

Between Allies and Enemies: Explaining the Volatility of the U.S. - Pakistan Relationship, 1947-2018

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Between Allies and Enemies: Explaining the Volatility of the U.S.-Pakistan Relationship, 1947-2018

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In March 1962, a smiling and waving Jackie Kennedy, sitting in an open top convertible alongside Pakistani President Muhammad Ayub Khan, slowly drove through the broad, tree-lined avenues of Lahore, the historic Punjab capital. The streets were lined with clapping admirers of the glamorous First Lady throwing handfuls of flower petals. Her unprecedented visit to Pakistan would continue into the mountains of the North-West Frontier Province. Packed crowds in the ancient lanes of Peshawar and at the historic Khyber Pass, the gateway to Afghanistan, greeted her with equal enthusiasm. One local tribesman even attempted to sacrifice a lamb in her honor. Reflecting the enthusiasm of his countrymen, President Ayub Khan would later remark that Pakistan had become the United States' "most allied ally in Asia."¹

Fast-forward forty-four years and another picture emerges.

In the same lanes of Peshawar where Mrs. Kennedy was met with warmth and hospitality, thousands of angry tribesmen marched in protest of an American airstrike the previous week on a nearby Pakistani village. The bombs' targets were suspected terrorists, but the explosion instead killed a dozen innocent civilians. The marching crowds fervently shouted "Death to America" and other anti-American slogans, rattling the market's old structures. Young men burned an effigy of President George W. Bush, with "Death to President Bush" scrawled in Urdu across the forehead of the figure engulfed in flames. Were the First Lady of the United States to pass through these streets today, it is clear that her reception would be very different.

This frustration and anger was equally prevalent on the American side. In January 2018, President Donald Trump, taking to his communication outlet of choice, tweeted, "The United States has foolishly given Pakistan more than 33 billion dollars in aid over the last 15 years, and they have given us nothing but lies & deceit, thinking of our leaders as fools. They give safe havens to the terrorists we hunt in Afghanistan, with little help. No more!"² For an American public bombarded by a never-ending news cycle, Trump's bombastic comments helped to put a spotlight on America's troubled relationship with this South Asian nation.

How are we to understand the dynamic nature of the U.S.-Pakistan relationship—moving from "most allied ally in Asia" to fervent anti-Americanism and accusations of "lies & deceit"? This *Policy Brief* will explain how both states have strategically used the other in pursuit of their

¹ Muhammad Ayub Khan, "The Pakistan-American Alliance," *Foreign Affairs*, January 1964; Muhammad Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 130.

² Donald Trump, @realDonaldTrump Twitter, January 1, 2018 (<https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/947802588174577664>).

often-competing national interests.³ The volatility of this relationship stems from the changing policy priorities of each state, shifting between periods of policy alignment and periods of policy disjuncture.

From Communism to Terrorism: The United States in South Asia

The United States' engagement with Pakistan has consistently been framed by broad international security paradigms—the Cold War and the War on Terror. Pakistan's role, in the American perspective, was to support and facilitate U.S. strategic objectives. This pragmatic relationship has, thus, risen and fallen according to the saliency of American security interests in the region. The varying levels of U.S. assistance to Pakistan demonstrate this pattern, as shown in Figure 1 below.

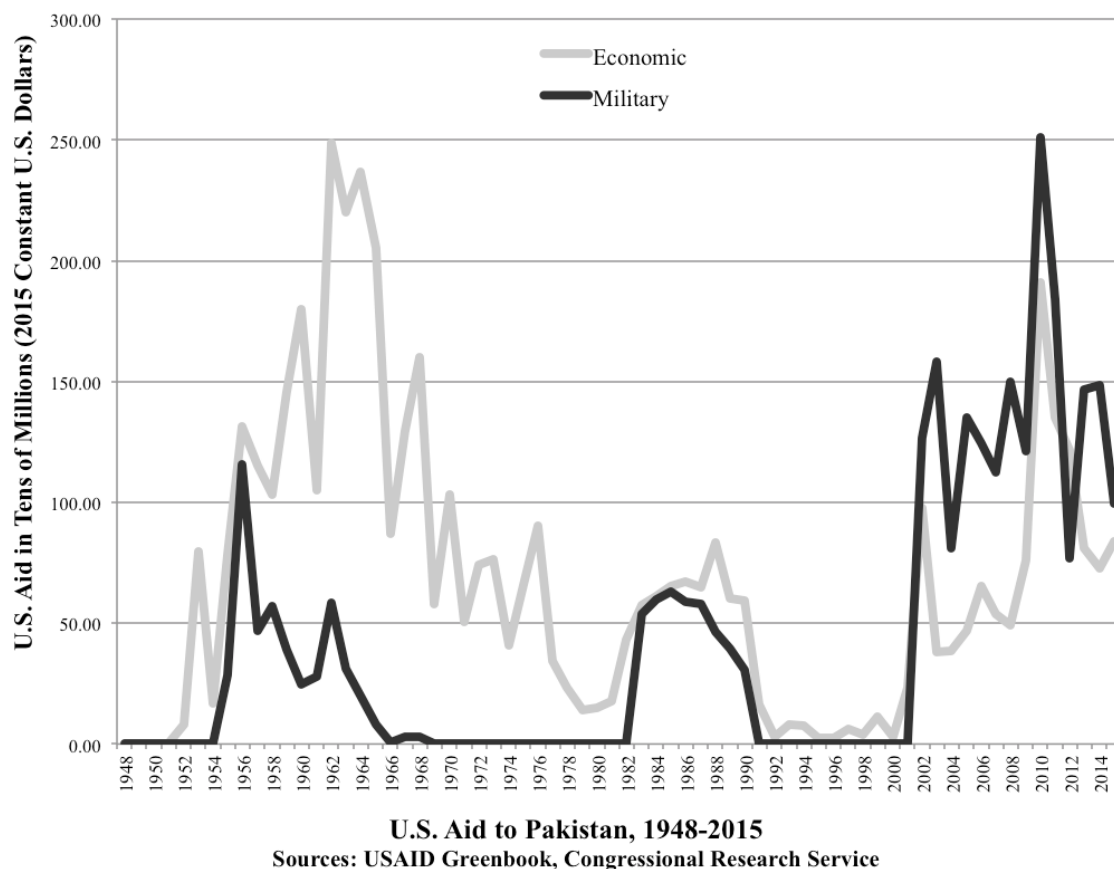


Figure 1. U.S. Economic and Military Aid to Pakistan, 1948-2015

During periods of high engagement in South Asia, whether a result of Soviet aggression or U.S. military operations, Pakistani support has been strategically and logistically vital. Therefore, the U.S. is willing to overlook points of contention, such as Pakistan's lack of democratic rule, military aggressiveness towards India, support of militant organizations, or

³ See Dennis Kux, *The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000: Disenchanted Allies* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Daniel S. Markey, *No Exit from Pakistan: America's Tortured Relationship with Islamabad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

nuclear weapons program. This support is often gained through high levels of economic and military assistance, increasing Pakistan's leverage over its stronger ally. During periods of low saliency for the U.S., on the other hand, these points of contention rise to the forefront of American concerns, serving as a justification and cover for American disengagement from the region.

The Cold War

After Partition in 1947, which split British India into the two states of Pakistan and India, the U.S. was initially content to let the U.K. take the lead in the region, seeing its struggle against the Soviet Union in Europe as its priority. With the 1947 Kashmir War, the U.S. was also concerned about escalating conflict in the Subcontinent, imposing an informal arms embargo on both India and Pakistan. President Truman however, began to take a more proactive foreign role under the Truman Doctrine, first introduced in March 1947 during a joint session of Congress. Through economic and financial assistance, this doctrine was meant to counter the spread of communism in vulnerable states, such as Greece and Turkey.⁴

With the Soviet's first nuclear test in 1949, U.S. foreign policy towards the Soviet Union shifted to a policy of containment premised upon military strength and military alliances. This was based on a reformulation of U.S. security policy under the NSC-68, a secret policy paper written by the National Security Council in 1950. In addition to pushing for expansion of peacetime U.S. military capabilities, the document outlined a militarization of the U.S. containment strategy working in tandem with allies, especially peripheral surrounding the Soviet bloc. The goals outlined in the document included,

- a) Defending the Western Hemisphere and essential allied areas so that their war-making capabilities can be developed;
- b) Providing and protecting a mobilization base while the offensive forces requires for victory are being built up;
- c) To conduct offensive operations to destroy vital elements of the Soviet war-making capacity, and to keep the enemy off balance until the full offensive strength of the United States and its allies can be brought to bear;
- d) To defend and maintain the lines of communication and base areas necessary to the execution of the above tasks; and
- e) To provide such aid to allies as is essential to the execution of their role in the above tasks.⁵

In pursuit of these objectives, U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles visited South Asia in 1953 and asserted the U.S. interest in Pakistan as a key Cold War ally due to its strategic

⁴ Carl C. Hodge and Cathal J. Nolan, eds. *U.S. Presidents and Foreign Policy* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2007), 400.

⁵ "NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security," Government Document, *U.S. National Security Council*, April 1950. Accessed at: <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68-9.htm>

location on the southern flank of the Soviet Union and communist China. In 1954, Pakistan signed a mutual defense assistance agreement with the U.S., becoming a member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). A year later, Pakistan joined the Baghdad Pact, later re-named the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). High levels of U.S. military assistance accompanied these agreements.

Pakistan was the only Asian nation in both SEATO and CENTO, serving as a linchpin between these two mutual defense organizations that served as a check on Soviet expansion and aggression. America's interests in Pakistan as an ally were further heightened as India under its first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru pursued a non-aligned status within the Cold War. In President Eisenhower's second inaugural address on January 24, 1957, he re-iterated the United States' concern that newly independent nations could be seduced by communism without rapid economic growth. He, therefore, advocated for an increase in U.S. foreign assistance, resulting in a large flow of American economic aid to stimulate the Pakistani economy. In the same year, Pakistan gave the U.S. permission to establish a secret communications facility and base for their U2 spy planes outside of Peshawar in order to spy on the Soviet Union.

Some in the U.S. government remained somewhat skeptical of Pakistan's intentions with U.S. aid simply contributing to an Indian-Pakistani arms race. The U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan James Langley wrote in a December 1957 letter to the assistant secretary of state,

I wonder if we have not collectively developed certain generalizations about Pakistan and then proceeded to accept them as gospel truth without sufficient periodical scrutiny... The situation of strength which we have accepted as synonymous with Pakistan has too large a component of wishful thinking... [It is] not too difficult to make a rather convincing case that the present military program is based on a hoax, the hoax being that it is related to the Soviet threat... We cannot afford to participate or close our eyes to an arms race between India and Pakistan.⁶

U.S. presidents during this period, however, feared the negative repercussions of removing this military aid. Eisenhower stated that he "did not quite know what to do about Pakistan" but understood the removal of military aid "might have severe repercussions on our relations" and "might even destroy the Baghdad Pact".⁷ President Kennedy also recognized, "We [have] important intelligence relations with them, and we [do] not want the Pak[istanis] in a moment of violence to destroy CENTO and SEATO."⁸

Following the 1965 war with India, the United States, however, stopped all military assistance to Pakistan, denying a Pakistani request for U.S. military support. This decision came in the wake of the U.N. Security Council Resolution 211 that called for a ceasefire between India and Pakistan and retreat to their August 5th positions.⁹ The U.S. was hesitant to use the

⁶ Kux, *The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000*, 93.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 141.

⁹ UN Security Council, *Security Council Resolution 211* (1965) [on calling for a ceasefire between India and Pakistan], 22 September 1965, S/RES/211 (1965). Accessed at: [https://undocs.org/S/RES/211\(1965\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/211(1965)).

framework of their defense alliances, which were focused on the Soviet threat, to become unilaterally involved in a South Asian conflict. This was also coming at a time of thaw in U.S.-Soviet relations, following the establishment of a hotline between the two superpowers with the signing a Memorandum of Understanding in June 1963 and the signing of the Limited Test Ban Treaty in August 1963. In the years following the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war, the prominence of Pakistan in U.S. foreign policy was diminished by the increased focus on Southeast Asia, especially as President Lyndon Johnson began the deployment of ground troops to Vietnam.

In the early 1970s, President Richard Nixon began to improve relations with Pakistan in order to use Islamabad's help in opening relations with China, with Henry Kissinger's 1971 clandestine trip to Beijing facilitated by Pakistan. This "tilt" in the U.S.-Pakistan relationship led to Nixon approving a one-time exception to the arms embargo. He also continued economic assistance despite reports of military atrocities in East Pakistan against Bengal separatists, who would split from Pakistan to form Bangladesh in March 1971. The Nixon administration justified continued assistance as a means of influencing the situation in East Pakistan and argued against any "public pressure" as "totally counterproductive".¹⁰ When the Soviet-allied India used the unrest in East Pakistan as an opportunity for a military attack, Nixon was concerned about maintaining the balance of power in Asia, seeing the destruction of West Pakistan as "the same as a victory of the Soviet Union over China".¹¹ The U.S. policy was therefore to protest events in East Pakistan but only ensure that West Pakistan remained intact.

After diplomatic relations with China had been established in 1972, the relationship again fell into decline. In 1973, Pakistan formally left SEATO, due to its lack of support in its wars with India. During this decade, the U.S. was also growing suspicious of the Pakistani nuclear weapons program, especially after India's first successful nuclear test on May 18, 1974. The Carter administration would also be critical of the 1977 military coup led by General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq and the subsequent hanging of the former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, conducted in spite of calls from President Carter and the U.S. Congress for clemency. In 1979, Pakistan withdrew from CENTO, leading to its collapse.

On December 24, 1979, the Soviet military marched into Afghanistan in support of the state's beleaguered communist government, leading to a protracted guerilla conflict bogging down the Soviet Union for nearly a decade. Despite Pakistan's continued pursuit of its nuclear program under Zia's military government, this issue was overshadowed by U.S. concerns about the Soviet invasion.¹² In 1979, Zbigniew Brzezinski, the national security advisor, convinced President Carter of the necessity of Pakistani support for the *mujahedeen* forces fighting against the Soviets in Afghanistan and that "this will require a review of our policy toward Pakistan, more guarantees to it, more arms aid, and, alas, a decision that our security policy toward Pakistan cannot be dictated by our nonproliferation policy".¹³ During Zia's 1980 visit to the

¹⁰ Kux, *The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000*, 195.

¹¹ Ibid., 203.

¹² Ayesha Siddiqa-Agha, *Pakistan's Arms Procurement and Military Buildup, 1979-99: In Search of a Policy* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001).

¹³ Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 51.

United Nations in New York, Carter invited him to the White House where the military dictator, previously viewed with suspicion because of his human rights record and nuclear ambitions, was now warmly welcomed.

The policies set under Carter were re-iterated by the Reagan administration. They communicated their willingness to live with the military government and the Pakistani nuclear program so long as the government did not conduct a nuclear test. During negotiations for the continuation of aid, Pakistani General K.M. Arif told the Secretary of State under President Reagan, Alexander Haig, “We would not like to hear from you the type of government we should have.” Haig responded, “General, your internal situation is your problem.”¹⁴ The U.S. rationalized the decision to support Pakistan with the argument that conventional military aid would negate the need for the nuclear bomb. While testifying before Congress in 1981, Under Secretary of State James Buckley stated,

We do believe that our best chance to influence the outcome, influence the future direction of what might be Pakistani intentions, is to help remove the significant sense of insecurity that the nation suffers from today. We believe that if real insecurity can be removed we will not only have a better chance to make sure that explosives are not detonated, but also would be in the best position to use the argument of persuasion that this would not be in Pakistan’s best interest.¹⁵

In May 1984, Vice President George H.W. Bush visited Pakistan in order to “symbolize and further solidify the strong relationship with Pakistan we have successfully developed over the past three years, a major Administration objective and accomplishment”.¹⁶ His visit included a trip to the Khyber Pass, passing through Peshawar where tribal crowds cheered him as they had Jackie Kennedy two decades prior. In 1986, the U.S. offered to provide \$4.02 billion in economic and military assistance over the next six years.¹⁷

After the final withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan in February 1989, the United States had little interest in any large-scale commitments in the region, especially as the Afghan civil war erupted. The necessity for strategic engagement was also undercut by the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and end of the Cold War. In April 1996, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Robin Raphel stated in Islamabad, “We do not see ourselves inserting in the middle of Afghan affairs, but we consider ourselves as a friend of Afghanistan which is why I am here to urge the Afghans themselves to get together and talk.”¹⁸ Following a proposal for an international arms embargo on Afghanistan during a U.N. Security Council session, the U.S. also was pushing for a non-interference agreement among regional countries.

¹⁴ Kux, *The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000*, 257.

¹⁵ Siddiq-Agha, *Pakistan’s Arms Procurement and Military Buildup, 1979-99*, 94.

¹⁶ Kux, *The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000*, 272.

¹⁷ Hussain Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), 188.

¹⁸ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 45.

As interest in Afghanistan declined and the Cold War came to an end, the U.S. was again unwilling to overlook its points of contention with Pakistan, in particular its continued pursuit of nuclear weapons. Following the Soviet exit from Afghanistan, the U.S. stopped the arms flow to Pakistan in 1990. This was a result President Bush refusing to verify Pakistan's non-involvement in nuclear proliferation under the Pressler Amendment of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act, a condition imposed on assistance to Pakistan in 1985. Under pressure from India, the U.S. nearly declared Pakistan a state-sponsor of terrorism because of Kashmiri militants using Pakistani territory as a base of operations. In 1992, the newly appointed Pakistani Ambassador to the U.S. Abida Hussein remarked that the U.S., with the end of the Cold War, "had about as much interest in Pakistan as Pakistan had in the Maldives".¹⁹

The War on Terror

"You are either with us or against us," U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell warned Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf over the phone mere hours after the Twin Towers of New York fell.²⁰ This reflects the message that President George W. Bush gave to the world in his September 20, 2001 address to Congress. In his declaration of the "War on Terror", President Bush stated, "From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime. Our nation has been put on notice, we're not immune from attack. We will take defensive measures against terrorism to protect Americans."²¹ In particular, President Bush focused on Afghanistan, as the operational safe haven for Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. He demanded, without the potential for negotiation or discussion, the Taliban government turn over all al Qaeda operatives and their support structure "or share in their fate". When the U.S. rejected appeals for negotiations from the Taliban about turning over bin Laden, the stage was set for the military invasion of Afghanistan. U.S. air strikes against the Taliban began on October 7, 2001, officially launching Operation Enduring Freedom.

The relationship with Pakistan was now fully connected to the military mission to defeat the Taliban. As the war in land-locked Afghanistan dragged on, the logistics of Operation Enduring Freedom would heavily depend on Pakistani support. By 2007, NATO forces were using nearly 575,000 gallons of fuel daily with nearly 80% of it coming from Pakistani refineries. Further, the storage capacity at key air bases accumulated to less than 3 million gallons, making the preservation of Pakistani supply lines vital. The only effective alternative was a much more precarious and lengthy logistical line connecting to refineries in Azerbaijan through Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.²²

In the early days of the War on Terror, the U.S. quickly lifted the arms embargo on Pakistan in order to secure their support for the invasion of Afghanistan, with drastic increases in

¹⁹ Kux *The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000*, 315-316.

²⁰ Robert M. Hathaway, *The Leverage Paradox: Pakistan and the United States* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2017), 15.

²¹ "Text: President Bush Addresses the Nation," *The Washington Post*, 20 September 2001. Accessed at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/bushaddress_092001.html

²² Robert Bryce, "Logistical Vulnerabilities and the Afghanistan War: The Pakistan Fuel Connection," *Heinrich Boll Foundation*. Accessed at: https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/assets/boell.de/images/download_de/worldwide/

both military and economic assistance. U.S. concerns for the nuclear arms race with India, with Pakistan having detonated their first success nuclear weapon in 1998, were put aside in favor of U.S.-Pakistani cooperation as part of the War on Terror. Beginning in 2002, Pakistan also received reimbursements for operational and logistic support for NATO forces in Afghanistan under the Coalition Support Fund (CSF). In 2004, the U.S. declared Pakistan a major non-NATO ally. President Bush would refer to his relationship with President Musharraf, who came to power in a bloodless military coup in 1999, as “tight”.²³

In addition to vital supply lines, the U.S. saw Pakistan as one of the many front lines in the fight against terrorism. Soon after the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan was pressured to move military forces into the mountainous and remote Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) to catch militants fleeing NATO forces across the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, known as the Durand Line. There were concerns that Taliban forces were strategically crossing the international border in order to avoid capture and use FATA as a base of support for operations in Afghanistan. Given the difficulty of the FATA terrain and the resulting ineffectiveness of military operations on the ground, the U.S. introduced a new strategy in 2004 to target the Taliban leadership—drone strikes. The United States received secret authorization from President Musharraf to conduct these strikes, turning over Shamsi Airfield in Balochistan as a base of operations. In August 2008, the Pakistani Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Gillani stated, “I don’t care if they do it as long as they get the right people. We’ll protest in the national assembly and then ignore it.”²⁴ Following President Barack Obama’s election, the number of drone strikes increased exponentially as a means of avoiding “boots on the ground” while also appearing hard on terrorism. The drone quickly became a source of controversy, however, with opponents pointing to the number of civilians killed in the strikes.²⁵

As President Barack Obama took office in 2009, he reiterated the alliance with Pakistan. Vice President Joe Biden stated, “If you don’t get Pakistan right, you can’t win [in Afghanistan].”²⁶ As part of the new regional strategy, Obama warned that military assistance was not a blank check, introducing performance benchmarks to ensure Pakistan was “rooting out al Qaeda and the violent extremists within its borders.”²⁷ The U.S., on the verge of a new Afghan offensive in 2009, increased the amount of military aid for Pakistan’s newly elected civilian government under President Asif Ali Zardari. The U.S. also tripled its economic aid in the hopes of promoting economic growth and political stability.

bryce_logistical_vulnerabilities.pdf

²³ Akbar Ahmed, *The Thistle and the Drone: How America’s War on Terror Became a Global War on Tribal Islam* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2013), 136.

²⁴ Declan Walsh, “Wikileaks Cables: U.S. and Pakistan Play Down Impact of ‘Mischief,’” *The Guardian*, December 1, 2010.

²⁵ Harrison Akins, “*Lawnmowers in the Sky*”: *The Turbulent Past and Uncertain Future of Drone Warfare*, Policy Brief 2:17, Howard H. Baker, Jr. Center for Public Policy, 10-13.

²⁶ Robert M. Hathaway, *The Leverage Paradox: Pakistan and the United States* (Washington, DC: The Wilson Center, 2017), 110.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 84.

The U.S. would, however, increasingly become dissatisfied with Pakistan's selective approach to the various Taliban groups operating within its borders. The government would sign peace agreements with some groups, such as the Waziri Alliance in Waziristan which was allied with Mullah Omar in Afghanistan through their Wazir kin across the border, while deploying its military against other groups, such as the Mehsud-dominated Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) which focused its fight within Pakistan. The Pakistani government was thus distinguishing between the "good" Taliban and the "bad" Taliban.²⁸ Admiral Mike Mullen, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated in 2011 before Congress that the Wazir-allied Haqqani network, operating out of FATA, was a "veritable arm" of Pakistan.²⁹ The "duplicity" of Pakistan came to a head with the discovery of, and subsequent Navy SEAL raid on, Osama bin Laden's hideout in the northern Abbottabad cantonment in May 2011.

A month after the bin Laden raid, President Obama announced a troop withdrawal with plans for the U.S. to hand over responsibility for security to Afghan forces by 2014. By this time, the rift between the U.S. and Pakistan was already growing wider following a series of controversial events. In January 2011, Raymond Davis, a CIA contractor, killed two Pakistanis, with the CIA director falsely claiming he had no connection to the agency. On November 26, 2011, NATO forces killed 24 Pakistani forces along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, mistaking them for insurgents. In response, Pakistan closed the border crossings for supply runs until July 3, 2012. Pakistan also forced the U.S. to shut down its use of the Shamsi Airfield in Balochistan.

With the drawdown of U.S. troops beginning in 2011, annual U.S. assistance to Pakistan also began to fall. In 2015, the U.S. placed conditions on a portion of its aid, requiring certification that Pakistan was taking action against terrorist groups operating within its borders, especially the Haqqani network.³⁰ The following year, the Pentagon refused to certify that the Pakistani government had taken sufficient action, withholding \$300 million in Coalition Support Fund (CSF) payments. In 2017, a further \$350 million in CSF payments was withheld. President Trump's fateful January 2018 tweet came in the midst of a deteriorating relationship. Despite plans for increasing troops in Afghanistan, Trump subsequently announced that his administration would freeze over \$1 billion in military payments to Pakistan, with a State Department spokesman stating the money would be withheld "until the Pakistani government takes decisive action against groups...destabilizing the region and also targeting U.S. personnel."³¹ In February 2018, the U.S. pushed to have Pakistan again placed on the Financial Action Task Force watch-list for failing to combat terrorism financing, limiting their access to funds within the international market.³²

²⁸ Ahmed, *The Thistle and the Drone*, 73.

²⁹ Markey, *No Exit from Pakistan*, 105.

³⁰ Hathaway, *The Leverage Paradox*, 102.

³¹ Cristiano Lima, "Trump administration to withhold aid to Pakistan," *Politico*, January 4, 2018.

³² Kay Johnson and Drazen Jorgic, "Global watchdog to put Pakistan back on terrorist financing watchlist: sources," *Reuters*, February 23, 2018.

Surrounded by Enemies: Explaining Pakistan's Security Dilemma

Many of the challenges and pathologies facing Pakistan stem from the conditions of its bloody birth in 1947. This was a new state created for Indian Muslims who feared the dominance of a Hindu majority following independence from British rule. Led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the *Quaid-e-Azam* (Great Leader), of the Muslim League, the creation of Pakistan was achieved in the face of great opposition from the Indian National Congress and the British authorities under Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of the British Raj.³³ The political division of British India into India and Pakistan was, however, accompanied by the horrors of communal violence between Hindus and Muslims, violence that claimed the lives of nearly a million people and displaced a further twelve million. Historian Yasmin Khan noted,

Partition played a central role in the making of new Indian and Pakistani national identities and the apparently irreconcilable differences which continue to exist today. We could even go as far as saying that Indian and Pakistani ideas of nationhood were carved out diametrically, in definition against each other... The two states necessarily saw each other through the prism of violence that had taken place and eyed each other warily across the expanses of the ruptured Punjab.³⁴

Stemming from these conditions, Pakistan was, and has perpetually perceived itself to be, insecure. In particular, Partition engendered two security priorities for the nascent Muslim state: national cohesion and concerns for the Indian threat. These issues particularly drive two points of contention with the U.S.: the Pakistani nuclear weapons program and Pakistani engagement in Afghanistan.

National Cohesion

Pakistan was not a natural creation, its borders drawn by Sir Cyril Radcliffe around the Muslim-majority areas of British India. This resulted in a nation in two parts (West Pakistan and East Pakistan) with 1300 miles and a hostile state dividing them. This new state contained a multitude of ethnicities, languages, cultures, and religions, all of which were now expected to unite around an amorphous idea of Pakistan. In addition to the myriad other logistical problems facing the new government—settling millions of refugees, setting up bureaucratic structures, and the post-partition division of financial and military assets—it needed to forge a national consciousness among these disparate groups.

The early foundations of the state were tied to the Islamic religion as a uniting factor across cultural and ethnic lines. The movement for Pakistan, however, often treated the role of religion with a certain level of ambiguity, meaning different things to different people.³⁵ It was unclear to what extent Islam would inform the government and laws of the country—would Pakistan be a secular Muslim state or an Islamic state? This debate, particularly following the

³³ See Akbar S. Ahmed, *Jinnah, Pakistan, and Islamic Identity: The Search for Saladin* (London: Routledge, 1997).

³⁴ Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 9, 142.

³⁵ Ahmed, *Jinnah, Pakistan, and Islamic Identity*, 109-113.

death of Jinnah in 1948, has continued throughout the lifespan of the nation. Fundamentalist Islamic groups opposed the creation of Pakistan, such as the Jamaat-e-Islami under Abul Ala Maududi. Maududi's objections rested on Jinnah's secular vision of a modern Muslim state. The early founders were, thus, unable to formulate a clear national vision around Islam that overcame divisions within society. To further the agenda of national unity, Pakistan was declared an Islamic republic under its 1956 constitution. In the 1980s, General Zia-ul-Haq would "Islamize" Pakistan as a means of legitimizing his rule and morally uniting the nation around their shared faith, especially in confronting India.³⁶ The strength and independence of ethnic and tribal identity would prove difficult to overcome. In 1972, Wali Khan, a Pashtun leader and son of the "Frontier Gandhi" Abdul Ghaffar Khan, summed up this challenge when he remarked, "I have been a Pashtun for six thousand years, a Muslim for thirteen hundred years, and a Pakistani for twenty-five years."³⁷

Almost immediately, the Pakistani state faced challenges to its political legitimacy, especially from minority groups who saw the government and military structures dominated by Punjabis, the largest ethnic group. Prince Abdul Karim, the brother of the Khan of the princely state of Kalat in Balochistan, opposed Kalat's accession to Pakistan and led a revolt against the newly formed government beginning in July 1948. He argued, "From whatever angle we look at the present Government of Pakistan, we will see nothing but Punjabi Fascism. The people have no say in it. It is the army and arms that rule... There is no place for any other community in this government, be it the Baloch, the Sindhis, the Afghans or the Bengalis, unless they make themselves equally powerful."³⁸ It took two years for the Pakistani military to defeat Karim and his forces. There would be a further three separatist rebellions within Balochistan over the next fifty years. The independent Pashtun tribes of the FATA have also consistently challenged the writ of the state and Pashtun nationalist political parties, such as the Awami National Party, have contested elections to advocate for greater Pashtun autonomy and cultural rights.³⁹ There was even a group of Pashtuns, including Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his followers, who supported the Indian National Congress during the independence movement and thus opposed the creation of Pakistan.

The most consequential challenge to national cohesion was the 1971 Bengal rebellion. The Bengal population of East Pakistan formed the electoral majority of Pakistan yet West Pakistanis, especially the Punjabis, dominated the government and military structures, discriminating against Bengali culture and language. In the 1970 elections, the Bengal Awami League of East Pakistan led by Sheikh Mujibur Rehman swept the polls. General Yahya Khan, who had ascended to the presidency the previous year following Ayub Khan's resignation, refused to allow the party to form a government. When civil unrest erupted, the military

³⁶ Stephen Philip Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 171.

³⁷ Ahmed, *The Thistle and the Drone*, 21-22.

³⁸ Farhan Hanif Siddiqi, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan: The Baloch, Sindhi, and Mohajir Ethnic Movements* (Abingdon, U.K.: Routledge, 2012), 61.

³⁹ See Anatol Lieven, *Pakistan: A Hard Country* (London: Allen Lane, 2011), 371-401; Harrison Akins, FATA and the Frontier Crimes Regulation in Pakistan: The Enduring Legacy of British Colonialism, Policy Brief 5:17, Howard H. Baker, Jr. Center for Public Policy, 10-13.

responded with overwhelming force. In response, Sheikh Rahman declared independence for the newly christened Bangladesh on March 25, 1971. India would soon intervene in support of the Bengal separatist movement. Following months of intense fighting, the Pakistani military would sign the Instrument of Surrender on December 16, 1971, with Pakistan formally recognizing Bangladesh as an independent state in 1974. The exact number of people killed in the bloody war is unknown with Bangladesh claiming 3 million dead while other researchers argue the number is closer to 500,000.⁴⁰

The Indian Threat

The concern for national cohesion is exacerbated by the threat from India. Many within Pakistan believe that internal divisions weaken the nation in the face of its hostile neighbor, viewing this as an opportunity for military action such as the 1971 Indian invasion of East Pakistan. In his April 1979 Valedictory Despatch, the former British Ambassador to Pakistan John Bushell wrote, “For Pakistan, internal fragility is aggravated by alarming external changes, for the most part still in the course of evolution. Neighbours look dangerous or liable to be dangerous”.⁴¹ Given the opposition to Pakistan’s creation, many within the government believed with great conviction that India, if given the opportunity, would undo Pakistan. General Ayub Khan wrote in his 1967 autobiography, “From the day of Independence, Pakistan was involved in a bitter and prolonged struggle for her very existence and survival. By 1954 Pakistan was compelled to align herself with the West in the interests of her security.”⁴² India is also often blamed for fanning internal dissent in order to weaken and destabilize Pakistan. Demonstrating this concern, the most recent problems with the Taliban groups emanating from FATA have drawn accusations of a “Hindu hand”.⁴³

At Pakistan’s founding, the fledgling state was already inclined towards the Western bloc. In a September 1947 cabinet meeting, Jinnah stated, “Pakistan [is] a democracy and communism [does] not flourish in the soil of Islam. It [is] clear that our interests [lie] more with the two great democratic interests, namely, the U.K. and the U.S.A., rather than with Russia”.⁴⁴ Jinnah wanted the U.S. to be the primary source of external support for Pakistan, requesting a \$2 billion loan over five years within the first two months of Pakistan’s existence. This request, though couched in the language of anti-Communism, was principally to bolster the country’s security in relation to India who already possessed a military advantage from the division of colonial assets following Partition.

The division of the British Indian Army assets was based on relative size between India and Pakistan. Of the armored corps regiments, India received 14 and Pakistan 6. Pakistan also received 8 artillery regiments (against India’s 40) and 8 infantry regiments (against India’s 21).

⁴⁰ See Sarmila Bose, *Dead Reckoning: Memories of the 1971 Bangladesh War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

⁴¹ Matthew Parris and Andrew Bryson, *Parting Shots* (London: Penguin Books, 2011), 65.

⁴² Quoted in C. Christine Fair, *Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army’s War of War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 115.

⁴³ Markey, *No Exit from Pakistan*, 40-41.

⁴⁴ Kux, *The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000*, 20.

Among the Royal Indian Navy's ships, Pakistan was granted 16 ships with India receiving 32.⁴⁵ This power asymmetry continued into the 1980s when the ratio of military size in terms of manpower, divisions, and tanks between the two states was roughly 2:1, in favor of India. India at this point also had a 4:1 advantage in surface ships and 3:1 advantage in combat aircraft.⁴⁶ Complicating this further, India withheld much of its share of the British Indian military stores such as ammunition and ordnance, as most were located within Indian Territory along with all of the operational ordnance factories. By March 1948, Pakistan had only received 3% of their allotted military stores. To address this imbalance, national defense comprised 75% of the budget in 1948 and would continue to comprise a majority of the state budget in the coming years.⁴⁷ To further address the power asymmetry, Pakistan saw the need for strong Western allies to buttress its military strength. With the U.S. shopping for allies to contain the spread of communism, Pakistan saw this as an opportunity to remedy its defensive weakness in relation to India.

The Indian threat was made more urgent by the status of Kashmir, a lingering symbol of animosity between the two states. While the Indian Independence Act of 1947 apportioned the Muslim-majority areas to Pakistan, the leaders of the 562 autonomous princely states, which were not formally integrated into the British colonial administration, were granted the right of choice for accession to either India or Pakistan. British Prime Minister Clement Atlee also allowed for the possibility of the princely states to declare independence. Among these states was Kashmir, a Muslim-majority region, with smaller Hindu and Buddhist populations, but ruled by a Hindu Maharaja. Given its Muslim-majority population, the Muslim League expected the province to join Pakistan. Jinnah traveled to the region in 1944 to court its political leaders. The local Muslim Conference, led by Ghulam Abbas, advocated for the Maharaja to sign the Instrument of Ascension for Pakistan while also declaring internal autonomy for Kashmir. However, the rival Kashmiri National Conference, led by Sheikh Abdullah, was angered at Jinnah's and the Muslim League's endorsement of the Muslim Conference, turning its support towards India, along with the region's Hindu and Buddhist communities. Maharaja Hari Singh was inclined towards Kashmiri independence as a means towards balancing these divergent views.⁴⁸

Violence against Maharaja rule, however, erupted in August 1947 when Muslims in the western Poonch district attacked local forces over economic problems and the Maharaja move to dismiss the local government to exert direct control. Within the broader politics of Partition, this revolt soon transformed into a struggle for the destiny of Kashmir as many in Poonch supported Pakistan. Soon, their fight would be joined by Pashtun tribal groups from the North-West Frontier, cloaked in the language of *jihad*, for the purpose of protecting their fellow Muslims. This was met by an Indian military offensive. The Pakistani regular army initially provided support to the Pashtun fighters but directly joined the fighting after Indian intervention.⁴⁹ Under

⁴⁵ Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, *Pakistan's Defense Policy, 1947-58* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 77.

⁴⁶ Siddiq-Agha, *Pakistan's Arms Procurement and Military Buildup, 1979-99*, 29.

⁴⁷ Cheema, *Pakistan's Defense Policy, 1947-58*, 32, 87, 125.

⁴⁸ See Luv Puri, *Across the Line of Control: Inside Pakistan-Administered Kashmir* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 23-30.

pressure from India, Maharaja Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Ascension for India on October 26, 1947. After nearly two years of fighting, a ceasefire was called on January 1, 1949, which established the Line of Control dividing the territory between India-administered Kashmir and Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Subsequent wars resulted from this unresolved conflict in 1965 and 1999, as both sides rejected mediation efforts by the U.N.

Pakistan perceived the conflict over Kashmir more than simply a territorial dispute but initial steps in Indian attempts to ultimately exterminate Pakistan. On September 22, 1965, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, then serving as Minister for Foreign Affairs, stated of Pakistan in his speech to the U.N. Security Council, “We do not want to be exterminated...But today our cities are being bombed indiscriminately by the might of India, by the formidable machine of the Indian armed forces.” In regards to Kashmir, Bhutto went on to argue that it is an integral part of Pakistan due to cultural, historical, and geographical affinities and, for Kashmir, Pakistan “will wage a war for 1,000 years, a war of defence”⁵⁰. The Line of Control today remains heavily militarized, with nearly 200,000 Indian and Pakistani troops on either side of the disputed border. Despite a ceasefire agreement, tensions remain high as troops periodically exchange fire across the border without the regular presence of international observers.⁵¹

The Pakistani Military as Political Actor

Any full understanding of Pakistan’s security policy and its relationship with the U.S. must consider the outsized role of the Pakistani military as a political actor. As the most powerful institution in the state, it has been referred to as “the backbone of the nation”.⁵² Following Partition, the military assumed the mantle as protector of Pakistani national unity, especially as an Islamic Republic, in the face of both internal dissent and external challenges from India.⁵³ This was the rationale for their involvement in politics, as guarding the viability of the state against corrupt and ineffective civilian leadership. This perspective was even upheld by the 1977 Supreme Court case *Begum Nusrat Bhutto v. the Chief of the Army Staff*, following the arrest of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on charges of ordering the murder of a political opponent. This case justified the imposition of martial law if deemed necessary.⁵⁴ Military leaders have ruled Pakistan for a total of 36 years: 1958-1971, 1978-1988, and 1999-2008.

The military has consistently advocated for a closer relationship with the U.S. as a means of increasing military assistance and therefore increasing and modernizing Pakistan’s military forces. Periods of close cooperation between the two states have often coincided with periods of military rule within Pakistan. Given lax oversight about the use of funds during the War on Terror, for example, the Pakistani government under President Musharraf was accused of using

⁵⁰ Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, “Speech delivered at the UN Security Council on September 22, 1965 on Kashmir Issue,” [www.bhutto.org](http://www.bhutto.org/1957-1965_speech21.php). Accessed at: http://www.bhutto.org/1957-1965_speech21.php.

⁵¹ Ajai Shukla, “Viewpoint: India and Pakistan up the ante on disputed border,” *BBC News*, January 30, 2018.

⁵² Gavin Kennedy, *The Military in the Third World* (New York: Charles Scribner’s, 1974), 89.

⁵³ See C. Christine Fair, *Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army’s War of War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁵⁴ Supreme Court of Pakistan, “*Begum Nusrat Bhutto v. The Chief of the Army Staff*,” Case PLD 77 SC 657, 1977. Accessed at: <http://advocategeneral.punjab.gov.pk/node/1846>.

U.S. support, arguably more suited for conventional warfare rather than counterinsurgency or counterterrorism, to build its military forces to balance against India rather than support U.S. counterterrorism efforts.⁵⁵ Even when out of power, the military determines policy for defense and arms procurement within the Pakistani bureaucracy as well as exerting strong influence over the civilian government.

Civilian political opposition, on the other hand, often views U.S. military assistance as helping to prop up the rule of military leaders. The protests that forced General Ayub Khan to resign in 1969 labeled him and his government as “American stooges”.⁵⁶ Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, elected prime minister in 1973, would use this sentiment in order to garner public support. The populist platform of Bhutto’s Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) was built on an anti-U.S., as well as anti-India, agenda, combined with his fiery diatribes against American imperialism and Pakistan’s role in SEATO and CENTO. He sought to connect the military government with American interests: “Pakistan’s foreign policy had chained the people. We had no free will to go anywhere. We had to obey what the United States ordered us to do...Our policies were those of SEATO and CENTO. The U.S. ambassador could keep Pakistan’s policy in line with Washington’s. If he wished Pakistan’s foreign policy to be a particular line...Pakistan obliged him.”⁵⁷ Bhutto would come to soften his position on the U.S.-Pakistan relationship when in office as a strategic alliance against India. Officials in the State Department met this shift with a certain level of mistrust given “his known dislike of the American alliance network”.⁵⁸

Echoing Bhutto’s rhetoric, the civilian opposition to General Musharraf’s rule in the early 2000s saw the U.S. as being on the “wrong side of history in Pakistan” in its support of the military government.⁵⁹ Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, daughter of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, stated in Washington, DC in 2004, “At this time of political crisis in Pakistan, with a military dictatorship strangling our Constitution, America should stand for its values and principles, and reject tyranny. General Musharraf uses Pakistan’s importance to the United States in Afghanistan to further his own dictatorship. This is at the cost of the human and democratic rights of the people of Pakistan.”⁶⁰ Civilian politicians are also incentivized to appear independent from and opposed to American influence because of their sensitivity to increasingly anti-American public opinion.⁶¹

The Islamic Bomb: Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons Program

During the early 1970s, the Pakistani engineer A.Q. Khan was working in the Netherlands for the engineering firm Physical Dynamics Research Laboratory (FDO), a sub-contractor to

⁵⁵ *Combating Terrorism: Increased Oversight and Accountability Needed over Pakistan Reimbursement Claims for Coalition Support Funds*, GAO-08-806, U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2008. Accessed at: <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-08-806>

⁵⁶ Mohammad Waseem, “Perceptions About America in Pakistan,” *Aziya Kenkyu*, 50, no. 2 (2004): 34-44.

⁵⁷ Shirin Tahir-Khelli, *The United States and Pakistan: The Evolution of an Influence Relationship* (New York: Praeger, 1982), 55.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁵⁹ Markey, *No Exit from Pakistan*, 82.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁶¹ See Karl Kaltenthaler and William J. Thaler, “Partner or Enemy? The Sources of Attitudes Toward the

the Uranium enrichment consortium Urenco formed to develop a European source of fuel for the continent's nuclear power plants. Given lax security, he had access to plans and data about the consortium's centrifuge process. After India tested their first successful nuclear weapon on May 18, 1974, Khan, concerned with the potential for nuclear blackmail by India, wrote a letter to Prime Minister Bhutto advocating for the development of a Pakistani weapon using enriched Uranium and offered his knowledge and services. The Prime Minister was swayed by his arguments and charged him to gather information to help develop a Pakistani Uranium bomb. In December 1975, Khan, now under suspicion from the Dutch authorities, absconded suddenly with his family to Pakistan, writing letters to friends that they were on vacation. Khan carried with him the plans for all of Urenco's centrifuge designs. This information, along with Khan's expertise would prove critical to Pakistan's nuclear weapons program called Project 706, which Bhutto named Khan director of in July 1976.⁶²

Bhutto had already begun to advocate for a nuclear weapons program when serving as Foreign Minister in the 1960s. During this period of time, he infamously stated, "Pakistan will eat grass or leaves, even go hungry" to produce a nuclear weapon.⁶³ Bhutto's pursuit of this program, putting it at the forefront of Pakistani foreign policy, was a means of balancing against India and acting as a deterrent to aggressive Indian behavior. The army, concerned that it would take away government funding for conventional forces and alienate Pakistan's allies, initially opposed the pursuit of the bomb but would quickly come to support the project. South Asian scholar Stephen Cohen observed that, for Pakistanis, the bomb came to be perceived as "a magic bullet that could resolve any problem."⁶⁴

A nuclear weapon was also viewed as a source of security independence. Pakistan has had few reliable allies that have wholly supported its agenda in regard to India, using the alliance for their own short-term strategic interests. Following the introduction of a U.S. military aid program to India, Ayub Khan stated in a 1964 interview with the London *Daily Mail*, "Today American policy is based on opportunism and is devoid of moral quality. Pakistan deeply regrets that although she has fulfilled all her commitments, she has been let down by politicians she regarded as friends".⁶⁵ The perceived need for independent military strength was heightened following the U.S. introducing an arms embargo in response to the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War. Many in the government felt abandoned by their Cold War ally. In June 1965, Ayub Khan stated in a Muslim League meeting, "The U.S. has always acted in a manner that [is] prejudicial to Pakistan's interests in the context of Indo-Pakistan relations".⁶⁶

With Chinese assistance, Pakistan had produced enough fissile material for the construction of a nuclear weapon by the mid-1980s and, in the face of U.S. opposition, continued

United States in Pakistan." In *Pakistan's Enduring Challenges*, edited by C. Christine Fair and Sarah J. Watson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015).

⁶² David Armstrong and Joseph Trento, *American and the Islamic Bomb: The Deadly Compromise* (Hanover: Steerforth Press, 2007), 45-59.

⁶³ Fair, *Fighting to the End*, 204.

⁶⁴ Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan*, 81.

⁶⁵ Kux, *The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000*, 151.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 157.

to develop their nuclear capabilities to carry out a test explosion. This persistence would eventually lead to the U.S. suspending military assistance in 1990. Despite U.S. pressure to not test a weapon, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was facing domestic pressure to do so, given the perceived need to match India. Sharif was told by an influential Pakistani journalist, “There is going to be an explosion soon. It will either be a Pakistani nuclear test or your being blown out of office!”⁶⁷ Seventeen days after an Indian nuclear test, Pakistan conducted its first nuclear test in Balochistan on May 28, 1998, becoming the seventh nuclear nation. In Pakistan, May 28th is celebrated as a national day known as *Youn-e-Takbir*, or “Day of Greatness”. Pakistan keeps the details of its nuclear arsenal a secret yet estimates place their total number of deployed weapons at around 100 roughly equal to India’s, with enough fissile material to produce a further 40 to 100 warheads.⁶⁸

Promoting Strategic Depth: Pakistan in Afghanistan

Pakistan was concerned with its western neighbor Afghanistan from its founding. Afghanistan was the only state to challenge Pakistani membership in the U.N. because of its claim to Pakistan’s Pashtun-populated Tribal Areas and North-West Frontier Province, considering the British-era Durand Line invalid. Pakistan’s concern was that the Afghan government sought to take advantage of post-Partition instability in order to sow internal discord and push for the absorption of the Pashtun areas into Afghanistan to create a “Pashtunistan”. The real concern was Afghanistan’s early alliance with India, sandwiching Pakistan between two hostile nations. Pakistan’s interest in Afghanistan, therefore, has been to always promote strategic depth to counter the influence of India.⁶⁹

The Soviet invasion in 1979 in support of the Afghan government was viewed through this frame, as an Indo-Afghan-Soviet conspiracy. The Pakistani government was concerned that the Soviet forces would continue through Pakistan to reach the warm waters of the Persian Gulf. General Zia-ul-Haq also saw this as an opportunity for procuring U.S. assistance given the need for military modernization. Much of the Pakistani military was reliant upon less advanced Chinese hardware and older American technology that was not able to match the Indian military. The U.S. had declined to send more sophisticated hardware such as AWACS given concerns about the cost and impacting the South Asian military balance. Zia, however, rejected Carter’s initial offer of \$400 million in military and economic aid, calling it “peanuts.”⁷⁰ The U.S. and Pakistani governments, however, did reach an agreement on expanded intelligence cooperation. They hatched a plan to provide aid to the *mujahedeen* forces to be funneled through Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).⁷¹ This cooperation was further expanded under the Reagan administration, which subsequently increased the level of aid offered to its ally.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 346.

⁶⁸ David E. Sanger and Eric Schmidt, “Pakistani Nuclear Arms Pose Challenge to U.S. Policy,” *New York Times*, January 31, 2011.

⁶⁹ See Fair, *Fighting to the End*; Hussain Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005); Olivier Roy, “The Taliban: A Strategic Tool for Pakistan,” In *Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation*, edited by Christophe Jaffrelot (London: Zed Books, 2004).

⁷⁰ Kux, *The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000*, 346.

⁷¹ See A.Z. Hilali, *U.S.-Pakistan Relationship: Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan* (Hants: Ashgate, 2005).

Following the withdrawal of Soviet forces in 1988, a civil war erupted against the communist government still in power. Despite the withdrawal of U.S. support, Pakistan continued to back the Pashtun-dominated *mujahedeen* forces from which the Taliban would eventually emerge and take over the government in 1996. For Pakistan, it was vital to promote a government in Kabul that would be favorable to their interests and susceptible to their influence. Pakistan, alongside Saudi Arabia, was thus continuing to supply arms and other supplies to the Taliban. Pakistan even provided the Taliban with a communications network and refurbished the Kandahar airport. India, as a result of Pakistani support of the Taliban, offered support to the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance.⁷²

Following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, Pakistan initially shifted its position away from supporting the Taliban under pressure from the U.S. This cooperation was seen as a means of renewing U.S. military aid. U.S. support served as a boost to Musharraf's power base, which primarily relied on the military.⁷³ Musharraf's support was also motivated in part by the situation with India and keeping India from a "golden opportunity with regard to Kashmir."⁷⁴ In 1989, an anti-India insurgency rose within Indian-administered Kashmir following the government manipulation of the 1987 elections. During the 1990s, this insurgency would eventually draw support from the Pakistani military. As part of the Afghan mission by the U.S., Pakistani cooperation did not entail action against Kashmiri militants, but only keeping them from traveling to Afghanistan to support the Taliban. Pakistan's support of militant groups has often focused on controlling their activities rather than simply provoking violence. Following the start of the 2004 Composite Dialogue with India, for example, Pakistani support for Kashmiri militants was aimed at reducing their actions and keeping them from fighting.⁷⁵

Pakistan's on-going interest in Afghanistan following the removal of the Taliban and replacement with an American-backed government is clouded by the Afghan relationship with India. Many within Pakistan's security establishment view the four Indian consulates within Afghanistan with grave distrust, taking it as an article of faith that they are in fact used by Indian intelligence as a means of spying on Pakistan and supporting anti-Pakistani militants.⁷⁶ A senior Pakistani military officer argued that the presence of so many consulates to serve only around 3,000 Indian nationals was evidence of this Indian duplicity.⁷⁷ Pakistan was also concerned about the October 2011 strategic partnership signed between India and the Afghan government to strengthen cooperation between the two states on security issues.

The need to promote strategic depth in Afghanistan has also impacted how Pakistan responds to militant groups operating within its borders. The initial military operations in FATA began tapering off around 2005 with subsequent military operations in the region largely focused

⁷² See Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000).

⁷³ Paul Staniland, "America and Pakistan After 2014: Toward Strategic Breathing Space," In *Pakistan's Enduring Challenges*, edited by Fair and Watson.

⁷⁴ Pervez Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 201-202.

⁷⁵ See Stephen Tankel, "Pakistani Militancy in the Shadow of the U.S. Withdrawal," In *Pakistan's Enduring Challenges*, edited by Fair and Watson.

⁷⁶ Tankel, "Pakistani Militancy in the Shadow of the U.S. Withdrawal," 38.

⁷⁷ Interview with author, Washington, DC, April 23, 2012.

on targeting militants groups, such as the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) led by the Mehsud of South Waziristan Agency, focused on attacking the Pakistani state. Simultaneously to fighting the Mehsud-led TTP, the government was brokering peace deals with other militant groups, such as the Muqami Tehreek-e-Taliban, emerging from the Mehsud's traditional tribal rival the Wazir. The Wazir whose tribal network straddled the Durand Line (including the Zadran tribe from which emerged the Haqqani network) had aligned with Mullah Omar who saw the terrorist campaigns against Pakistan as a distraction from the fight in Afghanistan. In playing tribal politics, the Pakistani government was thus careful to distinguish the “good” Taliban, whose fight was directed against NATO forces but helped Pakistan promote strategic depth in Afghanistan, from the “bad” Taliban, who focused on challenging the Pakistani state.⁷⁸ Pakistan's selective strategy in dealing with militant groups within its borders reflects the twin concern of protecting their western border from Indian machinations and halting the spread of FATA-based militancy that challenged Pakistani legitimacy.

The Uncertain Future of the U.S.-Pakistan Relationship

Given the mutually strategic nature of the U.S. and Pakistan relationship, there is an almost perpetual sentiment within each state that this alliance has fallen short, failing to deliver on promised benefits. As tensions increase with the U.S. freezing over \$1 billion in military assistance payments under public accusations of duplicity in their counterterrorism efforts, Pakistan may see little continued political or financial benefit in continuing an alliance with the U.S., especially as relations with China grow stronger.

Pakistan has long considered China its “all-weather ally”, using Chinese military assistance to counter-balance fluctuations and uncertainties with U.S. aid. As tensions arise with the U.S., Pakistan has consistently fallen back on China. Two weeks following the Bin Laden raid, for example, Prime Minister Gillani stated during a visit to Beijing, “We are proud to have China as our best, and most trusted friend and China will always find Pakistan standing beside at all times.”⁷⁹ By 2016, China even overtook the U.S. as the primary supplier of military hardware to Pakistan, supplying 63% compared to 19% from the U.S.⁸⁰ China, further, is poised to make a \$46 billion investment in Pakistan with the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor connecting Western China with the Gwadar Port on Pakistan's Arabian coast.⁸¹

The relationship between Pakistan and China weakens the leverage U.S. possesses in South Asia. U.S. strategy in the region must, therefore, consider this political reality. Considering the geopolitical importance of Pakistan, the U.S. should make a public and symbolic effort at reaching out to its ally in order to begin to constructively work on areas of disagreement between the two nations.

⁷⁸ Ahmed, *The Thistle and the Drone*, 72-73.

⁷⁹ Markey, *No Exit from Pakistan*, 183.

⁸⁰ Abheet Singh Sethi, “China behind Pak's growing confidence, supplies Islamabad's arms need,” *Hindustan Times*, September 30, 2016.

⁸¹ See Harrison Akins, *China in Balochistan: CPEC and the Shifting Security Landscape of Pakistan*, Policy Brief 4:17, Howard H. Baker, Jr. Center for Public Policy, September 2017.