I-am-not-too-bad in Islamabad – Week Three, 25 November 2011!

*Da boys in da band, Serena Hotel Lobby, Islamabad; not a hobby!*
Pakistan is complicated, indeed! Its government center is Islamabad, a planned city of trees, diplomats and bureaucrats; very boring. Its exciting, well-healed education center is Lahore, very lovely as well with tons of bright entrepreneurs. It’s got the dumb south and the contested northwest front of tribal rulers and Taliban. Last week five guys blew themselves up in Karachi and took several civilians. One guy was captured before he could blow up. He told the police, according to my security manager, he hoped to take at least one heretic with him, but several would be better to assure his ascension to heaven. I asked my Muslim security manager if the captured guy is a Muslim. He told me, “Not a true Muslim. Muslims do not kill innocent people.” I asked him if these guys yelled, say, “Brigham Young is Great!” “Martha Stewart is God!” “Benjamin Franklin over all!” “Power to Quakers!” “Remember Zion!” “Prophet MLK Jr!” Guess not.

I interviewed the managing director of the major water-resources engineering firm, a major employer of Paki engineering graduates. He gets his engineers from three Paki universities and is not satisfied with any of them. They are not motivated, committed, imaginative, serious, well trained or skilled. They can’t answer simple engineering questions like: how to estimate stream or channel flow, estimate the weight of a steel bar, explain why there might be a significant difference between the recorded rainfall and the recorded streamflow. They have trouble with scale, units, order of magnitude, and are poor in math. The MD prefers foreign university graduates. Just about all the senior engineers and other professionals I’ve met these past three weeks in Pakistan are largely foreign educated. They love our US, UK and European schools. Oh, the UPESH Vice Chancellor we meet last week was just indicted for plagiarism! Whadyaknow!

I’ve had several discussions with highly educated Pakis on why Pak broke from India. They say Hindus are too entrepreneurial and Muslims always lose around them. They say they were and would be economically suppressed in a Hindu-dominated society because the Hindus help each other in business and the Muslims do not. Plus, they hate each other’s religion and its consequences. Surprise!

Missed again great American holidays - Pesach, Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, Simchat Torah, Halloween, Thanksgiving - at home!
I am not too bad in Islamabad

Moghul art mural, King entertains a young girl, Avari Hotel Lobby, Lahore

Have fun, be happy, don’t worry! It doesn’t help!