

constituencies in which defying the law carried a moral badge of honour. This sets the internal NLM structural tensions and spectrum of attitudes on appropriate policy prescriptions firmly in context. Southall acknowledges both absolute and relative gains in socio-economic transformation in each country, while recognizing critical limitations.

What is the 'take home' message from this? That the transformation of global politics since the 1980s, accelerating in the 1990s, faced these NLMs with a more complex international environment which inevitably prescribed the agenda for state-societal transformation; that the initial conditions inherited from settler colonialism proved more long lasting and problematic than originally imagined. Southall reminds us of the conditioning factors of geography and history, but without excusing in any way each NLM's own limitations, policy choices and failings after independence—not least of which is the manipulations of struggle 'history'. I urge scholars and supporters of each country to read this important book, and to engage with its debates of common threads and crucial divergence.

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## **South Asia**

**Magnificent delusions: Pakistan, the United States, and an epic history of misunderstanding.** By **Hussain Haqqani**. New York: Public Affairs. 2013. 413pp. Index. £19.99. ISBN 978 1 61039 317 1. Available as e-book.

**No exit from Pakistan: America's tortured relationship with Islamabad.** By **Daniel Markey**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2013. 253pp. Index. Pb.: £18.99. ISBN 978 1 10762 359 0. Available as e-book.

**The warrior state: Pakistan in the contemporary world.** By **T. V. Paul**. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2014. 288pp. Index. £16.88. ISBN 978 0 19932 223 7. Available as e-book.

'The world needs us more than we need the world': this is a dictum that some now believe guides the conduct of Pakistan's governing classes. If so, it will come as a surprise to many accustomed to regarding Pakistan as the proverbial 'basket case' still heavily dependent on international aid for its survival. How, then, do we account for this counter-intuitive pronouncement and what justifies the perception that the international community has no choice but to keep Pakistan afloat, even as the country pursues its frequently ill-conceived agendas?

These questions lie at the heart of all three books under review. Each adopts a distinct approach and each offers a different explanation for enduring international concern about Pakistan. All agree, however, that, in contrast to some struggling African countries, humanitarian considerations can safely be ruled out. Instead, what is seen to drive the relationship between Pakistan and the global community, notably its most powerful actor—the United States—is cold-blooded calculation with international aid intended to gain leverage over Pakistan as a western ally or to rent the country's prime geostrategic location and in recent years to secure Pakistan's cooperation to guard against terrorist threats to western interests.

Such pragmatic arrangements between Pakistan and its mainly western benefactors are not new. Asked by the American journalist, Margaret Bourke-White, in August 1947 to comment on Pakistan's relations with the United States, the country's founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, drily observed: 'America needs Pakistan more than Pakistan needs America' (p. 8). The grounds for this extraordinary claim lay in Jinnah's estimation of Pakistan as 'the pivot of the world' (p.8–9) and a bulwark against the advance of Russia, the West's chief

adversary. Pakistani officials appeared to share these expectations, believing that 'surely America will give us loans to keep Russia from walking in' (p. 9).

These historical precedents are instructive and it is one of the strengths of Hussain Haqqani's polished analysis of US–Pakistani relations, *Magnificent delusions*, that it is well grounded in historical research, albeit much of it restricted to US archives. But what he lacks in Pakistani source material, Haqqani makes up for in vivid eye-witness accounts of the increasingly troubled relationship between Pakistan and America. Nevertheless, readers expecting any fresh revelations about his controversial tenure as Pakistan's ambassador to the United States, which ended with a slew of court cases charging Haqqani with acting against the interests of his country, will be disappointed. Neither the so-called 'Memogate affair' (which accused Haqqani of conniving with US officials to rein in Pakistan's military) nor the so-called 'Raymond Davis scandal' (which implicated Haqqani in helping extend a US spy network in Pakistan) receives detailed attention. On the other hand, anyone looking to understand the roots of Pakistan's dysfunctional relationship with its chief benefactor, the United States, will be handsomely rewarded.

Haqqani's fluid narration of US–Pakistan relations is built around one central premise: the fantasy of shared interests. From the outset the potential for mutual misunderstanding was vast. America and Pakistan were, in fact, the unlikeliest of allies—the one heralding the cause of democracy, the other fatally drawn to autocracy. But US Cold War imperatives and Pakistan's frantic quest for external support to counter the threat from India trumped any residual worries about fundamentally diverging interests.

For more than five decades, stretching from the 1950s to the present day, both sides cheated, lied and tricked their way through a relationship that was held together by the unrealistic expectation that US largess would transform Pakistan from an inveterate foe of India into a loyal ally of America. Events since 9/11 have made matters worse. The problem has been particularly acute in Afghanistan where differences between Pakistan and the United States turned ugly amid mutual recriminations of double-dealing and dishonesty. But these have only confirmed the untenable nature of this relationship. Haqqani is lucid about its prospects: 'To think that the United States would indefinitely provide economic and military assistance [to Pakistan] in return for partial support of US objectives is delusional. America must also overcome the fantasy that aid always translates into leverage' (p. 350).

Unfortunately these words are unlikely to cut much ice. As T. V. Paul succinctly demonstrates in *The warrior state*, foreign aid from major powers, including the United States, can always be relied on to pour into Pakistan. No matter how inefficient successive governments—Pakistan has one of the weakest tax regimes in the world—and no matter how damaging the consequences of foreign aid to Pakistan—much of it has been diverted to war rather than welfare—there seems to be no dearth of external benefactors ready to assist Pakistan. The question, then, is why—despite these entrenched flaws—does Pakistan still enjoy its status as one of the largest recipients of foreign aid.

The answer lies in what Paul labels as Pakistan's 'geo-strategic curse'—a condition he compares to the 'resource curse' that afflicts some oil-rich Gulf states. Lacking natural resources, Pakistan has been led instead to exploit its sensitive geostrategic location on the periphery of south central Asia, a site long known for the intersection of foreign interests. With a string of eager takers, led by the United States but also China, it was not long before Pakistan emerged as a classic rentier state living off the proceeds from external powers in pursuit of their particular geostrategic goals. The flow of 'easy money' proved to be intoxicating for Pakistan's ruling elites for whom the main problem was to make sure it

lasted. Help came in the form of Pakistan's 'warrior state', built on the foundations of the country's enduring conflict with India. Informed by 'a Hobbesian world-view with a religious coloration' (p. 24), it was judged to pose a mortal danger to the international community. Fear became the dominant discourse and the spectre of state failure, propelled by visions of jihadist violence and apocalyptic nuclear war, soon assumed centre stage. The notion that 'Pakistan was too important to fail' served as the abiding refrain, whistled by elites in Pakistan and echoed in western capitals.

Indeed, Daniel Markey's new book, *No exit from Pakistan*, serves as an illustration of the power of fear to shape western, especially US, policy towards Pakistan. While Markey is keen to avoid scaremongering, and seeks to distance himself from the popular image of Pakistan as a seething cauldron of angry jihadists waiting to train their guns against the West, he eventually succumbs to this view. His concern to offer a more multifaceted portrait of the 'many faces of Pakistan' (p. 29) inexorably gives way to a single narrative of fear, involving a fearsome Pakistan and a fearful America both locked in a hellish space with no exit.

A former US Secretary of State, George Shultz, is said once to have observed that hope is not a policy; nor is fear. To be fair, Markey acknowledges that 'fear is not a particularly firm foundation for partnership between nations' (p. 199). Yet it is fear that surfaces as the chief impetus for his preferred strategy of 'defensive insulation' against Pakistan, which would allow the United States 'to protect itself from Pakistan's terrorists, nuclear weapons and other possible dangers by erecting ... barriers around the Pakistani state' (p. 206).

Fear is not, of course, the only factor at play in this stern reformulation of US policy on Pakistan. Equally important is the tinge of American exasperation with Pakistan that runs through Markey's analysis. Although he labours hard to be even-handed by factoring in America's many misdemeanours in its treatment of Pakistan over the years, it is Pakistan's ungratefulness as a beneficiary of US largess that casts the longer shadow. Thus Pakistan's aid addiction is robustly, and rightly, condemned, although some readers may feel that those who peddle aid ought not to be absolved of all responsibility. That is why the real test of Markey's proposed strategy to ring-fence Pakistan may come to rest as much on Pakistan's supposed vulnerability to coercion as on America's political will to resist the temptation of subcontracting regional players such as Pakistan to extend US strategic objectives. So far there is little sign of either.

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## **East Asia and Pacific**

**Contestation and adaptation: the politics of national identity in China.** By Enze Han. New York: Oxford University Press. 2013. 224pp. Index. £47.99. ISBN 978 0 19 993629 8.

As part of its establishment of governing institutions in the 1950s, the Communist Party of China engaged ethnographers in a project to classify, or categorize, various 'ethnic groups' in the new People's Republic of China (PRC). The consequences of this have informed an important facet of identity in China ever since, with every citizen officially belonging to one of the 56 categories—one of which is the majority Han—which emerged from the 1950s project, created based on a mixture of the application of Soviet criteria for 'nationality' categorization and legacy notions from within China itself.

This has created fertile ground for studies of identity and its politics, particularly among scholars outside China (Chinese ethnography, or anthropology, lay dormant until the 1980s