

TO American Institute of Pakistan Studies  
FROM Christopher Candland  
RE Report on August 2016 AIPS Travel Grant  
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An AIPS conference travel grant, very gratefully received, permitted me to travel to Pakistan to present a paper at the 5th International Conference of the Department of Political Science, University of Peshawar, on the "Dynamics of Change in the Pakistan–Afghanistan Region: Politics on the Borderland," held from August 29 to 31, 2016. The three-day conference ran concurrently with the two-week 4th International Summer School of the Department of Political Science, University of Peshawar. The summer school began a week before the conference and concluded a week later.

I was given a two-hour session of the joint international conference-summer school, 30 minutes to present my paper, "Government, Legitimacy, and Violence," and 90 minutes to organize a discussion about it. The paper was my attempt to answer a question, posed to me in the form of a poem, after a talk that I gave at the Center for Oriental and Islamic Studies, University of Peshawar in 2012.

How strange your style to raid your loyal.  
Why do you spoil those loved erstwhile?  
What else is to be lost to prove me servile?  
You target our people and soil.  
Let me apprise you of the myth,  
That spells me subject and makes you royal.  
Who treads on me, who made me bleed?  
Who sowed the seed to get me hostile?  
Why are you freed to profess your creed?  
While I am stalked in the rank and file?

The author of the poem, then a student at the University of Peshawar, explained over tea that he was from an area that was then the focus of U.S. unmanned aerial vehicle bombing. He was curious about why U.S. citizens were seemingly not much concerned about 'targeted killings' in his area.

My answer, in brief, was Rabindranath Tagore's answer, 99 years ago, to the question of why he was against the idea of the nation. "The Nation," he told audiences in Europe emerging from the horrors of World War I, "is the greatest evil for the Nation." A human being, I argued, has little chance against a myth as grand as the nation. Violence in defense of the nation is considered legitimate, even patriotic, not criminal nor immoral. Thus, all of us, especially academics, must be critical of the idea of the nation. The discussion, some of it in defense of the Pakistani nation, was lively and productive.

The AIPS travel grant allowed me to chair another dynamic session, on "Gender Silencing," about the suppression of women's participation in formal politics in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. The AIPS travel grant also allowed me to attend the entire second week of the summer school, where I participated in each session and got to know each of the 22 participants, most of whom are M.Phil. candidates from Afghanistan and Pakistan. I advised several at length about how to pose productive questions, design research, conduct interviews, make field observations, and correspond with U.S. scholars. I continue to meet and correspond with a few of them about their work.

I am grateful to AIPS for making my travel to Pakistan possible. I believe that the trip was highly productive, and will have lasting benefits for Pakistan-United States academic relations and for Pakistan Studies.