

AN INTRODUCTION TO PAKISTAN'S MILITARY

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HARVARD Kennedy School

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INTRODUCTION

Pakistan's military is a central actor in many of today's most pressing security challenges, and few institutions face such extreme pressures from such diverse forces. In recent years the military has been asked to *simultaneously* combat a vicious internal insurgency, suppress international terrorist groups, and respond to Pakistan's worst floods in eighty years, all while squaring off against a much larger rival in one of the most strategically complex regions in the world.

Pakistan's armed forces are not only an instrument of the state's foreign policy, but also the most influential actor in the country's internal politics. They are currently battling brutal domestic adversaries who have killed thousands of civilians and targeted the nation's military and civilian leadership. They additionally figure prominently in efforts to suppress international terrorist groups, and have, at the same time, been accused of tolerating or even supporting those same organizations. Furthermore, Pakistan's armed forces oversee the world's fastest-growing nuclear arsenal amidst great concerns about its security given an active domestic insurgency, strategic competition with its nuclear neighbor, and the A.Q. Khan network's legacy of proliferation.¹ Finally, the Pakistan military participates in an ongoing strategic standoff with rival India—a simmering conflict that continues to threaten to explode into war for a fifth time since 1947.

As this paper was going to press, the killing of Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, Pakistan, re-focused the world's attention on the Pakistani military. That bin Laden had reportedly been hiding for several years near the Pakistani Military Academy (PMA)² raised serious questions about the possibility of complicity by the military and intelligence services. As *Dawn*, a leading Pakistani English-language daily, put it, “The idea that the world's most wanted criminal was spending his days there unnoticed by Pakistani intelligence requires either suspension of disbelief or the conclusion that the authorities are guilty of a massive intelligence failure.”³ The ensuing crisis brought US-Pakistani relations to their lowest point in years.

Despite its importance, Pakistan's military remains an opaque entity, both inside and outside of the country. Few publicly available reports exist for those seeking to acquire a basic understanding of its leaders, its functions, and its prime motivators.

This publication—the first of two Belfer Center reports examining Pakistan’s military—will provide a concise introduction to the nation’s armed forces. It will consider Pakistan’s:

- Overall strategic security and threat environment;
- Military history since 1947;
- Conventional military capabilities;
- Nuclear strategy and security posture; and
- Current counterinsurgency (COIN) efforts (briefly).

The second report in this series will:

- Explore in more detail Pakistan’s current counterinsurgency efforts;
- Evaluate threats to internal cohesion and fears of Islamist infiltration into the Pakistani military;
- Assess the traits of current and future Pakistani military leaders; and
- Examine the relationship between the Pakistani military and the civilian government.

To assemble this report, the authors interviewed over two-dozen retired Pakistani military officers. These interviews were primarily conducted in Pakistan in March and April 2010. While all three armed services were represented, the majority of officers interviewed had served in the Army and were of brigadier rank or higher. In addition to Pakistani military personnel, researchers conducted nearly forty additional interviews, including with Pakistani politicians, civil society actors, journalists, and military experts, as well as with US and European military, diplomatic, and intelligence officers and analysts. Although most of these interviewees were willing to speak on the record, some requested anonymity.

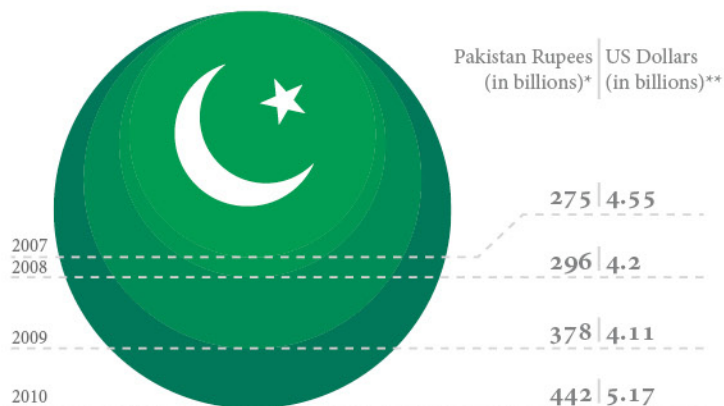
Due to the extreme sensitivity of the topic and the frequent refusal of interviewees to discuss it, the internal and external role of the powerful Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Directorate—the Pakistani military’s semi-autonomous intelligence organization—will not be extensively explored in this report. Similarly, this report’s analysis of the Pakistani nuclear program will be primarily based on existing open-source information because so many interviewees designated the subject as “off-limits” for our discussions.

For more information about the interview methodology, please see Appendix I.

The authors would like to thank all those interviewed for this report for their time and patience; Eric Rosenbach at the Belfer Center for support and guidance on this project; Farha Faisal and Anirudh Suri for research and assistance; and Jake Stefanik and Carolina Aguilar for copy editing. All errors, of course, remain ours alone.

PAKISTAN'S ARMED FORCES STATISTICS AT A GLANCE

ANNUAL DEFENSE BUDGET



ARMY

Personnel: 550,000

= 4,000 soldiers



ARMY STRATEGIC FORCES COMMAND

Personnel: 12,000-15,000

Responsible for land-based nuclear forces, approximately 190 Surface-to-Surface missiles (SSM)

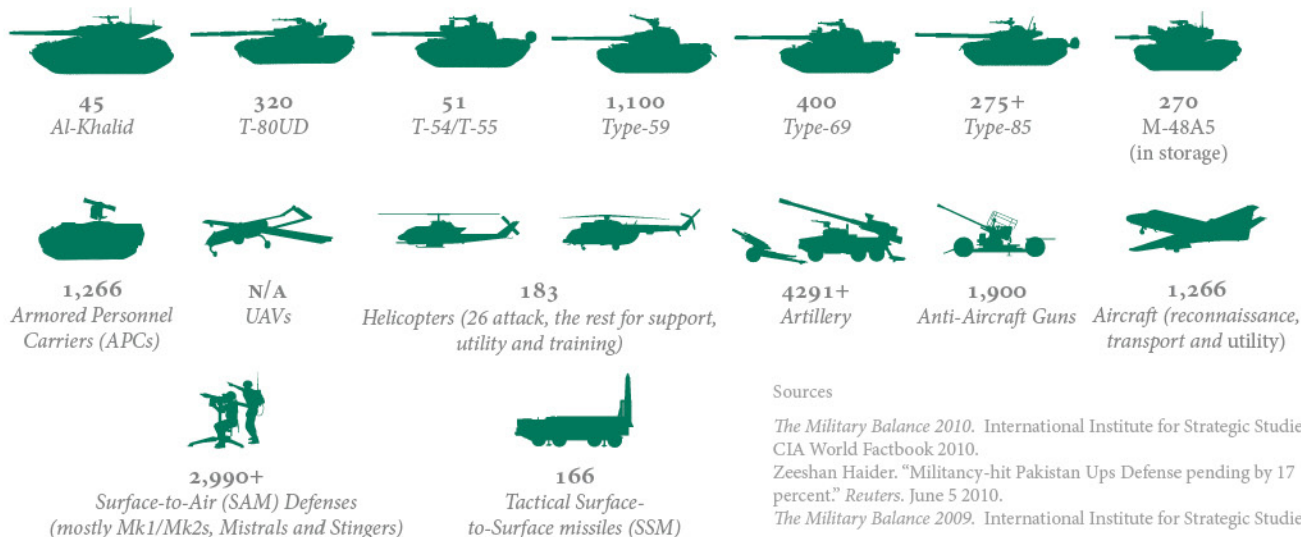


The Army has approximately 500,000 reserve troops

Headquarters: Rawalpindi

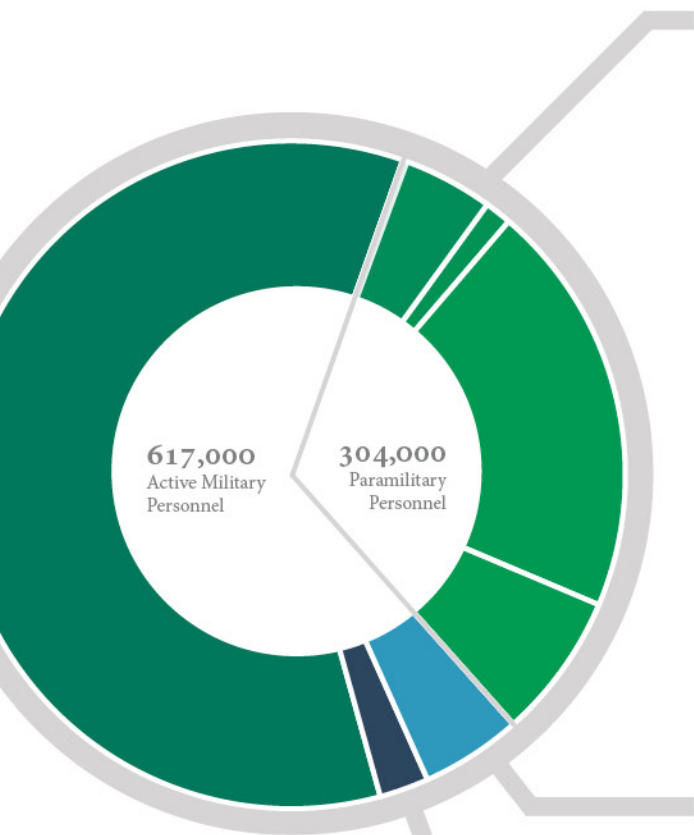
Major Bases: Rawalpindi, Bahawalpur, Quetta, Peshawar, Multan, Lahore, Mangla, Karachi

Equipment:



Sources

The Military Balance 2010. International Institute for Strategic Studies.
CIA World Factbook 2010.
Zeeshan Haider. "Militancy-hit Pakistan Ups Defense pending by 17 percent." Reuters. June 5 2010.
The Military Balance 2009. International Institute for Strategic Studies.



PARAMILITARY / OTHER

Maritime Security Agency (Coast Guard): **2,000**



Pakistan Rangers: **40,000**
(under Interior Ministry)



Northern Light Infantry: approximately **12,000**



National Guard: **185,000**



Frontier Corps: up to **65,000**
(under Interior Ministry control, but under Army command)



NAVY

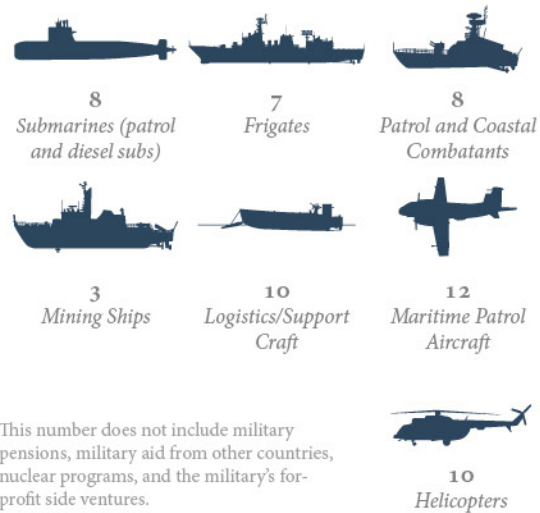
Personnel: 22,000 (including 1,400 Marines)



Headquarters: Islamabad

Major Bases: Gwadar, Karachi, Ormara

Equipment:



AIRFORCE

Personnel: 45,000



Headquarters: Islamabad

Major Bases: Peshawar, Sargodha, Masroor

Equipment:



* This number does not include military pensions, military aid from other countries, nuclear programs, and the military's for-profit side ventures.

** based on exchange rates at the time.

PAKISTAN'S STRATEGIC CHALLENGES: TRADITIONAL THREATS AND NEW ADVERSARIES

In less than seventy years, Pakistan fought four major wars, lost significant territory to a secessionist movement, served as a frontline for a superpower proxy confrontation, and endured major militant insurgencies and terrorist campaigns. Natural disasters in 2010, continued extremist violence against the state and its citizens, and US demands to support operations in neighboring Afghanistan highlight the prominence of Pakistan's armed forces in the life of the country. Drawing even more attention, Pakistan's engagement in a regional nuclear arms race tests the limits of the global non-proliferation regime and significantly raises the stakes in a future war.

This grim security picture, along with periods of turbulent civilian rule and internal unrest, has historically empowered the military to take what it considered necessary action to defend the Pakistani state.

EXTERNAL THREATS, INCONSISTENT PARTNERS

India

India is Pakistan's principal strategic competitor and has been the single largest factor in the development of the Pakistani military's conventional and nuclear capabilities. The two nations share a 2,900 km (1800 mile) border and have fought numerous conflicts for control of the disputed territory of Kashmir and over the secession of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh).

“If India builds the Bomb, we will eat grass or leaves, even go hungry. But we will get one of our own.”

Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, 1965

While Pakistan is the 36th largest country in the world in terms of total land area, it has numerous geographic vulnerabilities. For example, it is so narrow at its midpoint that an Indian advance of 300-400 kilometers—the range of Indian tanks prior to refueling⁴—could effectively cut the country (and its forces) in half.⁵ Furthermore, Pakistan's lines of communication—most importantly the highway that runs between Lahore and Karachi—run perpendicular to a probable Indian advance and could be easily severed if Indian forces gained ground. Many of Pakistan's major



MAP 1: Location map of Pakistan. Source: The United States National Imagery and Mapping Agency data, Wikipedia, and cia.gov. Original map modified by both the German Kartenwerkstatt and Tim Duffy.

population centers, like Lahore, also lie within relatively easy striking distance of the border.⁶

India is more powerful than Pakistan by almost every metric of military, economic, and political power—and the gap continues to grow.

Pakistan’s fragile economy increasingly plays a part in the country’s long-term strategic competition with India.⁷ The economic gap between India and Pakistan dramatically widened over the last thirty years, allowing India’s defense expenditures to rapidly outpace Pakistan’s, at a lower and decreasing share of GDP.⁸ At the same time, India’s economic rise has granted it increasing prominence on the world stage while Pakistan has been derided as an economic basket case.⁹

For a further examination of Pakistan’s slow economic growth rate, please see Appendix II.

With 1.3 million men and women in uniform, India’s armed forces are over twice the size of Pakistan’s 617,000-strong armed forces.¹⁰ India also has an additional 1.1 million reservists,

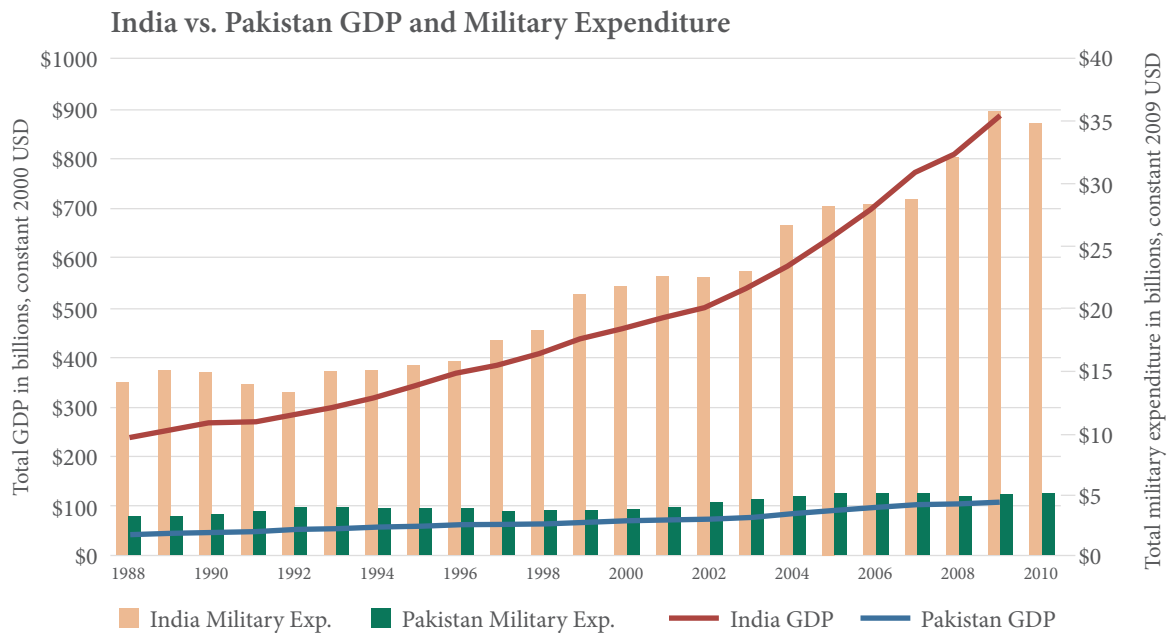


FIGURE 1: India vs. Pakistan GDP and Military Expenditure. Source: World Development Indicators 2011; SIPRI Military Expenditure Database 2011 <http://milexdata.sipri.org>

compared to Pakistan’s 500,000.¹¹ In practical terms, while Pakistan’s military could perhaps stem an Indian offensive for a few weeks or months, India’s ability to commit more men and resources to the fight would likely ultimately undermine Pakistan’s defenses in a prolonged conventional engagement.¹² From the Pakistani perspective, therefore, India remains indisputably its primary conventional threat (any specific Indian plans to attack notwithstanding.)¹³

“We plan on adversaries’ capabilities, not intentions.”

Chief of Army Staff General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani
February 2010

For more on Pakistan’s conventional capabilities, see pages 30–33.

The Pakistani military, realizing the danger of losing territory in a war against India, has developed a “Riposte” strategy.¹⁴ “Riposte” calls for Pakistani “strike” corps to take the initiative in a war with India, pushing deep into Indian territory while other corps hold back the initial Indian advance. This bold action against a numerically superior enemy relies upon initial momentum and the assumption that the international community will buttress their efforts by stepping in within a few weeks to urge a ceasefire—effectively halting both armies from advancing farther into each other’s territory. Under such a scenario, Pakistan could then trade territory gained for concessions from India.

Ideological extremists exacerbate this already tense relationship, threatening to drive the countries to war. After Pakistan-based terrorist groups carried out deadly attacks on Indian soil—including a suicide attack against the Indian Parliament in 2001—the Indian government articulated an increasingly aggressive military doctrine. Under the Hindu-nationalist BJP government, the Indian military in 2004 supposedly implemented a “*Cold Start* doctrine,” positioning quick-strike military units near the Pakistani border. However, despite provocations by Pakistan-based terrorist groups such as the *Lashkar-e-Taiba* (LeT) attack in 2008 on Mumbai landmarks that killed over 160 people, India has not risked a large military campaign against Pakistan.

It remains unclear whether *Cold Start* indeed existed or exists as a viable plan, or was an elaborate bluff by the Indian government.¹⁵ On the one hand, statements in late 2009 by former Indian Army Chief Deepak Kapoor¹⁶ on India’s preparations to fight a two-front war against Pakistan and China fuel Islamabad’s suspicions about Delhi’s intentions. On the other, leaders like India’s Army Chief V.K. Singh denied its existence in December 2010, stating that “we don’t have anything called ‘Cold Start.’”¹⁷

Tests of nuclear weapons by both India and Pakistan in 1998 significantly altered the strategic calculus of the Pakistani military. The impact of nuclearization on the likelihood of conventional war between Pakistan and India has significantly raised the potential costs of escalation. Worryingly, a misinterpretation of the relatively muted Indian response to the 2008 Mumbai attacks might encourage the belief held by some Pakistani policymakers that their nuclear capabilities act as a deterrent from massive retaliation in both border skirmishes and attacks by Pakistan-based terrorist organizations.¹⁸ It remains unclear whether this belief is grounded in a complete understanding of India’s strategic posture. At a minimum however, given conventional military disparities, nuclear weapons and a willingness to use them remain Pakistan’s primary deterrent against India.

For an elaboration of Pakistan’s nuclear capabilities, please see pages 34–37.

China

The People’s Republic of China (PRC) plays a critical role in assisting Pakistan in a wide-ranging relationship that encompasses conventional arms sales, nuclear assistance, and military exercises. Pakistani leaders routinely describe China as its closest foreign ally and its bilateral relationship as an “all-weather friendship” and a “comprehensive partnership.”¹⁹

The Sino-Pakistan relationship dates back to the PRC's founding, when Pakistan was one of the first countries to recognize Mao Zedong's government in Beijing after the 1949 victory of Communist forces. Separate Chinese and Pakistani conflicts with India in the 1960s further cemented ties between the two countries. The Sino-Pakistan relationship is primarily anchored in a shared wariness toward and history of war with India. Military ties remain deep, based on a shared desire to ensure "regional stability"²⁰—prompting Indian concerns²¹—as well as Chinese commercial interests and Pakistani defense requirements. For example, during the US suspension of military assistance in the 1990s, China was Pakistan's largest supplier of conventional arms.²²

Furthermore, China provided crucial assistance to Pakistan's nuclear program. Beijing provided technology and training to Islamabad, including the design and triggering mechanism it used in its own nuclear weapons test in 1966.²³ In the early 1980s China sent scientists to Pakistan's secret nuclear facilities and provided uranium hexafluoride (UF₆), a critical precursor to enriching uranium, to jumpstart Pakistan's uranium centrifuge process.²⁴ Illustrating this cooperation, US operatives in the 1980s discovered blueprints of a Chinese-designed atomic weapon in Pakistani nuclear scientist A.Q. Khan's luggage.²⁵

Chinese arms transfers have often "filled the gaps"²⁶ during periods of sanctions by the United States. Recent years have seen an increase in arms transfers between China and Pakistan; the two nations are currently jointly producing the JF-17 multi-role combat aircraft and the K-8

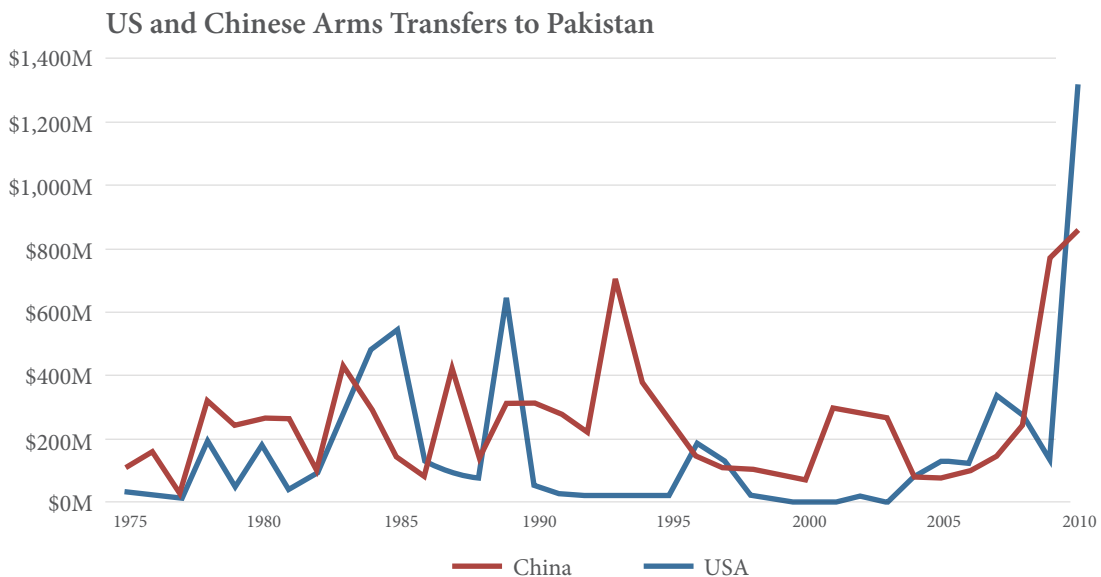


FIGURE 2: US and Chinese arms transfers to Pakistan. Source: *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Trend Indicator Values, 2008-2009*²⁸

Karakorum jet trainer. Pakistan also acquired the first of four Chinese Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS) in December 2009.²⁷ In a landmark agreement, Pakistan will reportedly be China's first customer in purchasing some thirty-six J-10s—one of China's most advanced fighter aircraft.²⁸ On the naval front, Pakistan purchased four F-22 frigates from China. The first of three frigates was delivered in 2009; China will assist in building the others in Pakistan.³⁰ Joint production also includes the al Khalid tank—the mainstay of the army. China also helped build Heavy Industries Taxila, the center of the army's engineering industry. This emphasis on joint production and building indigenous capacity earned China considerable goodwill with the Pakistani military.

That said, some analysts observe that Pakistan's military leaders find Chinese weapons generally inferior to Western weapons systems. As Fazal-ur-Rahman, a China expert at the Institute for Strategic Studies in Islamabad, argued:

Their technologies are not original technologies. They are borrowing from other countries. It is not state of the art. It is not the best option for Pakistan. You can't use their equipment as a force multiplier.³¹

Western weapons systems—and not Chinese ones—are considered much more useful for fighting India. A Pakistani analyst and a US official both note that the Pakistani military prefers “American toys” rather than Chinese weapons.³² Furthermore, some Chinese military systems also seem to have some dangerous flaws. For example, the Pakistan Air Force was obliged to replace the ejection seats in Chinese-manufactured jets because they were believed unreliable, not meeting Pakistani safety standards.³³ While a critical supporter and Pakistan's “best bet,” China is not seen as a “force multiplier” at the same level as is Western support.³⁴

In addition to their conventional and nuclear relationship, China and Pakistan's militaries have conducted multiple joint military exercises. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) and Pakistan's army conducted major “Friendship Exercises” in 2004 and 2006.³⁵ In October 2003, China selected Pakistan to engage with in its first-ever naval bi-national search-and-rescue exercise; in November 2005 both countries conducted another such exercise. In March 2007, China held the “Peace-2007” joint maritime training exercise in the Arabian Sea with seven other countries, including Pakistan.³⁶

In recent years, Pakistan's security situation and military operations in the tribal areas prominently factored in bilateral discussions. Notably, China was concerned with militancy in its western provinces and with ensuring regional stability vital for its domestic economic development.

Thus, in 2007, Pakistan and China signed an extradition treaty to make combating cross-border militancy easier.³⁷ Pakistan also recently sent Chinese nationals accused of extremist behavior back to China for prosecution.³⁸ In 2009, Pakistan's main Islamist party, Jamaat-e-Islami, even signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Chinese Communist Party, which, among other issues, supported China's position on its Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.³⁹ The leader of *Jamaat-e-Islami* went so far as to travel to China three times to allay fears that Pakistan's Islamist parties were supporting Chinese militants.⁴⁰

In short, Pakistan's relationship with China across a range of security activities is strong, enduring, and central to its foreign policy. The only comparable partnership is Pakistan's turbulent relationship with the United States.

Iran

Historically Pakistan and Iran have been relatively amicable neighbors; Iran was the first country to recognize the newly-created state of Pakistan in 1947. Economically, the two nations have mutually benefitted from the relationship; annual trade between Pakistan and Iran exceeds \$1 billion.⁴¹ Pakistan stated that it will purchase natural gas from Iran despite the increasing sanctions on the regime in Tehran; the two countries signed an agreement in 2009 to build a large gas pipeline together.⁴² Infamously, Iran also received nuclear technology from Pakistan through the A.Q. Khan network during the 1980s and 1990s.⁴³

However, several security issues complicate the relationship. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad recently accused Pakistan of supporting *Jundallah*, the group believed responsible for several suicide attacks against Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps officers and other Iranian sites in cities near the Iran-Pakistan border.⁴⁴ According to Iranian officials, *Jundallah* carried out a mid-December 2010 suicide bombing outside a mosque in the Iranian city of Chabahar that killed 39 people, and then fled across the Pakistan border to safety.⁴⁵ Anti-Shia violence within Pakistan antagonizes the Shi'ite majority in Iran. Mutual suspicions also hamper opportunities for Pakistan and Iran to jointly confront the Baloch insurgencies faced by both nations.⁴⁶

Prior to the September 11, 2001 attacks, Iran worked against Pakistani interests by supporting the Northern Alliance against the Pakistan-backed Taliban.⁴⁷ In a surprising reversal, both crude and sophisticated Iranian weapons were found headed for the Taliban in Afghanistan, raising concerns about Iranian support for that group.⁴⁸ Finally, given the contentious relationship between Saudi Arabia and Iran, the close historical ties between Riyadh and Islamabad continue to irritate Tehran.

Afghanistan

Pakistan has three interests in Afghanistan primarily shaped by its preoccupation with the threat from India. First Pakistan's geography limits its military's ability to strategically retreat in the event of a full-scale Indian invasion, but maintaining a friendly regime in Kabul gives Pakistan the potential to achieve "strategic depth."⁴⁹ This fallback option is an openly acknowledged element of Pakistani strategy.⁵⁰ However, while rhetorically the concept of strategic depth is an option, it seems unrealistic that the Pakistani army, if completely chased from Pakistan territory, would have the strength or logistical capability to mount an effective counterattack.⁵¹ Rather, the term strategic depth is shorthand for ensuring that Afghanistan does not pose a threat to Pakistan on its western border in the event of a war on the subcontinent, freeing much-needed forces to match India on its eastern border.

"A peaceful and friendly Afghanistan can provide Pakistan a strategic depth."

Chief of Army Staff General Ashfaq Kayani, February 2010.

Second, worse than an unfriendly regime in Afghanistan would be a pro-Indian government, which could, from the Pakistani military perspective, allow the state to be encircled by its enemies.⁵² India's diplomatic and humanitarian efforts in Afghanistan since 2001 have fed multiple conspiracy theories in Pakistan, including one that describes "tens of billions" of dollars spent and "hundreds" of Indian consulates being established within the country.⁵³ In reality, India has only one embassy and four consulates in Afghanistan⁵⁴ and describes its activities as focused on development projects, publicly pledging \$1.2 billion in aid to help rebuild the war-shattered country.⁵⁵ Still, even this scale of Indian activity stokes the suspicions of the Pakistani military and public.

"Nobody puts \$1.3 billion in dollars in Afghanistan unless there is some mischief that he intends... The West must realize that Pakistan will counter any Indian move in Afghanistan."

Brigadier Saad Mohammed (ret.),
Defense Attaché to Afghanistan 2003-2006, interview by authors April 1, 2010.



MAP 2: The Durand Line. Source: The United States National Imagery and Mapping Agency data, Wikipedia, and cia.gov. Original map modified by the German Kartenwerkstatt and Tim Duffy.

Finally, Afghanistan presents Pakistan with a historic challenge as it never officially accepted the Durand Line, the border between Afghanistan and British India drawn during the 1890s by the British colonial government. This ongoing dispute, along with Afghan claims on Pashtun and Baloch regions within Pakistan proper, are a source of concern to a Pakistani military shamed by the loss of significant portions of the country in 1971.⁵⁶

Pakistan has attempted to manage the strategic risks in Afghanistan by backing groups aligned with Pakistan's interests. Under Benazir Bhutto's government in the 1990s, Pakistan supported the Taliban—a Pashtun group that satisfied Pakistan's basic security needs in Afghanistan and did not make aggressive claims to leadership over Pashtuns in Pakistan.⁵⁷ After the September 11, 2001 al Qaeda attacks against New York City and Washington DC, this strategic calculus changed. The United States applied significant pressure on Islamabad, and Pakistan's public and direct support for the Taliban in Afghanistan dropped off sharply. The rapid victory by the US-backed Northern Alliance came at the cost, however, of upsetting the balance between the

Pashtuns in the south of Afghanistan and the northern communities that came to dominate Hamid Karzai's government.⁵⁸

This perceived imbalance, combined with the aforementioned concerns about retaining influence and strategic depth in Afghanistan, allegedly led elements within the Pakistani security establishment to provide some level of support to groups like the Haqqani network⁵⁹ and militants commanded by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.⁶⁰ While this report contains no direct evidence to either confirm or deny these allegations, it should be noted that support for insurgent groups would be consistent with an attempt by Pakistan to secure its interests in Afghanistan long after US forces withdraw from the region.

The United States

Although the United States does not share a border with Pakistan, it remains a central actor in Pakistan's external relations and domestic political debates. Pakistan's relationship with the US and with its military, in particular, has fluctuated significantly since the 1950s. This has led many in the Pakistani military—and many more in Pakistani society—to consider the US at best as an unreliable, transactional “fair weather friend.” The complexity of the relationship can be summed up in two statistics: First, Pakistan is one of the largest recipients of US military and non-military aid in recent years, including the \$7.5 billion in development funding committed



Pakistani soldiers unload humanitarian relief supplies from a U.S. Army CH-47D Chinook helicopter in Nardjan, Pakistan, on Dec. 10, 2005, following the earthquake that struck Pakistan. DoD photo by Airman 1st Class Barry Loo, U.S. Air Force.

in the Kerry-Lugar-Berman bill,⁶¹ and one of the largest purchasers of US weaponry, signing sales agreements worth some \$3.5 billion in 2006.⁶² At the same time, however, almost 60 percent of Pakistanis view the US as “an enemy of their country” according to a Pew Global Attitudes poll conducted in mid-2010. Furthermore, 65 percent are concerned that the US could become a military threat to Pakistan.⁶³ While on average less anti-American than the general population, many in the Pakistani military remain skeptical of US intentions and concerned about the level of US activity within their borders. This skepticism was dramatically exacerbated by the US raid on Osama bin Laden’s compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan.⁶⁴

Since 2001, the US has provided Pakistan with more than \$11 billion in military aid, mainly intended to fight terrorism.⁶⁵ However, most US weapons sold to Pakistan could easily be used in a future conflict with India. Advanced F-16 aircraft, Harpoon anti-ship missiles,⁶⁶ and P-3 Orion anti-submarine aircraft provide Pakistan with a means of countering some of India’s significant military advantage. Furthermore, US-provided TOW anti-armor missiles, Sidewinder air-to-air missiles, and 155mm howitzers⁶⁷ could be employed against India should large-scale conflict erupt. In addition, much of the arms relationship between the US and Pakistan has involved maintenance and upgrades on equipment bought in the past, such as older F-16s.⁶⁸ Some analysts even suggest that A.Q. Khan’s black market network was initially created in part to supply the Pakistani military with spare parts for its American equipment during periods of sanctions.⁶⁹

Pakistan’s access to US weapons systems is nonetheless bounded by the US desire to maintain good relations with India. This position is further complicated by Pakistan’s nuclear program outside the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). America’s recent cooperation with India on its civilian nuclear program particularly upset many Pakistanis, especially since no similar deal is likely to be forthcoming for Pakistan in the foreseeable future. Other more direct US actions, such as drone strikes against suspected militants, even when tacitly approved by Pakistan’s military establishment, are extremely unpopular with the Pakistani public.⁷⁰ The perceived unreliability of the US to supply weapons and spare parts over the long term has pushed Pakistan to increase its domestic capacity, diversify its arms suppliers, and develop a closer relationship with China.

The US-Pakistan relationship continues to be contentious because of conflicting regional interests. In 2010, the US pressed Pakistan to move more robustly against extremist elements in North Waziristan and other areas of Pakistan, despite the army’s stated desire to tackle this militancy on

its own timeline. This pressure increased in the wake of a failed 2010 bombing in New York City's Times Square—a plot with links back to the region.⁷¹

The January 2011 shooting of two unarmed men in Lahore by CIA contractor Raymond Davis deepened tensions between the US and Pakistan. Following the killings, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani demanded that the US withdraw approximately 335 CIA officers and contractors and Special Operations forces from the country, as well as halt CIA drone strikes in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).⁷²

The US killing of Osama bin Laden strained US-Pakistani relations even further. The raid sullied the reputation of the military within Pakistan and raised fears that India could exploit the same types of vulnerabilities that allowed the US forces to enter the country undetected.⁷³ The operation also stoked anti-Americanism within the military and undermined confidence in the leadership of a (COAS) believed to be “too close” to the US.⁷⁴ The consequences of this action were still unfolding as this report went to press.

INTERNAL THREATS

Secessionists

Separatist movements have long threatened the Pakistani state and held a special significance for the armed forces. The secession of East Pakistan (modern-day Bangladesh) in 1971 was traumatic for Pakistan's armed forces and cemented the military's identity as the guardian of national unity. Many recently-retired senior military officials and COAS Kayani himself⁷⁵ served as junior officers during this conflict, including Pervez Musharraf, who called it “the saddest episode in Pakistan's history.”⁷⁶ In the aftermath of the 1971 experience, the military found its state torn in half, its army shamed before its archrival, and its influence within Pakistani society challenged by a viable and assertive civilian political movement.

“In Balochistan, the Indians are actively involved—no matter what the Americans say—we have proof!”

Anonymous Lt. Colonel March 2010

The 1971 experience, as well as the long-simmering insurgency in Balochistan, heightened the military's sensitivity to separatist movements. Consequently, Afghanistan's claims to territory across the Durand Line have been particularly inflammatory to Pakistan's military.

Pakistan's support of the *mujahideen* and its early backing of the Taliban were, in part, motivated by Pakistan's desire to support Pashtun leaders whose aspirations were limited to Afghanistan, in contrast to those who call for a so-called "greater Pashtunistan" in uniting tribes divided by the current borders. Similarly, calls for Baloch independence have been met with stern responses by the military. This is particularly true because of a persistent suspicion by Pakistani officers that India and Iran seek to weaken Pakistan by empowering these separatist movements.

Internal Cohesion

Conflict within Pakistan is not limited to political separatist movements. Pakistan is an economically, ethnically, and politically diverse nation, with all of the attendant tensions that can be found when a relatively new political structure is built on top of complex societal fissures. Tensions along these divisions have at times led to violence and intervention by the military. For example, during the 1990s the Mohajir-Sindhi rivalry turned violent in Karachi, and the Army was dispatched to stop the fighting.⁷⁷ In mid-2010, the Mohajirs and Pashtuns in Karachi began fighting each other, necessitating the deployment of Sindh Rangers to quell the bloodshed.⁷⁸

Religious conflict also poses a significant challenge within Pakistan. Assassins killed the governor of Punjab in January 2011 and a cabinet minister in March 2011, both of whom spoke out against Pakistan's controversial blasphemy laws. There were a series of politically motivated attacks against the Shia minority over the past decade, particularly around the holiday of Ashura.⁷⁹ Other conflicts over Islamic identity include laws enacted during the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto era that prevent the Ahmadi religious community from describing itself as Muslim.⁸⁰ However, perhaps the broadest religious divide is between a largely secular political elite and an increasingly religious and conservative public. Particularly since the Zia period, the military has sought to find the proper balance between the relatively secular demands of its role as defender of the Pakistani state and the Islamic identity of the force and its members.⁸¹

The latter point significantly concerns policymakers in the US and elsewhere.⁸² Nonetheless, the officers interviewed for this report held that their personal religious convictions are separate from their roles and responsibilities as members of the military. While these opinions are not conclusive, these interviews reinforce the argument made by many Pakistani officers that Western observers consistently misunderstand the role of Islam in the armed forces. *The question of religious radicalization in the Pakistani military is addressed more comprehensively in the second report in this series.*

Militant Islam

A relatively new threat—in terms of its methods, goals, and ideology—to the Pakistani state has been the rise of domestically-focused militant Islamic groups, particularly the *Tehrik-e-Taliban* (TTP). While other militant groups have similarly attacked military personnel, the fierceness of the strikes carried out by the TTP raised their profile in the eyes of senior leaders. The TTP has carried out suicide attacks not only on the Pakistani state, but also against the Pakistani military. Perhaps the most shocking of these episodes were the October 10, 2009, assault on the Army General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi,⁸³ the deadly attack on officers and their families at a mosque, and the May 2011 attack on the Pakistan Naval Station Mehran in Karachi.

Other groups also threaten military personnel. In November 2008, an al Qaeda/Harkat-ul Jihad Islami leader murdered a former head of Pakistan's elite Special Service Group (SSG), and in October and November 2009 other militants tried to kill three serving brigadiers.⁸⁴ Suicide attackers also targeted regional headquarters of the Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) in Lahore and Peshawar in May and November 2009, respectively. *The TTP will be discussed in greater detail in the second report in this series.*



The complex set of threats and series of conflicts Pakistan has faced is often cited by the military as an explanation for its prominent role in Pakistani society. Throughout its history, Pakistan has been surrounded by powerful rivals and unstable neighbors, at the center of major-power politics, and internally divided along economic, religious, and ethnic lines. This backdrop has given the Pakistan Army what one analyst describes as “a sense of guardianship”⁸⁵ of the Pakistani state.

A SHORT HISTORY OF PAKISTAN'S MILITARY

The military focuses its external capabilities on fighting India, its primary rival. Internally, the military sees its role as a professional, disciplined safeguard against ineffective or corrupt civilian governments—or against civilian rule that threatens the military's autonomy and influence in foreign policy. The following section briefly describes the history of Pakistan's fighting forces.

INDIAN PARTITION, KASHMIR, AND THE USE OF PROXIES

The 1947 Partition of British India divided the British Indian Army into two unequal components; East and West Pakistan received approximately one-third of the former British Indian forces while India received the other two-thirds.⁸⁶ Because Muslim-majority Pakistan had a smaller military, and because Hindu-majority India called for the reunification of the former British Indian territories, Pakistani leaders immediately saw India as the nation's most significant military threat.⁸⁷

Much of the acrimony between Pakistan and India stems from the decision of a minor potentate to side with India over Pakistan around the time of Partition. When the 550 Princely States of British India were given the choice to join the newly formed countries of India or Pakistan, the Hindu maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir decided to join his Muslim-majority territory with India. The details of this deal, including the intrigues of the last viceroy of India, Lord Louis Mountbatten, remain contentious; the political leadership from both countries strongly believed that the territory was rightfully theirs.

At the time, Pakistan's nascent military forces could not take the territory by force. Equally important, the Pakistani military was still under the command of British officers who would not have led their troops into Kashmir.⁸⁸ Thus, Pakistani Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, along with lower-level Pakistani military leaders, approved a plan to use irregular forces to fight for Pakistani interests in the region.⁸⁹ These militias from the North West Frontier Province, called *lashkars*, crossed the border on October 21, 1947. After a few days of battle, these irregular forces nearly captured Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir. Indian forces—deployed on October 27—eventually pushed them back.⁹⁰



MAP 3: The Boundary of British India (1939). Source: cia.gov.

In this conflict, Pakistan gained some territory within Kashmir. The resulting ceasefire line, with minor changes, became formalized as the Line of Control (LOC) during negotiations with India following the 1971 war.⁹¹ Nonetheless, the combination of Pakistan’s weaker conventional military abilities and continued competing claims over Kashmir set the foundation that defined Pakistani military thinking.

US MILITARY AID, THE FIRST MILITARY REGIME, AND THE 1965 WAR

The looming threat of India led Pakistani leaders to look to the US for military assistance. In 1950 Liaquat Ali Khan famously turned down an invitation to visit Moscow, choosing to visit the United States instead. The US viewed Pakistan as a new Cold War ally, and between 1953 and 1961 \$508 million of US military aid flowed to Pakistan.⁹²

During this time, the Pakistani military remained a relatively stable professional institution. In contrast, the 1950s were a decade of extreme domestic political turbulence. Seven Pakistani

prime ministers fell between 1951 and 1958, and four East Pakistan governments collapsed in 1958 alone. During the same period, Pakistan's economy was in shambles and inflation soared. In 1958, the strongly pro-American Army Chief General Ayub Khan, with the initial support of some civilian leaders, launched a coup and took over the government. Khan's military takeover was the first of the four military regimes.⁹³

By the early 1960s, Pakistan's military began to believe it could confront rival India in Kashmir. In 1962, India fought China in a border war—a conflict in which the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) soundly defeated the Indian Army. Following India's battering by PLA forces, a well-trained, well-armed, and well-rested Pakistani military saw an opportunity to take Kashmir. Irregular forces were deployed inside Kashmir to incite a popular revolt, while regular troops moved to occupy the area.⁹⁴ This plan turned out disastrously for Pakistan, in part because of a lack of coordination between the army and the air force, but also because India decided to launch an invasion of Pakistan proper in response.⁹⁵ The war ended in a standoff after 17 days, and in 1966 the territorial gains made by both sides were rescinded as forces returned to their original positions. During the conflict, the US halted aid to both India and Pakistan.⁹⁶

By 1969, poor economic performance and frustration with one-man rule led to violent demonstrations against Ayub Khan, ultimately forcing him to resign.⁹⁷ However, before leaving office, Khan returned the country to martial law. Army chief General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan became Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) and then president.⁹⁸

THE 1971 WAR AND A RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE

While the majority of Pakistan's citizens resided in Bengali East Pakistan, power and military authority remained in Punjabi-dominated West Pakistan. This imbalance became plainly apparent during the 1970 elections, when the East Pakistan Awami League won a majority of the seats in the Pakistan National Assembly. To prevent the formation of an East Pakistani-led government, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), refused to attend the National Assembly session scheduled for March 3 and demanded an extension of the time allotted to write a new constitution.⁹⁹ On March 1, 1971 President Yahya Khan suspended the National Assembly. East Pakistanis took to the streets in protest, and after many strikes, mob violence, and low-level bloodshed against Pakistani military officers, the predominantly Punjabi Pakistani military used force on the streets of Dhaka and elsewhere. *Operation Searchlight* marked the beginning of the brutal civil war that led to, among other things, civilian massacres, mutiny among Bengali officers in the Pakistani military, urban terrorism, and a fractured country.¹⁰⁰ During this time, India began military incursions to support the Bengali

rebels, and in early December 1971 launched a full-scale invasion of East Pakistan. By December 16, East Pakistan was no longer under Islamabad's control.

On December 20, 1971, as a result of pressure from an officer corps shamed by defeat, Yahya stepped down and handed over power to Bhutto. Under Bhutto's leadership, India and Pakistan formalized the LOC, the Army suppressed an insurgency in Balochistan, and a new constitution was ratified. Pakistan also launched its clandestine nuclear weapons program as a hedge against India's conventional numerical military advantage.¹⁰¹

However, the economy suffered under Bhutto's nationalization schemes, and many, particularly in the army and business community, increasingly viewed him as a dictator.¹⁰² Rigged elections in 1977 led to a general strike of religiously conservative Pakistanis and a declaration of martial law.¹⁰³ On July 4, 1977, Chief of Army Staff Zia ul-Haq—handpicked by Bhutto for the top military position—overthrew Bhutto and declared himself CMLA. Two years later, after a trial widely viewed as unfair and despite the objections and appeals of international leaders, Bhutto was executed by hanging.¹⁰⁴

ISLAMIZATION, THE MUJAHIDEEN, AND NUCLEAR STUMBLING BLOCKS

The US resumed providing limited military aid to Pakistan in 1975, but then suspended it again in 1979 when Washington “discovered” the Pakistani nuclear program. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at the end of 1979, however, the US reconsidered its position and began supporting (along with generous financing from Saudi Arabia) Pakistani and Afghan *mujahideen* in their fight against the Soviet Union. In 1981 the US provided Pakistan with a \$3.2 billion five-year military and economic aid package.¹⁰⁵

Under Zia the military not only supported the *mujahideen* but also actively encouraged “Islamization” in its own ranks. Zia made Islamic teachings a regular part of military training and changed the motto of the army to “Faith, Obedience of God, and Struggle in the path of Allah.”¹⁰⁶ Several officers interviewed claimed that Zia also placed spies within the army to monitor un-Islamic behavior.¹⁰⁷ Finally, throughout much of the 1980s, Zia based an armor brigade in Saudi Arabia, strengthening the military's ties to the rest of the Muslim world and building connections with the Middle East.¹⁰⁸

In an effort to discourage Pakistan from continuing work on its nuclear program, in 1985 the US Senate adopted the Pressler Amendment to the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act. This legislation

banned most economic and military assistance to Pakistan unless the President of the United States could annually certify that Pakistan did not possess a “nuclear explosive device.” Because Pakistan was a critical player in America’s proxy war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, however Presidents Reagan and Bush certified that Pakistan did not have nuclear weapons, despite mounting intelligence to the contrary¹⁰⁹ and pressure from anti-proliferation advocates.¹¹⁰

After the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, the United States dramatically reduced its support to Pakistan as well as its presence in the region.¹¹¹ Then, in October 1990, President Bush refused to certify that Pakistan did not possess a nuclear explosive device, triggering the Pressler Amendment sanctions. The US cut off all military aid, including the final delivery of 28 F-16 military jets that Pakistan had purchased, the sale of spare parts for Pakistani military equipment, and International Military Education and Training (IMET) funding to Pakistan. This aid resumed only after the September 11, 2001 attacks.

“America is under no obligation to make it any easier for a nation to acquire or enhance such a [nuclear] capability...If Pakistan ultimately decides that its bomb is worth the hardships of acquiring and possessing it, then that is Pakistan’s choice to make and we must respond accordingly.”

US Senator John Glenn, July 30 1992

A RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE

In 1988, Zia died in a mysterious plane crash and Pakistan returned to civilian rule. Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif alternated in power for the majority of the 1990s, and the army chiefs who followed Zia undid many of his Islamization efforts. They did not, however, reduce the military’s support for militant Islamist groups.¹¹² Weakened by the suspension of US aid, the military increasingly saw nonconventional operations as one of the few ways it could stymie India’s rule in Kashmir and secure its interests in Afghanistan. Thus, the ISI supported numerous Kashmir-oriented militant groups¹¹³ as well as the Taliban in Afghanistan.¹¹⁴

Pakistan also put the finishing touches on its nuclear program. After India tested nuclear weapons in May 1998, Pakistan responded by testing its own weapons later that month. Fearing increased US sanctions, COAS Jehangir Karamat initially resisted testing and encouraged further

discussion before proceeding. He was, however, overruled by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.¹¹⁵

Several months later, Karamat gave a speech advocating for the creation of a deliberative body that would give the military a formal role in government decision-making. Karamat felt this was necessary because Sharif's style of governance had fostered instability and numerous crises.¹¹⁶ Sharif rejected this direct challenge to his authority; consequently, Karamat was obliged to retire several months ahead of schedule. As Karamat's replacement, Sharif chose Pervez Musharraf, then Corps Commander at Mangla. Musharraf, Sharif believed, would be more pliant than some of the more senior generals he could have otherwise chosen.¹¹⁷

MUSHARRAF AND KARGIL

Within a few weeks of Musharraf's appointment as COAS in 1998, he was presented with a plan to "straighten" the LOC by taking over the uninhabited but strategically-located Kargil Heights in Kashmir during the winter, when India left the area unoccupied. This plan called for Pakistani troops to pretend to be irregular forces and occupy the abandoned outposts. When Indians discovered the Pakistani occupying forces in mid-1999, the subsequent diplomatic and military confrontation grew to such an extent that US President Clinton personally intervened to end the crisis. Under intense US pressure, as well as the increasing possibility of a nuclear exchange, a humiliated Sharif agreed to withdraw Pakistani troops back to the LOC.¹¹⁸

After the 'Kargil Crisis' in 1999, a chastened Sharif attempted to pin the blame on the army and tried to replace COAS Musharraf. In response, the X Corps Commander and Chief of General Staff (CGS) led a coup and detained Sharif. Musharraf, who was flying back from Sri Lanka and was circling in an aircraft above Karachi for hours, touched down and assumed control of the country.¹¹⁹

THE POST-SEPTEMBER 11 WORLD

After the September 11, 2001 attacks on New York City and Washington DC, Musharraf acquiesced to US demands to renounce formal Pakistani support of the Taliban and agreed to be a full partner in the so-called 'Global War on Terror.' In exchange, the US resumed aid to the Pakistani military. As US and Northern Alliance forces drove the Taliban and al Qaeda from Afghanistan, many militants fled into Pakistan's tribal areas. The US-Pakistan relationship was far from perfect, and some analysts claim that the Afghanistan Taliban benefited from ISI assistance after the September 11, 2001 attacks, allowing the organization to reestablish itself as a fighting force.¹²⁰



Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf and US President George W. Bush walk together to their joint news conference at Aiwan-e-Sadr in Islamabad, Pakistan, March 4, 2006. White House photo by Shealah Craighead.

At the same time that US forces were driving the Taliban and al Qaeda across Pakistan's western border, militants launched a series of attacks in Kashmir. Then, on December 13, 2001, five Pakistan-based terrorists attacked the Indian Parliament, killing several people in a brazen daylight suicide attack.¹²¹ Because the ISI supported Kashmir-oriented militant groups, India suspected Pakistan of backing the strike. President Musharraf renounced the use of militants in Kashmir after the attack, but a ten-month military standoff between the two countries nevertheless ensued, with the US again intervening to help defuse the situation.¹²²

Under Musharraf's rule, militants gained increased control of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas on Pakistan's western border,¹²³ the Taliban regrouped in Quetta,¹²⁴ and, according to analysts in Pakistan and abroad, Kashmir-oriented terrorist groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba continued to operate on Pakistani soil despite an official ban.¹²⁵

Under pressure from the US to attack al Qaeda and prevent the Taliban from conducting cross-border raids into Afghanistan, in 2004 the Pakistani military engaged in "anti-terrorism" opera-

tions in North and South Waziristan. These operations resulted in heavy military casualties and a series of peace deals with what would shortly become the Pakistani Taliban. Nearly all these agreements failed, and by 2009 the military launched a more forceful string of offensives against militants in some FATA agencies and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP, now renamed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)).¹²⁶

Discontent with Musharraf's rule reached a crisis point in March 2007 when he dismissed the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Pakistan's legal community took to the streets in protest, demanding Musharraf's resignation. The Supreme Court overturned Musharraf's decision and on November 3, 2007, Musharraf enacted a state of emergency, dismissed the Supreme Court, suspended the constitution, and imprisoned protestors. He promised fresh elections in January 2008 (postponed until February because of the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in December 2007), and resigned from the army on November 28, 2007.¹²⁷ Ashfaq Parvez Kayani replaced him as COAS. Under impeachment pressure, Musharraf stepped down from his post as President in August 2008 and was replaced by Benazir Bhutto's widower, Asif Ali Zardari.¹²⁸

Following Musharraf's departure, General Kayani embarked on an effort to restore the military's image. He removed many officers from the civil administration and, at least initially, distanced the military from politics.¹²⁹ His leadership while fighting the Taliban in Swat Valley and FATA helped the military garner significant popular support,¹³⁰ which was evident from an unusual three-year extension as COAS.¹³¹

CONVENTIONAL CAPABILITIES

Again, Pakistan's conventional military strategy centers on countering the threat from its powerful neighbor India. Other resources in the public domain provide extensive technical discussions of Pakistani conventional resources and strategy (including a range of Indian estimates); in contrast, this section of the report will provide a high-level and brief discussion of the key issues concerning Pakistan's conventional posture.

ARMY

The Pakistani army forms the bulk of Pakistan's armed forces, and is the key player in its offensive and defensive capabilities. Pakistan has nine army corps. Six are deployed close to the Indian border in anticipation of conventional conflict with India, although some were temporarily dispatched to support operations in the tribal areas.¹³² I and II Corps are armored "strike" corps designed to penetrate Indian territory in a conflict as part of the "Riposte" doctrine.¹³³ XI and XII Corps have had principal responsibility for counterinsurgency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan.¹³⁴ The remaining corps are positioned to counter potential Indian offensives.



The army's main battle tank (MBT), the al Khalid, was developed with Chinese cooperation for domestic production.¹³⁵ Al Khalid tanks are fully equipped for night warfare and are armed with a 125mm primary cannon.¹³⁶ The Pakistani military can additionally deploy over 1,500 Chinese-built Type-59, Type-69, and Type-85 tanks, as well as Ukrainian T-80UDs, Soviet era T-54s and T-55s, and US-produced Vietnam-era M48A5s.¹³⁷

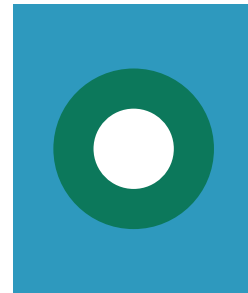
In addition to its MBTs, the Pakistani army has armored personnel carriers for troop movements and a limited medium and heavy artillery capability.¹³⁸ The US sold Pakistan Cobra attack helicopters,¹³⁹ ostensibly for counterinsurgency operations, but it is probable that these could be used as air support in a conventional conflict. In January 2010, the US reportedly agreed to sell Pakistan surveillance-only unmanned aerial vehicles, again with the stated goal of support for counterinsurgency operations,¹⁴⁰ but with possible application for other uses.



An F-16D Block 52+ 'Fighting Falcon' undergoes testing in the U.S. prior to delivery to the Pakistan Air Force. 13 October 2009. Source: US Airforce.

AIR FORCE

The objective of the Air Force is to establish theater air superiority and close air support for the Army. However, as confirmed by a retired Air Marshall, with the exception of recent internal security operations, the air force has generally been poorly integrated into overall military planning.¹⁴¹ Given India's significant air assets, this lack of attention to the role of air power may be a significant area of weakness in Pakistani conventional strategy.



The most controversial equipment in the Air Force arsenal, and a frequent topic of conversation even among Pakistanis outside the military, is the US-manufactured F-16 *Fighting Falcon*. In the hands of an able pilot, the F-16 is one of the premier multi-role fighters in the world and is a source of national pride for Pakistanis. The sale of the aircraft became a major point of contention between the US and Pakistan after 1990, when planned sales were canceled due to sanctions over Pakistan's nuclear program. After 2001, with increased cooperation between the two countries and with the lifting of sanctions, F-16s were delivered to Pakistan—over strong Indian objections¹⁴² because they can be modified to carry tactical nuclear weapons, among other rea-

sons.¹⁴³ The Air Force, as of 2010, has forty-seven F-16s, most of them older “A” and “B” variants, although some received “Mid-Life Updates.”¹⁴⁴

Pakistan’s Air Force also owns a mix of French Mirages and Chinese-built fighters, including the JF-17, for which Pakistan will be China’s first major customer.¹⁴⁵

NAVY

Due to Pakistan’s long land border with India, the Navy is unlikely to play a primary role in initial hostilities. To stress the degree to which the Navy did not figure centrally in Pakistani military planning, several interviewees and a range of sources referred to the claim that in the 1971 war the Navy Chief learned about the outbreak of hostilities while listening to the radio.¹⁴⁶ However, the Navy would likely be important in a prolonged conflict in order to maintain Pakistan’s access to crucial sea-lanes.



A naval contest with India would be an asymmetric conflict; India has the world’s fifth-largest navy, including one operational aircraft carrier.¹⁴⁷ Pakistan’s Navy is far smaller and thus would likely rely on hit-and-run tactics, utilizing its largely French-built submarine force and US-supplied Harpoon anti-ship missiles.¹⁴⁸

A concern among Pakistani naval officers and analysts is that India might develop a sea-based nuclear ability, allowing it a “second-strike” capability that could upset the nuclear deterrent balance between India and Pakistan.¹⁴⁹

PROXIES

The most controversial aspect of Pakistani non-nuclear strategy is its reliance on proxy fighters. As previously discussed, Pakistan employed *lashkars* since its first war in Kashmir and was central in coordinating the efforts of the *mujahideen* in their campaign against Soviet occupation in Afghanistan.

More disputed is the degree to which Pakistan continues to support militant proxies like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), among others, to pressure India over Kashmir and other disputed areas.¹⁵⁰ India accuses Pakistan of actively supporting the LeT and LeJ, or, at a minimum, tolerating their political wings. Pakistan denies these accusations and has officially declared many of these organizations terrorist organizations.

This report cannot provide sufficient evidence to prove ongoing official support for proxies; however, multiple press reports suggest that the Pakistani intelligence services continue to support some groups such as LeT,¹⁵¹ the Afghan Taliban,¹⁵² and the Haqqani network. In addition, from Pakistan's perspective, utilizing these groups in Kashmir and elsewhere might appear strategically useful, as these militant organizations keep the Indian army preoccupied with waging a costly counterinsurgency/counterterrorism campaign within its own borders instead of readying themselves for a conventional war with Pakistan.¹⁵³ However, the risks of supporting these groups have increased significantly as some of these organizations have turned their weapons on the Pakistani state.

NUCLEAR STRATEGY AND SECURITY

Pakistan considers its nuclear posture and stockpile its chief deterrent from an Indian attack. As of early 2011, estimates of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal ranged from approximately 95 to 110 weapons.¹⁵⁴ Pakistan relies upon two delivery platforms—missiles from Air Force aircraft and surface-to-surface missiles from the relevant army units.¹⁵⁵

This section briefly outlines Pakistan's weapons program, the command and control structure to oversee these weapons, Pakistan's nuclear doctrine, and key areas of concern related to regional stability, nuclear proliferation, and nuclear security.

Pakistan's nuclear activities began in 1955 as part of the Eisenhower Administration's "Atoms for Peace" program, which sought to provide nuclear assistance and training for civilian purposes. Under this program, over three dozen Pakistani scientists received training at US atomic facilities. With American assistance, Pakistan established a small civilian research facility under the auspices of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC).¹⁵⁶

Following the disastrous end to the 1971 war, Pakistan under Bhutto decided to pursue a nuclear deterrent to blunt India's conventional military advantages. Bhutto had long desired to acquire nuclear capabilities, famously declaring "If India builds the Bomb, we will eat grass or leaves, even go hungry. But we will get one of our own."¹⁵⁷

In early 1972, Bhutto convened a secret meeting with top Pakistani scientists and government officials, ordering them to design a nuclear bomb within five years.¹⁵⁸ PAEC began to research and develop a plutonium-based weapon, and would continue to do so for the next two decades. In 1974, Pakistan established a parallel uranium-based program.¹⁵⁹ This project operated under the auspices of A.Q. Khan, the Pakistani metallurgist with experience abroad who had secretly smuggled uranium centrifuge technology data from the Netherlands to Pakistan.

To achieve their nuclear goals, Pakistan also established a network of front companies to purchase nuclear components, codenaming the effort *Operation Butter Factory*.¹⁶⁰ A British security report from 2005 identified almost a hundred Pakistani organizations, including the Pakistani

High Commission in London, that assisted Islamabad in its nuclear quest.¹⁶¹ In May 1998, two decades after the program began and two weeks after India conducted its nuclear tests, Pakistan responded with a series of five nuclear tests, moving its program from the shadows onto the world stage.

COMMAND AND CONTROL

Musharraf established Pakistan’s overall nuclear command and control system in 1999, creating the Strategic Plans Division (SPD) in the Joint Staffs Headquarters to manage nuclear-related matters. In February 2002, Pakistan established the National Command Authority (NCA) to formulate policy and exercise employment and development control over all strategic nuclear forces and organizations.¹⁶² Retired Brigadier Feroz Hassan Khan argued that “Despite widely known limitations, Pakistan has done remarkably well in establishing a nuclear security regime and an evolving nuclear security culture that requires encouragement and support.”¹⁶³

Group	Responsibility
National Command Authority (NCA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes decisions on nuclear deployment.
Strategic Plans Division (SPD) The “secretariat” for the NCA; headed by the Director General from the army and comprises officers from the three services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops and manages all nuclear capability and exercises day-to-day control. • SPD Director General is responsible for the operational security of Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal. • SPD manages its 10,000 troops to ensure security at nuclear sites. Each nuclear facility has an SPD security division as the inner perimeter (the outer perimeter is the fence with electronic sensors). • Conducts security clearances with the ISI for employees under the Personnel Reliability Programme (PRP) and Human Reliability Programme (HRP).
Strategic Forces Commands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Army, Navy, and Air Force each has its respective strategic force command, but operational control theoretically remains with the NCA. • Each service exercises administrative control over the strategic delivery systems. • Pakistan’s Army controls the surface-to-surface missiles used as delivery vehicles for nuclear weapons. • Pakistan’s Air Force controls the aircraft used as delivery vehicles for nuclear weapons; protects several of the nuclear facilities through air defense (those sites are designated as no-fly zones).

TABLE 1: Pakistan’s nuclear command and control system.

Musharraf, in December 2007, formally articulated the NCA's composition and functions:¹⁶⁴ the President as chairman, the Prime Minister as Vice Chairman, the Foreign Minister, the Defense Minister, the Finance Minister, the Interior Minister, the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), the Chief of Naval Staff, and the Chief of Air Staff. When Musharraf left office in April 2008, Asif Ali Zardari became the nominal head of the NCA, though actual control over Pakistan's nuclear weapons remained with the military. In November 2009, however, President Zardari handed over his NCA powers to Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, who chaired its 16th meeting on January 13, 2010.¹⁶⁵

NUCLEAR DOCTRINE

While Pakistan has not formally articulated a nuclear doctrine, the senior military officer responsible for the Pakistani nuclear arsenal, General Khalid Kidwai (who is now retired from the military but remains Director General, Strategic Plans Division), outlined in a January 2002 interview the contours of a possible Pakistani nuclear weapons use strategy. He said Pakistan would launch nuclear weapons only "if the very existence of Pakistan as a state is at stake."¹⁶⁶ Kidwai went on to say, "Nuclear weapons are aimed solely at India." Explaining that if usual deterrence fails, nuclear weapons would be unleashed under the following circumstances:

- India attacks Pakistan and conquers a large part of its territory;
- India destroys a large part of either Pakistan's land or air forces;
- India attempts the economic strangulation of Pakistan;
- India pushes Pakistan into political destabilization or creates large-scale internal subversion in Pakistan.¹⁶⁷

Pakistan refuses to adopt a "no-first-use" doctrine—suggesting that Pakistan might use its nuclear weapons even if India did not use them first. Some analysts believe that if Indian forces crossed the N-5 highway connecting Lahore to Karachi, Pakistan might escalate a conventional conflict into a nuclear one.¹⁶⁸

KEY CONCERNS ABOUT PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

Since a conflict with India would be a high-stakes challenge for Pakistan, observers remain concerned with Pakistan's nuclear program due to the possibility of a nuclear confrontation. After all, India and Pakistan are willing to engage in limited conflict with each other despite the possibility of nuclear war. Indian leaders are acutely aware of this precarious position as well. India's former Chief of Army Staff in November 2009 stated that, "the possibility of a limited war under a nuclear overhang is still a reality, at least in the Indian subcontinent."¹⁶⁹ Concerns about an Indian attack on vulnerable Pakistani command-and-control systems might lead Pakistan's military to decentral-

ize nuclear launch authority to enable a response in the event of a surprise first-strike. Such a move would also increase the chances of inadvertent escalation during times of military uncertainty.

To reduce nuclear dangers, Pakistan and India in 1999 agreed to a number of nuclear confidence-building measures such as notification prior to the testing of ballistic missiles and the annual exchange of a list of nuclear facilities that are not to be attacked during a war.¹⁷⁰ Yet the risk of a wider conflict—triggered, perhaps, by a terrorist attack—suggests that a nuclear war in South Asia remains a calamitous possibility.

Despite the military's extensive vetting system, the "insider threat"—perhaps from low-level personnel working on nuclear sites—is an ongoing challenge to Pakistan's nuclear security. An assault and takeover of even a single nuclear device or facility, a fear heightened by recent suicide bomb attacks on Air Force bases reportedly serving as nuclear weapons storage sites, also remains a persistent threat to the nation and to neighboring countries.¹⁷¹ It is believed that as a response to the threat of an Indian attack, Pakistan dispersed its weapons to several low-profile sites, thereby increasing the challenge of securing these weapons. Similarly, the imperative to protect its weapons would likely lead the Pakistani military to transport these in small, secret convoys—potentially at greater risk of capture from an insider.¹⁷² *The "insider threat" is discussed in more detail in the second report in this series.*

Furthermore, Pakistani scientists have sold off-the-shelf nuclear technologies to the highest bidder in the past, raising significant proliferation worries. It remains unclear whether the Pakistani military leadership was aware or truly ignorant of the transfers carried out by A.Q. Khan to Iran, North Korea, and Libya. The fact that such a robust network existed over the course of some twenty years and was run from within the country's nuclear program nonetheless indicate that Pakistan's nuclear weaponry may not be as secure as its leaders claim.

Finally, many in Pakistan believe the US intends to seize Pakistan's nuclear facilities and weapons systems for a variety of political or religious reasons. This issue colors public perceptions of American behavior so much so that during a January 2010 visit to Pakistan, US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates felt it necessary to state at Pakistan's National Defence University that the US "has no desire to control Pakistan's nuclear weapons."¹⁷³ However, US plans to "provide added security for the Pakistani arsenal in case of a crisis," as one American journalist wrote, only exacerbated such fears.¹⁷⁴ Paradoxically, in his memoirs, Musharraf argued that not cooperating with the US against al Qaeda would jeopardize Pakistan's nuclear weapons even more: "It is no secret that the US has never been comfortable with a Muslim country acquiring nuclear weapons and the Americans undoubtedly would have taken the opportunity of an invasion to destroy such weapons."¹⁷⁵

COUNTERINSURGENCY

As this report noted, the Pakistani military has primarily directed its resources towards countering the threat of its strategic nemesis, India. As a result, it was less prepared to quell the insurgencies that developed in Pakistan's FATA following the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Although Pakistan has a long history of frontier warfare and low-level conflict in its tribal regions, the knowledge gleaned from that experience was not prioritized or disseminated in military training. Many of the first units going into the FATA and Swat Valley had difficulty shifting from a focus on large-scale mechanized warfare to one that emphasized smaller units, more precise air and artillery support, greater concern for civilian casualties and infrastructural damage, and a dominant and persistent military and government presence.

Since 2008, however, the military's effectiveness in counterinsurgency operations has improved significantly. The process by which the military increased its counterinsurgency capacity has been an adaptive one in which lessons learned on the battlefield gradually evolved into a set of standard practices taught at the training facilities that prepare Pakistani units for tribal area operations. These tactics, techniques, and procedures continue to evolve. However, insurgent organizations in the tribal agencies have adapted their tactics as well. As it stands today, both sides often claim victory before their gains are fully secured. Military units are effective in battle and capable of executing their missions tactically; the problem lies in the larger issues of governance, reform, and civilian aid and reconstruction.

The Pakistani military's dominant presence in Pakistani society is often matched by an equally underdeveloped civilian government. In the tribal areas, this is manifested in the difficulties Pakistan has had in bringing economic and infrastructural development to the region. Although Pakistan's military follows its own distinct brand of counterinsurgent doctrine, it does recognize the value of securing civilian populations, providing better governance, and developing the local economy; yet the inability of the civilian government to accomplish these goals hinders the military's ability to end its counterinsurgent campaigns.

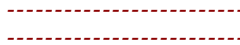
As a result, the Pakistani military has been forced to continuously recapture territory it has already held. It has also been reticent to move into North Waziristan, a bastion of insurgent organizations that operate in both Pakistan and Afghanistan. Although the Pakistani military is now a relatively effective counterinsurgent-capable organization, the lack of civilian government



Col. Daniel S. Roper, director, U.S. Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Center, discusses lessons learned in counterinsurgency with Brigadier Farhat Abbas Sani, Pakistan Military Air Defense brigade commander, during the Third Army/U.S. Army Central's counterinsurgency seminar. July 2009. Photo Credit: Third Army.

capacity continues to prevent any long-term reform from occurring in the tribal areas. Until civilians are able to govern effectively, the stalemate between the Pakistani military and the organizations it fights on a daily basis will likely continue.

The second report in this two-part series will discuss in greater detail how the Pakistani military's counterinsurgency tactics have changed, and highlight how counterinsurgency is one of many areas in which Pakistan and its military would benefit from a capable and credible civilian partner.



This report explored Pakistan's strategic context, the history of the Pakistan military, and the capabilities the Pakistan military developed in order to respond to the threats it faces. The second part of this two-part Belfer Center series, *The Pakistan Military: The Paradox of Power*, explores how Pakistan and its military could better address the country's challenges. That report finds that, paradoxically, improving Pakistan's overall strategic position and its internal stability requires that the military empower Pakistan's civilian institutions and focus more upon core security missions.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: METHODOLOGY

Pakistani Military Officer Interviews

Interviews by Rank		Pakistan	Canada	United States	Total
Army	Lt. General	4	0	0	4
	Major General	1	0	0	1
	Brigadier	10	2	1	13
	Colonel	0	1	0	1
	Lt. Colonel	2	0	0	2
	Major	1	2	1	4
Navy	Vice Admiral	1	0	0	1
	Captain	0	2	0	2
Air Force	Air Marshall	1	0	0	1
Total		20	7	2	29

TABLE 2: Methodology, Pakistani military officer interviews.

APPENDIX II: STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Pakistan's strategic position in terms of GDP has eroded relative to regional powers

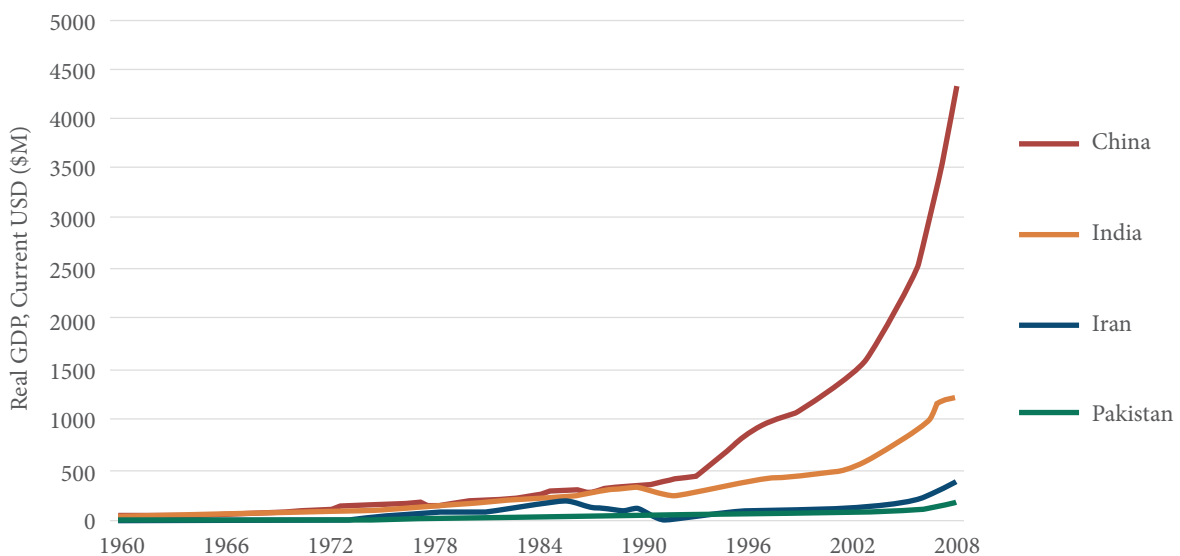


FIGURE 3: Pakistan GDP has Stagnated relative to regional powers. Source: *World Development Indicators*. The World Bank Group. <http://data.worldbank.org/>

ACRONYMS

IMET	International Military Education and Training	MBT	Main Battle Tank
AWAC	Airborne Warnings and Control System	MI	Military Intelligence Directorate
C4I	Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Intelligence	MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
CGS	Chief of General Staff	NCA	National Command Authority
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency	NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
CJCSC	Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee	NDU	National Defence University
CMLA	Chief Martial Law Administrator	NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
COAS	Chief of Army Staff	NWFP	North West Frontier Province
DGMO	Director General of Military Operations	PAEC	Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission
ERRA	Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority	PLA	People's Liberation Army
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas	PMA	Pakistan Military Academy
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	PML-N	Pakistan Muslim League
GHQ	Army General Headquarters	PPP	Pakistan Peoples Party
HRP	Human Reliability Program	PRC	People's Republic of China
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency	PRP	Personnel Reliability Program
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons	SPD	Strategic Plans Division
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate	SSG	Special Services Group
ISSB	Inter Services Selection Board	TOW	Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire guided missile
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	TTP	Tehrik-e-Taliban
LeJ	Lashkar-e-Jhangvi	UF ₆	Uranium Hexafluoride
LeT	Lashkar-e-Taiba	UN	United Nations
LOC	Line of Control	US	United States

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