



## Beyond Af–Pak

Australia's long-term interests in Pakistan

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Australia's engagement with Afghanistan and Pakistan has been energised by the idea that their fates are 'inextricably linked'.<sup>1</sup> But a clear articulation of the *hierarchy* of Australian strategic interests in those two countries has been missing. In public debate, the Australian Government has tended to conflate the different challenges, relationships and opportunities we have in the two countries in the shorthand term 'Af–Pak'.<sup>2</sup>

This paper makes three contributions: it analyses Australia's macro-level interests in the region; it proposes the broad contours of a strategy in Pakistan; and it identifies niche options for engagement.

Firstly, the paper proposes a new hierarchy of Australia's interests in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pakistan is of long-term importance to our interests in South Asia



A Pakistani security official stands guard after the authorities sealed the Pakistan–Afghan border at Chaman, Pakistan on 19 January 2011. Reports state that following a suicide bomb attack on NATO soldiers on the Afghanistan side of the Chaman border the crossing point was closed. © AKHTAR GULFAM/epa/Corbis

and its links with Afghanistan should be seen in that light.

Secondly, it outlines a strategy to further our interests in Pakistan's stability. We have good access to the Pakistani Government but lack influence over macro-level trends in the country. Australia should therefore leverage our limited influence to focus on problems of instability in Pakistan's geographic peripheries.

Thirdly, it recommends improving community security at the local level as the best option for Australia to help shape Pakistan's future internal stability. Such initiatives aim to build security from within Pakistan, in support of stronger governance and a more confident country. Pakistan's challenges are complex and primarily driven by variables beyond Australia's control. It is therefore impossible for Australia to induce transformative top-down change. But we can usefully generate niche opportunities that more directly align our strategic interests and strengthen the social contract between Pakistan's people and their state.

### Establishing a hierarchy of Australian interests in Pakistan and Afghanistan

To summarise, the hierarchy of Australia's interests in Pakistan and Afghanistan are in:

1. The emergence of a viable, prosperous Pakistan at peace with itself and its neighbours<sup>3</sup>—irrespective of what happens in Afghanistan. Reducing instability within Pakistan will help mitigate negative spillover effects into the region that would defy containment.
2. In the medium term, to prevent Afghanistan's descent into a proxy war if the multinational mission there fails. This scenario would lead Pakistan to pursue its national security in ways that could further impact on regional order.

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Conflating them—through the shorthand of 'Af-Pak' or by approaching them as a single foreign policy conundrum—creates three barriers to achieving our interests.

First, although our separate interests in Pakistan and Afghanistan are somewhat interactive, the benefit of linking the two countries to guide Australian policy formulation is minimal. Pakistan's future is not entirely dependent on the outcome in Afghanistan, and vice versa. Stephen Biddle highlights that Afghanistan's influence over Pakistan's future is incomplete and indirect.<sup>4</sup> If there is success in stabilising Afghanistan, it would not necessarily lead to best-case scenarios for Pakistan.

Given the two countries' distinct challenges, if we frame them as one problem set, we will influence neither.<sup>5</sup> Afghanistan is a fragile state that, despite the planned drawdown of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) combat troops in 2014, will still require direct international support to bolster security (and political) institutions over the long term. Pakistan, on the other hand, for all its bureaucratic flaws and economic decline, is not a 'fragile' state like Afghanistan. Its civilian government is weak but its military and intelligence agencies are strong. It has an independently functioning, even if problematic, political and security architecture with which Australia can engage. Critically, this will need to be done indirectly, in a way that is not seen to be imposed from the outside—a very different policy

proposition from the direct approach needed in Afghanistan.

Second, the Af–Pak rationale is a weak and unpersuasive case for Australia’s continued presence in Afghanistan, which makes it difficult to sustain public support for effort there or in Pakistan. This difficulty will become even more acute when Australia announces a drawdown plan for Afghanistan. Ultimately, the main security interest in Afghanistan is to prevent it reverting to a strategic vacuum filled with proxy war. The result would be Pakistan continuing to pursue its national security in a destabilising way, at the cost of regional order.

Third, the Af–Pak rationale overstates the significance of Afghanistan relative to Pakistan in the future of South Asia. It is understandable that Australia has focused on operational imperatives in Afghanistan, which has also involved appeals to short-term support from the public, yet this confuses the explanation of our long-term interests. At best, an Af–Pak concept implies we should give each country equal priority. At worst, it inverts the real hierarchy of our interests by focusing primarily on Afghanistan, framing Pakistan as merely the means by which to affect Afghanistan. For example, Prime Minister Julia Gillard in her October 2010 parliamentary speech continued what has been a bipartisan approach: ‘Stability in Pakistan ... is essential to stability in Afghanistan.’<sup>6</sup>

Instead, Australia needs to formulate and articulate a Pakistan-centric approach to the region.<sup>7</sup> Pakistan’s stability will remain at the core of Australia’s long-term strategic interests in South Asia—well beyond the war in Afghanistan.

### *Untangling the Af–Pak rationale*

The Australian Government outlines two national interests in Afghanistan: ‘to make sure that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for terrorists, a place where

attacks on us and our allies begin’; and ‘to stand firmly by our alliance commitment to the United States’.<sup>8</sup>

A useful way to test assumptions is to consider a future in which stabilisation efforts fail in Afghanistan. The result would be Afghanistan’s descent into a proxy war: neither sufficient numbers of low- to mid-level insurgents are ‘reintegrated’, nor enough Afghan Taliban leaders are compelled to negotiate. Domestic pressure sees the US transition from ‘light’ counterinsurgency to a narrower counterterrorism mission<sup>9</sup> on both sides of the Afghanistan–Pakistan border.<sup>10</sup>

With support from India, Iran, Russia, Europe and the US, the Pashtun-led Afghan government (and Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara militias) would go up against Pashtun-led Afghan Taliban insurgents,<sup>11</sup> the latter supported by Pakistan’s military and funded by Saudi backers.<sup>12</sup> Southern and eastern Afghanistan would be secured as Afghan Taliban strongholds that periodically contest control of Kabul.

To decide how bad this would be for Australia, we need to focus on possible impacts on international order. Stephen Biddle eloquently argues for the US to acknowledge something similar:

The US has many aspirations for Afghanistan ... [that it be] ruled in accordance with the will of the governed ... to see minority and women’s rights respected ... it’s people prosperous. But while we surely wish these things for any state, we do not ordinarily wage war to bring them about. The US national security interests that might warrant war to achieve here are much narrower.<sup>13</sup>

As the next sections highlight, the consequences of failure have mostly been overstated, although there are a few legitimate Australian interests to safeguard (see next two boxes).

**What's not at stake**

- Afghanistan is unlikely to become a safe haven for al-Qaeda.
- There would be no significant increased risk of al-Qaeda led global terrorist threats against Australia or our allies' homelands.
- There would be no significant increased risk of terrorist threats to Pakistan.

**1. Afghanistan unlikely to become a safe haven**

According to the Australian Government:

If the insurgency in Afghanistan were to succeed ... then Afghanistan could once again become a safe haven for terrorists. Al-Qa'ida's ability to recruit, indoctrinate, train, plan, finance and conspire to kill would be far greater than it is today ...<sup>14</sup>

But the proxy war scenario would not result in a safe haven for al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, as was the case prior to 2001, for two reasons.

First, the Afghan Taliban would be unlikely to welcome an al-Qaeda presence. The last time they protected al-Qaeda leaders in Afghan territory, their government was toppled. The Afghan Taliban and al-Qaeda relationship was always a marriage of convenience.<sup>15</sup> There are fundamental conflicts between al-Qaeda's transnational terrorist agenda and the Afghan Taliban's localised movement. Most groups participating in the insurgency are parochial, have local goals and, while seeking to kill Westerners in Afghanistan, are not motivated to hunt them globally.<sup>16</sup> The foreign military presence in Afghanistan has increased cooperation between the normally fractious tribal groups, who want autonomy from what they perceive as a corrupt central government.<sup>17</sup>

Second, even if the US transitions to a counterterrorism mission, it would still exert enough pressure on al-Qaeda in South Asia (and globally) to prevent it from once

again posing a significant threat to the US and its allies' homelands. At a minimum, this would prevent the re-establishment of major terrorist training infrastructure and a wholesale return of al-Qaeda to Afghanistan. Internationally, countries, including Australia, would also probably reinvigorate their respective domestic counterterrorism measures. The cumulative result: al-Qaeda's global reach from the Afghanistan-Pakistan borderlands would remain limited.

**2. Global, al-Qaeda led terrorist threats unlikely to increase**

Proxy war would not significantly change the current trajectory of the global jihadist movement. Terrorist threats to Australia and its allies have devolved beyond attacks directed by al-Qaeda leaders. It is now a more fluid, home-grown 'leaderless jihad' that often carries out attacks in the name of al-Qaeda but has no connection to it.<sup>18</sup> The calibre of terrorists has degraded, with less effective operations on US and European soil, despite increased attempts.<sup>19</sup> Homeland security is now the main game, particularly involving self-selected volunteers travelling to Pakistan for training.<sup>20</sup> Failure in Afghanistan would probably revitalise elements of the global jihadist movement, but it would not portend an influx of recruits from around the world into Afghanistan. More likely, there would be a spike in attempted attacks in allied homelands by home-grown extremists inspired by, but not operationally connected to, al-Qaeda's network.

**3. Terrorist threats to Pakistan unlikely to increase**

The proxy war scenario would be unlikely to increase significantly the militant and terrorist threat to Pakistan's stability. It probably wouldn't, as some commentators suggest, prompt an amalgamation of the Afghan Taliban and Pakistan Taliban against the Pakistani state.<sup>21</sup> The Afghan Taliban would be overwhelmingly preoccupied with



their main priority of fighting for strongholds in Afghanistan. More importantly, they are unlikely to turn against their historical ally, the Pakistani military—which the Pakistan Taliban target.

Failure in Afghanistan would be unlikely to alter significantly the increasingly coordinated threat that has spread from Pakistan's tribal areas to its urban centres east of the Indus River. A spectrum of radical groups have been working together<sup>22</sup> to target Pakistan government and international interests. The trajectory of this diffuse trend is difficult to predict because of the number of different actors involved. Proxy war in Afghanistan would add new drivers and dampeners to this trend. But overall, it probably would not significantly increase or diminish terrorism trends in Pakistan.

#### What is at stake

- Pakistan would almost certainly place greater 'value' on its militant and terrorist proxies to pursue regional interests.
- The risk of another war between Pakistan and India would increase.
- The risk of an adversarial relationship forming between Pakistan and the US would increase.

#### 4. The effects on Pakistan: reinforcing militant proxies

Pakistan is an insecure state that tends to assess its national security in zero-sum games, which encourages destabilising security measures—destabilising for itself, its neighbours and the international community.<sup>23</sup> Pakistani strategists believe



Pakistan Air Force cadets march at the mausoleum of the country's founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah in Karachi on 6 September 2011 to mark the country's Defence Day. © Rizwan Tabassum/AFP via AAP.

the country requires unconventional forces and a nuclear deterrent to offset India's conventional military and industrial superiority.<sup>24</sup> Pakistan views Afghan President Hamid Karzai as sympathetic to India, a situation that Pakistan perceives as threatening to its national security interests.<sup>25</sup>

With an eye on the end game in Afghanistan, the Pakistani military needs to be persuaded it has a stake in a political settlement that addresses its genuine security concerns. Failure in Afghanistan would redouble Pakistan's support of the Afghan-led insurgency and its use of militancy and terrorism as a foreign policy tool would be reinforced—posing a further threat to regional and international order. Shaping a more positive future for Pakistan is possible, necessary<sup>26</sup> and, ultimately, what is most at stake in Afghanistan.

### 5. Increased risk of another India–Pakistan war

Proxy war in Afghanistan would almost certainly increase the risk of strategic miscalculation between Pakistan and India.<sup>27</sup> A major terrorist attack on India emanating from Pakistan is a medium-term probability and<sup>28</sup>, under pressure from its domestic constituents, the Indian Government would consider responding militarily. Pakistan's ability to recover from another war with India is questionable.<sup>29</sup> There is a small possibility that India and Pakistan could stumble into a nuclear exchange. The result would be devastating for India and probably terminal for Pakistan.<sup>30</sup>

To the extent that Australia benefits from a prosperous India, we should care about avoiding scenarios that inflame the adversarial India–Pakistan relationship.<sup>31</sup> Australia has an interest in India's potential as an Asian balancer, global security provider and engine of the world economy.<sup>32</sup> A fourth India–Pakistan war that might escalate to the nuclear level is a low-probability, high-consequence scenario worth helping to mitigate.

### 6. Increased risk of US–Pakistan confrontation

Proxy war in Afghanistan would further increase the likelihood of a confrontational US–Pakistan relationship. Diverging US and Pakistani interests have never been so stark. In 2011, the September attack on the US embassy in Kabul, and the US killing of Osama bin Laden saw the US openly question Pakistan over its links to the Haqqani and al-Qaeda networks. A more worrying scenario is one in which the US and Pakistan shift from engagement, to containment, and possibly to outright opposition.<sup>33</sup>

Reliance on Pakistani territory to transit military supplies to Afghanistan would become less pressing as the US shifts to a counterterrorism mission. These developments would reduce resilience in the bilateral relationship. Although a low probability, a mass casualty or WMD terrorist attack on the US homeland, linked to Pakistan, could prompt US military action. Pakistan already perceives a threatening alignment between the US and India; its sponsorship of proxies could inadvertently bring forth this nightmare. How a nuclear-armed Pakistan would handle its national security in light of an estranged relationship with the US and its allies is unknown. Clearly, this is a worst-case scenario that we should try to avoid.

#### *Why Pakistan matters*

Stability in Pakistan will remain central to the international community's interests in South Asia, well beyond the war in Afghanistan. From its size to its relationship with India, Pakistan is important for several reasons. Ominously, Pakistan could negatively impact South Asia's stability or international order in a number of ways.<sup>34</sup>

Stable India–Pakistan relations are a concern for Australia. A confident and stable Pakistan—whose actions are not exclusively determined by its sometimes legitimate, but often paranoid, fears about India—is

important for stability, not least because of Australia's need for positive relations with India. Armed confrontation or, in the worst-case scenario, a nuclear exchange would affect stability throughout the Asia–Pacific and Middle East, including the Indian Ocean, which is vital for the global (and Australia's) economy.

The most likely near-term future is a Pakistan that muddles along, neither failing outright nor managing to strike a path of stability and broad-based economic development.<sup>35</sup> It could become an authoritarian, praetorian state under direction from military and intelligence agencies.<sup>36</sup> While unlikely, it could eventually become a nuclear-armed failing state held together by the sinews of the army, provided the army itself remained coherent.<sup>37</sup> Or, over time, Pakistan could become an increasingly Islamist or even theocratic state.<sup>38</sup> In a different direction, Pakistan could break along ethnic fissures<sup>39</sup> or fail to resurrect itself after a devastating war with India.<sup>40</sup>

The dilemma is that all of these 'futures' mean more instability inside and outside Pakistan in the near term and long term.<sup>41</sup> Efforts are

#### Pakistan's geopolitical significance

- Occupies an important piece of geostrategic real estate—at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East, and close to an artery of global energy supply.
- Remains locked in a low-intensity conflict with its nuclear-armed neighbour, India.
- Continues to explore an expansionary nuclear weapons program.
- Prone to using destabilising methods, such as militancy and terrorism, to pursue its national security.
- Home to approximately 173 million people, with an expected youth bulge in the future.

needed to reduce the respective likelihoods of their occurrence. The spillover effects of Pakistan's problems would have unpredictable second and third order effects that largely defy containment. A forward-looking Australian posture suggests support for the best-case outcome in Pakistan: a viable, stable state.



Pakistani 'Levi' border force personnel (black uniform) and Afghan border police guard check points at Ghaki pass bordering Afghanistan's Kunar province, at the Afghan border in Bajaur tribal region in Pakistan on 16 June 2011. © HANIFULLAH KHAN/epa/Corbis



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There are no guarantees that Australian investment to influence Pakistan's trajectory will achieve our interests. Nevertheless, the big impact of those alternative futures for Pakistan should encourage us to do what we can to maximise the benefits of our limited leverage. The alternative is a reactive posture that would relegate Australia to the role of observer and passive receiver of the ripple effects of Pakistan's struggle to find itself.

### Identifying our niches

Australia is not a major player shaping the international community's interests in Pakistan. But we can contribute by fostering security at the margins because we are viewed as having less of an 'agenda' or political baggage than, for example, the US or the UK.<sup>42</sup>

Australia's special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan, Ric Smith, points to economic reform as the fundamental barrier to stability and prosperity in Pakistan: its economy cannot produce enough broad-based growth or employment opportunities. Mr Smith also warns that Australia's relatively friendly access to the Pakistani Government should not be confused with any significant influence over the country's policies.<sup>43</sup> So how can Australia support stability in Pakistan?

*The peripheries of Pakistan are central to its instability*

Australia should shift its practical actions to peripheral geographic areas to engage with Pakistan's major zones of instability. The most important of these are Pakistan's border areas with Afghanistan: Balochistan

province, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province (KPK) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

Throughout history, large swathes of these areas have been beyond the control of external powers and, more recently, the central governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>44</sup> They have long been identified as incubators and theatres of serious transnational security challenges, with impacts felt regionally and globally. Non-state actors—criminal, terrorist, insurgent—have exploited this undergoverned space for financial, ideological and political gains. Mistrust has festered on both sides of the border and each state has shown a willingness to offer sanctuary to the other's opponents.<sup>45</sup>

Balochistan has around 40% of Pakistan's territory, 11% of its population<sup>46</sup>, significant natural resources and pockets of instability. It hosts one of the world's great narcotics super-highways, at least two cross-border insurgencies, a people-smuggling hub and a range of extremist religious groups.

KPK has been in recovery mode from counterinsurgency operations over the past two years and the 2010 torrential floods. It has been identified by Islamabad as a priority area for development assistance and, encouragingly, it has demonstrated potential for coherent provincial governance. KPK is also an important buffer between FATA and the rest of Pakistan—a 'frontier to the frontier'.

FATA is not a ripe target for meaningful Australian engagement. It is the epicentre of the cross-border insurgency and directly accessible only to Pakistan's military, paramilitaries and tribal levy forces. Unlike KPK and Balochistan, FATA sits outside Pakistan's provincial federation and is overseen by political agents who work with tribal leaders and report to Islamabad.



Figure 1: Border areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan



Influencing FATA is therefore an improbable task for Australia, and one being shouldered by the US and the UK.

#### *Community security is our best opportunity*

An overview of Australia's current assistance reveals a considerable gap between our interests and our engagement. Insecurity in these areas not only directly threatens our interest in Pakistan's stability but also inhibits the effective delivery of all other assistance we might offer. Tellingly, insecurity constrains the movement of Australian officials around

Pakistan, reducing our situational awareness and opportunities to engage strongly on our interests. Yet, no Australian department is directly attempting to improve security at the local level in Balochistan and KPK.

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Australia has recently strengthened our bilateral defence relationship with Pakistan. But our defence engagement only plays a small role in professionalising the Pakistani military through exchanges and scholarships—it does not directly contribute to improving security at the local level. To AusAID's credit it has directed some programs to Pakistan's border regions, recognising that the record of intervention there, although experiencing its share of failures, nevertheless warrants engagement rather than neglect. But while our aid program to Pakistan—Australia's fifth-largest—describes stability as its goal, it does not support any rule of law or stabilisation work. Instead, the program focuses on poverty reduction and development through education, governance, health, agriculture and humanitarian assistance.<sup>47</sup> Nobody knows if the latter has supported the former.

The Australian Federal Police's (AFP) budget and direction in Pakistan are decided in Canberra and tasked to the post in Islamabad.<sup>48</sup> The team in Islamabad focuses on transnational crime and engages, primarily at the federal level, with thirteen different agencies.<sup>49</sup> To date, Australia has focused on providing equipment and training to build specialised capacities such as forensics (linked to counterterrorism objectives), counter-narcotics, and countering people smuggling and money laundering. Operationally, the emphasis is on narcotics and people smuggling.<sup>50</sup>

It's not clear how current AFP activities help to achieve Australia's interest in supporting Pakistan's long-term stability—an important part of which is improving security at the local level. For example, our intention to provide training and equipment to Pakistan's forensic labs runs up against two big problems. First, meaningful impacts are unlikely unless a holistic approach is taken, including supporting law enforcement

personnel to collect evidence, forensic labs to process evidence, and district prosecutors to use evidence to secure convictions. Second, the US, the UK and the EU are already active in forensic capacity building. Thus, the burdens of coordination are likely to exceed the marginal value of Australia pursuing the same field of engagement.

Our focus on people smuggling and money laundering is only marginally related to our strategic interest in helping to stabilise Pakistan. Those types of organised crime result, in part, from a vacuum in law enforcement capacity at the local level. Therefore, instead of trying to help Pakistan counter specialised crime types at the federal level, a more direct approach would be to target security at the community level. This would help minimise the space in which organised crime groups operate.

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While Pakistan faces a number of development challenges, the country's deteriorating community security picture is alarming. Better law enforcement and judicial services would create an environment in which other basic services could more effectively be delivered. Rather than dividing policing support resources across thirteen law enforcement agencies, we should concentrate on provincial police and their direct impact on community security. Asked about the effects of security on his small business in Balochistan, Gul Mohammad replied:

There is a general despair, as we close our business before sunset and rush to our homes. The routes, even those in the middle of the town, are unsafe; the police force commonly reaches the spot of

incidents after loss to lives and properties is already made ... there is a constant fear of insecurity both from terrorists and our ineffective police force. This constant fear has destroyed our business as well as development activities.<sup>51</sup>

Many Pakistani communities have traditionally relied on informal practices of law and justice. The most famous examples are among the tribes of FATA, but other examples include the role of *sardars* (chiefs) and *dastoor-e-kalat* ('Qalat law') in Balochistan. A number of positive and negative trends in these societies are breaking down informal justice systems.

Only a professional and service-orientated police force—working with local administrations, communities and the judiciary—can provide long-term security for the country.<sup>52</sup> Pakistan's police forces are the first responders and primary preventers of crime that affects the lives of ordinary citizens. An effective police force that delivers a real *and* perceived sense of community security is also an important driver of development. Improved public safety is key to building the trust of local communities.<sup>53</sup>

Reflecting on the problems that drove him from Swat, one teacher suggested:

Really the people and the police officers, they need to be closer and [for there to be] real care by police for their own villages.<sup>54</sup>

Well-documented legal and structural factors hinder effective policing in Pakistan.<sup>55</sup> There is consensus that Pakistan's provincial police forces are ill-equipped, undertrained, politicised and corrupt. Their operational effectiveness is generally low and worryingly so, relative to the security environment. In Balochistan, one NGO worker observed:

The law enforcement agencies are mainly composed of local people who are reluctant to openly face the trouble makers, neglect their duties due

to pressure ... [and only] in rare cases come out to help and protect people.<sup>56</sup>

Pakistan's *Police Order 2002* inserted norms on democratic policing into law. It mandated that police be professional, service-oriented, and accountable to the people. But implementation of the order has been ad hoc and erratic. Some provincial leaders and police personnel resented intrusion into what they viewed as a matter of provincial concern. Many perceived the order as a cover for centralised control over lower levels of government. The result has been several amendments to the order, which have wound back some of its most progressive elements. Moreover, recent constitutional amendments have devolved greater control over law and justice to the provinces, which is generating a more fragmented patchwork of local arrangements.

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To summarise, local-level alienation and community insecurity affects Pakistan's stability—which, in turn, runs counter to Australia's interests. Particularly important in generating transnational threats are Pakistan's geographic peripheries. But, our current assistance does not address community insecurity directly. To be clear, there are likely to be diffuse benefits to Pakistan from our development assistance program. There are also narrow benefits to Australia from focusing on people smuggling and narcotics in our law enforcement relationships. However, between those two levels we are missing a strategy that aligns our long-term interests in Pakistan's stability with more substantive opportunities to pursue them.

Finding gaps in bilateral development assistance is challenging, partly because it's a competitive marketplace of ideas. Nevertheless, the snapshot<sup>57</sup> of other countries' assistance on policing provided below reveals niches that Australia could target, and which could generate disproportionate benefits from our limited leverage. Relative to people smuggling, money laundering and counter-narcotics, a practical emphasis on improving community security would more closely align with our priority of supporting Pakistan's stability. If we adopt a strategy that aligns our programming more tightly with our strategic interests in reducing instability, policing would be an important target for us. The next section provides suggestions on how to implement this strategy.

## Implementation: how to proceed

### *Policing for stability in Pakistan*

Table 1 provides a snapshot of current assistance to police in KPK and Balochistan. Most international assistance focuses on specialised capacities such as crime-scene investigation, counter-IED assistance and the provision of training to elite forces. There is no substantive program in KPK or Balochistan that prioritises the development of trust between police and communities<sup>58</sup>, or the related challenge of improving basic police training for low- to mid-rank personnel.

Australia can help mend the frayed social contract between communities and the Pakistani state by fostering better citizen-police relationships and improving conventional police capacity at the district level. Three practical objectives for Australia's assistance should be to:

- strengthen civilian oversight of police
- strengthen community policing
- improve training for lower police ranks.

Those three recommendations can be split into a two-pronged approach for implementation. The first two recommendations emphasise bottom-up entry points for assistance. This means helping to build alternative centres of influence so that civil society and local communities can support police improvement. The third recommendation is a top-down approach and requires direct involvement with government stakeholders to bring about reform. It would, however, still require an operational shift in Australia's engagement from the centre to the periphery, by engaging provincial governments and targeting the community-facing elements of their police forces (lower ranks). In relation to KPK, these activities directly align with Pakistan's Post Crisis Needs Assessment, which explicitly references the need for all three of these recommendations.<sup>59</sup>

At present, the majority of Balochistan's territory is policed by local tribal levies rather than the provincial police. This therefore limits the applicability of recommendations one and two. In Balochistan, Australia should therefore focus on recommendation three, which would help build security in police-designated urban centres. In KPK, Australia can pursue all three recommendations. An important constraint to the direct involvement of Australian officials in recommendations one and two is the security risk associated with working with local and remote communities and police for long periods in the field. This may require the Australian High Commission in Islamabad to manage local or international implementing partner/s to carry out the work. Either way, new or reallocated funds would be needed and Canberra would need to decide on a departmental division of labour, likely to involve the AFP and possibly AusAID.<sup>60</sup>



**Table 1: Snapshot of current international assistance to Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan police**

Country	General	Specialist
US	Providing some police infrastructure (KPK)	Providing infrastructure, training and protective equipment (counterterrorism focused), including body armour, helmets, armoured personnel carriers and other specialist equipment (KPK and Balochistan)
	Funding the rollout of essential operating equipment for police (KPK)	Providing training and protective equipment on bomb disposal (US Anti-Terrorism Assistance programme – national)
	Undertaking work on women in policing (KPK)	Providing support to the National Forensic Science Laboratory (federal)
UK	Budget support to the KPK police	Delivering counter-IED training and equipment (KPK)
		Delivering crime scene preservation training and equipment (KPK)
EU	Funding joint police–prosecutor training on investigations (KPK)	Providing training on investigations, including crime-scene investigation, and terrorism cases (KPK)
	Funding development of a police media strategy; delivering training to police on working with media (KPK)	
United Nations Development Programme	Providing police infrastructure in Malakand (KPK)	
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	Providing computer-based training centres to police lines, headquarters, and Police Training College Hangu (KPK and Balochistan)	Providing computer-based training, including specialist modules on human trafficking and money laundering (national)
	Providing mobility equipment (bicycles) to police (KPK and Balochistan)	Providing training in and equipment for crime-scene investigation (KPK and Balochistan)
	Providing equipment (vehicles, motorbikes and office furnishings) and infrastructure to flood-affected police lines and police stations (KPK and Balochistan)	

**Strengthen civilian oversight of police**

Whether directly or through an implementing partner, Australia should investigate formal and informal mechanisms to strengthen civilian oversight of police. In Pakistan, where macro-level, top-down reforms of police have stalled, strengthening civilian oversight is an alternative means to pursuing change. Civil society can improve community engagement and influence political will by monitoring and publicising, and liaising constructively with authorities on, the need for change.

*Police Order 2002* created accountability mechanisms at district, provincial and national levels. District and provincial public safety and police complaints commissions were designed to protect citizens from police excesses and protect police from political interference.<sup>61</sup> Yet, provincial governments have not enabled or supported many of those.<sup>62</sup> Where established, they have had little impact due to a lack of resources; their recommendatory, non-binding powers; and their compromised independence, as

provincial governments have changed their composition.<sup>63</sup> Encouragingly, the former head of KPK police (the Provincial Police Officer—PPO), has expressed openness to improving police accountability in relation to complaints from the public.<sup>64</sup>

Another formal mechanism for civilian oversight is citizen–police liaison committees (CPLCs). *Police Order 2002* empowered provincial governments to establish CPLCs as ‘voluntary, self-financing and autonomous bodies’ to help provincial public safety and police complaints commissions to liaise with citizens and police.<sup>65</sup> While CPLCs have been established in a few districts in Pakistan, most are yet to be created.<sup>66</sup> CPLCs have the potential to foster trust between police and communities, provided they are adequately recognised, autonomous and sufficiently resourced.<sup>67</sup> Problematically, the CPLCs established thus far primarily consist of elites, negating their very *raison d’être*.<sup>68</sup> The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Representative for Pakistan also highlighted this concern, noting that CPLCs would need to be safeguarded against being used to play out local politics.<sup>69</sup>

Like any development assistance, hurdles would need to be overcome if Australia were to support district and provincial governments in KPK, along with local communities, to develop functional district and provincial commissions or CPLCs. But for the international community, these mechanisms remain an attractive and underexplored option that may help to shape community security in Pakistan. If pursuing these formal mechanisms is not feasible, then Australia should support civil society to lobby police for an alternative means of improving civilian oversight.

### Strengthen community policing

Australia should design, develop and undertake community policing pilots. KPK is seeking to re-establish law and order while in a state of transition. At present, policing relies on force, and operational priorities are perceived as paramount. Nevertheless, more effective public security will not occur until cooperation between police and the communities they serve is stronger. Community policing engages the public in a partnership approach to identify, respond to, and solve problems that affect local neighbourhoods. For communities, community policing will empower them to shape police priorities and approaches at the local level. For police, it will help mitigate their paramilitary image and, through building trust, eventually lead to improved intelligence collection and crime reporting. Critically, it would help shift police towards a proactive, rather than reactive, posture. This would narrow the governance gap being filled by non-state and organised crime groups.

Community policing pilots should also focus on building local community and/or civil society participation. If a small-scale pilot in KPK is successful, it would open opportunities for replication elsewhere—an ideal outcome for a middle power like Australia. The former PPO of KPK expressed a keen interest in community policing pilots<sup>70</sup>; and the AFP described it as a ‘good idea’, provided it was well researched first.<sup>71</sup>

To ensure Western concepts of community policing are not imposed, the design phase should focus strongly on community outreach. The purpose would be twofold: to understand community perceptions of crime and security; and to map informal or alternative justice systems that might interact with community policing. Moreover, the design phase would bring definition

and a tangible model to the term ‘community policing’, which is often used as a catch-all without adaptation to local realities.

### **Support training for lower ranks**

Australia should implement or support a training needs assessment (TNA) of the key police training institutions in KPK and Balochistan—police training colleges in Hangu and Quetta, respectively. Australia should then fund recommendations made by the TNA, focusing where possible on improving the training curriculum.

Australia may take inspiration from the US, which has completed a TNA and is updating the curriculum at the National Police Academy Islamabad (responsible for training the senior police officer cadre). But, so far, no international donor is pursuing TNAs at provincial police colleges, which train low- to mid-level police. Lower rank personnel are the majority (90%) of the police’s total manpower, and have the most opportunities to connect the citizenry and state. Thus, Australia would be occupying a less crowded niche, helping to build a bridge between the senior cadre, their officers in the field and, most importantly, the community.

Commissioning a TNA and funding its recommendations is a practical way to ensure Australia’s expenditure on training is systematic and based on strong evidence. Australian resources are unlikely to cover all TNA recommendations; therefore, the AFP should share the findings with other partners. The impact could be substantial, given that these police colleges train thousands of recruits each year. This would be more cost-effective than our current approach of sending an assortment of higher ranking police personnel overseas for training. If necessary, this direct assistance should be used as leverage to encourage police participation in recommendations one and two.

## **Conclusion**

The Australian Government should formulate a new narrative for their interests—one that reflects a Pakistan-centric approach to the region. In relation to the war in Afghanistan, the narrative should continue to acknowledge our alliance commitments but de-emphasise the global terrorist threat rhetoric. Primarily, it should highlight the dangers of proxy war, the consequences on Pakistan’s national security interests and the impacts of these on regional and international order.

Most importantly, Australia should stress the importance of Pakistan’s future, regardless of what happens in Afghanistan. By shifting the focus to improving stability in Pakistan’s peripheries, Australia will find feasible opportunities for engagement that more directly align with our interests.

Promoting community security—by supporting civilian oversight of police, community policing pilots, and training for low-rank personnel—is a niche that we can fill. This would create a coherent framework from our macro-level interests down to micro-level achievements.

## Notes

- 1 Senator John Faulkner, Speech by the Minister for Defence at Lowy Institute, July 2010, Department of Defence, <http://www.defence.gov.au/minister/g2tpl.cfm?CurrentId=10627>. In full: 'I disagree with any argument that Afghanistan [relative to Pakistan] is a side show...Afghanistan and Pakistan are inextricably linked'.
- 2 In March 2009 President Obama announced a new strategy which, for the first time, argued that the futures of Afghanistan and Pakistan were 'inextricably linked'. The stated goal, has been to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al-Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and to prevent their return to either country. Obama's Af-Pak strategy represented a stark departure from the Bush administration's strategic narrative—which pivoted on 'the war on terror' and, in terms of South Asia, was exclusively Afghanistan-centric. For its part, the Australian Government has piggy-backed the American 'Af-Pak' rationale to justify our civilian and military presence in Afghanistan.
- 3 Christine Fair, Keith Crane, Christopher Chivvis, Samir Puri and Michael Spirtas, *Pakistan: Can the United States Secure an insecure state?*, RAND, 2010.
- 4 Stephen Biddle, 'Is it worth it: The difficult case for war in Afghanistan', *The National Interest*, July–August 2009.
- 5 As a small but important example of problems with the 'Af-Pak' approach, the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan both hate the shorthand name. Neither responds positively to the implication that they are a 'continuum' or that any similar issues they share justify approaching them as a single entity. One Pakistani Foreign Affairs officer suggested that 'the economies, people and migrations (sic) of Australia and New Zealand have maybe the same similarity as Afghanistan and Pakistan. But I would not make progress if I tell them Pakistan will help solve their shared problems by creating an 'ANZAC Envoy' that will put them in a room together to talk about sensitive things.' Interview in Islamabad, October 2010.
- 6 Julia Gillard, *No safe haven, Prime Ministerial Statement*, House of Representatives, <http://www.pm.gov.au/press-office/no-safe-haven>, 19 October 2010.
- 7 See Daniel Markey, who argues the terminology should in fact be 'Pak-Af'. Daniel Markey, *A US strategy for Pakistan: Future Directions*; William Ruger, Chair of National Security, Economics Papers No. 4: *American foreign policy: Regional perspectives*, US Naval War College, May 2009. A similar argument is also made by Christine Fair who argues, '...Pakistan—not Afghanistan—is the epicenter of the most intense US national security interests including regional conventional and nuclear stability, terrorism, and nuclear proliferation.' Christine Fair, *The US strategy in Afghanistan: Impacts upon US interests in Pakistan*, Testimony to United States House of Representatives, Armed Services Committee, 5 November 2009.
- 8 Julia Gillard, *No safe haven, Prime Ministerial Statement*, House of Representatives, <http://www.pm.gov.au/press-office/no-safe-haven>, 19 October 2010.
- 9 Andrew Exum, *Afghanistan 2011: Three Scenarios*, Center for a New American Security, <http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/assessing-case-war-afghanistan/p20220>, October 2009.
- 10 Despite the current deterioration in US–Pakistan relations, the US would probably continue aerial and drone strikes against high value targets in Pakistan's border regions—albeit at a reduced tempo. Responding to domestic pressure, the Pakistani government would continue to deny allegations of being complicit in US violations of the country's sovereignty.
- 11 Steve Coll also analyses the likely consequence of a proxy war in Afghanistan. While this paper disagrees with some of his conclusions, it supports his description of which actors would support the Afghan government and Afghan Taliban respectively. Steve Coll, 'What if we fail in Afghanistan?' *The New Yorker*, <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/stevecoll/2009/11/what-if-we-fail-in-afghanistan.html> November 2009.
- 12 Andrew Exum, *Afghanistan 2011: Three Scenarios*, Center for a New American Security, <http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/assessing-case-war-afghanistan/p20220>, October 2009.
- 13 Stephen Biddle, *Assessing the case for war in Afghanistan*, Testimony to Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 16 September 2009.
- 14 Julia Gillard, *No safe haven, Prime Ministerial Statement*, House of Representatives, <http://www.pm.gov.au/press-office/no-safe-haven>, 19 October 2010.
- 15 Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn, *Separating the Taliban from al-Qaeda: The core of success in Afghanistan*, Center on International Cooperation, New York University, [http://www.cic.nyu.edu/afghanistan/docs/gregg\\_sep\\_tal\\_alqaeda.pdf](http://www.cic.nyu.edu/afghanistan/docs/gregg_sep_tal_alqaeda.pdf), February 2011.
- 16 Marc Sageman, *Confronting al-Qaeda – Understanding the threat in Afghanistan and beyond*, Testimony to Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 7 October 2009.
- 17 *ibid.*



- 18 *ibid.*
- 19 *ibid.*
- 20 *ibid.*
- 21 For analysis on the differences between the Afghan Taliban, Pakistan Taliban and other militant networks see Brian Fishman, *The battle for Pakistan: Militancy and conflict across the FATA and NWFP*, New America Foundation, <http://counterterrorism.newamerica.net/sites/newamerica.net/files/policydocs/fishman.pdf>, April 2010; Thomas Ruttig, *The other side: Dimensions of the Afghan insurgency; Causes, actors and approaches to 'talks'*. Afghanistan Analysts Network, <http://aan-afghanistan.com/uploads/200907%20AAN%20Report%20Ruttig%20-%20The%20Other%20Side.PDF>, July 2009; and Don Rassler, 'Al-Qaeda's Pakistan strategy', *CTC Sentinel*, Combating Terrorism Center West Point, vol. 2, no.6, June 2009.
- 22 For an overview on the nature of Pakistan's militant threat see International Crisis Group, 'Pakistan: The militant jihadi challenge', *Asia Report* no. 164, March 2009. According to the report, the Pakistan Taliban comprises a number of militant groups loosely united under the Deobandi Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). With its strongholds in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Pakistan Taliban attacks Pakistan Government and international targets, as well as Shias. But since 2009, their influence has expanded due to support from long-established Sunni extremist networks in the Punjab. Historically these Punjabi networks have been either sectarian (Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi) or Kashmir focused (Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Tayyaba). More recently, their agendas are now more fluid and overlapping reflecting a mix of local, regional and international jihads.
- 23 Christian D Brose and Daniel Twining, 'Our Pakistan problem: The nuclear armed, insurgent-plagued, swing state of South Asia', *The Weekly Standard*, vol. 14, no. 48, September 2009.
- 24 Steve Coll, *Afghanistan's impact on Pakistan*, Testimony to Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 1 October 2009.
- 25 For an in-depth analysis of how Pakistan and India (and other regional actors) perceive their respective and mostly competing interests in Afghanistan, see Ashley Tellis and Aroop Mukharji (editors), *Is a regional strategy viable in Afghanistan?* Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, [http://carnegieendowment.org/files/regional\\_approach.pdf](http://carnegieendowment.org/files/regional_approach.pdf), 2010.
- 26 Christian D Brose and Daniel Twining, 'Our Pakistan problem: The nuclear armed, insurgent-plagued, swing state of South Asia', *The Weekly Standard*, vol. 14, no. 48, September 2009.
- 27 Milton A Bearden, *The war in Afghanistan: The regional effects*, Statement to Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 1 October 2009. Steve Coll also analyses the likely consequence of a proxy war in Afghanistan. While this paper disagrees with his conclusions, it supports his argument that proxy war would increase the likelihood of war between India and Pakistan. Steve Coll, 'What if we fail in Afghanistan?' *The New Yorker*, <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/stevecoll/2009/11/what-if-we-fail-in-afghanistan.html> November 2009.
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- 29 Stephen Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan*, Brookings Institution Press, 2004.
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- 32 Dan Twining, 'The stakes in Afghanistan go well beyond Afghanistan', *Foreign Policy*, 30 September 2009. [http://shadow.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/09/30/the\\_stakes\\_of\\_afghanistan\\_go\\_well\\_beyond\\_afghanistan](http://shadow.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/09/30/the_stakes_of_afghanistan_go_well_beyond_afghanistan)
- 33 On the risks and potential costs of the US (and international community) pursuing a containment strategy towards Pakistan see Daniel Markey, *A US strategy for Pakistan: Future directions*; William Ruger, Chair of National Security, Economics Papers No. 4: *American foreign policy: Regional perspectives*, US Naval War College, May 2009; and Christine Fair, 'Time for Sober Realism: Renegotiating US Relations with Pakistan', *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 32 no. 2, pp. 149–172.
- 34 A number of strategists explore Pakistan's spectrum of futures, the best examples of which are Stephen Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington DC, 2004; and Jonathan Paris, *Prospects for Pakistan*, Legatum Institute, <http://www.li.com/attachments/ProspectsForPakistan.pdf>, January 2010.
- 35 Christine Fair et al., note 3, pp. xv.; and Jonathan Paris, *Prospects for Pakistan*, Legatum Institute, <http://www.li.com/attachments/ProspectsForPakistan.pdf>, January 2010.
- 36 *ibid.*

- 37 Christine Fair et al., note 3, pp. 75.; and Stephen Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan*, Brookings Institute Press, Washington DC, 2004.
- 38 Christine Fair et al., note 3, pp. 75.
- 39 For analysis on prospects for Pakistan's break-up, see Selig S Harrison, *Will Pakistan Break Up?*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, [http://carnegieendowment.org/files/o6o9\\_Remarks\\_Harrison.pdf](http://carnegieendowment.org/files/o6o9_Remarks_Harrison.pdf), 9 June 2009.
- 40 Christine Fair et al., note 3, pp. 75.; and Stephen Cohen, loc. cit.
- 41 Christine Fair et al., note 3.
- 42 Interview with Ric Smith, Canberra, September 2011.
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- 44 In the 1970s Afghanistan sheltered Baloch nationalists while Pakistan gave refuge and training to the mujahidin in the 1980s. Today, Pakistan accuses Afghanistan of harbouring malign Indian forces, while the Pakistan Army supports the Afghan Taliban-led insurgency against the Afghan government and ISAF forces. Jayshree Bajoria, *Backgrounder: The Afghan-Pakistani border*, Council of Foreign Relations, March 2009.
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- 47 AusAID, *Australia's approach to aid in Pakistan*, [http://www.usaid.gov.au/publications/pubout.cfm?ID=3924\\_9936\\_6506\\_4223\\_9903&Type=](http://www.usaid.gov.au/publications/pubout.cfm?ID=3924_9936_6506_4223_9903&Type=), December 2010.
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- 53 Asian Development Bank, European Union, World Bank, United Nations, and the Government of Pakistan, *Post Crisis Needs Assessment: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Federally Administered Tribal Areas*, Pakistan, September 2010, p. 61.
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- 56 Interview in Quetta, October 2011.
- 57 This table provides an overview of key activities currently being undertaken bilaterally by other countries in Pakistan. It is not intended as an exhaustive list of all past, present and planned assistance to Pakistan's provincial police forces. A telling indication of coordination problems is the difficulty of obtaining such overviews, a fact that many donor interviewees themselves highlighted.
- 58 A previous effort by the United Nations Development Programme to fund a local non-government organisation to encourage community-police engagement was reported as having mixed results, but no details were available. Separately, the US is currently conducting community policing pilots in Islamabad. Although there may be useful lessons for Australia from this, the model is unlikely to replicate directly to environments like KPK.
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- 60 Interview with Australian Federal Police, Australian High Commission, Islamabad, October 2011.
- 61 Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, *Feudal forces: Reform delayed: Moving from force to service in South Asian policing*, New Delhi, 2008.
- 62 *Ibid.*
- 63 *Ibid.*
- 64 Interview with KPK PPO, Central Police Office, Peshawar, November 2010.





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- 69 Interview with UNODC Country Representative, Islamabad, October 2011.
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## Acronyms and abbreviations

AFP	Australian Federal Police
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CPLCs	citizen-police liaison committees
EU	European Union
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
IED	improvised explosive device
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KPK	Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa
NGO	non-government organisation
PPO	Provincial Police Officer
TNA	training needs assessment
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WMD	weapons of mass destruction

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