

US-Pakistan Relations: The Way Forward

TARIQ GILANI

Editor's Note: Article is derived from General Gilani's Strategy Research Project completed during his attendance at the US Army War College during Academic Year 2006.

The 58-year history of relations between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has been marked by periods of courtship and phases of distrust. Since 9/11, these relations have again entered an era of close ties with shared interests. However, there is a perception that the renewed friendship is being driven solely by America's need for Pakistani cooperation in the "War on Terrorism" and is dependent upon the continued presence and leadership of President Pervez Musharraf. The perception, if true, portends severe consequences for both the United States and Pakistan. This article examines the fidelity of this perception in view of the history of US-Pakistan relations. It reviews the major factors currently influencing this relationship and proposes an approach to build upon this foundation to enhance future US-Pakistan cooperation.

A Historical Review

Under the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Pakistan became independent on 14 August 1947 after a long struggle by the Muslims of British India. Jinnah is considered the father of Pakistan; he set in motion many political initiatives that became the foundation for Pakistan's society.

Jinnah was influenced by both his life experiences and the challenges he overcame. A Muslim from Karachi, Jinnah received most of his higher edu-

cation in legal studies in London. As a barrister, he soon became the leading lawyer of Bombay, India. As a politician, he was known for his commitment to the western style of democracy. Jinnah initially joined the Indian National Congress and launched the struggle to free India from the British, joining hands with the prominent Hindu leaders, especially, Gandhi. He eventually found himself at odds with the Hindu majority as he was convinced that the caste-centric Hindus did not intend to recognize the Muslims as equal citizens in India.¹

He then led the struggle for creation of an independent Muslim state located within the Muslim majority areas of India. Jinnah died on 11 September 1948, just one year following India's independence from Great Britain. Newly independent states at the outset of the Cold War, India and Pakistan were soon faced with the dilemma of aligning either with the United States or the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Although India promptly entered into favorable relations with the USSR, Pakistani leaders, mostly groomed in Western institutions, opted for aligning with the West. Correspondingly, Liaqat Ali Khan, the first prime minister of Pakistan, turned down Stalin's invitation to visit Moscow and instead visited Washington in 1950.² President Harry S. Truman generally remained indifferent toward Pakistan from 1947 to 1952. When the Eisenhower administration took office in 1953, the US government became increasingly anxious about the spread of communism to Asia and started to take an interest in Pakistan. This recognition culminated in the 1954 Mutual Defense Agreement.³

The US-Pakistan relationship continued to improve as Pakistan joined the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1955 and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in 1956. A main pillar of the relationship was the military cooperation between the two countries, which blossomed through an active training exchange program and the fielding of US weapons and equipment within the Pakistan military. Additionally, Pakistan gave the United States access to the Bataber Air Force Base near the Afghan border for U-2 reconnaissance flights over the USSR—at substantial risk to its own security.⁴ Meanwhile, in 1965 Pakistan fought a major war with India over the state of

Brigadier General Gilani is a field artillery officer currently commanding a brigade in the Pakistani Army. His assignments have included duties as a brigade operations officer and served as an instructor at the School of Artillery and the Pakistan Military Academy. He is a graduate of the Pakistan Military Academy; the Army Command and Staff College in Camberley, U.K.; and the Pakistan Armed Forces War Course. He holds a Master of War Studies degree from Quaid Azam University in Islamabad, and is a 2006 graduate of the US Army War College.

“In 1979, the Iranian revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, renewed American interest in improving the US-Pakistan relationship.”

Kashmir. A smaller but well-trained Pakistan Army equipped with US weaponry, was able to defend the country against a larger force.

Pakistan also played a pivotal role in bridging the gap between the United States and China when, President Richard M. Nixon, decided to begin the process of normalizing relations with Beijing. In July 1971, Pakistan facilitated the secret mission to China undertaken by Dr. Henry Kissinger, the US Secretary of State. Actually, the first meeting between the two countries took place aboard a Pakistan Airlines plane flying to Beijing.⁵ Pakistan soon paid the price for this diplomatic activism: India, exploiting the political turmoil after the 1970 Pakistani general elections, attacked Pakistan's eastern wing (now Bangladesh) with support from the USSR. In the midst of this crisis, Pakistan turned to the United States for assistance, but was met with a distressing refusal. The war resulted in the division of Pakistan: West Pakistan became Pakistan and East Pakistan became the independent country of Bangladesh. In 1972 as a consequence of this strategic loss a socialist democratic political party, the Pakistan Peoples Party, came to power. Accordingly, US-Pakistan relations, which had already deteriorated because of the lack of US support in the 1971 war, declined further as the United States did not favor a socialist government in Pakistan.

Twin events in 1979, the Iranian revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, renewed American interest in improving the US-Pakistan relationship. Pakistan suddenly became a key geostrategic player as it served as a buffer between the USSR and the Persian Gulf. The United States then decided to fight a proxy war in land-locked Afghanistan, and America sought Pakistan's support to spearhead this fight. General Zia ul Haq who had assumed control of Pakistan in a 1977 military coup offered America Pakistani support in the effort to drive the Soviets from Afghanistan. Pakistan more than served the US aims and was instrumental in forcing the Soviet Union to leave Afghanistan in 1988.

In retrospect, the period from 1979 to 1988 was a golden period in US-Pakistan relations. Unfortunately, both the governments remained fo-

cused on narrow national interests relevant to their own security issues. Indeed, the American interest focused almost entirely on unrestricted support to the Afghan jihad. Although successful, it accomplished only a relatively short-term and limited strategic aim, the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan. The interests of Pakistan were also myopic, characterized by limited modernization of the armed forces and US political support for the Pakistani military government. No worthwhile long-term economic policy was pursued, nor was any major economic infrastructure developed. Overall, positive US-Pakistan ties of the 1980s were shaped by military interactions. However, they did not include any projects designed to serve the long-term interests of either country.

Although it forced the withdrawal of the Soviets from Afghanistan, the war effort also produced many negative consequences in the region. An immediate effect of the US policy was a sharp rise in the number of madrassas (religious seminaries) in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). These madrassas were configured to indoctrinate young Muslim students from Afghanistan, Pakistan's tribal areas, and some Arab countries. The students were also given military training and were recruited in Afghanistan to fight the Soviets. The indirect effects of US policies in Pakistan in the 1980s included the spread of what has been called the "Kalashnikov culture." Thus, the United States indirectly supported many of the less desirable policies of the Zia regime: suppressing freedom of the press; a rise in ethnicity and sectarianism; and the deterioration of Pakistani domestic institutions. Overall, the joint policies of the American and Pakistan governments, with active support from some Arab countries, resulted in the militarization of a number of the Muslim youth, with far-reaching consequences related to the growth of terrorism.

During this period Pakistan suffered extreme internal instability thanks to the joint efforts of the Soviet Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti (KGB) and its Indian equivalent, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). Pakistan endured thousands of bomb attacks on trains, bus and railway stations, shopping centers, and other public places resulting in large numbers of civilian casualties. There was also a rise in political polarization due to the continued governance by the military, and increased instability due to an unprecedented rise in ethnic and sectarian violence. This internal strife was fueled by an influx of cheap Soviet weapons, including Kalashnikovs, rocket launchers, and many other weapons.

At the same time, Pakistan responded to India's nuclear development program by beginning the development of its own nuclear capability. Although the United States was strongly opposed to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, it effectively turned a blind eye to these developments because Pakistan was its most important ally in the containment of Soviet

southward expansion. When the Soviet Union left Afghanistan in 1988, the US interest in South Asia began to wane. Afghanistan, at that time, was in deep turmoil as a result of a decade of Soviet occupation and civil war. Against the advice of Pakistani leadership, America left Afghanistan.

America's treatment of Pakistan was not much better. Not only was its promised aid of \$4.02 billion to Pakistan withdrawn, the United States imposed sanctions on Pakistan for pursuing the development of nuclear weapons. The "blind eye," no longer obscured by the threat of Soviet expansion, began to see. It was at this time that President Zia ul Haq, along with some of his top military generals and the US Ambassador, were killed in an airplane crash in what many believed was an act of terrorism. There were no "smoking guns," but the list of possible perpetrators included the RAW, KGB, and the Pakistan Peoples Party (the political party in power at the time of Zia ul Haq's coup). Some within Pakistan even speculated that the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) may have been involved on the premise that President Zia ul Haq had become a liability for the United States. The mystery of the air crash was never solved, but the resultant uncertainty cast another shadow over the US-Pakistani relationship.

Thus, the courtship between the United States and Pakistan during the final decade of the Cold War was followed by a decade of declining cooperation highlighted by sanctions in the Pressler Amendment that prohibited US aid to Pakistan unless the President certified that Pakistan was not in possession of nuclear weapons. Although there were four democratically elected governments in Pakistan during the 1988-98 period, they focused mainly on petty internal politics to the strategic detriment of the country. In many respects, it was a lost decade for Pakistan. In May 1998, Pakistan again seized center stage in South-Asia when it exploded six nuclear devices in response to the Indian nuclear explosions in Pokharan. The United States responded by further tightening sanctions against Pakistan. As a consequence, Pakistan's economic condition worsened while ethnic and sectarian extremism began to build. During this period, the newly liberated Central Asian Republics (CARs) provided the majority of economic and trade opportunities for Pakistan. However, the instability in Afghanistan continued to impede Pakistan's relations with the CARs. Starved for energy resources and hoping to access Central Asian markets via the shortest route, Pakistan initiated its relationship with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.⁶

Growing discontent among Pakistan's masses along with successive corrupt governments and the immediate fallout of the conflict with India in Kashmir, served as catalysts for the bloodless coup of October 1999. The Chief of Staff of the Army, General Pervez Musharraf, assumed administrative control of the country with an agenda for reform, economic revival, and eradication of

extremism. President Musharraf's approach to governance was essentially different from previous military regimes. He did not impose martial law, did not limit freedom of the press, and did not attempt to appease the religious right. His rule also differed from that of the four previous civil governments that lost credibility due to their corrupt practices. By way of contrast, President Musharraf rid his own administration of the corrupt elite; this included bureaucrats, politicians, and even senior military officers. Regarding the situation in Afghanistan, President Musharraf endeavored to convince American leaders of the threat posed by al Qaeda and offered Pakistan's support to counter it.⁷

Post 9/11

The fateful events of 11 September 2001 had a dramatic impact on US-Pakistan relations. President Musharraf was prompt in extending full support to America in the ensuing war against terrorism. He readily agreed to all requests by Secretary of State Colin Powell. According to a number of sources, his positive response exceeded expectations.⁸ Indeed, President Musharraf has been frequently criticized within Pakistan for cooperating too readily and conceding too much to the United States without adequate recompense.⁹ The most probable reason for his forthright response was his recognition that America and Pakistan could join in quelling the radical religious and terrorist elements growing within the region. President Musharraf had already been moving along that path. His whole-hearted support to the United States subsequently helped build a strong relationship between the two nations.¹⁰ Pakistan has assumed a central and active role in the war on terrorism.

There are those who contend that Pakistan's support for the war on terrorism is being sustained solely by the force of President Musharraf's personality alone—that it does not reflect the true priorities of the country's populace and is not in accord with Pakistan's national interests. Interestingly, this argument is used by Musharraf's political foes as well as some of his supporters. His political opponents and the anti-US lobby try to imply that supporting the war on terrorism is extremely unpopular in Pakistan. They argue that President Musharraf is fighting an unholy war to please the Americans and that he should be removed from power. On the other hand, the President's supporters, assert that it is only President Musharraf who can provide unrestricted Pakistani support to the war on terrorism. If this is true then his continuation as president is crucial to the interests of the United States. Both arguments miss the mark and undermine President Musharraf's personal security. It should be obvious that the perception that this policy is dependent on the individual has led to multiple attempts on the President's life, at least two of which nearly succeeded. In fact, President Musharraf's opposition to religious extremism began well before 9/11.

President Musharraf began to strike at the roots of extremism long before being approached by the United States following 9/11. Moreover, a large majority of Pakistanis do not share the Islamists' vision of the future of the country and are concerned about the growth of extremism. Consider, for example, Pakistan's 2002 general election: The Pakistan Muslim League (Quaid) and its allied parties that supported President Musharraf's political ideology, won in three of the four provinces and were able to form a central government as well as three provincial governments. Conversely, the Muttahida Majlis Amal (MMA), a grouping of six religious parties, running on anti-Musharraf and anti-US platform, won its seats primarily within the Pushtun area of the tribal-dominated NWFP. According to Hussain Haqqani, "Despite the MMA's unprecedented electoral performance in 2002, the alliance (MMA) garnered only 11 percent of the total votes cast; the Islamist vote as a percentage of total registered voters has been more or less stagnant since the 1970s."¹¹ The results of the election also reflect the pattern of support within the country for the war on terrorism; with a decisive majority supporting President Musharraf's hard-line approach.

Not only does the ruling Pakistan Muslim League support the war on terrorism, many of the opposition leaders, who sometimes criticize President Musharraf on other issues, support him on countering terrorism. Notwithstanding the force of his own personal commitment to the war on terror, President Musharraf's policies are well accepted throughout much of Pakistan at large as well as within the political and military leadership.

In contrast to the relationship between the United States and Pakistan in the 1980s, current cooperation, although initiated as a result of the 9/11 attacks, has developed along a more sophisticated agenda. Instead of a one-item agenda focused on the war on terrorism, Pakistan has used the current situation of improved relations to pursue a broad series of issues. The policies pursued by the government of President Musharraf have proven to be in the best interest of both Pakistan and the United States in both the short- and long-term.

This comprehensive approach consolidates national views related to globalization, the eradication of militancy, economic development, and democratization. The US government has also genuinely sought to reduce Pakistan's foreign debt. Besides using its influence on G-8 countries for economic cooperation, the United States' was facilitated Pakistan's negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). America has also removed all sanctions imposed on Pakistan and has reassured the country's leadership that its nuclear weapon capability is acceptable and will not result in future roll-backs. The United States and Pakistan are also cooperating on matters related to nuclear nonproliferation, agreeing to resolve the proliferation issues involving Dr.

Qadeer Khan founder of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, in a mutually acceptable manner.

With regard to Pakistan's economy, President Musharraf has enacted macroeconomic measures to remove the country from its long-term debt trap. According to the CIA Fact Book, "IMF-approved government policies, bolstered by generous foreign assistance and renewed access to global markets since 2001, have generated solid macroeconomic recovery in the last three years. The government has made substantial macroeconomic reforms since 2000. . . . While long-term prospects remain uncertain, given Pakistan's low level of development, medium-term prospects for job creation and poverty reduction are the best in nearly a decade."¹² Additionally, "Islamabad has raised development spending from about 2 percent of GDP in the 1990s to 4 percent in 2003, a necessary step towards reversing the broad underdevelopment of its social sector. GDP growth, spurred by double-digit gains in industrial production over the past year, has become less dependent on agriculture. Foreign exchange reserves continued to reach new levels in 2004, supported by robust export growth and steady worker remittances."¹³

Pakistan is enjoying an economic upturn. The past fiscal year has indeed been fruitful for Pakistan's economy, recording several multiyear "firsts." Pakistan's real GDP growth of 8.4 percent in 2004-05 is the most rapid in two decades. Pakistan has positioned itself as the second fastest growing economy after China in 2004-05. It witnessed the largest expansion of private sector credit in the 2004-05 timeframe. Pakistan's exit from the IMF Programme marked an important milestone; and the country's public and external debt burden declined to their lowest levels in decades.¹⁴

Besides the improvement in macroeconomic indicators, Pakistan has enjoyed marked improvements in social and living conditions. Key indicators such as the literacy rate; gross and net enrollment in primary, middle and high schools; access to sanitation and safe drinking water; use of electricity and gas as sources of lighting and cooking fuel; various health indicators such as child immunization and treatment of diarrhea—all have shown marked improvements over the past four to seven years. While Pakistan's socioeconomic and macroeconomic policies have facilitated these positive developments, an increasingly broad and dynamic global recovery has also aided the nation.¹⁵

The government has also launched some mega-projects to improve the macroeconomic situation of the country. The port of Gwadar is being constructed in the relatively underdeveloped province of Balochistan on the Arabian Sea and is near completion. The project had been on the drawing board since the early 1990s but could not be initiated earlier due to politico-economic disconnects. Finally, initiated in 2002, this deep-sea port will pro-

vide docking for large cargo ships, offering the shortest access to the land-locked regions of Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Western China.

The Thar Coal Project likewise promises significant economic gains. The Thar coalfield contains 175 billion tons of coal covering an area of 9,000 square kilometers in the Tharparker District of the Sindh province. This project will be providing a total of 500 megawatts of electricity for at least the next 30 years. Pakistan will be able to significantly reduce its reliance on imported oil.¹⁶

The Pakistani government is negotiating participation in the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) and Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP) gas pipeline projects.¹⁷ If these projects succeed, they will completely fulfill Pakistan's energy requirements. Current plans to extend these projects to India will provide additional revenues from transit fees. The gas pipelines are also likely to bring India and Pakistan closer politically and economically.

Pakistan has become the United States' most trusted ally in the global war on terrorism. This war cannot be won without winning the hearts and minds of the Pakistani populace and denying terrorists their support base. As Pakistan's border with Afghanistan is being cleansed of terrorist cells, large-scale economic and development projects have been launched in the tribal areas in an effort to curtail future terrorist activities. The construction of roads, schools, and hospitals in previously inaccessible regions has helped bring local inhabitants into the mainstream of national life. This two-pronged strategy was developed to achieve both the short-term goal of defeating the terrorists and the long-term objective of eliminating the conditions that foster terrorism. A political initiative is underway to integrate the Maliks (elders) in this process. Operations by law enforcement agencies are opening the border region and denying access and support to terrorists and other miscreants.

Development work and political engagement in previously inaccessible and unfriendly regions has benefitted the GWOT. Pakistani security forces have captured many al Qaeda and Taliban terrorists, including such top leaders as Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, Abu Zubaydah, and Abu Faraj al-Libbi.¹⁸ The Pakistan Army has killed over 300 terrorists and apprehended approximately 700 terror suspects in the Afghan border region. Civilian law enforcement agencies have conducted more than 194 raids throughout the country, resulting in the apprehension of some 573 terrorists. In these efforts the Pakistani security forces have suffered more casualties than any nation except the United States. More than 300 soldiers have lost their lives and some 600 have been wounded in these operations. Through a combination of constitutional reforms, enactment of anti-terrorist laws, and cooperation with international law enforcement organizations, the terror suspects involved in such attacks as the 1993 bombing of the World Trade

Center (WTC), the assassination of two CIA officials in Virginia, and the bombing of the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were captured and deported to America.¹⁹

In addition to its ongoing campaign against terrorism, Pakistan is in the process of improving its educational system and increasing the nation's literacy rate. Almost half of the Pakistani population is currently illiterate. Young illiterate boys from poor families, who either cannot afford schooling or do not have access to a school, are recruited into small Masjid (mosque) schools or madrassas. Unfortunately, the madrassa system is generally perceived in a negative light and considered a breeding ground for terrorism. This perception is not correct. Indeed, madrassas form one of the largest non-government organizations in the world. These religious schools provide succor to the poor and the needy. Madrassas provide food, shelter, and education to children whose parents cannot afford these basics. Education in such schools is generally limited to the tenets of religion. The Pakistani government neither funds nor exercises control over the curriculum of these schools and does not monitor the quality of the religious teachers—Imams. These schools are run by local communities and the Imams are hired locally. More than 95 percent of madrassas are politically moderate providing a strong moral foundation for their students.²⁰ Unfortunately, some madrassas are controlled by hard-line and militant organizations, including a few with foreign sponsors. These schools expound extremist views and indoctrinate their students against the greater society. Although the government has initiated a strict crackdown against extremist madrassas, it has also developed a thoughtful and comprehensive strategy to bring these institutions into the mainstream. Steps initiated by the government include monitoring the recruitment of teachers, provisions for training workshops, government funding, control over outside sources of funding, audits of organizational accounts, and regular monitoring and evaluation by the Department of Education. The government has also introduced standardized subjects in 8,000 Madaris in an effort to bridge the gap between madrassas and the formal education system. The government's involvement is designed to strengthen the lines of communication between the madrassas and the government, educate over 1.5 million students, and help eradicate extremism throughout the country.²¹

Education reform has been a major priority of the Pakistan government for the last five years. These reforms included measures such as the separation of the general, higher, and special education ministries; provisions for free education through high school; and unprecedented increases in funding, especially in the sciences and technology. Curriculums are being revised in an effort to rid them of extremist ideologies and make them compatible with

international standards. These revisions are critical to Pakistan's efforts to have Pakistani degrees accepted in the West. The government's endeavors have borne positive results. The Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) for primary schools (ages 5-9) has increased from 72 percent in 2001-02 to 86 percent in 2004-05. The increase of the Metric Level (age 13-14) in the GER was a moderate 42 to 44 percent. The real impact will be observable in four to five years when the existing primary-level cohort will reach high school.²² The US government is taking a keen interest in supporting Pakistan's education reforms; having already invested about \$100 million. According to the State Department, the United States has a long-term vision for Pakistan's education system and also plans to support modernization of Pakistan's engineering and high-technology sectors.²³

Additionally, the government of Pakistan has made a commitment to democratization. The government is now in the hands of elected representatives who serve in a legitimate parliament. An extremely courageous and ultimately popular step by the leadership has been the transfer of control of local government to elected representatives. These and other initiatives by President Musharraf as part of his policy of modernization and enlightened moderation are not only important for Pakistan's long-term goals; they also serve the long-term interests of the United States related to globalization, eradication of extremism, and democratization. President Musharraf's sincerity in such matters has attracted critics because he continues to don his military uniform. He has made it quite clear, however, that his rationale for not removing the uniform is that the democratic reforms he initiated have not yet taken root. Suggestions that he resign as President would almost certainly result in those programs and initiatives not being completed. A majority of the Pakistani people who have witnessed the improved economic activity and the transition to a less corrupt environment believe him. They prefer that he continue to oversee the government and sustain his strategic direction for the modernization of Pakistan. The PEW Global Attitudes Project in its "Gauging National Satisfaction" survey reports that: "Pakistan, despite continued conflict in neighboring Afghanistan, also weighs in on the positive side, with 57 percent of the public content with the country's current course, compared with 39 percent who are not. This represents continued improvement over the 54 percent to 41 percent margin recorded a year ago and a sharp reversal from the 29 to 67 percent balance of dissatisfaction recorded in May 2003."²⁴

Opportunities for Expanding US-Pakistan Interests

Continued improvements in the US-Pakistan relationship provide unique opportunities for both countries. A country of more than 150 million

people, Pakistan is the sixth most populous nation on the planet and the second largest in the Muslim world. Among Muslim countries, it has the most promising and technologically sound population. English is widely spoken and understood across the country. Located on the mouth of the Persian Gulf at the strategic junction of the Middle East, Central Asia, China, and South Asia, Pakistan provides the shortest route for the CARs and China to reach the Arabian Sea. It also serves as a land-bridge between energy-starved India and the energy-rich CARs and Iran. Located at the cross-roads of competing economic routes and strategic interests, Pakistan is also a nuclear power. An important player in the region, it holds a very respectable position in the 54-member Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). All these factors and its proximity to China, India, Afghanistan, and Iran make Pakistan an extremely lucrative geopolitical ally.

Pakistan was created through a democratic constitutional process assuring freedom of religion.²⁵ Although it has periodically resorted to the imposition of martial law and lapsed into military dictatorships, it continues to maintain a pluralistic character and is moving inexorably toward full democracy. Its non-Muslim minorities enjoy complete freedom of religious practice and are represented in all tiers of democratic institutions. Among the 342 representatives in the national assembly of Pakistan, a minimum of 10 seats are reserved for non-Muslims. Likewise, 73 women currently serve in the assembly—13 above the minimum of 60 prescribed in the constitution. In addition, non-Muslims have reserved seats in provincial assemblies and local bodies. Women, besides having genuine equal opportunities in all walks of life, have 33 percent of the seats in local government reserved for them.²⁶ Today Pakistan serves as a shining example of a modern democratic Muslim state.

Given the aforementioned developments and a strong, if uneven, tradition of US-Pakistan friendship, Pakistan remains extremely relevant to US national interest on several levels, to include national security, access to the energy-rich regions of the Middle East and the CARs, and the politico-economic goals of democratization and globalization.

It is also in Pakistan's national interest to mold the nation into a modern Islamic state capable of attaining its national goals of economic autonomy, political sovereignty, and widespread prosperity. As a leading Muslim country, Pakistan has an obvious interest in countering the growing global perception of a breeding-ground for conflict between the Western and Islamic worlds. The emergence of a violent, terrorist-based Islamic movement is as much a threat to Pakistan as to Western countries. If Pakistan is to be successful in modernization initiatives, it needs to exploit the West's technology. It also needs to capitalize on the institutional reforms

used by established democracies to eliminate corruption, especially with regard to the accountability of democratically elected and appointed government officials.

Improving the Substance and Visibility of US-Pakistan Cooperation

While the cooperation between nations has dramatically increased since 9/11, residual distrust has only been marginally reduced. According to the PEW survey, while 57 percent of Pakistanis favor the current government policies and 52 percent consider Islamic extremism a threat, only 23 percent view the United States favorably. Although this is an improvement over the 17 percent reported two years ago, it is still well below acceptable standards.²⁷ What is needed is a deliberate strategy for improving the US-Pakistan relationship. A concentrated effort to debunk the perception that the relationship is based on the vested interests of the United States and the power-base of President Musharraf. It is reassuring that the US government has declared its policy regarding Pakistan is based on the following five goals:²⁸

- Winning the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).
- Nonproliferation of WMD.
- Promoting a peaceful Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship.
- Improving the Pakistan-India relationship.
- Promoting Democracy.

While these goals appear to focus mainly on security, there are a number of other areas where the United States and Pakistan can work together to improve their current relationship.

Literacy and Education

The Pakistan government, with the financial and technological support of the United States, needs to improve the regulation of private schools; to include monitoring the qualifications and selection of its instructors, in addition to a standardizing of curricula. The influence of ideological extremism needs to be halted at its source and prevented from infecting Pakistan's youth. Pakistan, with continued financial and technological support from the United States will successfully accomplish this important goal.

A mass literacy drive needs to be launched, this will require increased funding from the government and the involvement of relevant NGOs. In the region, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have made tremendous strides in the eradication of illiteracy. Pakistan certainly could learn from their experience. The United States needs to visibly contribute to this effort by offering scholarships to promising young people based on their academic credentials, and

through the sharing of new technologies and distributed learning approaches. To be successful, however, all Pakistani and American efforts need to take into consideration the culture of both nations and the Islamic ethos. No matter how good the intentions, culturally insensitive initiatives are likely to be counter-productive, especially if “hidden agenda” caveats are attributed to such efforts.

The Pakistan Millennium Conference on Higher Education, organized in 2002, sought to identify a number ways to enhance the quality of higher education—this was certainly a step in the right direction.²⁹ The conference’s recommendations deserve serious consideration:

- There is no one right model for achieving quality; therefore universities must be given autonomy to set their own directions to achieve quality, with some minimal standards set by a monitoring body. Government control over universities must be eliminated.

- In order to promote responsible institutional discourse, faculty must be given guaranteed autonomy to conduct research and debate issues. Institutional autonomy and intellectual freedom are fundamental imperatives.

- The financial management system as well as models of accountability of the universities for using allocated funds should be radically restructured.

- In the short-term, public funds should be raised by eliciting the support of people who are widely trusted and reputable. In the long-term, the universities should build credibility by efficient and visible utilization of donor funds to harness non-governmental fiscal resources.

- Universities must undertake initiatives to lower the cost of education by utilizing new technologies. They should capitalize on the many available opportunities, such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) open-courseware initiative to enhance instruction.

Building of National Institutions

Despite a strong desire among Pakistanis for an effective democratic order, the nation’s democratic governments have persistently failed to perform well primarily due to poor governance. The weak performance of elected governments has prevented democracy from establishing solid roots in the country. Every day that these conditions persist serves to reinforce the opinion that governance within a democratic framework is inherently corrupt and inefficient. There is a need for immediate and highly visible actions to change this perception if there is to be any reform at Pakistani institutions. The United States, as the most established and successful democracy in the world, should assist in developing Pakistani democratic institutions and the

education of its politicians and legislators. In the long-term, such support may constitute America's greatest contribution to Pakistan. Other major institutions like the judiciary, police, tax structure, and state bureaucracy also need reform. Again, an approach embedding sound policies and processes within the Pakistani bureaucracies need to be consistent with culture and religion. Nevertheless, an innovative program of US-Pakistan exchanges at every level of government, including independent assessments of governmental agencies by combined teams of experts, with follow-up action plans for short- and long-term reforms, ought to be initiated. The establishment of permanent oversight organizations (inspector generals, governmental accounting offices) empowered and trained to conduct organizational assessments and recommend reforms would go a long way toward improving Pakistani institutions. The United States, with the help of European nations, is already engaged in reforming important institutions in Afghanistan and Iraq. The same type of investments, at a fraction of the cost, in Pakistan where there is already a fairly well developed infrastructure would almost certainly result in success.

Economic Assistance and Technology Transfer

Although Pakistan has an extremely promising young population with a fairly large pool of information technology (IT) experts and nuclear scientists, it is striving to enter the industrial age and has yet to challenge the information age. Even its modest consumer-based industries that have continued to grow have come under tremendous pressure as markets are flooded with cheap Chinese goods. Pakistan's economy could be bolstered through direct foreign investment in the industrial infrastructure or by means of the transfer of crucial technologies to the manufacturing sector. The United States is in a position where it could take highly visible and meaningful actions to enhance Pakistan's exports to American markets. Similarly, Pakistan needs to invest in making its industrial output more competitive on the international market. American involvement in Pakistani economic development could provide a highly visible means of gaining the confidence of both the Pakistani people and the international community, bringing added value to the US-Pakistani relationship.

Kashmir

The Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan has remained unresolved; it provides both risks and opportunities for the US-Pakistan relationship. The dispute has absorbed huge amounts of Indian and Pakistani resources over the last half-century, and it continues to bleed both countries

of valuable resources that could be better applied to economic and social programs. India insists on a bilateral resolution of the dispute, however, this is unrealistic from the Pakistani viewpoint since the resolution would entail the ceding of disputed territories. Involvement of the international community, especially the United States, could help promote an early resolution of the dispute. The dispute has worked a severe economic hardship on Pakistan because the country is compelled to maintain a large military, far greater than normal regional security threats require. Further, the continuing insurgency in the Indian-Held Kashmir (IHK) has aroused a militancy among the Muslim youth. These young people are not only motivated to fight the Indian occupation forces in IHK, but are further inclined to take up arms against perceived injustices anywhere in the world. Fair resolution of the dispute would help quell this militancy among the youth and would go a long way in reducing popular support for such behavior. The United States should lead an effort leveraging India's economic dependency on America. This effort should focus on the United Nations resolution based on granting the right of self-determination to the people of Kashmir. To ensure future security between the two nuclear rivals, America could enter a trilateral security arrangement designed to enhance nuclear command and control arrangements in South Asia. Perhaps, no other US action would receive so positive a response from both the Pakistani populace and the international community as the peaceful resolution of this divisive issue.³⁰ Even incremental progress would receive regional visibility and dispel the perception that the US-Pakistani relationship is Musharraf-dependent or War-on-Terrorism centric. Moreover, progress in resolving this security issue would allow for the reduction of Pakistani armed forces, in addition to freeing up significant forces for security operations against terrorists.

Global War on Terrorism and Military Cooperation

Military-to-military cooperation between the United States and Pakistan has stood the test of time and has developed into a close relationship. The Pakistan military is a well-trained and highly motivated force; it has played an important role in national decisionmaking. Additionally, the bulk of the Pakistani military equipment is of US origin. Also, many senior military officers have attended professional courses in US military schools and have enjoyed positive exposure to American culture. Despite this long military relationship, the US military recently lost touch with the Pakistan armed forces. During a meeting with some middle-ranking Pakistani Army officers prior to 9/11, the Commander in Chief of US Central Command was surprised to find that none of the Pakistani officers present had attended a US military school. He then re-

marked that the United States had lost a relationship with a complete generation of Pakistani military officers due to the Pressler sanctions. At that time, he made a commitment to correcting that mistake. Consequently, literally hundreds of Pakistani military officers have interacted and trained with their US counterparts over the past five years. Certainly, the training of Pakistani military personnel with the US military should be maintained, however, there are areas for improvement:

- Operations against terrorists are more successful when conducted by means of timely information sharing between US and Pakistani agencies; while still respecting one another's sovereignty and values. Many of the top leaders of al Qaeda have been captured or killed by Pakistani security forces or law enforcement agencies based on information provided by US intelligence. Conversely, on some occasions US forces have acted unilaterally inside Pakistani territory. These incidents, which have mostly failed to achieve their intended objectives, often produced civilian casualties and loss of property resulting in intense politico-diplomatic backlashes. For example, on 13 January 2006, 13 innocent people (3 men, 5 women, and 5 children) were killed in four houses in Pakistan by a US air or missile attack.³¹ Besides the loss of innocent lives, the incident resulted in a diplomatic rebuke by the Pakistan government, public unrest in Pakistan, and a plethora of problems for Pakistani security forces operating in the area. America should not act unilaterally with disregard for the territorial integrity of an ally; violation of sovereignty does not serve the long-term interests of either nation. Further, such acts have a negligible impact on the easily replaceable leadership of al Qaeda. Information-sharing has produced the best results and should be relied upon in the future.

- The United States needs to provide Pakistan forces with technologically advanced equipment—including sensors, surveillance and acquisition means, telecommunication equipment, and unmanned aerial vehicles for monitoring movements and conducting search and destroy missions in the border areas.

- Through active socioeconomic measures, Pakistan needs to bring its tribal areas into the mainstream of the national political structure, thereby eliminating terrorist sanctuaries. The US government and NGOs can provide much needed financial and technological assistance to Pakistan in an effort to bolster regional economies.

- Pakistan can enhance jointness among its military services, benefiting from the rich US experience.

- The US could, on a limited basis, allow the licensed production of US military equipment in Pakistan.

Conclusion

Pakistan's support to the United States in the war on terrorism is buttressed by a consensus from within the Pakistani nation and actively led by President Musharraf. Liberated through a democratic process, Pakistan has strong traditions of pluralistic attitudes in religion, politics, and freedom of speech that are compatible with US values and strategic objectives. Although the events of 9/11 have served as a catalyst for bringing America and Pakistan closer, US policy with regard to Pakistan is not limited to the Global War on Terrorism. Although both nations have their respective national interests and security concerns, most long-term US objectives are shared by Pakistan. Importantly, there are no areas of significant divergence regarding the national interests of both nations.

Historically, some issues and isolated incidents have led to mutual distrust. Both countries have worked through these and acknowledged major areas of coincident interests, deliberately pursuing a closer relationship for the benefit of all. Nevertheless, there are additional opportunities for improving this relationship. An improved US-Pakistani relationship will solidify Pakistan as a reliable regional partner and strengthen the overall conduct of the global war on terrorism, further stabilizing a region that at one time was fraught with danger.

NOTES

1. Shahid Javed Burki, *Historical Dictionary of Pakistan*, (2d ed.; London: The Scarecrow Press, 1999), p. 186.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 336.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 336-37

4. *Ibid.*, p. 337

5. *Ibid.*, p. 98

6. There were also other reasons meriting Pakistani support to the Taliban. The Afghan civil war had two distinct groupings based on their historic affinity: the Taliban, who were mostly Sunni Pushtoons, had actively fought for the liberation of Afghanistan from the Soviets and had been supported by the West, the Arab countries and Pakistan; the Northern Alliance was a collection of various minority ethnic and sectarian groups living in the northern and western parts of Afghanistan, their support base being in the Soviet Union, Iran, and India. Peaceful Afghanistan was also a strategic necessity for Pakistan due to Pakistan's threat perception vis a vis India and Afghanistan's role as a state capable of providing strategic depth. The Taliban held fundamentalist religious ideology, but were extremely honest and, at the time, were the only hope for bringing peace to the war-torn country.

7. Tommy Franks, *American Soldier* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2004), pp. 214-15. It is generally thought that due to lack of engagement with Pakistan, the US did not understand Pakistan's economic hardships and compulsions vis a vis Afghanistan. However, the conversation between General Tommy Franks, then Commander in Chief of the US Central Command, and George Tenet, former Director of the CIA, before the former's visit to Pakistan in 2001, revealed the US understood the situation in Afghanistan and reflects an understanding of the ground realities of the time: "As a practical matter, Pakistan will continue an accommodation with the Taliban until we are able to offer a better alternative. Musharraf is between a rock and a hard place—India and the Pressler Amendment" . . . "Afghanistan offers the Pakistani's what we call 'strategic depth.' That's battle space to maneuver and support Pakistani combat forces in the event of another war with India." Tenet responded, "That's what my people tell me also." In his meeting with President Musharraf, General Franks was told: "We have no choice but to work with the Taliban" . . . "I can assure you that we dislike their extremism, but they brought stability to Afghanistan and ended the bloodshed after the Soviets left. We must have stability on at

least one border. . . . The Taliban is isolated. We have some influence with them, but we don't control them. I will do my best to help, but we need help from the international community. . . . Pakistan would like to help with the problem of Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda. If we can increase our influence with the Taliban, it is possible they would agree to expel him to some neutral state for either exile or to be put on trial." General Franks then said he could not grant concessions, but indicated that he would carry the message to Washington.

8. Ayaz Amir, "A Passion for Selling Ourselves Cheaply," *Dawn*, 21 September 2001, <http://66.201.122.226/weekly/ayaz/20010921.htm>.

9. *Ibid.*

10. John A. Gastright, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South Asian Affairs, US Department of State, interview by author, 13 December 2005, Washington, D.C.

11. Hussain Haqqani, *Pakistan—Between Mosque and Military* (Washington: The Brookings Institution Press, 2005), p. 326.

12. Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Fact Book: Pakistan*, <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/pk.html>.

13. *Ibid.*

14. Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Finance, "Report on Economic Survey 2004-05," <http://www.finance.gov.pk/>.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Daily Times, Pakistan, "Sindh demands Rs. 1 billion for Thar Coal Project," 10 July 2003, http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story_10-7-2003_pg7_36.

17. Indiainfo.com, "Work on Iran-India Gas Pipeline May Begin by 2007," 30 December 2005, <http://news.indiainfo.com/2005/12/30/3012iran-india-gas-pipeline-work.html>.

18. Christina Rocca, Assistant Secretary of the State for South Asian Affairs, "Statement before the House International Affairs Committee for Asia and the Pacific," 14 June 2005, <http://www.state.gov/p/sa/rls/rm/2005/47892.htm>.

19. Brigadier Ikram Ullah, Pakistan's Senior National Representative, vs. Central Command, (telephone interview), 20 December 2006.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*

22. Government of Pakistan, Statistics Division, Federal Bureau of Statistics, Islamabad, "Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey (2004-05)," <http://www.statpak.gov.pk>.

23. US Department of State, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, October 2006, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3453.htm>.

24. The PEW Global Attitudes Project, "Data on Gauging National Satisfaction" <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?PageID=805>.

25. The introduction to the National Assembly of Pakistan starts with these words: "Pakistan was created entirely through a democratic and constitutional struggle. Islam is the anchor-sheet of Pakistan and democracy is ingrained deep into the Muslim psyche. Islam permits no 'hero worship.' Pakistan's record of parliamentary democracy may be checkered but its return to this form after each pause and break more than vindicates the fact that democratic traditions are deep-rooted in Pakistan's polity," <http://www.pakistan.gov.pk/>.

26. Asia Pacific Online Network of Women in Politics, "Women in Pakistan," <http://www.onlinewomeninpolitics.org/pakistan/pakmain.htm>.

27. PEW Global Attitudes Project.

28. Gastright.

29. Pak-Millennium Conference 2002, Higher Education in Pakistan: Challenges for Reform held at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Boston University, "Conference Report on Fiscal Solvency and Financial Management," 13-14 April 2002, <http://web.mit.edu/bilal/www/education/pmc2002report.pdf>.

30. Although beyond the purview of this article, following are a few thoughts on resolution of this long standing dispute, which has aptly been termed as the nuclear flash point: US mediation can greatly facilitate Pakistan—India negotiations keeping them focused. The position that USA cannot mediate between these two countries is fallacious, because the US has mediated between them on two recent occasions, during the Kargil conflict in 1999 and the standoff in 2002. In the short term, the emphasis has to be on reduction of forces on both sides of the Line of Control and bringing peace to the people of Indian-Held Kashmir. For ultimate resolution of the dispute, the model of entire Kashmir being one constituency for plebiscite can be modified to allow self determination on regional basis and a realignment of the border to accommodate the wishes of the people of Kashmir. This would not only allow self determination for the Kashmiri people, but also allow face saving to both Pakistan and India. Management of the dispute through purely bilateral measures, without substantive external efforts for its resolution is unlikely to be successful.

31. Amnesty International, "Pakistan: US Involvement in Civilian Deaths," <http://www.amnestyusa.org/regions/asia/document.do?id=ENGASA330022006>.