

COVER FEATURE

Post-Osama Pakistan – shall it remain a warrior state?

The killing of Osama bin Laden could provide Pakistan an opportunity to reverse its downward slide, though changing course will not be easy. The country must decide whether to decisively confront Islamist violence, or continue with the military's current policy of supporting jihadi militants with one hand even as it slaps them with the other.

By Pervez Hoodbhoy

The most intensive manhunt in history ended on 2 May 2011 with the killing of Osama bin Laden. When an elite squad of helicopter-borne US Navy SEALs slipped into Pakistan from Afghanistan, they returned with the body of al-Qaeda's founder-king. To the relief of many around the world, the man who had attacked and physically eliminated all he perceived as enemies of Islam – Soviets and Americans, Iraqis and Pakistanis – was dispatched to his watery grave.

Initially, the Pakistani government claimed cooperation in the operation. But this was flatly rejected by those who had laid and executed the intricate plans. John Brennan, assistant to President Barack Obama for homeland security and counterterrorism, said, 'We didn't contact the Pakistanis until after all of our people, all of our aircraft were out of Pakistani airspace ... we were watching and making sure that our people and our aircraft were able to get out of Pakistani airspace. And thankfully, there was no engagement with Pakistani forces.' The director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Leon Panetta, hinted at Pakistan's complicity with al-Qaeda when he said, 'It was decided that any effort to work with the Pakistanis might jeopardise the mission: they might alert the targets.' Significantly, President Obama did not thank Pakistan.

For Pakistan it was, as columnist Ayaz Amir put it, the mother of all embarrassments. For years, the country's military and civilian leaders had flatly denied bin Laden's presence in the country. Some had slyly suggested he might be in Sudan or Somalia. Others confidently claimed that he had died from a kidney ailment, or perhaps was in some intractable area protected by nature and terrain, and thus outside of the effective control of the Pakistani state. But as it turned out, of course, the world's most famous and recognisable terrorist's abode was within walking distance of the famed Pakistan Military Academy at Kakul, a short distance from Abbottabad, where, just days earlier, General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani had declared that 'The terrorist backbone has been broken and *inshaallah* we will soon prevail.'

Pakistanis, who think of their military as a fine fighting force, were angry and appalled that the American invaders got away with the raid scot-free. The military consumes a huge chunk of Pakistan's national resources; it had just purchased sophisticated AWAC aircraft, continues receiving delivery of modernised US F-16s, and has a nuclear arsenal that could soon rival Britain's in size. But the hugely expensive system proved unable to detect, much less confront, the five slow-moving helicopters that flew in south from Jalalabad. Two of these landed and stayed for 40 minutes almost next to the brigade headquarters of the Second Division of the Northern Army Corps in Abbottabad. They left without engagement. It was only when the

Americans had exited Pakistan's airspace that air defences were scrambled. [DESK: **A map to show Kakul and Abbottabad would be good. Desk can use this:** <http://www.pakistanarmy.gov.pk/AWPReview/TextContent.aspx?pId=267&rnd=469>]

For multiple reasons, bin Laden's killing has become a bone stuck in the throat of Pakistan's establishment, which despises the Americans but is formally aligned with them. This bone can neither be swallowed nor spat out. To approve of the Abbottabad operation would infuriate the Islamists, who are already fighting the state. To protest too loudly, however, would suggest that Pakistan had willingly hosted the king of terrorists.

Subservient civilians

One clear consequence of the US operation was to put into stark relief the humble subservience of Pakistan's civilians to their military masters. As the story broke on Pakistani news channels, the elected government quaked. It was too weak, corrupt and inept to take initiatives. Thus, there was no official Pakistani reaction for hours after President Obama had announced the success of the US mission. A stunned silence was finally broken when the Foreign Office declared that 'Osama bin Laden's death illustrates the resolve of the international community including Pakistan to fight and eliminate terrorism.' Hours later, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gillani described the killing as a 'great victory'. Thereupon, Pakistan's high commissioner to the UK, Wajid Shamsul Hasan, rushed to claim credit: 'Pakistan's government was cooperating with American intelligence throughout and they had been monitoring [bin Laden's] activities with the Americans, and they kept track of him from Afghanistan, Waziristan to Afghanistan and again to North Waziristan.'

This welcoming stance was reversed almost instantly. A stern look from the military, which had finally decided to condemn the raid, took a few hours in coming. Praising the killing of the world's most wanted terrorist was now out of the question. In its moment of shame, the government furiously twisted and turned. Official spokespeople babbled on, becoming increasingly senseless and contradictory. Without referring to the statement he had made that very morning of 3 May, High Commissioner Hasan abruptly reversed his public position, now saying: 'Nobody knew that Osama bin Laden was there – no security agency, no Pakistani authorities knew about it. Had we known it, we would have done it ourselves.'

Tongue-tied for 36 hours, president and prime minister awaited pointers from the army, following them dutifully after they were received. But simple obedience could not satisfy the army. Gen Kayani announced his unhappiness with the government: 'Incomplete information and lack of technical details have resulted in speculations and misreporting. Public dismay and despondency has also been aggravated due to an insufficient formal response.' The threat was barely veiled: the government must proactively defend the army and intelligence agencies, or else...

Thus prodded, a full eight days after the incident Prime Minister Gillani broke his silence. He absolved the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and army of 'either complicity or incompetence'. Before an incredulous world, he claimed in a statement that both suggestions were 'absurd'. Attempting to spread the blame, he declared in Paris, before his meeting with President Sarkozy, 'This is an intelligence failure of the whole world, not Pakistan alone.'

Prime Minister Gillani, more loyal than the king, had somewhat overstretched himself. Even the head of the ISI, Lieutenant-General Ahmad Shuja Pasha, was not confident that he had done a good job. In appearing before an in-camera session of the Parliament, Pasha broke a long tradition of being **unanswerable to civilian authorities**. But, it is said his offer was met with dead silence. Servitude to power runs thick in the blood of Islamabad's politicians, which is why they wrote, **some decades ago**, into the Pakistan Constitution that it is a crime to 'criticise the armed forces of Pakistan or to bring them into disaffection.'

Though the incompetence of the civilian government is legendary, the responsibility for the present debacle lies squarely with the military. Except when the military has itself been the government, Pakistan's strategic decision making has been entirely invented and executed by generals who consider their interests to be synonymous with that of the country. Pakistanis have good reason to fear their army. Although it might not have won any war against India, it has been victorious on all four occasions when it moved against civilian governments. It is unsurprising that on nuclear weapons, Kashmir, **India**, Afghanistan and Pakistan-US relations, the army alone makes the decisions.

Bin Laden's killing presented a rare opportunity for Pakistan to reclaim some of the powers snatched by its army. But the government chose the status quo instead. Over forty years ago, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who had before him a weakened army that he had rescued from ignominy, made the mistake of restoring the army's former status, rather than make it respect the supremacy of the Parliament. Eventually that same army hanged him. As mere survivors, the Zardari/Gillani government has little interest in history or the future of Pakistan, content as they seem to be whitewash the army and let it off the hook.

Untamed warriors

Why was Pakistan's warrior class never tamed by civilian rule? The answer must be sought in the foundation of Pakistan and the state of confusion into which it was born. Beyond the simplistic notion that Hindus and Muslims were incapable of living together, the idea of Pakistan was unclear from the outset. Although he made many speeches, Muhammad Ali Jinnah left no manifesto and authored no book before his untimely death. Critical questions were thus left unanswered: Would the new state be capitalist or socialist, liberal or theocratic, modern or tradition-based? On what basis would power be distributed between its different regions? How would defence, education, science, health, etc be prioritised?

With no clear answers, and lacking a clear basis for legitimacy or direction, the state quickly aligned with the powerful landed class: the army leadership and the economic elite joined forces to claim authority in a nation without definition or cohesion. The Kashmir dispute gave reason for the military to become powerful and to make the acquisition of modern weaponry an overriding priority. The Americans happily obliged, given the burgeoning cold war. A fatal attraction for guns steadily drew Pakistan into the US orbit.

Still, it is easy to blame the military for Pakistan's deepening failure as a state. But the responsibility must be shared with the wider 'establishment' that runs Pakistan. Stephen P Cohen, a political scientist, calls this establishment a 'moderate oligarchy' and defines it as 'an

informal political system loosely bound together that ties together the senior ranks of the military, the civil service, key members of the judiciary, and other elites.’ Membership in this oligarchy, Cohen contends, requires adherence to a common set of core beliefs.

These beliefs can easily be enumerated. Members of ‘the establishment’ must believe that India has to be countered at every turn; that nuclear weapons have endowed Pakistan with security and status; that the fight for Kashmir is the unfinished business of Partition; that large-scale social reforms, such as land redistribution, are unacceptable; that the uneducated and illiterate masses deserve only contempt; that vociferous Muslim nationalism is desirable but the Sharia is not; and that Washington is to be despised but fully taken advantage of.

In such a situation, the absence of a blueprint meant that Pakistan could have gone in many different directions. The one actually chosen by history resulted in its becoming a client state of the US. This trend became stronger after the 1958 coup by General Ayub Khan, when the US was keen to cultivate allies against communism during the Cold War. Pakistan was invited into the SEATO and CENTO alliances (covering Southeast and West Asia, respectively) and, to quote arch anti-communist John Foster Dulles, became America’s ‘most allied ally’. The embrace became tighter with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The American strategy for defeating the ‘Evil Empire’ required marshalling the forces of Islam from every part of the world. With General Zia ul-Haq as America’s foremost ally, and Saudi Arabia as the principal source of funds, the CIA openly recruited Islamic holy warriors from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Algeria.

Radical Islam went into overdrive as its superpower ally and mentor funnelled support to the mujahideen. The strategy worked. In 1988, Soviet troops withdrew unconditionally, and the US-Pakistan-Saudi-Egypt alliance emerged victorious. A chapter of history seemed complete, and hubris defined US policy for another two decades. But the true costs of this victory did not take long to surface. Even in the mid-1990s – long before the attacks of 11 September 2001 – it was clear that the victorious alliance had unwittingly created a new entity that had gone beyond its control.

This, in a nutshell, is the history of how Pakistan became host to the current array of radical Islamist groups. These pathological social and religious formations have developed divergent goals. Some target the American empire, which is why Pakistan was the country of choice for bin Laden. Other groups focus on the more limited goal of ‘liberating’ Kashmir. Still others, such as Lashkar-i-Jhangvi and Sipah-e-Sahaba, are largely anti-Shia. Gradually, Pakistan morphed into Jihadistan, attracting a multitude of Islamists from Europe to West and Central Asia to Indonesia. But Jihadistan is a messy place these days, a far cry from the simple bastion of anti-communism in the 1980s. Today the military must kill some of its former protégés and some radicals even as it secretly supports others.

Collective psychosis [I PUT THE SUBTITLE BACK]

Twenty-five years ago, the Pakistani state pushed Islam on its people as a matter of ideology. Prayers were made compulsory in government departments, punishments were meted out to those civil servants who did not fast during Ramadan, selection for academic posts required that the candidate demonstrate knowledge of Islamic teachings, and jihad was propagated through

schoolbooks. Today, government intervention is no longer needed because of the spontaneous groundswell of Islamic zeal that has been the result of the years of grooming. A generation of poisoned minds that holds the external world responsible for all the country's ills has led the country into collective xenophobia and psychosis. Signs suggest that a fascist religious state may be just around the corner.

A necessary condition for fascism – a sense of victimhood, mass delusions and a disconnection with reality – has now been met. A majority of all Pakistanis believe that 9/11 was a Jewish conspiracy, think the dynamiting of schools and suicide attacks on shrines are the work of Blackwater (the US defence contractor now called Xe), see India's hand behind Pakistan's deepening instability and, refuse to accept Pakistan's responsibility in the Mumbai attacks of November 2008. Many welcomed the murder of Punjab Governor Salman Taseer in January, despite the fact that his only 'crime' was to protect a poor peasant Christian woman against charges of blasphemy. Surveys also show that a majority believes that senior army officers do not support the Taliban, and think that peace will return to Pakistan once the US leaves Afghanistan.

Those holding such distorted views of the world greeted the news of bin Laden's killing with outright disbelief and denial. Pakistan's capacity for self-deception should not be underestimated. An online survey conducted two days after the operation by a global opinion pollster revealed that a staggering 66 percent of Pakistanis thought the person who was killed by US Navy SEALs was not bin Laden. Participants in satirical TV shows burst into peals of laughter as they poured scorn on America and its claims. The supposed killing of bin Laden was nothing but high drama, said popular TV anchors. General Mirza Aslam Beg, former army chief and the formulator of the notion of 'strategic depth' in Afghanistan, fully agreed. He wrote: 'Osama's look-alike prisoner from Bagram was picked-up and brought to Abbottabad and killed in cold blood, in front of his family members, who were living there. In fact, Osama had been killed in Afghanistan some time back and his body may still be lying in a mortuary in Afghanistan.' Beg says it was all a ploy to defame the Pakistan government, the Pakistan armed forces and the ISI.

Rent-a-country [THIS SUBTITLE COMES HERE]

Over decades, Pakistan has adapted to its changing strategic circumstances by renting itself out to powerful states. Territory and men are part of the services provided. Payment comes not just from the US, but Arab countries as well. For fear of public criticism, the arrangements have been kept hidden. Pakistan's supposedly vibrant press has chosen to steer off such controversial issues. But post bin-Laden, the clatter of skeletons tumbling out of Pakistan's strategic closet is forcing some secrets out into the open.

Questioning by angry Pakistan's parliamentarians has been particularly revealing. They wanted to know from Air Chief Marshal Rao Qamar Suleman just how US helicopters had entered Pakistan and escaped without detection. Where did US drones fly from? Was it Shamsi air base in Balochistan, as some foreign newspapers had alleged? His answer left them stunned: Shamsi base was not under the control of the Pakistan Air Force but, instead, of the United Arab Emirates. Why would the UAE want the base? Ostensibly because wealthy Arabs have many land investments in Pakistan, and often travel to the country in their own planes for purposes like

hunting expeditions. As for not detecting the incursion, the air chief conceded that Pakistan's radar defense had not been jammed at the time of the Navy SEALs incursion. 'I do not know from where the helicopters who participated in the Abbottabad operation that killed Osama bin Laden came,' he said. In another country it is hard to see how an air chief could have kept his job.

The army's indignation over the violation of Pakistan's sovereignty by the bin Laden operation is phony; it is a dispute over the amount of rent, not over principle. US drones have targets inside Pakistani territory and some take off from bases within Pakistan. But even as drone attacks are given a wink and a nod, the military simultaneously makes a formal protest to the US. However, one does not hear expressions of indignation at the loss of Pakistan's sovereignty to Arab fighters and the Taliban in Waziristan, Kurram, Parachinar and other tribal areas.

Post-bin Laden, stung by criticism from the general public and seeking to raise morale, Gen Kayani has been stumping the garrisons. Meanwhile, he has been asked why the invaders were not challenged and destroyed. Who sheltered bin Laden if we are actually fighting al-Qaeda? The *Express Tribune* quotes an unnamed young military officer who made a stinging comment before the army chief: 'Sir, I am ashamed of what happened in Abbottabad.' Replied Gen Kayani, 'So am I.' He promptly went on to hold the government responsible for allowing Pakistan to get such bad press.

The golden goose

Osama bin Laden was found sheltered in the army's backyard. Though caught red-handed, the army denied that it knew of his presence. A counter propaganda blitz followed, with street banners and pamphlets proclaiming that the army and ISI are the veritable pillars of Pakistan. **[Photographs?]** Supporters and commentators were instructed to make the case that this part of a great grand conspiracy against Pakistan, and to deny that bin Laden had been the army's guest.

The results of the blitz have been mixed. Even the ferocious General Hamid Gul (retired), a self-proclaimed jihadi who advocates war on America, did not buy the army's denial, remarking that bin Laden being in Abbottabad unknown to authorities 'is a bit amazing'. Aside from the military, he said, 'there is the local police, the Intelligence Bureau, Military Intelligence, the ISI – they all had a presence there.'

The army's supporters, on the other hand, claim that there was no reason for it to harbour bin Laden. *What would Pakistan gain?* they ask. On the face of it, this seems like a strong rhetorical rebuttal. But years ago, Gen Pervez Musharraf had unwittingly provided a clear and cogent explanation. The back cover of his 2006 autobiography, *In the Line of Fire*, reads:

Since shortly after 9/11 – when many Al-Qaeda leaders fled Afghanistan and crossed the border into Pakistan – we have played multiple games of cat and mouse with them. The biggest of them all, Osama bin Laden, is still at large at the time of this writing but we have caught many, many others. We have captured 672 and handed over 369 to the United States. We have earned bounties totaling millions of dollars. Here, I will tell the story of just a few of the most significant manhunts.

Musharraf was army chief in 2005, when bin Laden's specially fortified compound in Abbottabad was being constructed. At that time, political chatterers were wont to speculate about which al-Qaeda or Taliban leader would be miraculously captured or killed on the eve of some important US military or political leader's visit to Pakistan. Indeed, like the proverbial rabbit pulled out of the magician's hat, a high or middle-ranking leader was usually produced around that time. Important arrests included those of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the Kuwaiti-born senior al-Qaeda leader who was arrested in Rawalpindi, and Mullah Baradar, a Taliban leader arrested in Karachi. The Americans visitors generally took satisfaction as they departed.

This line of thought suggests that bin Laden was the army's golden goose – the ultimate trophy to be traded in at the right time for the right price, whether in dollars or political concessions. I do not wish to insinuate that the army was in secret collusion with al-Qaeda. **Indeed, this was scarcely possible, given the hostility Al-Qaida had expressed against Pakistan's army leadership. Restricted to his hideout, bin Laden could not have been effective in directing operations. Without telephones or internet in his house, and communications limited to the occasional courier, bin Laden was now the army's virtual captive. At some point the army started seeing him as their cash cow.**

An examination of the computer drives seized from bin Laden's lair will ultimately reveal the degree of the army's involvement. Until then, to be rigorous, one must not foreclose the possibility that the army and ISI leadership were ignorant of bin Laden's whereabouts. So let us momentarily accept that there had been a genuine intelligence failure, as stated by the ISI chief before the closed session of Parliament.

If true, this would say two things. First, that the intelligence failure was that of the ISI leadership but not necessarily that of the entire organisation. **As in the case of the Mumbai attacks, where two lower-level ISI officers were disciplined for their involvement, information channels could have been deliberately designed so as to keep information away from the senior leadership following a policy "don't ask, don't tell". This would give the senior military leadership greater deniability (in the present instance one need not distinguish between ISI and army even though the ISI formally reports to the prime minister rather than the army chief).** Second, it says that the ISI and military are playing high-stakes Russian roulette. In seeking to destroy the enemy, they are using a weapon that fires equally often forward and backward. This was revealed with stunning clarity when the army headquarters in Rawalpindi was attacked in 2009, and the ISI headquarters in three cities were destroyed by suicide bombers. All attacks were traced to insider involvement.

Rent-a-jihad?

While Pakistan's military rulers are said to have some attraction to wads of money, those who are out to kill Pakistani soldiers and generals in the name of religion appear to have no less. This is suggested by the bizarre absence of jihadist reaction to bin Laden's killing.

Of course, this is not wholly true. A suicide bombing in Charsadda on 12 May, ten days after the bin Laden operation, killed 80 Frontier Constabulary paramilitary soldiers and responsibility was claimed by the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) as revenge for bin Laden's death. But it is unclear whether this was indeed a revenge attack, or if it was instead intended as punishment for

the ongoing army operations in the district of Mohmand Agency and elsewhere in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). In any case, in a country where suicide attacks are near-daily occurrences and Frontier Constabulary personnel are considered to be cannon fodder, the matter disappeared from public attention after just a day or two.

One expected far more protest. Pakistan, after all, is a country where bin Laden t-shirts and posters were sold on street corners before and after 9/11. But the demonstrations shown on TV were uncharacteristically thin. The largest reported was of about 4000 people who turned up at a rally organised by Hafiz Saeed, the head of the banned Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD). Noticeably absent were Maulana Fazlur Rehman, the Jamiat Ulama Islam chief who lays claim to be the father of the Taliban, and Maulana Fazlur Rehman Khalil, head of the banned Harkatul Mujahideen. They did not offer funeral prayers for bin Laden. Even mainstream Urdu papers referred to the *halakat* (killing) of bin Laden rather than his *shahadat* (martyrdom). Shockingly, in referring to its former hero, the Islamist right-wing newspaper *Nawa-i-Waqt* used the disrespectful word *uss* (he) rather than the respectful *unn*.

What on earth had happened? Why did the acclaimed hero of jihadism die virtually un-mourned? And what makes some extreme rightwing commentators describe bin Laden's mission as that of spreading *fasad* (internal strife) rather than jihad, holy war?

Bushels of Saudi riyals did the job. Mainstream Sunni jihadist groups in Pakistan are now increasingly projecting themselves as praetorian guards of the Saudi regime, which in turn finances them. When a radicalised bin Laden turned violently against the country of his birth, Saudi Arabia, he initiated a deep rift between al-Qaeda and some Pakistani jihadist groups. Amir Rana, a noted terrorism expert, remarks that publications of the Jamat-ud-Dawa, whose affiliate carried out the 2008 attacks in Mumbai, now sing praises of the Saudi kingdom. The JuD is actively working to defuse the anti-Saudi campaign by pro-Shia elements in Pakistan who had launched rallies and demonstrations against Saudi Arabia's recent military intervention in Bahrain. More recently, a pro-Saudi demonstration in Karachi turned into an armed clash.

Pro- and anti-Saudi divisions have become so deep that Saudi interests in Pakistan are now open targets. There is a deep split between the TTP, which fully uses suicide bombings as a tactic, and the pro-Saudi Laskar-e-Taiyyaba, which disapproves of their use against Muslim targets (although they are allowed against others). Until a while ago, these two groups had been allies. But within days of the bin Laden operation, grenades were being lobbed over the walls of the Saudi embassy in Karachi. Subsequently, the Pakistani Taliban expressed its 'full support' for the shooting death of a Saudi diplomat in Karachi on 16 May this year, the second attack against Saudi officials in the city in less than two weeks. Like Western diplomats, who had moved their families out of Pakistan many years ago, the Saudis are relocating their families back home. Jihadistan is no longer safe, even for the funders of jihad.

The un-mourned passing of Osama bin Laden has merely confirmed the old adage: He who pays the piper calls the tune. Saudi money has weaned support away from al-Qaeda, and towards those groups that are both pro-Saudi and pro-Pakistan. Indeed, the Saudi and Pakistani establishments have much in common. They agree on the definition of 'good' versus 'bad' jihadis; both are formal US allies with a strictly transactional master-client relationship with

Washington DC; both use extra-state actors in pursuing their foreign-policy goals; both are anti-Shia and strongly pro-Wahhabi; and both are relieved that al-Qaeda has been decimated.

A prognosis

At this point, my cracked crystal ball suggests the following five points:

First, Pakistan's generals will remain in thrall of their own irrational logic of selectively encouraging militancy. They are red-faced today, but their high-stakes game is not over. In the past they survived the adventure of secretly sending militants and soldiers across the Line of Control in Kargil, profited from A Q Khan's sale of nuclear wares in the open market, and gave tacit permission to the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba's military preparations and the Mumbai operation. While damaging, these revelations did not prove fatal.

Second, the status quo shall reign on Pakistan's eastern border. Abbottabad could well inspire some Indians to dream about doing an operation in Muridke or Bahawalpur against the Jaish-e-Mohammed or Lashkar-e-Tayyaba. But the Indians know that, should their forces engage in a similar Seal-type mission, the Pakistani response would be different and disproportionate. In a situation where nuclear-tipped missiles are poised for flight across contiguous borders, it is wise to avoid fatally foolish fantasies. The failure of Operation Parakaram, India's response to the attack on the Indian Parliament on December 2001, represented a 10-month-long mobilisation of nearly half a million soldiers and deployment of troops along the border. When Parakaram fizzled out, Pakistan claimed victory and India was left licking its wounds. For this, India should blame no one but itself. Having aggressively initiated the nuclearisation of Southasia, it inadvertently levelled the playing field and made Pakistan the winner.

Third, US military and economic aid to Pakistan will continue. Until the US fully or largely withdraws from Afghanistan, it will remain dependent upon Pakistan both for allowing NATO supplies to be trucked across its territory, as well as for limiting the operation of the Haqqani network in North Waziristan. The chorus of voices in the US Congress against continuing aid to Pakistan will die down, while conditionalities on aid will escalate. Zalmay Khalilzad, former US ambassador to Iraq and Afghanistan, has written an article that gives a preview of these potential conditionalities:

First, we should formally present any information about Pakistani complicity in shielding Bin Laden to Pakistan's leaders. Then we should follow up with demands that Pakistan break the backbone of Al-Qaeda in Pakistan by moving against figures like Ayman al-Zawahiri; remove limits on the Predator drone campaign; uproot insurgent sanctuaries and shut down factories that produce bombs for use against American and Afghan soldiers; and support a reasonable political settlement in Afghanistan.

Pakistan will continue to play its current game – and suffer periodic embarrassments as with the recent Wikileaks revelations – because it cannot afford a total break with the US. **For all the present bluster of 'breaking the chains', its economy is dependent upon US largesse. Pakistan will therefore keep running with jihadi hares and hunt with the American hounds.** Furthermore, Islamabad senses that strategic depth in Afghanistan now lies within the realm of possibilities. But this requires US acquiescence, or at least that there be no active opposition. All things

considered, neither side feels it can afford to upset the applecart. The working military-to-military relationship will therefore not end.

Fourth, Pakistan-China relations will grow warmer. Upon his arrival in Shanghai two weeks after the bin Laden raid, Prime Minister Gillani declared China his country's 'best and most trusted friend'. The hope in Pakistan is that, as and when relations with the US sour, it will have another major power to which to turn. China had already conveyed to the US that it does not condone the US's violation of Pakistan's airspace to attack bin Laden. The 5 May editorial of the Urdu newspaper *Jang* complemented China 'for daring to stand against the Western forces', and stated that 'China is the only hope for countries like Pakistan.' Yet while China is often referred to in Pakistan as an 'all-weather friend', this friendship does come at a price: the Pakistani market has been flooded by cheap Chinese goods that have driven small local industries out of business. **Its trade with China is largely one-sided with Pakistani exports being of raw materials and foodstuffs. It is said that China has hugely benefited from opaque mining deals in resource-rich Balochistan. Still, Pakistan-China trade stands at only USD 8 billion, and is minuscule compared to India-China trade of about USD 70 billion at present.**

And fifth, the bin Laden episode is sure to harden Pakistan's nuclear stance. For the world, the fact that world's most-wanted fugitive was hidden in an army town puts the safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons into doubt. Logically speaking, there are only two possibilities. If the military was actually unaware of the world's most-wanted terrorist being virtually under its nose, then its claims about Pakistani nuclear weapons being unassailable become questionable. On the other hand, if it was playing a game using bin Laden as a pawn, then it is not to be trusted with nuclear weapons. Suggesting either possibility infuriates Pakistan's security establishment. The Strategic Plans Division, which has custody of Pakistani nuclear weapons, dismisses the chance of a mutiny in nuclear quarters and chooses to ignore the numerous insider attacks upon the military and ISI.

Stung by such suggestions in the aftermath of bin Laden's killing, the army released an emphatic statement: 'As regards the possibility of similar hostile action against our strategic assets, the forum reaffirmed that unlike an undefended civilian compound, our strategic assets are well protected and an elaborate defensive mechanism is in place.' Like nuclear North Korea, Pakistan feels secure. It knows that international financial donors are compelled to keep pumping in funds. Otherwise, a collapsing Pakistan would be unable to prevent its hundred-plus Hiroshima-sized nukes from disappearing into the darkness. For this purpose, more nukes are better.

Where does Pakistan go from here as a country? With bin Laden gone, the military has two remaining major strategic assets: America's weakness in Afghanistan, and Pakistani nuclear weapons. It will surely move these chess pieces around adroitly to extract the maximum advantage. But this will not assure the peace and prosperity that Pakistanis so desperately crave. They will not give security to Pakistan, solve the country's mounting electricity and water crises, move its citizens out of dire economic straits, give them justice and opportunity, or protect them from suicide bombers. Until the military sorts out its own internal matters, and the conviction comes about that Pakistan will deal with terrorists as terrorists should be dealt with, the country will not be at peace with itself or with the world.

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