

PAKISTAN AND THE SHADOW OF 9/11

ALEXANDER EVANS

After the fall of the Taliban, Pakistan's policy of strategic depth in Afghanistan had to adapt. 'Brand Pakistan' has suffered over the last ten years, portrayed in the media as an obstacle to peace. Pakistan is willing to support an Afghan political process – but on the basis that any agreement is credible and reflects Pakistan's critical role in the region. Ultimately, India, not Afghanistan, is at the heart of Pakistani strategic foreign policy, and this will continue to define the region into the future. An effective US-Pakistan bilateral relationship needs to be built on more than transactionalism.

Pakistan has been at the frontline of the counter-terrorism campaign of the last ten years. Thousands of Pakistanis have died fighting terrorists; and hundreds of Pakistani terrorists have died fighting their own government. Dozens of Americans and other foreigners have also been killed. Pakistan's government and media are right to say that Pakistan has suffered greatly both at the hands of terrorists and in fighting them. But for some Pakistanis, it has been less clear where the frontline is – and who the real foe is.¹

Following 9/11, Pakistan's General Musharraf quickly chose to work alongside the Americans, accepting the reality of a changed environment in Afghanistan. Pakistan's traditional policy of 'strategic depth' in Afghanistan had to be set aside. This nebulous policy meant different things to different people. Some Pakistanis argue it meant a desire to direct and control the Afghan government, others that it meant much less than that. For these analysts, strategic depth was more about a Pakistani desire to limit Indian political influence in Afghanistan, in particular in the region close to Pakistan's own western border.²

Pakistan has reconsidered the form of its foreign policy, even if the principles and perceptions that drive it remain relatively constant. So, what

has changed? Inside Pakistan, there has been movement on Afghanistan policy. The Taliban government from 1996 to 2001 was a tactical success for Pakistan but a strategic failure. For five years India had no access to Afghanistan, lacking diplomatic relations with the Taliban regime. While the Taliban regime was unwilling to follow Islamabad's instructions to the letter, the government was certainly friendly to Pakistan.

At the same time, however, the Taliban government hosted a range of terrorists who were planning attacks on the United States. Far from strengthening Pakistan's regional security, the nature of the regime and its support for international terrorists was building the conditions for Pakistan to lose ground, dramatically, in 2001. As US special forces and the Northern Alliance seized Kabul and the south of the country, the balance of power inside Afghanistan shifted dramatically. India, which long had ties to elements of the Northern Alliance, found itself with a good working relationship with the new Afghan government. The Taliban were, at least to begin with, marginalised. But as the insurgency grew, the fighting in Afghanistan inevitably drew on militants based in Pakistan. The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Balochistan became crucial areas from which a regrouping Taliban could organise its insurgency against

NATO and Afghan forces. Pakistan was hit by a double blight. On the one hand, a good part of Al-Qa'ida's strength, previously based in Afghanistan, now moved across into Pakistan; and the US and allied counter-terrorist effort became increasingly focused on targets based there. On the other hand, the Afghan Taliban presence in Pakistan led to pressure from the Afghan and US governments on the Pakistan military to take action. A series of Pakistan military moves into the FATA followed from 2003, undermining the status quo. The existing structure was one of devolved autonomous governance, largely by blurred groups of militants organised by tribe. The presence of the army in the region challenged this and helped to inflame Pakistani Pashtun militants intent on challenging the Pakistani state. A toxic mix in the FATA of Al-Qa'ida, Afghan and Pakistani Taliban groups animated by a powerful anti-Americanism, a firm resolve to see the Karzai government removed, and growing radicalisation did little to enhance Pakistan's security – or its Afghan interests.

Primus Inter Pares

The last decade, then, has been a period of debate and reflection for senior Pakistani strategists. What should be done about Afghanistan – and about the US and NATO presence in the country?



Supporters of Pakistan's Tehreek-e-Insaf rally outside parliament as members of Pakistan's military establishment give a briefing on the Abbottabad episode which killed Osama Bin Laden, 13 May 2011, Islamabad, Pakistan. *Courtesy of AP Photo/B K Bangash.*

Pakistan's Afghanistan policy has certainly evolved: recently retired Pakistani generals and intelligence officers are at pains to say, directly, that Pakistan does not want to see a return to a Taliban government. Instead the emphasis is on finding a political way forward in Afghanistan. However, Pakistani strategists still see Afghanistan through India-shaped glasses. One example of this is the intense Pakistan media focus on Indian consulates in Afghanistan. For Pakistan, its position in Afghanistan must be one of *primus inter pares*. As one senior ISI officer put it in 2010, Pakistan feels it has a unique position in Afghanistan and the right to comment on any development which has a zero-sum impact on the region.³

How does this translate in practice? Pakistan is clear what it does not want to see in Afghanistan. Its politicians and strategists appear to have learned three lessons from the experience of the 1990s.

The first is that a botched or unenforceable political settlement will lead to renewed political instability. This

means any process of dialogue between Afghanistan, the US and the Taliban must involve Pakistan and be carefully constructed.

The second is that civil war, or sustained insurgency, within its neighbour's borders is not in Pakistan's interests. This is the early 1990s model from Afghanistan. The reason for this is that instability and fighting in Afghanistan will, inevitably, destabilise the FATA and parts of Balochistan. It could bring further waves of Afghan refugees into Pakistan and it would undermine the potential for economic trade and growth inside Pakistan.

The third is that a Taliban government established by force of arms is both unlikely to come about or gain the willing acceptance of other regional actors. Any public failings of such a regime – on female or minority rights, for example, or on tackling terrorism – would be blamed on Pakistan.

The net result is that Pakistan is modifying its Afghanistan policy. It is tentatively willing to support Afghan-

led reconciliation efforts and the fresh US drive for a political process. The two negative models from the 1990s support this. But the most important lesson from the 1990s is about the nature of a political deal. A deal that lacks credibility or balance will undermine Afghan and regional security. Neither the Geneva Accords of 1988 nor the 2001 Bonn Agreement proved durable or enforceable. The good news in the run-up to future international conferences on Afghanistan is that Pakistan is willing to support a political process. But Pakistani policy-makers also remember past failures in the region – and they will want to ensure lessons from these failures are incorporated in a way that reflects their reading of events. Most importantly, a modified Afghan policy does not mean abandoning Pakistan's underlying interests, and these interests remain heavily anchored around the question of India.

India Rising

India, not Afghanistan, remains at the heart of Pakistani strategic foreign policy.

Here, too, there has been some change – but not much. The scale of India's economic, political and military rise is indisputable. Therefore, the Pakistani interest now is not in balancing India, but in ensuring Pakistan's strategic autonomy, given an ever more imbalanced bilateral relationship. Pakistan's focus is on India's military configuration and deployment, the Cold Start doctrine which offers an option of swift military escalation in the event of a crisis⁴ and the geographical disposition of Indian forces. To Pakistani eyes, the vast majority of Indian air force bases and army commands are in the west – and therefore Pakistan-centric.

Pakistan, like India, has spent much of its history since independence fighting some of its own people rather than an international enemy. Insurgencies in Balochistan, Bengal and Karachi mean that Pakistan's army and security forces have had previous experience of countering non-state armed groups. At the same time, Pakistan's strategic culture – how the military elite perceives Pakistan's interests – remains anchored in the troubled relationship with India.⁵ India is perceived by some to pose a potential existential threat to Pakistan. As a result, India remains at the heart of Pakistan's security policy, although the nature of the contest between India and Pakistan has evolved. From 1947 to 1971, the contest was primarily over the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan believed that it – and Kashmiris – had been cheated of a commitment to a plebiscite that would, so they thought, enable Kashmiris to choose to accede to Pakistan. India thought otherwise, viewing Kashmir as a closed book following the Maharaja's decision to accede the state to India in 1947. This was despite Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's complaint about the situation *vis-à-vis* Kashmir to the United Nations in January 1948, which triggered a series of UN Security Council resolutions and the establishment of an unsuccessful UN Commission for India and Pakistan, which failed to reconcile the two neighbours or agree a way forward over the disputed state.⁶

Asymmetrical Balance

Pakistan's defeat at the hands of India in the 1971 war changed the dynamic.

India established itself as the larger player in South Asia and the military and economic balance in the region continued to change – and not in Pakistan's interests. India's nuclear test in 1974 triggered a revised arms race that led to covert nuclearisation by both states. As India pulled away from Pakistan, the Pakistan Army began considering ways of asymmetrical balancing. In addition to the development of its own nuclear programme, Pakistan began covertly supporting militants in Punjab (during the 1980s) and Kashmir (from 1988).

India's economic liberalisation during the 1990s, along with warming India-US relations, changed the context still further. India's growing wealth allowed it to modernise its military, an activity which has accelerated over the past decade. While Indian strategists often put this into the context of India-China relations, to Pakistani eyes Indian strength further weakens Pakistan. As Pakistani military officers often say, they worry about Indian capabilities, not their intent. Another cause of Pakistani concern is Cold Start, India's military doctrine since 2004. Cold Start is designed as a potential response to further terrorist attacks with links to Pakistan, and – according to analysts – would see Indian forces quickly seize Pakistani territory to use as a bargaining chip. This makes Pakistani military planners nervous. Finally, the increasing warmth of India-US relations that began in the 1990s – driven in part by growing bilateral trade – took further steps forward with the foundations for a civil nuclear deal in 2005.⁷ Against the backdrop of growing Indian military capabilities, this India-US bilateral relationship further worries Islamabad.

The net result is a Pakistani strategic culture that remains India-centric. This is not just the view of a small strategic elite. The 2011 Pew polling data shows 57 per cent of Pakistanis view India as a serious threat to Pakistan – well above any other country or organisation, including Al-Qa'ida.⁸ Senior Pakistanis, however, realise that India's strength cannot be counter-balanced. The goal now is to prevent Indian 'hegemony' in South Asia and to ensure that Pakistani sovereignty

can be defended against any perceived Indian threat.

As such, the post-9/11 decade has not seen a fundamental improvement in the Indo-Pakistan relationship. While both sides agreed to resume bilateral peace talks in February 2011, the past ten years have been characterised by as many steps back as forward. Major terrorist attacks against the Indian parliament in December 2001 and Mumbai in November 2008 further heightened tensions. In Kashmir, militant groups continue to attack Indian security forces as well as killing civilians. The notable gain on the ground was the ceasefire along the Line of Control, implemented in November 2003. This ceasefire receives relatively little attention, but has saved hundreds of lives, replacing regular small arms and artillery exchanges by both militaries with reasonably well-observed restraint. This ceasefire is an example of a successful pragmatic confidence-building measure and is likely to persist.

The United States and Pakistan

Pakistan has four crucial bilateral relationships. Two are positive, one is hostile, and one complex.⁹ The positive relationships are with two traditional allies, China and Saudi Arabia. China is described as Pakistan's 'all weather' ally. It provides soft loans, an implicit P5 voice at the UN Security Council and assistance in building strategic assets such as the Karakoram Highway between the two countries at the Khunjerab Pass, and Gwadar port at Gwadar in Balochistan. Saudi Arabia is another key ally, with strong ties between Pakistan's military leadership and the Saudi Kingdom. Leading Pakistani politicians like Nawaz Sharif have also enjoyed close ties with the Saudis. Riyadh has been willing on occasion to act as an intermediary between Islamabad and Washington when US-Pakistan bilateral relations have been tough. At times of acute need, the Saudis have provided assistance or loans. At the other end of the spectrum, the (mainly) hostile relationship is with India. This remains the most important strategic relationship Pakistan has, proving the point that rivals or enemies often determine our identity more than friends.

The complex relationship is with the United States. These two countries have at times been close, at others distant, alternately cultivating or compromising each other. The United States' presence in Afghanistan has depended on Pakistani support, not least because the bulk of NATO and civilian supply lines to Afghanistan run through Pakistan; and because Afghan Taliban commanders have been based in Pakistan. The United States has sought a positive – or at least not openly hostile – Afghanistan-Pakistan bilateral relationship and Pakistani support for President Karzai's government.

Washington has also needed Islamabad's co-operation to pursue Al-Qa'ida and disrupt the planning of terrorist attacks against US targets. Notwithstanding the controversy over the most significant raid of all – the unilateral US special forces strike that killed Osama Bin Laden in May 2011, Pakistan's government and intelligence services have provided vital support for the counter-terrorism campaign.

Functional Co-operation

At a practical level, the bilateral relationship between the two countries for the past decade has been informed by quiet co-operation as much as by public differences. Pakistan is too important to the United States; the relationship with the United States is too important to Pakistan. Pakistan's leaders may want to assert Pakistani sovereignty from Washington, but do not want to be isolated internationally or see a sharp reduction in US economic assistance. US policy has shifted to favour democratic institutions and civilian government, a move away from much of the Musharraf era, which saw perhaps too-uncritical an investment in a single military ruler who talked the talk of moderation. The US has, of course, wanted more tangible efforts by Pakistan on counter-terrorism and Afghanistan. Many Americans, including the large number of senior military officers who served in Afghanistan, have been frustrated with what they see as insufficient support from Pakistan.

President Obama and the Congressional leadership agreed to

enhance the relationship with Pakistan within months of the new president's inauguration. The Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009, better known as the Kerry-Lugar-Berman bill, authorised a massive increase in US civilian assistance to Pakistan, tripling it to \$1.5 billion a year. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, urged on by her special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, committed to a strategic dialogue with Pakistan.¹⁰ Bilateral discussions intensified with three meetings at ministerial level in 2010 and functional co-operation extended beyond the usual basket of security and assistance issues. These advanced the US-Pakistan dialogue, including on Afghanistan. A major breakthrough was the 18 July 2010 agreement by Islamabad and Kabul to a new Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement. Intense US lobbying in support of it, driven by Richard Holbrooke, helped generate a new treaty that would significantly ease bilateral trade. Efforts to achieve this had been underway for over thirty years, so achieving it – and seeing it implemented in 2011¹¹ – was a major step forward for US-Pakistan relations.

Bumps in the Road

But sceptics remain on both sides, unconvinced that Pakistan and the US have enough interests in common to co-operate effectively, or that a strategic partnership could be a vehicle for an improved relationship. Richard Holbrooke's unexpected death in December 2010 was a significant setback. But more damaging yet was the Ray Davis case. Davis, who worked for the CIA, shot dead two Pakistanis in an incident in Lahore on 27 January 2011; another Pakistani was killed as a backup vehicle raced to the scene. Davis was arrested and detained. The US and Pakistan had a major disagreement over Davis, whose diplomatic immunity was not honoured by the Pakistani police, courts or government. Only his release in March 2011, accompanied by expressions of regret from the US, helped moderate growing public criticism of the relationship in both the United States and Pakistan.

Less than two months after this major diplomatic incident, US special forces launched a covert raid on 2 May 2011 on a house in Abbottabad where intelligence suggested Osama Bin Laden might be located. He was indeed there, and was shot dead. The house was inside a Pakistani military cantonment area and close to the national military academy. The raid was not launched with Pakistani consent nor was Pakistan given advance notice. While clearly a counter-terrorist success for the US, the raid at first generated embarrassment among Pakistanis, quickly translating into anger at the obvious breach of Pakistan's sovereignty. While functional co-operation between the two countries continues, the intense anti-Americanism – not necessarily discouraged by a military whose competence was brought into question as a result of the Bin Laden raid – persists.

Anti-Americanism in Pakistan

Since 2001, popular and elite anti-Americanism has become more noticeable in Pakistan. Some of this was always there: it was prevalent in the 1980s,¹² despite enormous US assistance to the anti-Soviet struggle in Afghanistan; and in the 1990s there were few enthusiasts for America to be found in Pakistan, whether among the urban middle-classes in Punjab or among farmers in Pakistani-administered Kashmir. However, there are four main differences to anti-Americanism since 9/11.

First, anti-Americanism can now be measured. The rise of opinion polling has provided a rich seam of data showing what is on the minds of ordinary Pakistanis. Polling also provides insights into specific provinces. June 2011 Pew data covering Pakistan as a whole shows 73 per cent unfavourable ratings of the United States (up from 68 per cent in 2010) and 69 per cent viewing the US as an enemy (up from 59 per cent in 2010).¹³

Second, Pakistani society has become more globalised. The growth of television, the Internet and – among a far slimmer segment of the population – social media means that Pakistanis feel more connected to broader issues than they did before. While the Israel-Palestine

conflict has always been a public issue in Pakistan, the US-led intervention in Iraq was deeply unpopular and helped mobilise anti-American sentiment. Optimists may hope the advance of social media and bloggers will lead to a greater internal debate in Pakistan, but it is equally likely to support aggressive cyber-nationalism.

Third, Pakistan's own security situation is seen at the popular level as a direct outcome of the US-led intervention in Afghanistan and US drone strikes inside Pakistan. The presence of NATO forces in Afghanistan is not popular, and nor are drone strikes, which, regardless of who they target, are viewed as an infringement of Pakistani sovereignty. Collateral damage – the deaths of civilians in these strikes – have also been controversial, despite growing acknowledgement, including in the Pakistan media, that militants are successfully targeted by this tactic. Emphatic condemnations of the drone strike programme by Pakistani political and military leaders support a well-formed national consensus on this issue.¹⁴

Fourth, anti-Americanism increasingly suits some of Pakistan's elite. Pakistan's super-rich echo populist complaints about the US but still send their children to American schools and colleges. For some of the political and military elite, it is easier to blame the United States for many of the problems Pakistan faces than to square up to the urgent need to tackle these problems through dynamic, strategic leadership.

Finally, India's growing power gains a more conspiratorial air if linked to US regional goals (hence, in some Pakistani eyes, the US-India civil nuclear deal is part of this great conspiracy) or Israeli foreign policy, with practical concerns about Israeli high-technology defence supplies to India becoming tied to higher-level anxiety about a putative US-India-Israel axis.

The figures on anti-Americanism in Pakistan may seem high, and opinion polling can create a sense of crisis, particularly in the absence of similar data from the 1990s and before. But in fact anti-Americanism is a continuing feature of the Pakistani landscape – what appears to have changed is that anti-American

rhetoric is now seen as a component of authentic Pakistani nationalism.

Pakistan's Image Problem

In January 2008, *The Economist* ran a cover with a picture of a grenade with 'Pakistan' written on it, and the phrase 'The world's most dangerous place' emblazoned above it.¹⁵ Pakistan's image has taken a hit since 2001, and in particular since 2007, as growing terrorist violence inside Pakistan gave it an increasingly negative international public image – a problem also exacerbated by a range of other issues. Increased media attention to Pakistan over the last ten years has led to plenty of critical press pieces questioning Pakistan's commitment to fighting extremism or supporting President Karzai's government and NATO goals in Afghanistan. The assassination of the opposition leader Benazir Bhutto in December 2007, the Governor of Punjab Salman Taseer in January 2011, and Minorities Minister Shahbaz Bhatti in March 2011 generated critical media coverage outside Pakistan. Major bombings like that of the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad in September 2008 and the Pearl Continental in Peshawar in June 2009 generated a sense of insecurity, even for well-guarded sites. The March 2009 attack on a Sri Lankan cricket team convoy in Lahore further undermined international confidence in Pakistan as a safe country to visit or operate in.

Pakistanis have been sensitive about this and indignant when the nation as a whole suffers the ill effects of Pakistan's poor brand. Despite the fact that most of those killed in these attacks have been Pakistanis – and Pakistani civilians at that – the damage to 'brand Pakistan' has been immense. Foreign visitors have tended to restrict their travel inside Pakistan, often staying in high-security guesthouses or hotels and meeting fewer ordinary Pakistanis as a result. International media attention has often been unsympathetic to the scale of the challenge the Pakistani state has faced. Plenty of journalists have focused on Pakistan's failures – or perceived lack of support for the fight against terrorism – rather than the tangible and significant efforts and sacrifices Pakistan has made.

The decline of confidence in Pakistan's security has also seen increased interest among young Pakistanis in emigration.¹⁶

However, alongside this hypersensitivity has been an unwillingness to consider frankly the origins of this violence. The tale on the streets is that it is down to US policy. Without drone strikes or the intervention in Afghanistan, so the story goes, Pakistan would not be facing the fallout it is. A commonly used term is 'blowback'.¹⁷ If there is a desire to cast back further into history, the focus is on another US intervention – the covert support for the *mujahedeen* during the 1980s. These popular narratives are not without an element of truth: these American policies have had an effect on Pakistan, including unintended consequences. But Pakistani policy-makers and the public have also tended to avoid focusing on the consequences of Pakistani policy choices – whether backing the Taliban in the 1990s, facilitating the rise of Kashmiri and Punjabi terrorist groups, or pursuing tactical goals at the expense of Pakistan's long-term strategic interest.

Outside Pakistan, since 9/11 perceptions have changed of Kashmiri and Punjabi militant groups. While Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) has a different ideology to Al-Qa'ida, both generate terrorist capabilities when they train militants or radicalise young people. LeT in particular is a concern because its ideology has always extended beyond Kashmir. Propaganda posters in the mid-1990s showed the Kremlin, US Congress and an Israeli flag on fire. The November 2008 Mumbai attacks, which targeted Israelis as well as sites popular with Western tourists, showed LeT's hand. The past decade has undermined any remaining willingness outside Pakistan to separate out Kashmir-specific militant groups from their FATA counterparts and approach them differently. This presents Pakistani political and military leaders with a significant dilemma. Do they tackle these groups, closing down their military capabilities? If Pakistan tries to do so, what are the consequences for domestic stability? What political price would Pakistan have to pay? Pakistan's military and political leadership have to wend a

delicate path between what is politically manageable and logically desirable for Pakistan's own security. The three bomb blasts in Mumbai on 13 July 2011, which left at least eighteen dead, are a reminder of the risks of not taking firm steps (although at the time of writing it remains unclear which organisation was responsible). But to echo the line Pakistan uses about India, Pakistan should worry about the terrorist capabilities of groups like LeT, not their supposed intent.

Pakistan's Strategic Position

Ten years after 9/11, Pakistan faces a complicated strategic position. On the one hand, the relationship with Washington is essential – by necessity as much as design – and Pakistan has received billions of dollars of funding and assistance from the US. Pakistanis complain that this is not enough, or cite the unfavourable comparison with US military expenditure in Afghanistan. But the political support for this assistance within the US Congress is declining. Every dollar for Pakistan is a dollar not spent on tackling problems in the American economy. However, despite this tension, the relationship is not about to break – although it can be brittle, as the Ray Davis case illustrated.

On the other hand, Pakistan's reputational problem – and India's military rise – means that Pakistan, for all it might gain in a political settlement with Afghanistan, faces the risk of becoming isolated in future. China is unlikely to support Pakistan as intensively as the United States has, although Beijing is also unlikely to abandon Islamabad. Despite supporters in the Muslim world – Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates foremost among them – Pakistan's international position still depends on its domestic circumstances.

Inside Pakistan

Pakistan's internal security situation remains fluid. The positive news is that military campaigns in Swat in 2008 cleared the Swat Valley of Islamist militants. Similar campaigns in the FATA have been reasonably successful, even if North Waziristan still remains largely untouched by military efforts. The bad news is that suicide bombings remain

a regular feature of Pakistani life, with major cities equally as vulnerable to attacks. Notwithstanding a lack of popular support for militants, their reach reflects capabilities that will not easily be dismantled.

Pakistan's economy is also in a bad way. A thin tax base, high levels of internal circular debt and an infrastructure ill-equipped to provide energy or water to a growing population all mean that Pakistan's future depends on economic reforms. These, however, are politically difficult to agree or implement.

The political scorecard also remains fluid. There has been a move away from the Musharraf era and US policy now explicitly supports civilian, democratic rule in Pakistan. The emphasis is on supporting institutions, not backing individuals. Democracy has made gains in Pakistan: it is increasingly likely that President Zardari's government will be the first democratic government in Pakistan's history to finish a full term. But the army leadership still dominates strategic policy, in particular foreign and security policy.

9/11 in Retrospect

Inside Pakistan, there is a continuing sense that the country has paid – and continues to pay – the price for the policies pursued by the United States in the region. Furthermore, external assistance, Pakistanis argue, has been limited and far from repaying Pakistan for the direct costs incurred from countering insurgency, supporting NATO logistics or helping to tackle terrorism. Even the fact of Bin Laden's presence in Pakistan – long denied by leading Pakistanis – has not erased this popular perception of Pakistan as a long-suffering and underappreciated state.

Outside Pakistan, the perception is different. In the United States, Europe and India there is a sense that Pakistan has reaped what it sowed. Pakistan's support for irregular armed groups since the 1980s generated an environment in which terrorists could thrive and Al-Qa'ida could take cover. The decisions to support the Afghan *mujahedeen* leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in the late 1970s, the Taliban in the mid-1990s, or groups like the Lashkar-e-Taiba in the 1990s

were Pakistani choices alone. These choices, made by successive generations of Pakistan's military leadership with support from Pakistan's politicians, have had consequences and have helped to generate the challenging situation Pakistan finds itself in today.

Both of these assessments contain some truth. US and allied regional policies in the 1980s and since 9/11 have had an undeniable impact on Pakistan. Equally, however, history did not begin on 9/11 – or with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan – and Pakistan has made plenty of explicit, sovereign policy decisions with enormous consequences for both Pakistan and the wider region.

The future is uncertain but Pakistan is likely to muddle through. The legacy of 9/11 and the decade since will not be fully understood for some years to come. It is right to hold Pakistan to account for what Islamabad contributed to the problem; however, it is also right – and important – to understand how US and allied policies contributed to the situation today. Without a concerted effort by both Pakistan and the US moving forward, the problem of extremist violence will not be successfully tackled. This means carefully managing two challenges to Pakistan and Pakistan's ability to work with the US and others.

The first is anti-Americanism. This is a problem for Pakistan's leadership and, where possible, concerted efforts should be made to constrain it. At the very least, Pakistan's civilian and military leadership should not seek to further inflame it. Anti-Americanism is the surest way to erode US political support for a long-term relationship of assistance to and co-operation with Pakistan. The public orthodoxy of anti-Americanism also inhibits a sense of Pakistani agency. Ironically, the more Pakistanis think the United States is responsible for Pakistan's problems, the less they are likely to take on the responsibility of tackling them.

The second is Pakistan's image – and the resultant tone of outside engagement with Pakistan. Pakistanis are proud. Public shame is acutely damaging. The more international partners can respect Pakistan without sugar-coating the country's problems, the better. Differences are better aired in private

than in public. There are good practical policy reasons for this. If Pakistan feels its prestige is battered, the scope to engage with India on a peace process or support the United States in Afghanistan becomes more limited. An apprehensive or hurt Pakistan is less likely to co-operate. Pakistan's support is important as a tentative political process, including contacts with the Taliban, begins in Afghanistan.

The last decade has been strongly shaped by counter-terrorism and the war in Afghanistan, but US and allied interests in Pakistan go well beyond both of these. Pakistan will matter to US foreign policy for decades to come, even if Pakistan is not the immediate priority it

has been of late. A long-term view of the US-Pakistan relationship means keeping in mind Pakistan's role in Afghanistan and South Asia, and Pakistan's relationship with China. If Pakistan's foreign policy weakness is that it peers at the region through India-shaped glasses, a potential US weakness is to look at Pakistan through Al-Qa'ida- or Afghan-shaped glasses.

To support US policy goals, a viable bilateral partnership that has more ambition than mere transactionalism¹⁸ is required. So, too, is realism: Pakistan and the United States are unlikely to enjoy a special relationship. But it is a strategic relationship. As such, sooner rather than later, the US-Pakistan relationship needs

to be re-defined beyond the shadow of 9/11. ■

Alexander Evans OBE is the Henry A Kissinger Chair in Foreign Policy and International Relations at the Library of Congress on sabbatical from the British diplomatic service. From December 2009 to July 2011 he was a senior adviser to the US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, and has previously served in Islamabad, New Delhi and the Policy Planning Staff.

This article is written in a personal capacity and does not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Notes

- 1 Ashley J Tellis and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Pakistan and the War on Terror: Conflicted Goals, Compromised Performance* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2008).
- 2 For an early account of strategic depth, see Marvin G Weinbaum, 'Pakistan and Afghanistan: The Strategic Relationship', *Asian Survey* (Vol. 31, No. 6, 1991), pp. 498–99.
- 3 He was speaking at a Track II meeting in late 2010.
- 4 See Walter C Ladwig III, 'A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army's New Limited War Doctrine', *International Security* (Vol. 32, No. 3, 2008), pp. 158–90.
- 5 For an insightful assessment of this strategic culture, see Peter R Lavoy, 'Pakistan's Strategic Culture', paper prepared for the Defence Threat Reduction Agency, October 2006.
- 6 The most comprehensive history of India and Pakistan's competition over Jammu and Kashmir is Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unending War* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2000).
- 7 For an assessment, see George Perkovich, 'Global implications of the U.S.-India deal', *Daedalus* (Vol. 139, No. 1, 2010), pp. 20–31.
- 8 Pew Global Attitudes Project, 'Support for Campaign Against Extremists Wanes: U.S. Image in Pakistan Falls No Further Following bin Laden Killing', 21 June 2011, p. 1.
- 9 The UK-Pakistan relationship is also close, and generally positive, but to Pakistani eyes it does not equate in importance to these four states. However, the UK's development contribution, as well as political and personal links to Pakistan, means that this relationship will remain important.
- 10 See Embassy of the United States in Islamabad, Pakistan, 'The United States and Pakistan Strategic Dialogue Meeting', <<http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/uspakstrategicdialogue.html>>, accessed 14 July 2011.
- 11 See Press Statement by Mark C Toner, Deputy Spokesperson, Office of the Spokesperson, US Department of State, on 'Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement', Washington DC, 13 June 2011, <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/06/166078.htm>>, accessed 14 July 2011.
- 12 Hamid H Kizilbash, 'Anti-Americanism in Pakistan', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (Vol. 497, 1988), pp. 58–67.
- 13 Pew Global Attitudes Project, *op. cit.*; 2010 figures from Pew Global Attitudes Project, 'America's Image Remains Poor: Concern About Extremist Threat Slips in Pakistan', 29 July 2010, p. 15.
- 14 See for example the official statement from Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 13 April 2011, <http://www.mofa.gov.pk/Press_Releases/2011/Apr/Pr_137.htm>, which says 'Pakistan strongly condemns the drone attack at Angoor Adda today. We have repeatedly said that such attacks are counter productive and only contribute to strengthen the hands of the terrorists.'
- 15 See *Economist*, 'The world's most dangerous place', 3 January 2008.
- 16 Huma Yusuf, "'Quit Pakistan Syndrome": A Country Loses Faith in Itself', *The New Republic*, 18 June 2011.
- 17 See for example Maleeha Lodhi, *The Future of Pakistan-US Relations: Opportunities and Challenges* (Washington, DC: National Defense University INSS Report, 2009).
- 18 Transactionalism is a term that triggers an emotional response in Pakistan precisely because it alludes to Pakistan's perception of past American abandonment. It also carries connotations of a lack of respect, which matters in a society in which honour and shame have such cultural value.