media or the media in Karachi. In the national media, Balochistan is never mentioned.

Question:

Pakistan was selected as one of the five countries for the first phase of implementation for the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. What are the implications of the Pakistani government's participation in this UN initiative?

Ahmed Rashid:

It is going to be up to the government of Pakistan to take the initiative to enact some of what the UN is asking for, without being forced to do it. It would be so wonderful if the government would do a couple of things, like opening up the cases of some of these murdered journalists – doing something without being forced to do it because of western pressure. It's like the economic dilemma right now. It would be wonderful if Nawaz Sharif would take some steps towards raising taxes rather than waiting for the IMF to beat him on the head and say, raise more taxes. It would be great if the government could do something on its own initiative rather than being beaten on the head by the EU or the UN or whoever it is.

Elizabeth Rubin:

The relationship between the West and Pakistan is at play in the conditions of journalists and the dangers they find themselves in. As Ahmed said about the fact that no one killed them before, though they may have threatened them or imprisoned them – I think this war has really upped the stakes. I think there is a place for diplomacy that has not been found. The relationship between the US and Pakistan has never been as bad. It would be great if with this new government there was a bridge that could be found. If there's any way to talk to each other, that would also help Pakistani journalists.

Gareth Price:

Thank you. I'll reiterate Ahmed's point that this report is well worth reading. I'd like to thank our speakers, Ahmed Rashid and Elizabeth Rubin.