

# The importance of learning (some) IR theory for diplomats

How Pakistan's civil service  
recruitment process shortchanges its  
diplomats

# A little about myself

- Graduated from LUMS in 2003
- Sat the CSS in 2004
- Completed LLB in 2005
- Joined the Foreign Service in 2005
- 2007-08 – Desk officer for the U.S.
- 2008-14 – Beijing
- Completed Master in Public Policy from Princeton this year

# The CSS

- One-size-fits-all
- The recruitment process is rigorous and demanding, yes...but is it *smart*?

THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE > PAKISTAN

## Declining CSS results leave top recruiter scratching its head

By Riazul Haq Published: October 12, 2016

- Why the recent fuss about the shocking pass rates of the CSS misses the point?

# The problem with picking “generalists”

## Academic backgrounds of the Foreign Service batch of 2005 (33<sup>rd</sup> Common)

Engineering/Science	6
Medicine	3
Law	3
English literature	2
Economics	2
Linguistics	1
Military officers	2
TOTAL	19

Notice anything odd?

# Typical excuses for not taking this more seriously

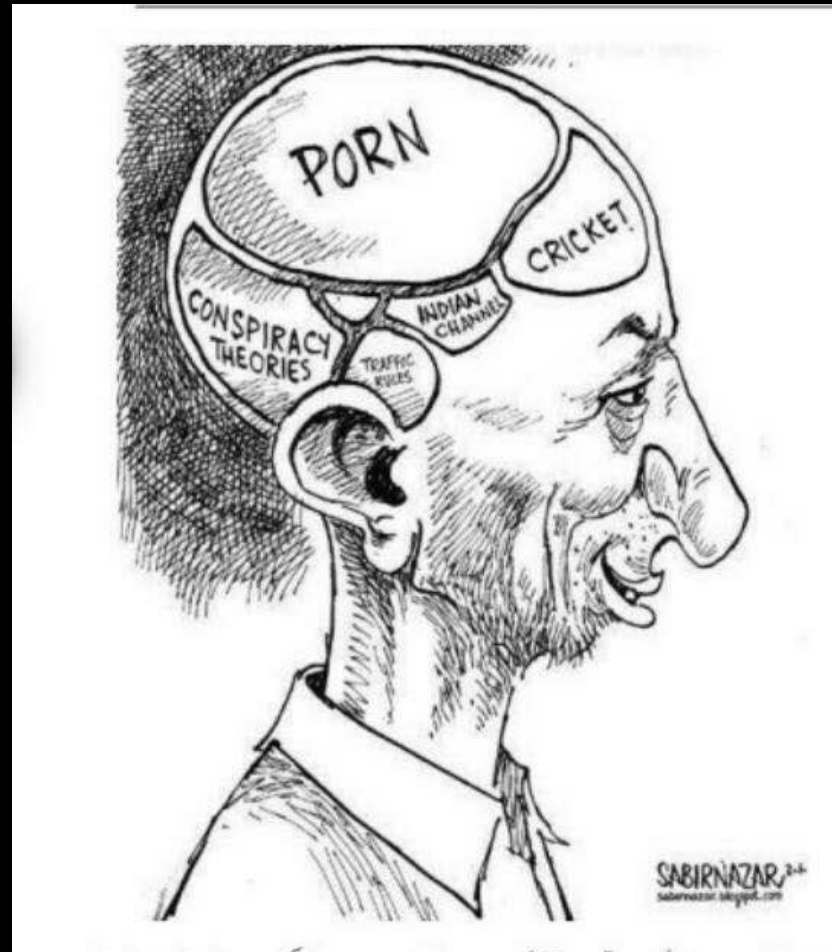
- IR is easy – “social sciences are for people not smart enough to do the real stuff”
- “I can read it off a book at home...but I can’t become a doctor by reading Gray’s Anatomy”
- “Took IR in CSS”
- “Topped IR in the FPOE”
- “I’ll learn it by doing”

What do these two guys have in  
common?!

(Or why I decided to go back to school after 11 years in  
the foreign service)



# Diplomacy in the age of “post-truth”



# Reading for confirmation bias





# Why reading (some) IR theory helps?

- The world seems both more and less complicated
- Makes you less paranoid and more empathic
- You learn to distinguish between “national honor” and “national interest”
- Oddly, you also become more hopeful

**FINALLY THANKS TO  
FULBRIGHT FOR GIVING ME A  
CHANCE TO DO THIS!**

MPP Forum hosts...

# HOMELAND

(In which a Pakistani diplomat explains why his “homeland” is a whole lot more complicated than Carrie Matthison thinks)

Haseeb bin Aziz, MPP '16

Friday, December 4, 2015  
Bowl 2, Robertson Hall  
12:15 p.m.

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