



# THE LAND WARFARE PAPERS

No. 82 APRIL 2011

## What Drives Pakistan's Interest in Afghanistan?

Christopher L. Budihas

A National Security Affairs Paper  
published on occasion by

**THE INSTITUTE OF  
LAND WARFARE**

ASSOCIATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES ARMY  
Arlington, Virginia

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**by**

**Christopher L. Budihas**

**The Institute of Land Warfare**  
ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

## AN INSTITUTE OF LAND WARFARE PAPER

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### **LAND WARFARE PAPER NO. 82, April 2011** **What Drives Pakistan's Interest in Afghanistan?**

by Christopher L. Budihas

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## Foreword

Ever since Britain's haphazard partition of British Colonial India in 1947, destabilizing events, both within the country and forced upon it, have plagued Pakistan. The frequency of these events continues to prevent Pakistan from becoming a regional power while the unpredictable degree of instability within the region continually prevents it from becoming a failed state. This instability has increased regional tensions with its neighbors, allowed the formation of al Qaeda safe havens and contributed to the rise of homegrown terrorism. Much of Pakistan's historical instability is deeply rooted in its relationship with Afghanistan.

In this paper, the author examines how Pakistan's external and internal security interests, internal political framework and economy are interwoven with its relationship with Afghanistan. The current regional dynamics reveal that, fundamentally, national security drives Pakistan's ultimate interest in controlling Afghanistan. To preserve national unity, Pakistan must use Afghanistan to guard against internal militant groups as well as its aggressive Indian neighbor. Without stable national security, Pakistan will not be able to achieve the economic growth necessary to achieve global leadership within the international community.

Finally, the author provides recommendations for future U.S. strategies and finds that failure to understand the complexities analyzed in this article could lead to a failed NATO strategy in Afghanistan, a debunked U.S.–Pakistani–Afghan partnership and, worst case, a regional war between the two nuclear states of Pakistan and India. The findings also conclude that for Pakistan to achieve an enduring state of security there must be open and credible strategic dialogue between Afghanistan and NATO countries—only such dialogue could deliver a mutually cooperative partnership and lead to collective diplomatic agreements. In addition, the author recommends parallel negotiations with India and Iran, which could lead to cooperative concessions, if not formal treaties or agreements, thereby mitigating those countries' damaging policies regarding Pakistan. With Pakistan's security, politics and economy inextricably linked with Afghanistan, the relationship between these two countries must be recognized by regional and international policymakers.



Gordon R. Sullivan  
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25 April 2011



# **What Drives Pakistan's Interest in Afghanistan?**

## **Introduction**

In March 2009 President Barack Obama stated that Pakistan's border region is "the most dangerous place in the world" because the majority of international terrorist incidents within the previous year had been either planned in or launched from Pakistan.<sup>1</sup> Many of these terror plots directed against the United States and its allies came from terrorists who were trained by al Qaeda in the frontier areas of Pakistan. With such sobering threats to its homeland and a 10-year NATO war in Afghanistan, the United States continues its efforts to create an effective partnership with Pakistan. Yet the United States has a history of failed foreign policies in Pakistan because policymakers resist acknowledging the complexities of Pakistan and its relationship with Afghanistan. The continued failure of political leaders and strategists to understand these complexities, marked by Britain's 1947 arbitrary division of British Colonial India, could lead the United States into a failed NATO strategy in Afghanistan, a debunked U.S.–Pakistani partnership and, worst case, a regional war between the two nuclear states of Pakistan and India.

Since its creation in 1947, Pakistan has been plagued with instability as a result of from its haphazard partition from British Colonial India. A series of internal and external destabilizing factors throughout its 63 years of history leave it on the edge of becoming either a failed state or a regional power. Many of the challenges that Pakistan has had and continues to face in today's world are inextricably linked to its western neighbor. Pakistan's historical and current relationship with Afghanistan is vital to understanding and analyzing Pakistani motivations and concerns within this volatile region of the world. The seemingly causal impacts of other regional states and subnational actors in providing positive or detrimental effects on the stability in the region are also imperative to recognizing Pakistan's political situation. Any major strategic action directed toward Pakistan from another country—particularly India, China and Iran—will very often have an impact on Afghanistan. Likewise, these countries' interests in Afghanistan have become increasingly influential on Pakistan's security, political and economic interests.

Four major components—internal security complexities, external security challenges, dynamics of internal Pakistani politics and the quest for economic resources—are interwoven with those of Afghanistan and will be addressed in this paper. Exploring Pakistan's internal security complexities and their links to neighboring Afghanistan will determine what factors are having a destabilizing effect on Pakistan's sovereignty. Necessary to a discussion of Pakistan's external security is its strategy to protect itself from India by building an alliance with Afghanistan that provides Pakistan strategic depth while preventing Indian influence within Afghanistan. Chinese and Iranian influences in Afghanistan are also crucial to Pakistan's security concerns. An examination of the Pakistani government's internal politics will include inadvertent power sharing with the military, provincial governments, powerful elites and ethnic majorities. This investigation will also discuss the economic importance to Pakistan of gaining access to Afghan markets and natural resources.



## The Birth of Plate Tectonic Friction in the Region

Around 711 CE, Muhammad bin Qasim and his Arab Muslim army from the Middle East moved through Central Asia and established the Umayyad Empire in what is now Pakistan. Qasim immediately faced civil unrest within the empire, specifically from the indigenous Punjab and Sindh populations. Additionally, the empire's inability to control Buddhist and Hindu influences in this region continued to complicate its rule over the country.<sup>2</sup> For the following 1,000 years, various Islamic dynasties would attempt to control modern-day Pakistan with varying levels of success.

Throughout many Central Asian dynasties, the land mass of present-day Afghanistan also fell within these borders, resulting in a fusion of the cultures and histories of the tribes currently residing in the region. The expansion of Islam in the subcontinent region during this period led to the establishment of Muslim communities within modern-day India. The cultural differences between the Islamic and Hindu communities provoked demographic friction that sparked—and continues to spark—localized violence and periodic wars. In addition, the geographic position of this region—the “silk roads” that operate as trade routes, connecting Europe and the Middle East with Central Asia—made controlling this area financially crucial for the regional dynasties in power.<sup>3</sup> However, the diverse demographics and challenging geography of this region made it extremely difficult for the sultans to maintain positive control of their regions.

Pakistan's modern history begins around 1849, when the British defeated the Sikh Empire during the Anglo-Sikh Wars.<sup>4</sup> The British East India Company ruled over the subcontinent—the region including what is now India, Pakistan and Bangladesh—until 1947 when Pakistan and India were granted independence. During its rule, the British Empire was challenged to prevent ethnic violence and reduce tensions amongst the region's indigenous populations.

In 1885 a number of prominent Indian leaders (both Hindu and Muslim) founded the Indian National Congress (INC) in a legal attempt to protect the well-being of the people on the subcontinent. The INC was instituted as a result of perceived injustices and an ongoing lack of effective governance by their British subjugators. Under British rule, friction between Hindus and Muslims increased exponentially, because the Muslims attempted to participate in the INC but were, in essence, disregarded and pushed to the political sideline by the Hindus. An increase in Muslim nationalism prompted prominent Indian Muslims in the government to establish the Indian Muslim League in 1906. In the league's charter, *The Green Book*, Maulana Mohammad Ali outlined the principles of the organization.<sup>5</sup> The major tenets were not to “establish an independent Muslim state, but rather [to] concentrate on protecting Muslim liberties and rights, promoting understanding between the Muslim community and other Indians, educating the Muslim and Indian community at large on the actions of the government, and discouraging violence.”<sup>6</sup> Over the following decades, however, these tenets shifted. Perceived prejudices by the Hindu majority, lack of government essential services for Muslim communities and sectarian violence between communities caused the Muslim League to evolve as a political movement, advocating that Muslims establish an independent nation.

As recommended by the Simon Commission in 1927, the British proposed a joint conference between the Indian Muslim League and the INC that would develop an inclusive constitution for all Indian cultures and religions.<sup>7</sup> However, the two parties could not reconcile their differences at the conference. This political failure marks a critical crossroad in the

region, creating an irreversible separation between Muslims and Hindus. Through the 1920s and 1930s Mahatma Gandhi and other prominent Hindu political leaders set the conditions for a free Indian nation. Meanwhile, Muslim leaders laid a foundation for the creation of an independent Muslim nation. At the same time, leadership within the Muslim League became perpetually disenchanted with the INC, and Muslim participation in the governmental process gradually dwindled to nonexistence. Through the 1930s Muslim separatist organizations increased their calls for an independent Muslim nation. In 1937 Mohammed Ali Jinnah, a major political leader in the Indian Muslim League, future governor-general of Pakistan and considered by many to be the father of Pakistan, successfully argued for the British adoption of a “Two-Nation Theory,” which demanded the separation of the Hindu and Muslim lands as two sovereign independent nations.<sup>8</sup>

When the region entered World War II, India supported the British against the Axis alliance. Simultaneously, the internal situation within the Indian colony deteriorated with substantial interethnic friction, leaving the nation on the brink of dissolution.<sup>9</sup> In 1944 Ali Jinnah and Gandhi met in Bombay to attempt to mediate a single-state solution wherein the two ethnic groups were equally represented.<sup>10</sup> But these efforts proved fruitless, in part because they coincided with the end of World War II. According to Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund, authors of *A History of India*, “the British [no longer] had . . . the will, the financial resources or military power” to govern the Indian subcontinent.<sup>11</sup> In acknowledging Britain’s lack of resources, British Prime Minister Clement Attlee appointed Lord Louis Mountbatten to determine the partitioning of the region into independent nations—which became India and Pakistan. In what turned out to be a haphazard division of the countries, the British government demonstrated its distressingly flawed knowledge about the subcontinent region it had ruled for almost a century—and its haste to rid itself of the region as quickly as possible. The historical thumbprint the British left on this region—specifically the borders it drew—continues to be a central source of problems for Pakistan.

On 14 August 1947 Pakistan became an independent country. The shortsighted way the country was divided and inadequate preparation for separating Pakistan and India into two nations immediately presented the new Pakistani leadership with major issues to address. First, the new government was not properly established. From the start, Pakistan did not establish essential framework, including government institutions, economic capital, administrative policies and military and police forces. Even though the country was largely separated along homogeneous demographics from the “provinces of Punjab and Bengal,” the “mass migration” of two million Muslims into Pakistan resulted in a number of tribal and ethnic clashes.<sup>12</sup> The inability of the Pakistani leadership to prepare for this mass migration led to decades of interethnic violence among Muslims.

One of the major complications of the British partition remains the division of Pakistan into a West (current-day Pakistan) and an East (current-day Bangladesh). The Pakistani government’s inability to effectively rule the East Pakistani Bengal nation increased nationalist spirit and awakened a Bengali separatist movement, which eventually broke away from Western Pakistan. In 1971 the West Pakistani government and military were unsuccessful in quelling the Bengali guerrilla movement, which was supported by half a million Indian soldiers deployed to East Pakistan. As a result, Bangladesh became an independent country. This embarrassing loss of a large, prosperous part of Pakistan—and India’s direct assistance to the Bangladeshis—is still a source of friction between the nations.<sup>13</sup>

## Post-Independence Pakistani–Afghan Relations

After gaining independence, Pakistan's two major strategic goals involved Afghanistan: establishing friendly relations with Afghanistan and preventing a Kabul–Delhi alliance. However, Afghanistan's leadership had reservations about Pakistan. Foremost, many leaders in the regime doubted that Pakistan would be able to survive as a sovereign nation-state, given its complex dynamics. Afghanistan had reason to resist friendly relations with Pakistan since a failed Pakistani state would allow Afghanistan to seize some of Pakistan's territory. Additionally, the Afghan monarchy worried that if Pakistan became a fully functional democratic country, its democratic image would generate internal separatist fervor in the Afghan population, awakening their desire for freedom from repressive monarchical rule.<sup>14</sup> However, since the fall of the monarchy in 1973, there has not been a deliberate Afghan policy or strategy to prevent Pakistan from becoming a democracy.

In an attempt to take advantage of a young Pakistani state, the Afghans sought to exploit the newly formed government by renouncing the Durand Line, a British-drawn Pakistani–Afghan border agreement, and pursuing the creation of an independent Pashtun nation.<sup>15</sup> Despite attempts to erase the Durand Line, the Afghans had no legitimate claim to reverse the international agreement, and the boundary still exists. Afghanistan's desire for an independent "Pashtunistan" gained little traction, with Pakistan balking at Afghanistan's claim for this independent state. Omar Sharifi, a chair at the American Institute of Afghan Affairs, notes that Pakistan believed "Afghanistan's concern for the unity of Pashtuns [was] not genuine because it [did] not include the Pashtuns (Pashtunistan) on its side of the line."<sup>16</sup> In essence, Afghanistan wanted to give the Pashtuns their own nation at the expense of Pakistan without giving up any of its own sovereign Pashtun territory for this independent Pashtun nation. The Pakistani government, however, contended that because Pakistani Pashtuns chose to be Pakistanis in the 1947 Peshawar Referendum, the Pashtun population's majority vote was included in the new Islamic Nation of Pakistan. This majority vote referred to the Pashtun people who were living within Pakistani territory and not those Pashtuns in Afghanistan. Throughout the last six decades, the Durand Line and the Pashtun population have added to the friction between the two nations.

Despite this tension, the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan fluctuated between a civil friendship and a tenuous peace between partition and the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Pakistan focused on maintaining peace and preventing a "Kabul–Delhi nexus" that would threaten its stability and growth.<sup>17</sup> Until 1979 economic, religious and ethnic similarities between the Afghan and Pakistani neighbors provided a cooperative exchange and gradually improved their relationship.<sup>18</sup> But Pakistan continued to worry that an Afghan–Indian alliance would lead to a two-front war against it, culminating in its ultimate demise and the division of the nation's territory divided between the two neighboring countries.

The 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, however, rather than the feared Kabul–Delhi alliance, shaped Pakistan into what it is today. Stephen Tanner, author of *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the Fall of the Taliban*, links the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan to the Soviet–Afghan Friendship Treaty of 1921, an agreement which made the Russians believe they had a legitimate right to influence their southern neighbor.<sup>19</sup> Ex-Pakistani Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar illuminated the strategic consequences of the Soviet invasion:

A Soviet military intervention provoked a deep sense of alarm in Pakistan. Suddenly the buffer disappeared and as the Soviet rulers consolidated their control in Afghanistan,

they used it as a springboard to reach a warm water port on the Arabian Sea [through Pakistan]. Pakistan could not afford to acquiesce in the Soviet intervention, nor could it confront a superpower.<sup>20</sup>

Pakistan faced a number of challenges in warding off a potential communist neighbor. Immediately upon the Soviet invasion, 3.2 million Afghan refugees fled across the border into Pakistan. This mass exodus produced a crippling financial strain on Pakistan's economy and dramatically changed its internal demographics. Pakistan had to learn how to train and resource an Afghan guerrilla movement in order to extricate the Soviet invaders and their puppet government from Afghanistan. The United States came to Pakistan's assistance in hopes of preventing the creation of a communist Afghanistan. Thus, the Soviet invasion led to a partnership between the United States and Pakistan.<sup>21</sup> Over the next decade, the United States' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) worked in support of the Pakistani military, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) organization<sup>22</sup> and the Pakistani government to train, resource and fund the Afghan mujahedin. While the eviction of the Soviets from Afghanistan was successful, other residual consequences of the war continue to adversely impact regional dynamics.

Major repercussions of the Afghan war included a destabilized central government, an increase in warlordism, a drastic rise in religious militancy and a major boost in international narco-trafficking. The three million Afghan refugees burdened the national economy, heightened religious militancy and increased social divisions along ethnic lines. These effects of the Afghan–Soviet war still strain Pakistan's government. After the Soviet invasion was resolved and its puppet regime removed from power, friction between the Pakistani civilian governmental leadership and its military leadership escalated. At the end of the Soviet war in Afghanistan, Pakistan's primary strategic goal was the installation of a pro-Pakistani government in Kabul.<sup>23</sup>

However, after the Soviet-installed Najibullah Regime fell in 1992, warlordism prevailed in Afghanistan. Pakistan recognized that in order to see a pro-Pakistani government in Kabul, it would have to shift its strategic approach. This anarchical environment in Afghanistan contributed to the country's increasingly negative influences on Pakistan. In the last four years of the Najibullah regime, the rise of a Pakistani-friendly Afghan Pashtun Taliban force under Mullah Omar seemed the logical choice for bringing stability to Afghanistan and providing Pakistan a strategic alliance. Pakistan's military and ISI provided the Taliban with the requisite resources and training needed to subjugate Afghanistan. Additionally, Pakistani religious leaders provided the Taliban with additional resources, money and recruits through its global Islamic networks.<sup>24</sup>

Despite help from Pakistan, the Taliban struggled militarily with the former Afghan warlords, who later evolved into the Northern Alliance Coalition. The Taliban's enforcement of strict Sharia laws and its brutal treatment of the civilian populace brought it negative international media attention, resulting in increased pressure on countries—specifically Pakistan—not to support the Taliban.<sup>25</sup> When al Qaeda attacked the United States on 11 September 2001, Pakistan was at a crossroads in its official sponsorship of the Taliban: knowing it must either disassociate from the Taliban or remain supportive of the Taliban and face widespread international repercussions. Pakistan officially chose to cease its support of the Taliban. However, there still remained warranted suspicion of Pakistan's unofficial support of the Taliban—particularly as evidenced by safe havens for Taliban members within Pakistan.<sup>26</sup>

Since NATO forces in Afghanistan initiated Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Pakistan's relationship with its neighbor has followed a troubled trajectory that has further

complicated its own internal and external security, interjected further dysfunction within its own political structure and strained its economic well-being to the brink of catastrophic financial collapse. According to Kamal Matinuddin, author of *The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994–1997*, Pakistan’s key objectives in Afghanistan before the NATO invasion had been:

- the creation of a durable peace with an Afghan government that is pro-Pakistan;
- the repatriation of Afghan refugees from Pakistani soil;
- access into Central Asian markets; and
- a safe route for the oil and gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to the Arabian Sea.<sup>27</sup>

However, with the NATO invasion, these goals became loftier, in part because the Pakistan government did not expect the Taliban issue to affect it—and its international status—as greatly it has. Currently, Pakistan’s failure to achieve these strategic goals through an enduring partnership with Afghanistan results from a number of culminating factors that are intertwined with its western neighbor.

### Internal Security Issues

Since its partition from India, Pakistan’s internal security environment has been complicated, as exemplified by the flooding in summer 2010. Increasing domestic pressure forced the central government to provide critically needed disaster relief services and to increase internal security to prevent militant groups in the country from exploiting the flood to gain more influence over the local civilians.<sup>28</sup> Historical ethnic alliances associated with the Pashtuns and the secondary effects of the Taliban’s influence contribute to the government’s internal security difficulties. The Pakistani government’s inability to exercise control within its sovereign borders has enabled the rise in domestic terrorism, a result from the conflict between Islamic fundamentalism and secular state policy. Adding to the internal turmoil is NATO’s ongoing war in Afghanistan.

Three recent natural disasters in Pakistan—the 2005 earthquake and the 2007 and 2010 summer monsoon floods—have played into militant hands by increasing their recruiting capability. In the most recent summer monsoon flood, which affected a fifth of the country, the Pakistani government had a very difficult time providing aid (food, shelter and materials) and evacuation support to the affected civilian population. The Tehrik-e-Taliban, al Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jamaat Ud Dawa all reportedly distributed aid and set up medical stations to treat hundreds of displaced people in the FATA and NWFP; these efforts increased their popularity and thus the number of potential recruits—likely a calculated move. The terrorist organizations highlighted the Pakistani government’s inability to care for its citizens during these crises, further driving a wedge between the government and these already skeptical Pakistani citizens. The militants’ apparent exploitation of these natural disasters demonstrates their ability to harness the synergy needed to gain popularity at the expense of a weak Pakistani government.

Source: International Crisis Group, “Pakistan: The Worsening IDP Crisis,” Asia Briefing 111, 16 September 2010, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-asia/B111-pakistan-the-worsening-idp-crisis.aspx>

## The Pashtun

*The Pashtun are not at peace unless they are at war.*  
Pashtun Proverb<sup>29</sup>

An estimated 42 million Pashtuns geographically straddle the international boundaries between Afghanistan and Pakistan and make up the largest Islamic tribe in the world.<sup>30</sup> Approximately 13 million Pashtuns live in Afghanistan and represent 42 percent of the total population, making up Afghanistan's ethnic majority. In Pakistan, 29 million Pashtuns, heavily concentrated in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), represent only 15 percent of the total population.<sup>31</sup> This disproportionate split of the Pashtun tribe dates back to the enactment of the Durand Line in 1893. However, the border is extremely porous and the Durand Line has done little to physically prevent the daily cross-border activities of the Pashtun people.

Throughout the centuries, the Pashtun people, as an entity, have not been subjugated to centralized rule. Instead, centralized governments have had to build loose alliances with the Pashtun clans to keep them loyal to the ruling authority. This historical perspective directly influences today's relationship between the Pashtuns and the Pakistani government. Before the NATO invasion of Afghanistan and the subsequent influx of Taliban members in Pakistan, there had been an unwritten policy that the central government would not interfere with the Pashtun local governance in the FATA and NWFP. This informal agreement, which lasted from 1947 through 2002, insinuated that the Pashtuns would become a centralized, semi-autonomous state over which the Pakistani government and army would exercise little control.<sup>32</sup>

Over the past century, Afghan and Pakistani Pashtuns have wanted their own country—and the unwritten agreement was intended to pacify this desire. Afghan Pashtuns believe they are the rightful rulers of Afghanistan because they are the majority. Pakistani Pashtuns question the legitimacy of the centralized Pakistani government's rule over them, since they were forcibly partitioned into the country in 1947.<sup>33</sup> Even though the Pashtuns are separated into two countries, they generally have a sense of inter-tribal Pashtun nationalism that allows them to support one another during times of need.

However, U.S. pressure on Pakistan to conduct military operations against Afghan and Pakistani Taliban members has prompted Pashtun tribal leaders to claim that the Pakistani government is breaking their supposed agreement. In late 2002 NATO combat operations in Afghanistan increased American pressure on the Pakistani government to address the militant threats posed by the insurgent forces operating in these Pashtun tribal belts. The start of Pakistani military operations in the Pashtun region broke the informal agreement and provoked deeper tensions.

## The Taliban

In a 29 April 2009 speech to the House of Commons, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown stated that “the greatest international priority . . . is the border areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan.”<sup>34</sup> According to a June 2010 *British House of Commons Library Research Paper*, “These border areas are predominately inhabited by ethnic Pashtuns, from whom are drawn most of the membership of the Afghan and Pakistan Taliban, the two groups believed to be providing shelter and assistance to al Qaeda.”<sup>35</sup> The Taliban movement—sparked in large part by the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan—has influenced Pakistani internal security much more than either Pakistan or Afghanistan ever anticipated.

Once the Soviets left Afghanistan, many religious Pashtuns observed that unemployed mujahedin fighters, who were becoming increasingly corrupt, sought to govern Afghanistan—and were willing to do so at the expense of the common people. This tense environment gave disenfranchised Afghan Pashtun refugees in Pakistan the opportunity to create the Taliban movement. In addition, the madrassas (religious schools) proved ripe for recruiting orphaned and disillusioned young males into this formidable religious–military–political movement. As Ahmed Rashid states in his book *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, the Taliban “saw themselves as the cleansers and purifiers of a guerrilla war gone astray, a social system gone wrong in an Islamic way of life that had been compromised by corruption and excess.”<sup>36</sup> Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar declared that “restor[ing] peace, disarm[ing] the population, for sharia law, and . . . defend[ing] the integrity and Islamic character of Afghanistan”<sup>37</sup> were the terrorist organization’s primary goals.

The Taliban’s roots within the Pashtun tribe are critical to understanding Pakistan’s internal security problems. The movement is tribally based and not affiliated with any specific country, making it a difficult organization to contain. Since the Pashtun tribal boundaries extended within both Pakistan and Afghanistan, it was impossible for either country to fully control the Taliban. Additionally, the Taliban’s tribal roots within the Deobandi<sup>38</sup> traditions of Islam, which is very similar to the Wahabi<sup>39</sup> religious sect on the Saudi peninsula and to the Pashtunwali<sup>40</sup> tribal code, reinforce the Pashtuns’ desire to live within an imposed strict Islamic sharia-type society. Their ideological foundation concentrates on preserving Pashtun cultural, Islamic values and totalitarian thinking.<sup>41</sup>

In the mid-1990s the Pakistani government supported the Taliban movement in an effort to dispose of the Tajik-dominated government in Kabul and install a pro-Pakistan government in Afghanistan. Pakistani leaders believed that a Taliban-led Afghanistan would bring many rewards—including a sense of geographical depth in the likelihood of a war with India and an increase in Pakistan’s ability to reach Central Asian markets through Afghanistan—but they did not anticipate the repercussions of such a radical movement emanating from their western neighbor and operating within their nation. The Pakistani government assumed that once the Taliban secured Afghanistan, the Pashtun religious–military force residing in Pakistan would leave for Afghanistan, taking with it the approximately 3 million Afghan refugees who had crossed into Pakistan with the Soviet invasion. It also speculated the Taliban would entice Pakistani-based Islamic militants to Afghanistan.<sup>42</sup> The Afghan Taliban never fully governed the entire nation before the NATO invasion in 2001, but it controlled over 90 percent of the country at its peak in July 1998.<sup>43</sup> Ultimately, the Pakistani leadership failed to foresee that supporting a radically expanding Taliban movement would have the opposite of the intended effect. The Taliban’s influence further radicalized an already destabilized Pakistan in what has been perceived as “the Talibanization” of their western frontier.<sup>44</sup>

### **Pakistani Taliban = *Tehrik-e-Taliban* (TTP)**

*The Afghan and Pakistan Taliban cannot simply be viewed as two sides of the same coin.*

Jon Lunn and Ben Smith<sup>45</sup>

Until 2002 there was only an Afghan Taliban movement. However, that same year a Pakistani Taliban, or *Tehrik-e-Taliban* (TTP, or “Movement of Students”), slowly emerged in the NWFP and FATA in response to aggressive Pakistani military operations and perceived governmental neglect.<sup>46</sup> Pakistan launched military operations under increasing U.S. pressure to crack down on the Afghan Taliban in the tribal belts, which were impacting NATO combat

operations along the Afghan side of the border. However, these operations backfired because Pakistani tribal leaders, not wanting any further influence from what they perceived to be a corrupt and disinterested central government in Islamabad, vehemently protested the destructive Pakistani military tactics.

For five years, this homegrown insurgency continued to expand. In December 2007 the Pakistani security forces' heavy-handed tactics in the deadly seizure of the Lal Masjid Mosque (commonly called the "Red Mosque") in Islamabad,<sup>47</sup> rallied the TTP movement to form an official federation under the influential leadership of Baitullah Meshud.<sup>48</sup> Previously, the TTP's primary strategic goal had been to achieve an autonomous self-rule in the NWFP and FATA. Now TTP would continue its armed opposition and execute domestic terrorist acts against the central government's authorities and institutions. This led the government to label the approximate 30,000-man TTP movement as a terrorist organization in August 2008.<sup>49</sup> Although the TTP had been a movement independent of the Afghan Taliban, with separate and distinct goals, Mullah Omar extended a hand of friendship to TTP in early 2009 to create an official partnership between the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban organizations. Mullah Omar wanted the organizations to "put aside their differences and support the Afghan Taliban in combating the American presence in Afghanistan."<sup>50</sup> This objective led to a shura (tribal leader meeting) that officially merged the Afghan Taliban and TTP under the name "Council of United Mujahedin"<sup>51</sup> and led the TTP to redefine its strategic goals to "establish an Islamic state in Pakistan based on sharia law, to resist the Pakistani Army attempts to counter those and to support efforts to expel coalition forces from Afghanistan."<sup>52</sup> This merger allowed the TTP to increase exponentially its cross-border and domestic terrorist attacks in support of its Afghan brothers' efforts.

Currently, the three strategies the Pakistani government has deployed to contain the TTP are "divide and rule, [broker] peace deals, and [order] the use of force."<sup>53</sup> The tense environment that instigated the creation of the TTP will continue to remain a major challenge for the Pakistani government until it implements a whole-of-government strategy aimed at reconciling and reintegrating TTP into Pakistani mainstream society. In 2010 the Pakistani military continued its attempt to contain the TTP in order to reduce its domestic terror activities and prevent the spread of its militant influence in the country, albeit unsuccessfully. The Pakistani government's failure to influence effectively or control the Taliban within its country only heightens tensions its diplomatic relationships with both Afghanistan and the United States. Until a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy is adopted by the central government, the TTP, with its domestic terrorist attacks on civilian officials, security forces and government institutions, will continue to destabilize Pakistan's internal security.

## **Al Qaeda**

NATO's overwhelming military power pushed al Qaeda out of Afghanistan without adequately considering where Taliban members would go. Upon invading Afghanistan in 2001, NATO aimed to kill or capture al Qaeda leaders and their operatives, but unfortunately it did not tactically set conditions that would have prevented al Qaeda from slipping out of Afghanistan and into Pakistan's frontier regions. Top al Qaeda leaders and their operatives fled into Pakistan's western region to set up bases of operation from which they could continue to wage their global jihad. The Pakistan government's and military's failures to strictly govern and secure the NWFP and FATA has given al Qaeda a sanctuary to operate from Pakistan's tribal belts with impunity. According to General David Petraeus, "Pakistan is [now] the headquarters of the al Qaeda senior leadership."<sup>54</sup>



Since the 1990s al Qaeda has networked extensively within the tribal belts of Pakistan and cemented itself within the tribes through intermarriages and religious Deobandi and Wahabi links. The lack of government control in these mountain havens allows al Qaeda and other militants to operate successfully outside central Pakistani governmental control, thus turning Pakistan into al Qaeda's global headquarters. Even though the number of al Qaeda fighters is unknown, it is speculated that there are as many as 300 terrorist operatives in Pakistan.<sup>55</sup> Many of them are foreign fighters coming to Pakistan's tribal areas from around the world to receive jihad training. Al Qaeda's presence in Pakistan's tribal areas provides another destabilizing force both in the country and in its relationship with Afghanistan. Additionally, some British analysts believe that al Qaeda is acting as a mediator between militant groups, facilitating the formation of alliances by helping them cooperate operationally in the name of the jihad.<sup>56</sup>

Since the beginning of the NATO war in Afghanistan, it has been widely believed that al Qaeda leaders and members have been operating out of Pakistan's NWFP and the FATA. It is also widely rumored that some of al Qaeda's senior leaders are operating in and around the provincial capital of Quetta.<sup>57</sup> The belief that al Qaeda maintains unchallenged safe havens in Pakistan is a source of friction in diplomatic relations among the United States, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Yet Pakistan continues to vehemently deny claims that key al Qaeda leaders, such as Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar, are in Pakistan.

There is significant international frustration with Islamabad for giving al Qaeda—either purposefully or inadvertently—sanctuary in Pakistan's frontier tribal regions. This frustration not only complicates NATO relations with Pakistan but also stirs up tensions between the Islamabad and Kabul governments, greatly affecting their ability to interact in a cooperative and political manner and to cultivate their shared interests. While al Qaeda is the primary reason for NATO's involvement in the region, the group is only part of a complex web involving Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Al Qaeda is able to take advantage of the Pakistani government's weak attempts to eradicate its members from their safe havens. It has sponsored domestic terrorist acts against the Pakistani government and military organizations to further destabilize Pakistan's U.S.-backed government. With these attacks and by using Islam as a rallying cry to unite the people, al Qaeda hopes to gain the support of Pakistanis, pitting them against the Islamabad government. Since 2002, when Pakistani military operations commenced in the frontier tribal belts, the military has been blamed for the deaths or displacement of thousands of innocent Pakistani civilians. This damage has increased popular support for al Qaeda, the TTP and other militant organizations to the detriment of the central government. The Pakistani security forces' underdeveloped counterinsurgency strategy has increased public disapproval of the government.

There are strong indicators that al Qaeda operatives are training the TTP and other prominent Pakistani militant groups to use relatively new terror tactics. The ever-increasing suicide bombings and improvised explosive device (IED) attacks are al Qaeda signature tactics; until 2003 there had never been a recorded suicide attack in Pakistan's history.<sup>58</sup> In 2009 there were 80 recorded suicide attacks.<sup>59</sup> These homegrown terrorist organizations, many arising since NATO's 2002 invasion of Afghanistan, are attacking the government, the military and a number of minority religious sects within the country.

According to various Pakistani media outlets, al Qaeda and Taliban leadership and their operatives have been moving out of the frontier tribal areas as a result of U.S. unmanned aerial missile strikes. In an August 2010 article in the Pakistani *Daily Times*, a Pakistani intelligence

officer reported that “60 to 70 percent of the core al Qaeda leadership has been eliminated, dealing a serious blow to the network’s capacity to launch any major attacks on the West.” Remaining insurgent leaders are widely believed to be migrating toward Pakistan’s urban areas, most notably Karachi, in efforts to protect themselves from the increased drone attacks. The *Daily Times* report found that Quetta shura members—senior al Qaeda members and the top leadership of the Afghan Taliban—are actually the Karachi shura, located in safe houses outside of Karachi. There are rumors that Mullah Omar has attempted to escape the frontier areas to the urban area in Karachi or another part of Balochistan to avoid U.S. drone strikes. These U.S. attacks have had some success in killing al Qaeda leaders, but it is currently unknown if the attacks are effectively dismantling al Qaeda’s terror network.<sup>60</sup>

### **Impact of Afghan refugees**

In the past two decades, Afghan refugee camps and villages in Pakistan have been a breeding ground for disenfranchised military-age males who are facing high unemployment and poverty. Inspired by religious and militant leaders, they see joining a militant group as an honorable opportunity to wage jihad and earn money. A recent study published in *Insurgency & Terrorism in Afghanistan: Who is Fighting and Why* reveals that the “fighters are predominantly Afghan [refugees], made up of idealists trained and recruited in Pakistan, young recruits with no viable economic alternatives both from Pakistan and Afghanistan, and opportunists primarily motivated by monetary gain.”<sup>61</sup> Daniel Byman, coauthor of *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*, concurs that Afghan refugees are not being recruited by militant groups because of extremist religious motivations but primarily because of the conditions they live in and the hope for a better existence.<sup>62</sup> The refugee crisis in Pakistan has increased unemployment, drained Pakistan’s economic resources and, worst of all, filled the ranks of the militant groups that are attacking governmental and security force institutions in both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Large numbers of refugees first began fleeing from Afghanistan into Pakistan when the communists seized power in Kabul in 1979. It is estimated that by the late 1980s, more than 4 million Afghans had fled to the east, largely because of Soviet occupation.<sup>63</sup> These refugee camps served as the epicenter for Afghan guerrilla recruiting and training; this legacy continues today as militant organizations draw new recruits from the camps to fill their ranks.

The second mass exodus of refugees occurred when NATO forces invaded Afghanistan. The majority of displaced persons moved into the FATA, NWFP and Balochistan Provinces, greatly straining Pakistan’s governmental capacity and economy. The 2009 report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) stated that there were approximately 1.9 million displaced Afghans still in Pakistan.<sup>64</sup> Additionally, the UNHCR reported that there were more than 80 known reported Afghan camps in Pakistan, 71 in NWFP, 12 in Balochistan and one in Punjab. The Taliban have recruited many displaced Pashtun volunteers who see the Taliban fight in Afghanistan as honorable and wish to join its ranks to regain their country from its U.S.-supported, Tajik-dominated Kabul government. The madrassas in and around the refugee camps serve as recruitment centers for the terrorist organizations. Particularly in the NWFP and Balochistan, the camp madrassas’ mullahs (religious leaders) conspire with the militant leaders to get these young men join their cause.<sup>65</sup>

Over the past decade the Pakistani government has responded to recruitment in the camps by forcibly deporting or arresting Afghan refugees.<sup>66</sup> The policy of deliberate deportation pushes Afghan males out of Pakistan, but because the government will not forcibly deport

women and children, families are often split, further motivating refugees to join militant groups. A UNHCR spokesperson stated that this method of deportation causes the refugees to “live in a state of fear.”<sup>67</sup> However, deportation of these Afghan refugees stems from its fear that additional Afghans will flee into Pakistan, saddling the government with additional economic strains and security issues.<sup>68</sup>

The heavy-handed tactics used by the Pakistani military in their offensive operations also drive the refugees to militant groups. For example, in March 2010 the military’s indiscriminate use of heavy firepower in the Orakzai frontier area displaced more than 328,000 people and killed thousands.<sup>69</sup> The militants used civilians’ anger about the military’s attacks to gain material and manpower support from the displaced people. With this help, the militants could wage more retribution-type attacks against the security forces that set up garrisons in these newly “cleared” locations.<sup>70</sup>

The refugee crisis in Pakistan continues to highlight the government’s inability to control its territorial domain in the western tribal regions. Without adequately addressing the refugee situation, Pakistan’s internal security will continue to be a major issue until a whole-of-government solution is implemented. This strategy, however, necessitates cooperation from Afghanistan. Ideally, the Afghan government would resolve the refugee crisis by devising a repatriation effort, building infrastructure for Afghan civilians to return to and providing free passage and transportation. While Pakistan may believe it is Afghanistan’s responsible to set the conditions for its people returning, the Afghan government has been too weak and poor since the first refugee movement out of Afghanistan in 1979 to enact these necessary policies.

### **Domestic terrorism**

In March 2009 David Kilcullen, counterinsurgency expert and senior advisor to U.S. military leaders, stated that “Pakistan could collapse within six months if immediate steps are not taken to remedy the situation.”<sup>71</sup> This concern—which still exists—refers to the extensive rise in domestic terrorism in Pakistan. Recent attacks have also demonstrated that no part of Pakistan is safe from terror attacks launched by homegrown militants. The Institute for Conflict Management recorded 2009 as one of the most violent years in Pakistan’s recent history.<sup>72</sup> There was an 800 percent spike in domestic terrorist attacks from 2003 to 2011, with more than 13,500 Pakistani government and civilian fatalities.<sup>73</sup> The central government’s failure to execute a comprehensive domestic strategy that curbs the militancy and ethnic violence contributed to this rise in violence.

One of the major motivators for militant domestic terror attacks is retaliation against the Pakistani government’s institutions and security forces. Pakistan’s security forces have increased military operations against militant strongholds in the NWFP and FATA as a result of international pressure. In response, these terrorist organizations have attacked various governmental institutions. For example, in September 2010 the Pakistani Air Force conducted airstrikes against TTP elements in the Teerah Valley in Khyber, resulting in the deaths of 60 suspected militants and their family members; the TTP responded with a series of suicide attacks on Pakistan’s army garrisons and police stations.<sup>74</sup> The Pakistani security force’s weak counterinsurgency capability and nonexistent comprehensive government strategy to defeat these militant organizations have allowed these terrorists to continuously operate within the country and target institutions that govern and protect the greater Pakistani population.

Another key motivation for the domestic terror attacks is the unpopular Pakistani governmental support of NATO operations in Afghanistan. The routine U.S. unmanned aerial drone missile attacks, seemingly condoned by the Pakistani government, serve as greater inspiration for militant attacks on governmental organizations. The unpopularity of the NATO operations in Afghanistan has provided alliance-building opportunities among many Pakistani terrorist organizations, such as the TTP, Haqqani Network, LeT and LeJ.<sup>75</sup> The 7 September 2010 TTP suicide attack on a police station in Maranshah, which killed 14 policemen and civilians, was launched after a recent U.S. drone missile attack against TTP operatives in the area. Azam Tariq, spokesman for the TTP, told reporters by telephone that “we are targeting Pakistani security forces because the government has allowed America to launch drone attacks on us.”<sup>76</sup> The frequency of U.S. drone missile strikes and the rate of militant attacks in retaliation have steadily increased in the last year.

Militants have used public discontent with the NATO war and its secondary effects on Pakistan to target minority ethnic and religious sects within Pakistan. Since the 1947 partition, Pakistan has experienced periodic outbreaks of interethnic violence. Extremist organizations are instigating this violence to destabilize the internal security environment and incite public discontent with the weak Islamabad government. During summer 2010, there was a substantial uptick in violence as Sunni extremists took the opportunity to attack Shia and the minority Ahmadi communities. After the 3 September 2010 suicide attacks that took place at the end of Ramadan, killing 53 and wounding 197 Shiites in Quetta, Qari Meshud, known as a TTP “mentor of suicide bombers,” said that although the TTP primarily attacks the U.S. and Pakistani governments, “Shias are also our target.”<sup>77</sup> Some of these attacks are not only intended to destroy the Pakistani government’s credibility but are also part of a strategic campaign by the TTP to gain increased control of territory in the Balochistan Province, where the TTP is rumored to be headquartered in its capital of Quetta. There is also a theory that the TTP is attempting to promote “Talibanization” of the frontier areas to gain permanent territory.<sup>78</sup>

As Pakistan continues to be pressed to take control of its territory, domestic terror attacks will likely continue. If the Pakistani government and military cannot control the NWFP and FATA, the current destabilizing dynamics will certainly not improve and perhaps further deteriorate. Rather than continuing to kill and displace thousands of civilians in attempts to crush the Taliban and militant extremists, the Pakistani government needs a whole-of-government strategy to pacify these two provinces. Such a strategy would include not only military attacks on the area but also economic aid and projects intended to improve civilian lives, thereby gradually drying up the Taliban’s and al Qaeda’s recruiting pool. But as Pakistan struggles for control, its internal security situation weakens further and may inadvertently place additional stress on the current Pakistan–Afghanistan relationship.

### **External Security Complexities**

*It's our history. A history of three wars with a larger neighbor. India is five times larger than we are. Their military strength is five times larger. In 1971, our country was disintegrated. So the security issue for Pakistan is an issue of survival.*

Former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto<sup>79</sup>

Since Pakistan’s inception, external security has been its primary strategic concern. The haphazard division of Pakistan and its ethnically diverse populations have prevented it from uniting its people under one nation. Pakistan’s leaders, having failed to instill a sense of

national unity, have instead exploited its citizens' paranoia: perpetuating external threats and guilt imposed by Islam ideology.<sup>80</sup> The seriousness with which Pakistan addresses external security issues directly influences how diplomatically it negotiates its role in NATO operations in Afghanistan and its relationships with India, China and Iran.

### **Impact of NATO operations in Afghanistan on Pakistani external security**

*The extremists who have taken root in the border area of Pakistan and Afghanistan have attacked us before. . . . They are now attempting to destabilize, if not overthrow the Pakistani government and take back enough control, if not the entire country of Afghanistan.*

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton<sup>81</sup>

Since its invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, NATO's operations have adversely affected Pakistan's external security by unifying Islamic extremists, albeit unintentionally. Both NATO's unmanned aerial drone attacks on sovereign Pakistani territory and its ever-increasing political pressures on Pakistan have fed the nation's instability.

A number of unforeseen consequences from NATO operations and U.S. policies in Afghanistan have contributed to a steady climb in religious extremist organizations' strength, as Muslim males enlist to fight those they perceive as Christian invaders of Afghanistan. A predominantly Western coalition fighting a war in a Muslim country has prompted extremist organizations in Pakistan to call jihadi volunteers across the world to join the fight against NATO forces in Afghanistan. Additionally, the Pakistani perception that the United States installed a puppet Karzai government—consisting of a large number of minority Tajik and Uzbek government officials and military officers, who are historically pro-Indian and/or pro-Iranian—further motivates their cause. In addition, India's political and economic interactions with the Afghan government and NATO partners, even if regarded as harmless civil-economic projects helping the Afghan people, are seen as a Hindu-Western attempt to take over this Muslim country. These factors bolster their jihadi call-to-arms in Afghanistan, destabilizing Pakistan's strategic external and internal security.

Extremist organizations—some merely transiting and others basing their operations out of Pakistan—are increasing international diplomatic tensions with the Pakistani government. The majority of this stress stems from two significant sources. One is international pressure on Pakistan to stop the inflow of jihadists from Pakistan into Afghanistan and eliminate safe havens in the FATA and NWFP. The government's inability to control the FATA and NWFP has a secondary effect on the remainder of the country: the population loses faith in the ability of Islamabad to properly govern the nation and therefore turns to other leaders outside the government—notably those associated with extremist organizations. More important, these pressures challenge the Pakistani government's ability to rule the nation. Failure to strengthen its government could spin the nation toward a worst-case, failed-state status.

The other significant point of contention that arises from NATO operations in Afghanistan is the unrelenting U.S. unmanned aerial drone strikes in the NWFP and FATA. This tactic has many unintended and troubling consequences in Pakistan. Most prevalent perhaps is the Pakistani population's belief that the United States is doing whatever it wants in its country without international repercussions—in fact, with broad international support. Even though these strikes kill a number of high-ranking terrorists, they also kill and injure a significant

number of innocent civilians, prompting Pakistani protests against the strikes. Furthermore, its refusal to prevent these strikes feeds the belief that the current Pakistani government is a puppet of the United States. Although the attacks might be successful in killing militant leaders, they add even greater strain to the external and internal security environment in Pakistan. Even though Pakistani civilians see its leaders as pro-U.S. puppets, the external security situation contributes to the difficult foreign relationship between Washington and Islamabad.

### **Impact of Indian operations in Afghanistan on Pakistani external security**

India and Pakistan continue the dangerous cat-and-mouse game that has existed since the partition in 1947. Over the past 60 years, the two nuclear nations have had uneasy foreign relations stemming from the land disputes that arose upon their partition. This has led to three major wars and continuous strained relations over the disputed territory of Kashmir. Speculations that both countries are executing a proxy war in Afghanistan in order to gain strategic advantage over the other are prevalent.<sup>82</sup> As Ahmed Rashid, author of *Descent into Chaos*, explains, “Kabul had suddenly become the new Kashmir—the new battleground for the India–Pakistan rivalry.”<sup>83</sup> This proxy war in Afghanistan is producing an external security threat to Pakistan and has the potential to lead to greater regional destabilization or, worst case, a Pakistani–Indian war.

Each nation’s strategic alliance with Afghanistan and intent to deny the other country geographic access supports the contention that a proxy war exists in Afghanistan. Except during the Taliban’s reign, India has historically supported all Afghan governments. The friendly Indian–Afghan alliance has heightened Pakistan’s paranoia that India hopes to use Afghanistan to reacquire the subcontinent land mass that was formerly part of its nation.<sup>84</sup> The idea is not new; in outlining his Mandala theory of foreign policy, the ancient Indian military philosopher Kautilya noted that “immediate neighbors are considered as enemies, but any state on the other side of a neighboring state is regarded as an ally or the enemy of my enemy is my friend.”<sup>85</sup> By following Kautilya’s theory, India would deny Pakistan a healthy relationship with Afghanistan, which would ultimately allow India to contain Pakistan both militarily and economically.

Adding to the friction between Pakistan and India have been terrorist attacks against Indian aid workers in Afghanistan—attacks that have been linked to Pakistani-sponsored militant groups and ISI operatives within Afghanistan.<sup>86</sup> According to Ambassador Gopalaswami Parthasarathy, former Indian envoy to Pakistan, “There has been a consistent policy of targeting Indians and Indian projects in Afghanistan. It’s no doubt a decision taken by the Taliban. Pakistan is directly or indirectly complicit in the attack.”<sup>87</sup> As the July 2011 withdrawal or reduction of NATO forces in Afghanistan draws near, India fears that anticipation of this change may set the conditions for a reconciliation agreement between the Karzai government and the Taliban, harming its current relationship with Afghanistan. Additionally, India is concerned that the withdrawal or reduction of troops could facilitate a Taliban–Pashtun political movement that would then evict India from Afghanistan; worse, NATO’s plan could set the conditions for a Pashtun violent or nonviolent takeover of the Afghan government, which would likely turn Afghanistan anti-Indian and pro-Pakistani.<sup>88</sup>

General Stanley McChrystal, former Commander, U.S. and International Forces in Afghanistan, stated in his 2009 *Commander’s Initial Assessment* that “the current Afghanistan government is perceived by Islamabad as pro-Indian. While Indian activities largely benefit the Afghan people, increasing Indian influence in Afghanistan is likely to exacerbate regional

tension and Pakistani countermeasures in Afghanistan or India.”<sup>89</sup> Pakistan’s precarious relationship with Afghanistan prompted it to back the Taliban in hopes of seeing a pro-Pakistani government in Kabul. An Afghan government sympathetic to Pakistan would give Pakistan an increased geographical area to maneuver and strategically delay an Indian invasion until an international intervention could preclude an Indian annexation of their nation.<sup>90</sup> J. Alexander Thier, director for Afghanistan and Pakistan at the Washington-based United States Institute of Peace (USIP), commented about the regional dynamics: “Pakistan has existential concerns about Indian involvement in Afghanistan, as they see it as a form of encirclement aimed at the weakening or dismemberment of Pakistan. Pakistan relies on Afghanistan for ‘strategic depth’—it would support Pakistan in the event of another war with India, including providing a retreat area for overwhelmed conventional forces.”<sup>91</sup> For Pakistan, India’s intervention in Afghan affairs poses a real and catastrophically dangerous threat to its existence.

Pakistan believes that India is employing “soft power”<sup>92</sup> tactics in Afghanistan to preclude a pro-Pakistani Afghan government and policy from taking shape. Pakistanis see this pursuit by India as a means to gain strategic advantage in a potential future conflict. If successful, this strategy would facilitate the conditions India needs to secure a victory in case of war with Pakistan. Adding to Pakistan’s concerns is the fact that India has opened six consulates throughout the country and an embassy in Kabul since the beginning of NATO operations in Afghanistan. India is also currently the fifth largest international donor in Afghanistan: as of spring 2010, India had donated upwards of USD\$1.2 billion.<sup>93</sup> Additionally, India’s employment of more than 4,000 Indian citizens in Afghanistan to work on development and reconstruction projects perpetuates Pakistani suspicions of India’s intent. Pakistan assumes that these projects serve India’s strategic goals of developing a pro-Indian Kabul. These large soft-power projects include initiatives such as the construction of a major highway that runs from the Iranian seaport in Chabahar into Afghanistan and the joint electrical and oil pipeline projects that bring resources into Afghanistan. These pipeline projects offer the hope that continuing overland links will eventually bring these resources directly into India.<sup>94</sup> The Chabahar seaport will provide India, along with other nations, the capability to deliver goods to Afghanistan without going overland through Pakistan, further economically depriving Pakistani goods access to Afghan markets. Another charge by Pakistan against India is its funneling supplies from Afghanistan into Pakistan in support of the Balochistani insurgents’ armed struggle against the Afghan government. Pakistan believes that India’s Research and Analysis Wing (RAW)<sup>95</sup> has intelligence operatives in Afghanistan to prevent Pakistani influence and to collect intelligence against Pakistan across the Pakistani–Afghan border.<sup>96</sup> Pakistan also accuses RAW of training Balochistani militant organizations in Afghanistan.<sup>97</sup> Other possible evidence of Indian strategic encirclement includes rumors that it counterfeits Pakistani rubles and injects them into Pakistan to reduce their value<sup>98</sup> and that it channels support for the Northern Alliance through the Indian airbase at Farkhor, Tajikistan.<sup>99</sup>

Pakistan firmly believes that it deserves the right to be a partner with Afghanistan while India does not deserve the same right. In 1988 the popular Pakistani military president, General Zia, said, “We have earned the right to have [in Kabul] a power which is very friendly to us. We have taken risks as a frontline state, and we will not permit a return to the prewar situation, marked by large Indian and Soviet influence in Afghan claims on our own territory.”<sup>100</sup> More than 20 years later, this quote still defines how Pakistan views its relationship with Afghanistan. It sees India’s current initiatives in Afghanistan as violating its own access and right to Afghanistan, thus posing a significant external threat to Pakistan.

For India to build its credibility with Pakistan, it needs to cease further support to elements that threaten Pakistan's internal security, such as the various Balochistani insurgent groups. It should also resist pursuing a solely strategic relationship with Afghanistan at the expense of Pakistan's security. The threat of Indian strategic encirclement will only continue to feed Pakistan's 60-year-old paranoia that India's greatest pursuit is to destroy its nation. Mutual concessions or a formal treaty between Pakistan and India are crucial to setting the foundation for an enduring regional security. Pakistan needs to demonstrate to India the benefits of a cooperative relationship that includes Afghanistan and demonstrate to India that the strategic risks in such an agreement are worth their economic gain. Further, India must comprehend the reality that a weak and fragmented Pakistan is not beneficial to its own interests, since an increase in terrorism and regional Islamic militancy would attack its interests abroad and at home. Additionally, a destabilized Pakistani government and military would jeopardize India's nuclear weapons security, and India would not be able to escape the fallout of an imploding Pakistan.

### **Impact of China in Afghanistan on Pakistani external security**

China's strategic interests in Afghanistan stem from three wide-reaching foreign policy objectives.<sup>101</sup> First, China has economic interests in Afghanistan. Second, China wants to prevent the importation of militant Islamic ideology into its country. Because China shares a porous 76-kilometer border with Afghanistan through the Wakhjar Pass into Xinjiang Province, home of China's independence-seeking Uighur Muslims, this concern is certainly justifiable. However, China has a tight control on the Uighur population, so it would be difficult for the Islamic extremism that permeates Afghanistan to spread to the Chinese region inhabited by Uighur Muslims.<sup>102</sup> Furthermore, China continues to engage both Afghanistan and Pakistan diplomatically to establish pro-Sino relations between the collective countries to preclude a militant Islamic spillover across their border.

Third, the Chinese foreign policy in Afghanistan is also interlinked with Pakistan—both policies enacted to ensure economic access across the region and to counter both U.S. and Indian influence in the region, which would have a negative effect on a growing China. Currently, China's relationship with Afghanistan is not causing a negative external security impact on Pakistan. The fact that the three nations' collective foreign relations are friendly is positive from their point of view. However, the United States and India are concerned about a Chinese involvement as they do not know the long-term implications of Beijing's policies in Afghanistan.

### **Impact of Iran in Afghanistan on Pakistani external security**

The 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan shifted the tempered but friendly relationship between Islamabad and Tehran. The repercussions of the U.S.–Iranian hostage crisis made the predominantly Shiite Iran an international outsider. During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, Iran stated publicly, when pushed, that it was opposed to the Soviet invasion (mainly for diplomatic reasons). For all intensive purposes, however, Iran played a neutral part in the war in order to facilitate a civil relationship with communist Moscow. The Iranian government continued indirect support for the minority Shia population in Afghanistan—a minority that did not pose a military threat to the Soviet-backed Afghan government. However, after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, Tehran provided political and military support to the Northern Alliance<sup>103</sup> in an effort to stop what they perceived



as a Sunni Pashtun spread of Deobandi extremism. Iran's support of anti-Taliban forces was directly at odds with Pakistan, but the two countries still resisted overt hostilities.

Currently, relations between Iran and Pakistan remain civil. However, there exists some political and economic tension, primarily stemming from Iran's allowing India to construct a highway into Afghanistan from the Iranian port in Chabahar.<sup>104</sup> This highway will allow India to transport its exportable goods into Afghanistan via the Iranian port, negating the current trade agreement with Pakistan that India's commerce moves overland through Pakistan into Afghanistan. This rerouting of Indian trade through Iran would reduce Pakistan's current ability to prevent—or at the very least, decrease—India's economic trade and access to Afghanistan. The fear of an India–Iran economic alliance feeds a Pakistani suspicion that the two countries may be militarily aligning themselves and using Afghanistan to gain a strategic military advantage over Pakistan.

However, even though there maybe some suspicion about India's economic initiatives in Iran, there are some positive indications that Iran and Pakistan can have a cooperative relationship. One instance of this cooperation is the increasingly collaborative manner of addressing and opposing the Balochistani insurgency, which affects both countries. An example of this cooperation is the 2008 Pakistani arrest and deportation to Iran of Balochistani insurgency leader Abdolhamid Rigi.<sup>105</sup> The current analysis determines that Iran is not intentionally using Afghanistan to provide it a regional advantage over Pakistan and that the countries' political interaction will keep their relationship civil.<sup>106</sup>

## **Dynamics of Pakistani–Afghan Relations on Internal Politics**

### **Pakistani–Afghan political environment: commonalities and disjointedness**

The formation of these two nations has led to a historically tense Pakistani–Afghan political relationship. The arbitrary nature of the Pakistani partition from India set the conditions for the current internal political framework that has led to four military coups and prevented every elected civilian government from reaching its term limit. Pakistan's attempt to formally ground itself in democracy has not reached fruition. Internal political upheaval throughout the past six decades and General Zia's presidential exploitation of Islam to serve as a medium to unite the country have left Pakistan's democratic foundation shaky.

The historical autocratic rule associated with Afghanistan and three decades of war have bred political wariness between the two nations. Even though they share many commonalities through religion, culture and ethnicity, they have had a disjointed political relationship. This underlying distrust between the nations has interfered with achievement of a fully cooperative political alliance.

Both these nations have had a difficult time reconciling their pasts in order to build a more positive future through a complementary partnership—from Pakistani sponsorship of the Taliban to what is perceived as NATO's installation of the current Karzai government. The NATO war has made it more difficult for Pakistanis to achieve their goal of installing a pro-Pakistani government in Afghanistan. Most Pakistani government officials and military leaders have difficulty accepting Karzai as Afghanistan's president: they see him as a corrupt Pashtun who surrounds himself with former Tajik and Uzbek warlords and elites. Pakistan's informal alliance with the Pashtun population certainly influences its relationship with Kabul. Pakistanis speculate that the current Karzai government will continue to alienate the Pashtun

majority in Afghanistan, thereby also weakening Pakistan's capacity to control the Pashtun population within its own borders.

### **Pakistan's troubled political framework**

The Pakistani governmental system has fundamentally failed to fully achieve its original separatist goal of democracy. Mohammed Jinnah's vision of a democratic Islamic and homogenous Pakistan was never truly reached, primarily because of its ethno-demographic disparities and secular views of non-Islamism.<sup>107</sup> These tensions over the past six decades have resulted in the failure "to establish enduring and credible political institutes," which deepens instability in Pakistan.<sup>108</sup> The impact of this instability, felt beyond the borders of Pakistan, influences its relationship with Afghanistan.

The constant internal political interplay among the civilian politicians, senior military generals, urban elites and ethnic tribal and Islamic leaders—who all contribute to the volatility of the central government's power and influence—makes governing Pakistan extremely difficult. In "Decolonization and State Building in South Asia," Sumantra Bose surmises that since its independence, Pakistan has been split into either a socially elite population (composed of the educated, military and Westernized moderate urbanites) seeking a more democratic form of government or a more traditionally Muslim population (Islamist, poor and rural populations) wanting a theocratic central government.<sup>109</sup>

Pakistan's political party system plagues the centralized government in gaining political stability. It is complicated by the fact that there are more than 46 political parties in this semi-democratic nation that continue to undermine the political system through power grabbing and corruption. Additionally, the magnitude of having this many political parties, with their own competing agendas and visions, hinders the democratic process.

The Pakistani military is regarded as the only truly stable government institution—hence the four successful military coups in the nation's history. Current military-political relations are starting to buckle under internal political pressures that may break the government and lead to another military takeover.<sup>110</sup> In September 2010 Pakistani Army Chief General Ashfaq Kayani called a meeting with President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani, telling them that civilian leadership needs to "put its house in order" by taking measures to improve Pakistan's weak economy and its response to ongoing flood relief and to reduce political corruption.<sup>111</sup> Subsequently, President Zardari has pushed against the military twice in the last year by attempting to pull the Pakistani ISI under his executive office. However, the senior military leaders stopped this injunction.<sup>112</sup> This struggle between the Pakistani military and government is coupled with the Pakistani and Afghan governments' suspicions about the Pakistani military's rogue employment of ISI operatives within both nations, adding to their mistrust of the political-military relationship. These examples of political-military fissures add to the government's inability to gain a trusted Afghan partner, ultimately debilitating Pakistan.

The bid for power between these various factions, with noncooperative goals and widely varied visions of Pakistan's future, destabilizes and disrupts the government. Resulting from its political instability are many of Kabul's chief complaints against the Pakistani government, particularly its allowance of Taliban and al Qaeda sanctuaries, the perceived ISI support of terror groups that operate in Afghanistan and the rise of Islamic militancy in the Pakistani border region that spills into Afghanistan.<sup>113</sup> Additionally, Pakistan's ineffectual suppression

of a ten-billion-dollar-a-year black market and the Afghan belief that it sponsors Pashtun interests in Afghanistan further complicate their relationship.<sup>114</sup> These collective government tensions feed Pakistan's political internal instability, presenting another obstacle to the formation of a pro-Pakistan Afghan government.

## **Pakistan's Desire for Economic Access in Afghanistan**

### **Strategic value of Afghanistan's geographical location as a "Central Asian crossroad"**

With a quarter of Pakistan's population living below the standard poverty line, a 15.2 percent inflation rate, a USD\$20 billion national debt and recovery from the summer 2010 flood that is projected to cost another USD\$20 billion, the Pakistani economy is facing many economic challenges.<sup>115</sup> However, with a diverse economy that produces sophisticated products, including fertilizers, textiles and pharmaceuticals as well as simple goods, such as clothing apparel, the economy has the potential to recover with delicate and proper handling.<sup>116</sup> For most of its existence as an independent nation, however, Pakistan has received only "low levels of foreign investment,"<sup>117</sup> which makes its market access—for both importing and exporting—even more vital to its economic rebound and, in turn, to its political stability.

Historically, the Pakistani and Afghan markets have supported each other. Typically, Afghanistan provides food and cotton products, while Pakistan exports raw metals and simple market commodities. Afghan export and import trade is reliant on the Pakistani port of Karachi (a source of leverage when other countries want to trade with Afghanistan, because it currently provides the only port-to-overland access). In possessing Karachi, Pakistan controls India's full access to Afghan markets—and will until the Iranian Chabahar seaport reopens. While the Pakistani economy is greatly affected by trade with Afghanistan, Pakistan can survive without it, if necessary. The Afghan economy, on the other hand, which in 2009 reportedly exported 69 percent of its products to Pakistan for consumption on both legal and black markets, is likely to implode without Pakistani market access.<sup>118</sup>

The NATO war in Afghanistan has produced a number of unforeseen effects that plague both economies. There has been an increase in foreign investment in Afghanistan, specifically with Pakistan's rival, India. The foreign influence has resulted in extensive black-market activities, increased poppy growth and reduced wheat production. These influences on the market damage the Pakistani economy but will not bankrupt it.

Pakistani governmental and business leaders are attempting to gain more economic access and form bilateral trade agreements with Afghanistan. Additionally, they are continuing to focus on denying India economic strategic encirclement of Pakistan. Pakistan's fear of India is not only an issue of national defense. Pakistan also foresees how India's access to Afghan markets could damage Pakistani trade policies with Afghanistan.

On a positive note, however, in an unprecedented meeting between Presidents Karzai and Zardari on 15–16 September 2010, the Pakistani and Afghan leaders discussed and then signed a joint statement that outlined initiatives to build a stronger bilateral cooperation between the nations. Of the five major goals of the partnership, three were to increase:

- economic cooperation, transit, trade and investment by developing a joint approach to realizing the enormous potential of bilateral economic, transit, trade and investment cooperation;

- infrastructure development and connectivity by focusing on infrastructure development and railroad connectivity to complement economic, transit, trade and investment linkages; and
- energy linkages by developing a comprehensive strategy to promote energy sector cooperation and projects.<sup>119</sup>

These three collaborative goals between Afghanistan and Pakistan, if properly executed, will provide greater bilateral cooperation between the nations and will build each state's economy.

### **A fight for economics: Pakistan versus India in the Afghan arena**

India's economic exploration in Afghanistan has long worried Pakistan. The historical rivalry has led to India's pursuit of increased foreign investment and trade agreements between New Delhi and Kabul. Since the NATO invasion, India's foreign aid and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan have contributed to increased Pakistani inflation, because of the replacement of traditional imports of food crops to Pakistan with poppies for opium production and an increase in black-market activities.<sup>120</sup> The increase in opium production has skyrocketed wheat prices in Pakistan to twice their traditional market value.<sup>121</sup> As a result of foreign aid, black-market activities are estimated to amount to over USD\$10 billion in annual illegal trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>122</sup> The negative effects of India's foreign aid to and investment in Afghanistan not only further complicate the economic sphere in Pakistani–Afghan relations but also affect Pakistan's ability to maintain domestic security and effectively operate its governmental institutions.

India is purposefully deepening its economic ties with Afghanistan at the expense of Pakistan, thus supporting Pakistan's suspicion that India is attempting to gain strategic encirclement. The Pakistanis point to evidence that India is building a seaport in Chabahar, Iran, and is refurbishing the connecting highway from the port to the Afghan city of Zaranj.<sup>123</sup> This bilateral agreement to use the seaport facility on the Indian Ocean allows India strategically significant road access into western Afghanistan. This Iranian port will allow India and other nations to bypass the current Karachi–Kandahar route that facilitates the only efficient port-to-overland access to import goods and services into Afghanistan.<sup>124</sup> This New Delhi–Tehran–Kabul trade alliance could economically disable or strangulate Pakistan, especially if these nations collaborated to exercise sanctions against what they perceive as a Pakistan hostile to their interests.

In addition, India's economic goals in Afghanistan include eventually gaining greater access to the Central Asian Republics (CARs)—the region covering Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. These nation-states were collectively labeled the CARs because of their shared history, rich natural resources (minerals and oil) and geographic location. Access to these countries would help India develop new energy resources to feed its rapidly growing economy.<sup>125</sup> India's current trade activities in Afghanistan reveal how its economic exploration has a direct and debilitating economic impact on Pakistan.

### **Impact of China on Pakistan's economic access into Afghanistan**

One of China's major foreign policy goals in this region is to maintain strong relations with both Pakistan and Afghanistan that will serve its strategic and economic security needs and to facilitate access into the CAR markets and oilfields.<sup>126</sup> China must achieve its goals

while countering U.S. and Indian influence in these economic crossroads of Central Asia.<sup>127</sup> With its exponential industrial growth over the past three decades, China's energy and raw resource requirements have climbed to an all-time high, requiring China to gain access into new markets.

This industrial growth has strengthened China's interest in building trade agreements and recently led to China's USD\$3.5 billion investment in the Afghan Aynak copper fields.<sup>128</sup> China is sponsoring the development of the Pakistani deepwater seaport in Gwadar and increasing transit of overland goods through Pakistan into Afghanistan and the CARs. The Pakistanis traditionally have had a good foreign and economic relationship with the Chinese.<sup>129</sup> The current assessment is that China's increased economic and investment activities are benefiting both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

### **Impact of Iran on Pakistan's economic access into Afghanistan**

Iran's cultivation of an economic partnership with Kabul is one of Tehran's two major strategic objectives within Afghanistan. In "Iran's Policy Towards Afghanistan," Moshen Milani notes that Iran's goals in Afghanistan are to establish "an economic sphere of influence by engaging in reconstruction in Afghanistan" and "for Iran to become the hub for the transit of goods and services between the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan, Central Asia, India and China."<sup>130</sup> The effects of this relationship on Pakistan are yet to be determined; however, economic relations between Pakistan and Iran have been strong historically and remain relatively strong.<sup>131</sup>

To meet its strategic economic goals with Afghanistan, Iran is investing heavily in infrastructure projects that range from major eastern Iranian cities into Afghanistan, expanding its economic and operational reach into Afghan markets. By improving its infrastructure, such as roads, rail and bridges, the Iranians will gain greater access to deliver goods to Afghan markets. The Indian-sponsored construction at Chabahar coincided with Iran's reconstruction of a highway from the port facility into Afghanistan and could economically damage Pakistan. This overland road would provide greater access into Afghan and CAR markets, cutting travel by 700 kilometers compared to the Karachi-Kandahar road, which currently has a monopoly on major transit trade from the Indian Ocean port into Afghanistan.<sup>132</sup> While Iran may not be purposefully attempting to hurt Pakistan economically, its exploration to gaining greater access into Afghan markets, especially once the Chabahar port is operational, may have a major adverse impact on Pakistan's economy.

## **Synthesis on the Implications for the United States**

### **A Pakistani perspective of the United States**

For a lasting peace to evolve, the United States, in its attempt to build an Afghanistan that can stand on its own feet, must continue to involve Pakistan strategically. It is critical that any U.S. strategy provides the means to build a comprehensive trilateral partnership among the United States, Afghanistan and Pakistan. American policymakers must recognize how Pakistan judges U.S. actions in its region. Unpopular U.S. foreign policy decisions involving Pakistan incite popular opinion that the United States is a fair-weather friend.<sup>133</sup> American use of foreign aid to gain Pakistan's support is considered insulting, and its cross-border unmanned aerial drone strikes in Pakistan paint America in a negative light.

Widespread negative opinions of the West's interaction with Islamic nation-states are particularly meaningful. Adverse perceptions have derailed many West–East or Muslim–Non-Muslim negotiations and foreign policies. Former U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Robert Oakley effectively summarizes the reasons behind Pakistan's current negative impression of U.S. foreign policy:

The history of relations between Pakistan and the United States is complicated and ambiguous, largely due to Pakistani perceptions of past U.S. abandonment. Any new U.S. strategy for Pakistan has to be considered against realistic expectations, which in turn have to take due account of the long-standing, fundamental nature of the factors that have shaped Pakistani strategic priorities and culture.<sup>134</sup>

As the former ambassador notes, the U.S. track record as a Pakistani partner is rather tenuous.

A July 2010 Pew Research Poll showed that 59 percent of Pakistanis describe the United States “as an enemy, while just 11 percent say it is a partner.”<sup>135</sup> Additionally, more than 65 percent of Pakistanis surveyed stated that they opposed the NATO war in Afghanistan and want to see NATO troops depart immediately.<sup>136</sup> Even with these statistics, the poll found that 64 percent of Pakistanis want better relations with the United States but relations that emphasize a mutual respect and cooperation with one another—a wish that stems from Pakistan's feeling that America is conveniently using it when its help is needed in regional affairs.<sup>137</sup> As the United States attempts to overcome the fear of American abandonment of Pakistan, it is imperative that the United States realize that it will be judged with a critical eye until it builds Pakistanis' trust through positive political actions. The United States has left many foreign policy scars on Pakistan, which must be taken into account when developing new strategies.

Historically, the United States has used foreign aid as a means to gain Pakistani support. During the 1980s when it supported the mujahedin against the Soviets, the United States passed the Pressler Amendment in an attempt to control Pakistan's nuclear weapons procurement and to facilitate the movement of funding and military equipment in support of the Afghan jihad against the communist invaders.<sup>138</sup> Upon the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the United States also “packed up shop and went home,” seemingly abandoning Pakistan—now dependent on American aid—when Afghanistan was in chaos and the effects were directly spilling into Pakistan. Many Pakistanis see this diplomatic maneuvering as another American attempt to bribe their government into supporting the fight against al Qaeda and their countrymen.<sup>139</sup> This maneuvering—viewed as taking place at Pakistan's expense, with increasing domestic violence and additional economic strain—gives rise to fears they will again be abandoned when NATO forces withdraw from Afghanistan.

The highly unpopular U.S. unmanned aerial drone attacks on sovereign Pakistani soil perpetuate civilian disgust for the United States.<sup>140</sup> The attacks feed the Pakistanis' perception that America is a unilateral world bully that can do as it pleases. On 30 September 2010, U.S. attack helicopters crossed into Pakistani airspace and inadvertently killed two Pakistani soldiers thought to be militants. The Pakistani population turned out in large demonstrations and their central government shut down the only main NATO logistical route, which runs from Karachi to Afghanistan, in protest of this direct violation to their sovereignty.<sup>141</sup> Also fueling the protests were the other 21 recorded drone missile strikes that month in Pakistan.<sup>142</sup> Since President Obama has taken office, the United States has substantially increased the number of drone missile attacks aimed at killing militants seeking refuge in Pakistan, thus increasing the division between the two nations.<sup>143</sup> These cross-border attacks encourage Pakistani suspicion

of U.S. intentions in their region and serve as a source of embarrassment for the Pakistani central government, thus further increasing tensions between Pakistan and the United States. Moreover, Pakistanis' opinions of their political leaders are damaged by these attacks, which suggest that the government leaders cannot or will not prevent the United States from doing what they will in Pakistan; in fact, many Pakistanis believe that the government is covertly supporting the United States in these attacks. Former TTP leader Baitullah Mehsud explains the unintended consequences of unmanned aerial drone attacks, which ultimately further his insurgent efforts: "I spent three months trying to recruit and only got 10–15 persons. One U.S. attack and I got 150 volunteers!"<sup>144</sup> The United States must be careful not to produce what counterinsurgency expert David Kilcullen describes as "accidental guerrillas" by doing something that, on the surface, appears tactically logical but in reality leads to the disenfranchised population being further isolated from their government and swayed to support or join the insurgency.<sup>145</sup> The United States should reevaluate its use of unmanned aerial strikes to determine whether killing a limited number of militants is counterproductive if collateral damage undermines support for its strategic goals.

### **Recommendations for mutually supporting U.S. strategies and policies**

Any U.S. comprehensive strategy in this region must create a genuine partnership with Pakistan. The strategy has to address issues concerning the Pakistan–India friction, build economic ties across the region for the benefit of all nations involved and take action to eliminate or reduce the negative perceptions of U.S. influence in the region.

On 27 March 2009, President Obama unveiled his new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, intended to encourage enduring change and to "disrupt, dismantle and defeat al Qaeda and its safe havens in Pakistan, and to prevent their return to Pakistan or Afghanistan."<sup>146</sup> Holistically and strategically, the Af–Pak strategy is fairly sound in its attempt to apply a whole-of-government approach to addressing the issues associated with this region. The execution of this two-year-old strategy, however, has been thwarted by many of the obstacles discussed here. In my view, a comprehensive two-year strategic review of the goals laid out in President Obama's Af–Pak strategy should be conducted in 2012. This review must verify whether published goals are being met and, if not, determine if those objectives should be eliminated or adjusted to achieve the policy's goals. Most important, this review must ascertain what additional policies need to be implemented in the existing Af–Pak strategy; or if a revision is required, then the review must determine what new policies should be instituted.

In a revised Af–Pak strategy, the United States must adopt additional comprehensive measures and policies that strengthen the U.S.–Pakistani–Afghan nexus. Any revisions must be based on the belief that Pakistan is a trusted partner, because, as Pakistani Prime Minister Gilani stated at a diplomatic conference in October 2010, "Pakistan is part of the solution to [the] Afghan issue and not the problem."<sup>147</sup> Without a clear appreciation for Pakistan's efforts to stabilize Afghanistan, the United States will not achieve its strategic goals in Afghanistan and may further weaken regional dynamics. Not including Pakistan in the stabilization process will be perceived as either an insult or a threat—a perception that will damage NATO efforts in Afghanistan.

Future goals must continue to embrace enduring trilateral diplomatic, security and economic agreements among the United States, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The strategies used to achieve these goals may fall into the official Af–Pak strategy or separately as part of a regional or international agreement. The aggregate progress the United States has made since

the invasion of Afghanistan is respectable but gradual. In many regards, the United States' approach has been ill-conceived because leaders have not taken into account the region's complexities and instead have concentrated on the tactical level of the war. Anthony Cordesman, in his report *The Afghan War at the End of 2009*, stated that NATO and the United States "were still focusing on tactical clashes" and "failed to focus on practical plans, schedules for action, needs for resources, and metrics for success."<sup>148</sup> A formal trilateral agreement or treaty is required to provide realistic and attainable objectives that facilitate trust through open and honest political dialogue and incorporate a strategy intended to build regional security and economic cooperation. Additionally, the plan must promote either a joint foreign policy agreement or concessions with major regional actors such as India and Iran. Doing so will reduce regional friction and mitigate potential attempts to derail this strategy. Historically, Central Asia is a delicate balance of power among nations competing for regional military superiority and economic prosperity. An appreciation for this balance of power must be acknowledged in a new comprehensive approach to Central Asia. Solely supporting U.S. goals while ignoring these regional dynamics will backfire, creating further threats to U.S. security and economic interests at home and abroad.

Within a formal trilateral agreement, the United States has to take reasonable diplomatic measures to help Pakistan address malicious and destabilizing influences. In explaining the need for such diplomatic measures, Lieutenant General David Barno testified that the United States "must assist Pakistan in managing change—economically, militarily, perhaps even socially—as it deals with immense problems brought about by a deadly combination of both internal and external factors."<sup>149</sup> Pakistan yearns for a strong and genuine partnership with the United States, but America must set the conditions for this partnership through a proposed trilateral agreement. A positive sign that Pakistan is willing to participate in such a relationship was demonstrated in Afghan and Pakistani government negotiations in October 2010. Prime Minister Gilani stated at a press conference that "we have signed on to a joint vision for [Afghanistan and Pakistan] and the region, one that places primacy on economic development."<sup>150</sup> This statement demonstrates a positive step forward and an inclusive regional policy approach that draws upon the two nations' joint vision in economic development, which will both strengthen Central Asian markets and lead America to achieve an enduring U.S.–Pakistani–Afghan nexus.

The United States, Pakistan and Afghanistan need to develop a joint reconciliation and reintegration program that will bring their enemies to the negotiation table. Approximately a third of all counterinsurgency wars have culminated in some form of reconciliation or negotiation with the insurgency.<sup>151</sup> Pakistan must be involved in the planning process, since the Afghan insurgency often uses Pakistan as a base to recruit, provide sanctuary, motivate ideology, resupply and fund their insurgent efforts.<sup>152</sup> In an October 2010 press conference, Prime Minister Gilani reinforced this analysis, declaring that "without involving Pakistan, any negotiation process" will not be successful.<sup>153</sup> However, Gilani believes this process must be initiated by Afghanistan.<sup>154</sup>

As part of the revised strategy, the United States should selectively assist in building regional economic bridges across Central Asia to form cooperative economic partnerships that would inevitably bring greater security and political cooperation. With reconciliation, Central Asian nations have the potential for an economic prosperity that could rival the European Union if they can build market interdependency. For example, a U.S.-mediated kick-start of the stalled Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India pipeline initiative could



provide mutually supporting oil resources and trade among these nations while also serving as a medium to increase credible strategic dialogue that would solidify regional stability and security. Additionally, the United States would have to avoid the appearance of picking favorites among Afghanistan, Pakistan and India in economic partnerships. Last, the United States must not punish these nations if they engage in dialogue with either Iran or China. The United States has the ability to mediate these important economic initiatives, thus creating greater economic interdependence and regional security.

The U.S. strategy in this region also has to address the negative opinion of U.S.-led operations and foreign policies. Specifically in Pakistan, the United States needs to target Pakistani opinions about its intentions in the region, specifically the speculation that the United States is helping Pakistan now but will ultimately abandon it again, as it did in 1989. A rise in Pakistani popular opinion of the United States will relieve pressure on both the U.S. and Pakistani governments, may reduce militant recruitment and can potentially build a relationship wherein the nations can use their mutual interests advantageously.

The U.S. government should also reexamine its definition of “victory” or “winning” in Afghanistan to ensure a realistic, achievable and supportable outcome for the people they intend to help in this region. Most important to Pakistan, setting the conditions for “victory” in Afghanistan will undoubtedly involve its support. For victory in Afghanistan, LTG Barno, in his February 2009 Senate Armed Service Committee testimony, reinforced that a “win” would have to incorporate Pakistani support.<sup>155</sup> He elaborated that these conditions must include a “Pakistan [that] is stabilized as a long-term partner that is economically viable, friendly to the United States, no longer an active base for international terrorism and in control of its nuclear weapons.”<sup>156</sup> While it may currently be difficult to define what victory truly looks like in this region, the United States must define a “win” and strategize with Pakistan accordingly.

## Conclusion

Pakistan’s security, political and economic dynamics cannot be fully understood without considering its history and the current regional complexities it shares with neighboring countries. Pakistan’s primary interest in controlling Afghanistan is to ensure its own security. Benazir Bhutto vehemently declared that “the security issue for Pakistan is an issue of survival.”<sup>157</sup> Haunted by its turbulent history, Pakistan’s security has always been at the center of its political strategies and thus the country formed a nationalistic mantra to unite its citizens in a patriotic fervor against perceived external threats. Karman Shafi, a highly respected Pakistani political analyst and journalist, eloquently summarizes that Pakistan should “befriend all the Afghan people: northerners, southerners, Pashtun and Uzbek and Hazara, Sunni and Shia. To be the elder brother to Afghanistan, rather than its manipulator. We must also ask ourselves whether our last involvement in Afghanistan was good for that country or for Pakistan.”<sup>158</sup> Without security, Pakistan will not be able to achieve the economic growth and political reform that it requires to achieve its vision of being a major global leader.

For Pakistan to achieve this enduring security, there must be an open and credible strategic dialogue with Afghanistan and NATO. Reaching a diplomatic agreement might form a cooperative partnership aimed at building a positive future for the region. In addition to this strategic dialogue, parallel negotiations that lead to cooperative concessions must occur with both India and Iran. If these negotiations lead to formal or informal treaties or agreements, they should focus on mitigating negative impact on Pakistan resulting from each country’s

specific interest with Afghanistan. Because the friction among the nations in this region has yet to benefit any one country, reducing these tensions would likely work to each country's advantage. Most important to these regional agreements is addressing the elimination or reconciliation and reintegration of militants who are destabilizing the region. For Pakistan to prove to its neighbors that it is a trustworthy partner, it has to take steps to eliminate all direct and indirect support to militant extremists, including sanctuary.

Political leaders and military strategists must understand the history that impacts the regional dynamics to fully appreciate how Pakistan's internal and external security, as well as its political and economic interests, affect Afghanistan. Failure to understand these complexities could lead the United States into a failed NATO strategy in Afghanistan, a debunked U.S.–Pakistani–Afghan partnership and a regional war between the two nuclear states of Pakistan and India.

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