



**ARE  
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PEACE TALKS  
WORTH A  
DAMN?**

**ASHLEY J. TELLIS**





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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## SUMMARY

The international community's routine call for continuous India-Pakistan dialogue is not only misguided but also counterproductive. This entreaty, which often follows major Pakistani-supported terrorist attacks in India, fails to recognize that the security competition between the two nations is not actually driven by discrete, negotiable differences. Rather, the discord is rooted in long-standing ideological, territorial, and power-political antagonisms that are fueled by Pakistan's irredentism, its army's desire to subvert India's ascendancy as a great power and exact revenge for past Indian military victories, and its aspirations to be treated on par with India despite their huge differences in capabilities, achievements, and prospects.

Pakistan's revisionist behavior is further intensified by its army's ambition to preserve its dominance in domestic politics. Moreover, its possession of nuclear weapons has permitted its military and intelligence services to underwrite a campaign of jihadi terrorism intended to coerce India—with the expectation that Pakistan will remain fundamentally immune to any meaningful military retaliation. This manifestation of hostility toward India makes any kind of diplomatic solution satisfactory to both Islamabad and New Delhi highly elusive. Even worse, the Pakistan Army feels emboldened by the international calls for bilateral engagement, believing that its strategy of nuclear coercion successfully invites foreign pressure on India to make concessions on territory and other issues thus far out of reach.

## THE FUNDAMENTAL ASYMMETRIES IN STRATEGY

- India is content with the status quo. It accepts Pakistan's existence as a state and is content to have the current Line of Control be the legitimate, internationally recognized boundary in Jammu and Kashmir.
- India aspires to achieve great power status, and its most pressing strategic challenge is countering the rise of China. Consequently, India sees Pakistan's antagonism and its support for terrorism as distractions that consume resources otherwise better spent on fueling its ascent on the world stage.
- In contrast, Pakistan aims to revise the status quo. It sees India as an existential threat to its survival and perceives itself to be India's genuine peer competitor. Although both perceptions are dubious, Pakistan continues to use force, as well as jihadi terrorism, to achieve its strategic objectives of weakening India and securing political concessions.
- More broadly, the Pakistan Army's conflict with India preserves its domestic political and economic predominance, and its efforts at protecting the "ideology of Pakistan" end up sustaining the perilous notion of a permanent Muslim resistance toward a "Hindu India."

## PROSPECTS FOR A SETTLEMENT

- India's clear geopolitical, economic, and military superiority implies that Pakistan cannot compel it to revise the status quo by force. Nor does India have to offer any compromises to procure peace because it is both a satisfied and dominant power. Since Pakistan lacks the means to either wrest the territories it lays claims to or reverse its continuing relative decline vis-à-vis India, the path to peace depends largely on Pakistan's willingness to accept its current strategic circumstances.
- Since the full subordination of the Pakistani military to its civilian leadership is unlikely for the foreseeable future, a shift in Pakistan's orientation and behavior will depend fundamentally on the military itself. The army's former chief of staff Pervez Musharraf provided the best hope to date that peace could be negotiated by an idiosyncratic military leader who is willing to change the army's objectives with respect to India. Unfortunately, Musharraf has proven to be the exception, not the norm, in the Pakistan Army.

- Great power mediation is not an adequate alternative for peace either, since the United States lacks the means to alter Pakistan's strategic calculus and China lacks the desire. Even if motivated, however, China would likely utilize Pakistan to slow down the rise of its emerging Asian competitor, India.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY**

- The United States and others in the international community should recognize—in the current environment—that continued dialogue will not extinguish the entrenched grievances that drive the Pakistan Army's passionate animosity toward India. There is a role for Washington and others in encouraging a peace settlement between the two nations, but it requires subtlety and, first and foremost, must involve pressing the Pakistan Army to cease supporting jihadi terrorism in India.
- The Pakistan Army should also be persuaded to acquiesce to the current territorial and strategic realities involving India and, as a consequence, end its relentless revisionism—which threatens to destabilize the Indian subcontinent and the security of Pakistan itself. The international community may never be able to convince Rawalpindi of the benefits of accepting the status quo, but it should certainly avoid reinforcing troublesome Pakistani behavior through a premature and futile call for dialogue.





## INTRODUCTION

It is a tired shibboleth that crops up repeatedly: only a continuous dialogue between New Delhi and Islamabad can end Pakistan's long campaign of cross-border terrorism against India. This view is pervasive both within South Asia and across the international community, constituting the conventional wisdom among academics, commentators, diplomats, journalists, and government officials.<sup>1</sup> Not surprisingly then, the clamor for dialogue often reaches a crescendo in the aftermath of a significant Pakistani terrorist attack in India.

The pattern is all too familiar. A jihadi group operating from Pakistani territory, with or without state support, strikes an Indian civilian or military target. If the assault is particularly atrocious, India usually suspends diplomatic engagement with Pakistan, while mulling over more forceful responses, including military retaliation. Because of the risks inherent in any kinetic rejoinder, the United States and other well-meaning bystanders invariably counsel restraint, hoping that New Delhi settles for just a suspension of the India-Pakistan dialogue. For example, after the September 18, 2016, terrorist attacks on the Indian military base at Uri,<sup>2</sup> then White House spokesman Josh Earnest emphasized that “the United States has continued to encourage India and Pakistan to find a way to resolve their differences peacefully and through diplomacy. . . . And we have condemned violence, particularly terrorist attacks. And we continue to be hopeful and encouraging of both sides to try to find a way to resolve their differences and to reduce their tensions through diplomacy and without resorting to more violence.”<sup>3</sup>

Depending on the terrorist attack's severity, the international community may even grudgingly reconcile to the prospect of an Indian military response, while continuing to urge New Delhi to keep it proportional and avoid a "crisis slide."<sup>4</sup> Simultaneously, as Pakistan begins to issue its own threats to deter India from undertaking punitive retaliation, both the civilian leaders in Islamabad and the military leaders in Rawalpindi are invariably urged by their foreign counterparts to crack down on the terrorist groups operating from their territory and to curtail Pakistan's long-standing state support for terrorism. For example, on September 28, 2016, the spokesman of then national security adviser Susan E. Rice announced that, after learning of New Delhi's intention to launch "surgical strikes" on Pakistan in retaliation for the Uri attack, Rice

strongly condemned the September 18 cross-border attack on the Indian Army Brigade headquarters in Uri and offered condolences to the victims and their families. Ambassador Rice affirmed President [Barack] Obama's commitment to redouble our efforts to bring to justice the perpetrators of terrorism throughout the world. Highlighting the danger that cross-border terrorism poses to the region, Ambassador Rice reiterated our expectation that Pakistan take effective action to combat and delegitimize United Nations (UN)-designated terrorist individuals and entities, including Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, Jaish-e-Muhammad, and their affiliates. In the context of the robust U.S.-India partnership, Ambassador Rice discussed our shared commitment with India to pursuing peace and regional stability and pledged to deepen collaboration on counterterrorism matters including on UN terrorist designations.<sup>5</sup>

The advocacy of restraint—at least publicly—at the peak of a crisis is ordinarily muted because an aggrieved India might be more likely to lash out against Pakistan if the international community, and especially the United States, were to hold New Delhi to a different standard than theirs when confronted by terrorist attacks. Consequently, U.S. policymakers (and their other great power counterparts) are usually careful not to push openly for a dialogue while India is still smarting from its victimization to terrorism originating from, or supported by, Pakistan. But after the crisis abates, the entreaties that India should renew its engagement with Pakistan begin anew. For instance, Earnest, some three months after the earlier January 2016 terrorist attack at Pathankot and amid fears about the Pakistani development of new nuclear weapons, reiterated the Obama administration's hope "that improvements in bilateral relations between India and Pakistan could greatly enhance prospects for lasting peace, stability, and prosperity in the region." He went on to emphasize that "the United States has made this case to both countries, that there be a sustained and resilient dialogue between the two neighbors."<sup>6</sup>

If past history is any guide, renewed exchanges between the two South Asian rivals materialize after a decent interval following the last outrage—a "peace" process that often begins with some dramatic Indian gesture, such as former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's historic

bus visit to Lahore in 1999 after the Kargil intrusion or Prime Minister Narendra Modi's surprise stopover in Lahore on Christmas Day in 2015 after the terrorist attack at Gurdaspur earlier that year. The revived diplomatic dialogue that ensues continues for a while, sometimes chalking up small gains but more often meandering along because of both sides' inability to confront what each considers the core problem in their bilateral relationship. As a rule, this desultory process persists until a new crisis—typically provoked by another Pakistani terrorist attack on India—brings it to a halt, with the cycle of interrupted diplomatic engagement and the exchange of military threats beginning over again.

Given this dynamic, the critical question is: What must be done to make the peace process between India and Pakistan simultaneously productive and permanent? India currently refuses to participate in any formal dialogue with Pakistan, largely due to the terrorist attacks in Pathankot and Uri, the heightened involvement of the Pakistani intelligence services in stoking violence and protests in Jammu and Kashmir since the killing of the militant Burhan Wani in Kashmir in July 2016, and Pakistan's abduction and capital conviction of the former Indian naval commander Kulbhushan Jadhav in April 2017. Many observers believe, as the former Indian cabinet minister Mani Shankar Aiyar eloquently phrased it, that only an "uninterrupted and uninterrupted" dialogue between the two countries can resolve their most difficult outstanding disputes, such as over Jammu and Kashmir, which are also viewed as stimulating Pakistan's support for jihadi terrorism.<sup>7</sup> This conviction appears to drive the international community's repeated invocations for engagement, but despite their ubiquity, there is unfortunately no intellectual clarity on whether a sustained bilateral dialogue can in fact produce the desired result(s). In this instance especially, the process of dialogue and the outcome of tranquility may be too easily conflated.

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**Progress does not hinge primarily on the presence or absence of bilateral conversation but rather on the choices Pakistan makes in how it approaches issues of grand strategy, the character of its highest national security decisionmaking structures, and the durability of its economic and political success.**

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There is a compelling reason to believe that diplomatic engagement, although necessary, is less pivotal to the ambition of peace than a fundamental transformation in Pakistan's strategic objectives vis-à-vis India.<sup>8</sup> Progress does not hinge primarily on the presence or absence of bilateral conversation but rather on the choices Pakistan makes in how it approaches issues of grand strategy, the character of its highest national security decisionmaking structures, and

the durability of its economic and political success. Because these structural factors have a disproportionate impact on the prospects of peace between India and Pakistan, it is unlikely that even external mediation—as apparently contemplated by U.S. President Donald Trump and his administration prior to and after taking office—would be successful.<sup>9</sup>

The Trump administration's temptation to engage in active intercession between India and Pakistan is understandable. Its predecessors have been lured as well because important U.S. interests in South Asia are hostage to the ongoing rivalry between the region's two major states. The continuing crisis in Afghanistan, for instance, is exacerbated by Islamabad's paranoia about New Delhi, thus leading many Pakistanis and even Americans to argue that the "road to peace in Kabul lies in [resolving] Kashmir."<sup>10</sup> The acceleration of Pakistan's nuclear program, including its destabilizing turn toward the acquisition of tactical nuclear weapons, is similarly seen as a response to "India's conventional arsenal," as well as a consequence of the fact that Washington "gave India a pass and signed a generous nuclear cooperation deal that allowed New Delhi to buy American nuclear energy technology," thereby justifying "greater international attention" to the bilateral competition between the two countries.<sup>11</sup> And, finally, Pakistan's dangerous descent into extremism has only intensified the demand that "the United States must . . . be engaged in the [India-Pakistan] peace process to insure against its failure" because Rawalpindi's dalliance with jihadi radicalism is "linked as much to Pakistan's sense of insecurity as to [its] army's ambitions."<sup>12</sup> Because these difficult challenges, which bear on important U.S. interests, are seen to arise from the India-Pakistan rivalry in different ways, it is not surprising to find many thoughtful individuals arguing "that [the] enhanced U.S. stakes in South Asia are a stimulus to the peace process. However, this strategic pressure point will be eroded by any U.S. indifference to the India-Pakistan dialogue."<sup>13</sup>

However tempting such an inference may be, it should be resisted—not because an India-Pakistan rapprochement would not be beneficial for both parties and for the United States, but because an end to the dispute is currently, and for a long time to come, beyond Washington's reach and perhaps beyond New Delhi's and Islamabad's as well. This depressing conclusion should give U.S. policymakers pause whenever they are tempted to either ritualistically exhort India and Pakistan to engage in a dialogue or, even more problematically, contemplate U.S. intercession in their bilateral dispute. Such U.S. intervention could not only be futile but also counterproductive to the cause of peace because it encourages Rawalpindi to persist in waging subconventional war against India in the hope that Washington decisively intervenes to finally produce outcomes favorable to Pakistan.

There is a role for the United States in encouraging a peace settlement between India and Pakistan, but the approach must be subtle and focused on pressing Rawalpindi to end

state-sponsored terrorism targeted against India—an instrument that has acquired renewed vitality ever since Pakistan acquired nuclear weapons in the 1980s. Achieving this goal will require the Pakistan Army to accept the current territorial and strategic realities involving India and, as a consequence, end its relentless revisionism, which threatens not only stability within the subcontinent but also the security of Pakistan itself. There is no assurance that Washington will ever be able to persuade Rawalpindi of the benefits of such an outcome, but by reorienting its objectives, the United States could demonstrate a better appreciation of the dilemmas facing India and Pakistan and could avoid exacerbating them by either reinforcing troublesome Pakistani behavior or mindlessly urging a dialogue that promises little success in resolving the fundamental sources of estrangement between the two sides.

As the Trump administration proceeds to implement its new South Asia policy—which is anchored at least partly on the hope that, as Secretary of State Rex Tillerson recently phrased it, “India can take some steps of rapprochement on issues with Pakistan to improve the stability within Pakistan and remove some of the reasons why they deal with these unstable elements inside their own country”<sup>14</sup>—it should closely examine the complexities of the bilateral rivalry, which are often forgotten in the rush to resolve current problems afflicting the United States in South Asia. This report seeks to illuminate the fundamental asymmetry in Indian and Pakistani aims, demonstrating why the bilateral rivalry is so toxic and difficult to mitigate. While the territorial disputes garner a great deal of public attention, two other elements exacerbating the competition are not as clearly perceived: the Pakistan Army’s desire to retard India’s ascendancy as a great power and its smoldering desire to avenge its past defeats, both of which are closely connected to protecting its political and economic primacy within Pakistan.

Lasting peace between the two South Asian rivals will not be possible without a structural change and an alteration of the strategic culture within Pakistan. Creating “balanced” incentives for each nation to maintain bilateral diplomatic engagement is difficult because India’s clear geopolitical, economic, and military superiority implies that it does not have to offer radical compromises to procure harmony, thus leaving Pakistan with the greater burden of reconciling itself to the status quo. In the meantime, international appeals to India and Pakistan for a resumed dialogue may be misplaced or do more harm than good, both to the countries concerned and to the cause of peace and stability in South Asia.

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**There is a role for the United States in encouraging a peace settlement between India and Pakistan, but the approach must be subtle and focused on pressing Rawalpindi to end state-sponsored terrorism targeted against India.**

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# A TANGLED TAPESTRY

*THE INTERLOCKING ANTAGONISMS BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN*

India and Pakistan have been locked in an unyielding security competition ever since the dissolution and partition of the British Raj in 1947. Their rivalry has been, and continues to be, steeped in long-standing ideological, territorial, and power-political antagonisms. Although the history underlying these tensions is wearying for most contemporary U.S. policymakers, it is often immediately relevant to the strategic behaviors of the two states and must be comprehended if the limits of bilateral diplomacy are to be appreciated.

## IDEOLOGICAL DISPUTATIONS

The ideological contention implicates contested identities and competing political visions and pits Pakistan as the self-conscious guardian of the region's Muslim population against a secular India that happens to possess almost as many adherents of Islam as there are people in Pakistan. The "two-nation theory," which Pakistan's founder, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, latched onto in the dying years of the British Indian empire, centered on the proposition that Hindus and Muslims constitute two separate and distinct nationalities, which have remained so despite, as Jinnah put it, "a thousand years of close contact" in the same geographic space.<sup>15</sup> These ethnics, he averred in 1940, being "as divergent today as ever cannot at any time be expected to transform themselves into one nation merely by means of subjecting them to a democratic constitution and holding them forcibly together by [the]

unnatural and artificial methods of British Parliamentary statutes.”<sup>16</sup> The original progenitors of this idea, a philosopher and poet of Lahore, Mohammad Iqbal, and a Cambridge student, Choudhry Rahmat Ali, had laid the foundations earlier: in 1930, the former had called for amalgamating with some modifications the four northwestern provinces of the Raj into “a Muslim India within India,”<sup>17</sup> while in 1933, the latter imaginatively proposed the name Pakistan as an acronym for “the five Northern units of India, viz. Punjab, North-West Frontier Province (*Afghan Province*), *Kashmir*, Sindh, and *Baluchistan*,”<sup>18</sup> which were to be incorporated into an entirely new state.

As these ideas gathered steam, they came to constitute the justification for creating Pakistan as a homeland for the millions of Muslims living on the Indian subcontinent—an act that, in the words of one popular Pakistani textbook, embodied the “revolt against the prevailing

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**Their rivalry has been, and continues to be, steeped in long-standing ideological, territorial, and power-political antagonisms.**

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system of India where the Hindu nationalism was being imposed on the Muslims and their culture.”<sup>19</sup> Given these sentiments, it is not surprising that the partition that finally resulted in 1947 was violent and cataclysmic, bringing in its wake immense physical dislocations that left lasting bruises across the political landscape.<sup>20</sup> It also bred intense emotional hostility between the two successor states, India and Pakistan, because

it legitimized the vivisection of the colonial Raj not on the basis of a mobilized civic nationalism but rather on a highly politicized (and polarizing) notion of religion as the foundation of collective identity.

The Muslim League’s slogan, “Islam in danger,”<sup>21</sup> which served as the galvanizing trope that forced the British Crown to cleave its proudest imperial possession, remains etched in the psyche of the contemporary Pakistani state. Despite being independent now for close to seventy years, Pakistan remains deeply fearful for its survival: the older locution “Islam in danger” has effectively been replaced by the notion of “Pakistan in danger,”<sup>22</sup> but, thanks to a heady combination of religious zealotry, external support, and now nuclear weapons, Pakistan has come to define its success primarily “through the prism of resistance to ‘Hindu India.’”<sup>23</sup> This permanent hostility to India, nurtured through the continuous promotion of a parochial Islam, animates what is widely referred to as the “ideology of Pakistan.”<sup>24</sup> Although encompassing varied facets, this ideology is centered on the conviction that the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent have no sovereign other than Allah alone, and by being set apart from all other Indians by their culture, civilization, customs, and way of life, they have a religious duty to protect the uniqueness of their ethnos, especially in the face of Hindu syncretism.<sup>25</sup>

The notion that Pakistan thus represented a supernatural obligation was captured by the ditty popularized in the lead up to Partition, “*Pakistan ka matlab kya? La ilaha illal-lah*” (What is the meaning of Pakistan? There is no God but Allah). Although Jinnah himself would dismiss it, arguing that “neither the Muslim League Working Committee nor I ever passed a resolution [called] ‘*Pakistan ka matlab kya*’—you may have used it to catch a few votes,”<sup>26</sup> he nonetheless legitimized the sentiment when he declared that “Pakistan was created the day the first Indian national entered the fold of Islam.”<sup>27</sup> Whatever its utility for providing political legitimacy and enhancing national integration originally might have been, this validation of resistance to Hindu domination has over time strengthened various Pakistani prejudices that disparage Indian secularism as merely a self-serving myth that obscures “Brahmin chauvinism and arrogance.”<sup>28</sup> Thus, it congealed “the nexus between power and bigotry in [the] creative imaginings of [Pakistan’s] national identity” in ways that inflame the communal dimensions of its rivalry with India and has, more recently, fueled the reactionary agenda of resurgent Hindu extremism in India, which, like its fanatical Pakistani counterpart, has little use for either the ideals of liberal democracy or peaceful relations with other evangelizing religions at home.<sup>29</sup>

## TERRITORIAL CLAIMS

Given Pakistan’s origins as a state conjured from imagination and constructed by religious mobilization, the ideological elements unexpectedly proved to be the source of great frustration where its territorial claims were concerned, despite their being deeply intertwined. On the basis of a communal logic, Jinnah demanded—and expected to receive—six full provinces of undivided India in its northwestern and eastern Muslim zones. However, when his test of religious identity was applied as the principle for determining the spatial division of the Raj, Pakistan inherited only a truncated homeland because the variation in religious distribution by district compelled the further division of several provinces.<sup>30</sup> That Jinnah’s final inheritance would indeed be “moth-eaten,” as Viscount Louis Mountbatten would characterize it, became a source of Pakistani resentment from the beginning.<sup>31</sup> Although the new nation would comprise Muslim-majority territories and, in that sense, exemplify the success of its confessional movement, Partition would always remain an awkward victory because several other significant Muslim-dominated areas would forever remain inside independent India. Moreover, even those provinces that were carved up to constitute Pakistan became examples in its consciousness of how either British fecklessness or British conspiracies with the Indian National Congress were instrumental in denying the new state its birthright.<sup>32</sup>

No territorial dispute encapsulated Pakistani resentments more vividly than the struggle over the Himalayan kingdom of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan’s claims undoubtedly derived from Jinnah’s demand for political control over all the northwestern Muslim-majority provinces of



*This map is illustrative and is not intended to represent the official boundaries claimed by India or Pakistan.*

the former Raj and from Rahmat Ali’s vision that included Kashmir as the “K” in the new acronym Pakistan, “the land of . . . the spiritually pure and clean,”<sup>33</sup> which was to assemble the subcontinent’s believers in a new “Muslim Zion.”<sup>34</sup> But it was not to be. For whatever Ali’s and Jinnah’s aspirations were, the Raj could not simply transfer Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan even if it had wanted to, because the territory, being a protectorate ruled by its own maharaja, was not controlled by the Crown.<sup>35</sup> Under the Indian Independence Act of 1947, British suzerainty over the princely states, such as Jammu and Kashmir, lapsed upon the dissolution of the Raj, and the native rulers were free to accede to either India or Pakistan or even remain independent—if they could, in fact, sustain such autonomy in the face of Indian

and Pakistani opposition. Because such opposition was inevitable, the viceroy, Mountbatten, counseled the princes to make their choices wisely, given that “there [were] certain geographical compulsions which cannot be evaded.”<sup>36</sup> When the maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, despite initially contemplating independence, chose to accede to India after the Pakistani invasion of his territory, the conflict between his kingdom and the Pakistani-backed tribal invaders was effectively transformed into a war between India and Pakistan.<sup>37</sup>

The resulting hostilities continued for more than a year, finally ending with a UN Security Council Resolution adopted on January 5, 1949. This resolution confirmed earlier determinations of the Security Council that had formalized then Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru’s offer to hold a plebiscite to determine the future of Jammu and Kashmir after Pakistan had withdrawn all its invading forces. Ironically, Jinnah had rejected Nehru’s immediate post-independence offer of “an impartial reference to the will of the people” in all three disputed princely kingdoms<sup>38</sup>—Junagadh, Hyderabad, and Jammu and Kashmir. It ultimately did not matter, though, because Pakistan never withdrew its nationals from Jammu and Kashmir as mandated by the various UN Security Council resolutions of 1948–1949, thus failing to meet the precondition for the plebiscite and leaving India with control over roughly two-thirds of the kingdom since.<sup>39</sup>

The state of Jammu and Kashmir ratified the maharaja’s accession to India in 1954, and, despite the misgivings of Kashmiri activists and protests from Pakistan, its constitution formally declared in 1957 that “Jammu and Kashmir is and shall be an integral part of the Union of India.”<sup>40</sup> After the 1971 war, when Pakistan was conclusively defeated, the Simla Agreement transformed the 1949 ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir into the Line of Control and required both sides to settle their differences solely through negotiations—a development that India has treated as further confirming the state’s accession as final, with any future modifications occurring only through a negotiated settlement between New Delhi and Islamabad (see timeline next page).<sup>41</sup>

Chastened by its defeat in 1971, Pakistan remained silent about its claims to Jammu and Kashmir for almost two decades, resurrecting them only after 1987 when the denizens of the Vale of Kashmir, reacting to New Delhi’s rigging of the state elections that year, sparked an insurgency that—with substantial Pakistani support—still waxes and wanes.<sup>42</sup> Exploiting its experience with the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan, Pakistan’s involvement in Jammu and Kashmir has, since at least 1989, consisted of funneling large numbers of trained Islamist fighters, weapons, and money across the border for attacks in the disputed state and increasingly throughout India.<sup>43</sup> These operations have now effectively displaced the local militants as the principal source of armed resistance to the Indian government. Kashmiris residing outside

## ARROWS AND OLIVE BRANCHES

### KEY MOMENTS IN INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS FROM AUGUST 1947-MAY 2014

<b>AUGUST 1947</b>	Britain ends its colonial rule over the Indian subcontinent, making India and Pakistan independent states.
<b>OCTOBER 1947</b>	Pakistani tribal invasion of Jammu and Kashmir provokes a war between India and Pakistan and precipitates the maharaja's accession to India.
<b>JANUARY 1949</b>	A UN Security Council resolution ends active conflict and calls for a referendum in Kashmir after Pakistan's withdrawal of forces.
<b>FEBRUARY 1954</b>	The constituent assembly of Jammu and Kashmir ratifies the maharaja's accession to India.
<b>SEPTEMBER 1960</b>	India and Pakistan sign the World Bank-brokered Indus Waters Treaty.
<b>APRIL 1965</b>	Skirmishes occur in the vicinity of the salt marsh, Rann of Kutch, in western Gujarat.
<b>AUGUST 1965</b>	Pakistan initiates a second war over Kashmir, ending a month later under a UN-mandated ceasefire.
<b>JANUARY 1966</b>	Indian prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and Pakistani president Ayub Khan sign the Tashkent agreement, formalizing a withdrawal to pre-August lines.
<b>DECEMBER 1971</b>	A third India-Pakistan war is provoked by the secessionist uprising in East Pakistan, which is supported by India and ends with the creation of Bangladesh.
<b>JULY 1972</b>	Pakistani prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi sign the Simla Agreement, ending the 1971 war and transforming its ceasefire line into the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir.
<b>MAY 1974</b>	India conducts a nuclear test, becoming the first nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council to do so.
<b>APRIL 1980</b>	A crisis in the Punjab begins, leading up to the Sikh insurgency supported by Pakistan, which continues until 1993.
<b>APRIL 1984</b>	The Indian Army launches Operation Meghdoot to secure control of the Siachen Glacier, provoking active conflict with Pakistan until 2003.

<b>NOVEMBER 1986</b>	The Indian Army launches Operation Brasstacks to test new operational concepts but also threaten Pakistan for its support for the Sikh insurgency, leading to a crisis that ends in March 1987.
<b>MARCH 1987</b>	State assembly elections, widely believed to be rigged, are held in Jammu and Kashmir.
<b>DECEMBER 1989</b>	Armed resistance to Indian rule in Jammu and Kashmir begins with support from Pakistan.
<b>APRIL 1990</b>	A crisis in Kashmir and Indian military mobilization threatens to incite war between India and Pakistan.
<b>MAY 1998</b>	India detonates five nuclear devices. In response, Pakistan claims six detonations.
<b>FEBRUARY 1999</b>	Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visits Lahore to meet with Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif, resulting in the Lahore Declaration.
<b>MAY 1999</b>	The Kargil conflict erupts as Pakistani forces occupy the Himalayan peaks in Indian territory.
<b>AUGUST 1999</b>	India shoots down Pakistan's Atlantique aircraft with sixteen people on board for violating its airspace.
<b>MAY 2001</b>	Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf and Vajpayee meet in Agra to resolve the problems in Jammu and Kashmir.
<b>OCTOBER 2001</b>	Insurgents attack the legislature building in Kashmir, killing thirty-eight people.
<b>DECEMBER 2001</b>	Gunmen attack India's Parliament, provoking a major Indian military mobilization against Pakistan, which ends in October 2002 after repeated U.S. intervention.
<b>JANUARY 2004</b>	Musharraf and Vajpayee hold talks, launching bilateral negotiations to settle outstanding issues.
<b>FEBRUARY 2004</b>	A composite dialogue between India and Pakistan begins, resulting in four rounds of talks that end after the Bombay terrorist attacks of November 2008.

<b>FEBRUARY 2005</b>	India appoints Satinder Lambah to lead secret back-channel talks with Pakistan's Tariq Aziz, resulting in a framework to settle the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir by 2007.
<b>OCTOBER 2008</b>	India and Pakistan open a trade route across Kashmir for the first time in six decades.
<b>NOVEMBER 2008</b>	Pakistan-based terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba gunmen attack multiple targets in Bombay, killing 166 people, resulting in the suspension of the composite dialogue.
<b>JULY 2009</b>	Pakistani prime minister Yousaf Raza Gillani and Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh meet in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, to chart the future of bilateral talks.
<b>JANUARY 2010</b>	Pakistani and Indian forces exchange fire across the Line of Control in Kashmir.
<b>FEBRUARY 2010</b>	Foreign minister talks between India and Pakistan are held in New Delhi.
<b>JULY 2010</b>	Foreign minister talks are held in Islamabad.
<b>FEBRUARY 2011</b>	India and Pakistan's foreign secretaries meet in Thimphu, Bhutan, and agree to resume the composite dialogue.
<b>MARCH 2011</b>	Singh and Gillani meet informally in Mohali, India, to watch the semifinals of the Cricket World Cup between India and Pakistan.
<b>JULY 2011</b>	India's foreign minister S. M. Krishna and Pakistan's foreign minister Hina Rabbani Khar meet in New Delhi, marking the culmination of the first round of the resumed dialogue.
<b>NOVEMBER 2011</b>	Singh and Gillani meet in the Maldives and agree to continue the dialogue.
<b>NOVEMBER 2011</b>	Pakistan's government commits to giving most-favored-nation status to India, which remains unimplemented.
<b>APRIL 2012</b>	Singh meets Pakistan's president Asif Ali Zardari for talks in New Delhi.

<b>SEPTEMBER 2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Krishna visits Pakistan and signs new agreement, leading to the liberalization of a bilateral visa regime. The second round of resumed dialogue begins, when India's and Pakistan's commerce secretaries meet in Islamabad and three trade agreements are signed.</li> </ul>
<b>DECEMBER 2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The third round of resumed dialogue, on conventional and nonconventional confidence-building measures, begins in New Delhi.</li> </ul>
<b>MAY 2013</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharif wins the election in Pakistan, and Lambah meets Sharif in Lahore to convey India's congratulations and its desire to improve bilateral relations.</li> </ul>
<b>JUNE 2013</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharif takes office for a third nonconsecutive term.</li> </ul>
<b>JULY 2013</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharif's Special Envoy Ambassador Shahryar Khan meets Singh and hands over a personal letter from Sharif.</li> </ul>
<b>AUGUST 2013</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Pakistan Army kills five Indian soldiers along the Line of Control, leading to heightened tensions.</li> </ul>
<b>SEPTEMBER 2013</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Singh and Sharif meet in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly and agree to end tensions on both sides of the Line of Control.</li> </ul>
<b>MAY 2014</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pakistan Army Chief General Raheel Sharif calls Kashmir the "jugular vein" of Pakistan and declares that the dispute should be resolved in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions.<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>"Pakistan Army Chief Calls Kashmir 'Jugular Vein of Pakistan,'" *Times of India*, May 1, 2014, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/Pakistan-army-chief-calls-Kashmir-jugular-vein-of-Pakistan/articleshow/34464638.cms>.

the Vale tend to be less antagonistic toward India, but the majority, which lives within the Vale, remains sullen, disgruntled, and suspicious of New Delhi, often speaking of Indians as aliens rather than countrymen.<sup>44</sup> Generally, however, they have reluctantly accommodated to the discomfiting realities of Indian control, but their opposition explodes in frequent spasms of popular resistance depending on the immediate provocations.

The current and continuing crisis in the Vale of Kashmir, sparked by the killing of a local insurgent in July 2016,<sup>45</sup> demonstrates the Indian government's profound failure to effectively integrate Jammu and Kashmir within the Indian Union—a breakdown that has been exacerbated by overreaching Indian nationalism, unimaginative policies in the state capital of

Srinagar, and New Delhi's costly lack of regard for local aspirations.<sup>46</sup> Praveen Swami, one of India's prominent journalists, summarized this miasma: "Politics can, and must, offer Kashmir and India a new imagination—a new way of seeing their relationship to themselves, and each other. There is, however, no leadership in sight that appears equal to such a project."<sup>47</sup>

This lament, however, does not undermine the larger reality that the armed resistance to India today is mounted mainly by Pakistani jihadi groups that leverage the help of radicalized locals for their operational success. These groups usually have no organic links to the disputed

state and are more obsessed with inflicting nihilistic pain on India than they are with genuinely resolving the problem of Jammu and Kashmir. It is unclear whether their local accomplices care about the future of the state either.<sup>48</sup> The intensifying Islamist ideology of a new generation of Kashmiri rebels threatens to displace the older yearnings for *azadi*—which, in this context, vaguely connotes "freedom from India"—with more alarming objectives, such as "carrying violence into the Indian heartland" and "making

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**The current and continuing crisis in the Vale of Kashmir demonstrates the Indian government's profound failure to effectively integrate Jammu and Kashmir within the Indian Union.**

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the[ir] movement transnational in character by aligning with global terror formations like al Qaeda and the Islamic State."<sup>49</sup> The Modi government, for its part, has chalked up major successes in its present campaign to target both the finances of the Hurriyat—the civilian leadership of the disaffected Kashmiris—and the indigenous armed separatists themselves, but even these achievements are unlikely to squelch the dissidence in Jammu and Kashmir without further efforts at political accommodation by New Delhi.<sup>50</sup>

The intensity of the conflict over Jammu and Kashmir, compounded by the injection of Islamist terrorism, overshadows several other territorial (or territorially implicated) disputes between India and Pakistan. Both countries still contest the status of the Siachen Glacier, a high-altitude wasteland that was, for many years, the site of an active conflict. They also continue to disagree over the Sir Creek in the Rann of Kutch marshlands, where, in 1965, they engaged in a limited military encounter that served as a prelude to Pakistan's 1965 war with India. Further, bickering over water rights pertaining to the Indus River persists, perhaps even growing in intensity. The old controversy over the Wullar Barrage/Tulbul Navigation Project in Indian Kashmir has never been resolved, and more disputes over water management will likely follow.<sup>51</sup> Prime Minister Modi, tiring of Pakistan's continued terrorism against India, has begun to press Islamabad by evoking India's hitherto unused privileges under the Indus Waters Treaty to build more storage dams. Such action could limit the water

flows into Pakistan, which is a lower riparian state that already suffers from violent alternations between floods and droughts as a result of climate change.<sup>52</sup>

These territorial disputes, with deep roots in the competing ideological visions of statehood, remain at the forefront of security competition between India and Pakistan. This is not surprising, of course, because territoriality is an exceptionally significant feature of the modern state system, insofar as it pertains to the relative ability to “influence, affect, or control objects, people, and relationships by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area.”<sup>53</sup> Since the most primordial power of the state is implicated in territorial disputes, interstate rivalries are often heightened not only because of the intrinsic value of the contested land but also because such struggles invariably reflect differences in the relative power of the competitors.

## POWER IMBALANCES

The distribution of power between India and Pakistan makes their other problems over ideology and territory all the more intense. The repeated hyphenation of the names of the two rivals over the last seventy years has obscured the brute reality that the two countries are radically different in their national capabilities. India is more than four times Pakistan’s size, is more than six times larger in population, has an economy that is over eight times bigger when measured by the nominal gross domestic product, and fields military forces that outmatch Pakistan’s by any measure other than deployable nuclear weapons.<sup>54</sup> If the two countries were located in different geographies, they would not even merit comparison. Yet, thanks to the exigencies of history and proximity, their destinies have become intertwined. Because Pakistan was able to mount repeated military challenges to India in the early years—due to promising economic performance, an alliance with the United States, and the presumed support of the Muslim *ummah*—the country’s perception of itself as India’s peer was reinforced, and, to this day, Pakistan continues to pursue a foreign policy that demands equal treatment with India. Former Pakistani prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto succinctly summarized this attitude when he noted that “one of the dominant urges for Pakistan has been to dispel the notion of seniority or superiority of Hindu India over Muslim India by creating a Muslim State equal and sovereign to the other State.”<sup>55</sup>

Islamabad’s expectation of being treated as a peer by a larger and more powerful neighbor would seem unreasonable in most circumstances, except that it was fortified by both the roots and the success of Jinnah’s movement. For almost 700 years, Muslim rulers sat upon the thrones of the great imperial edifices that dominated the Indian subcontinent. This hegemony came to an abrupt end after the Great Indian Mutiny of 1857. As K. K. Aziz phrased it, “In 1858, the Muslims of India ceased to be the rulers, and became a problem.”<sup>56</sup> Because in the

aftermath of their defeat at the hands of the British, “the [erstwhile] conquerors of India, the proud inheritors of the triumphs and glories of the Mughal court, could not merge themselves in the drab greyness of the vast Indian millions and still call their past their own,” their quest to recover greatness would, in time, lead to the Pakistan movement’s demand for a separate state. The success of this endeavor sustained, in Farzana Shaikh’s words, the “myth of power as a Muslim birthright.”<sup>57</sup>

En route to this achievement, the British entrenched the Pakistani zeal for equality with India. When the Indian National Congress resigned from the British Indian government in 1939 in protest of India’s entry into World War II, the Muslim League leveraged its backing for the war effort to entice the Raj into accepting its claim that it should be treated as the sole voice representing all of India’s Muslims. In gratitude for this support, the Raj granted the Muslim League parity with the Indian National Congress in every discussion pertaining to the future of India.<sup>58</sup> When these negotiations finally yielded the new state that Jinnah had demanded, the league bequeathed its progeny, Pakistan, with the same expectations of comparable deference. This outcome further bolstered the Pakistani conviction “that they not only must compete with India, but must compete *on an equal footing*; and that to accept anything less would be a humiliating betrayal” (italics in original).<sup>59</sup> The assertion that India and all other nations must treat Pakistan as a genuine peer still remains strong in Islamabad, but as the economic and diplomatic trajectories of the two countries continue to diverge, such an expectation becomes more and more unsustainable.

In any event, India’s economic and strategic successes over the last twenty-five years have reinforced the dominance and resistance that characterize the power-political dimensions of the India-Pakistan competition. In Indian conceptions, true security can only derive from the clear recognition of its standing as an emerging global power about to actualize its vast potential after several centuries of subjugation, division, and underperformance. Although this vision was present even at independence,<sup>60</sup> India’s achievements since then—preserving its national unity, sustaining its democratic credentials, and, more recently, realizing rapid economic advancement—have all buttressed its national conviction that success will only be fully realized when India achieves true great power status. Security, in that context, is defined to mean circumstances that permit India’s gradual ascendancy without interference.

This vision is by no means directed primarily at intimidating Pakistan; rather, it draws on India’s perceptions of itself, its history, its worldview, and the role it seeks in the global arena. However, because international politics ultimately involves struggles for relative gains, the Indian desire for preeminence—though rooted in autonomous justifications—engenders unintended consequences where Pakistan is concerned. From Islamabad’s and, more

importantly, Rawalpindi's point of view, the greatness that guarantees India elevated security and standing is highly menacing and is intended to bring about the end of Pakistan as an independent entity.<sup>61</sup> The "ideology of Pakistan" only encrusts such fears insofar as it conceives of any Indian success as automatically undermining Partition and, by implication, the security of the Muslim "nation" throughout South Asia. That the ideology of Pakistan has become a victim of gradual accroachment by the Pakistan Army over the decades has only made things worse: it has reinforced Pakistan's inclination to resist India's political dominance via diplomacy at all times and by force whenever it perceives an exploitable advantage.<sup>62</sup> This ethos makes the resolution of most bilateral disputes extremely difficult because the solutions are judged not just by their intrinsic adequacy but also by how they conform to Pakistan's desire to be treated as a peer by India.





## FEARFUL ASYMMETRY

### *PAKISTAN'S DOGGED REVISIONISM AND THE PERSISTENCE OF SECURITY COMPETITION*

The interlocking ideological, territorial, and power-political contestations between India and Pakistan thus set the stage for a persistent rivalry, but the ensuing security competition is highly asymmetric. In contemporary terms, India is fundamentally a status quo power: it does not seek to improve its existential circumstances through the threat or use of force. This does not imply that New Delhi is entirely satisfied with its circumstances, only that its discontent today has more to do with status deprivation—its absence at the high tables of global governance—than any territorial avarice.<sup>63</sup> In contrast, Pakistan displays an anti-status-quo temperament, as it seeks to revise its inheritance and improve its status through the threat and/or use of force.

### INDIA'S STATUS QUO ORIENTATION

In the context of its relations with Pakistan, India's disposition as a status quo power is manifested in three specific ways: its acceptance of Pakistan as a state, its satisfaction with the existing territorial boundaries, and its focus on relations beyond South Asia. Today, India emphatically accepts Pakistan's existence as a state, despite consistently rejecting the two-nation theory as its legitimating ideology. No responsible Indian leader can approve the ideational justification that led up to Pakistan's creation without opening the door to some future attempts at similarly rationalizing secession by another segment of India's highly diverse population.<sup>64</sup> The

contention of some Pakistani elites that India's rejection of the two-nation theory therefore implies its rejection of Pakistan per se is accordingly false, if not incendiary, because it fails to recognize that states routinely accept the entitative existence of their rivals even when disapproving of their worldviews.<sup>65</sup>

In any case, no Indian leaders in high office, including those hailing from nationalist parties such as the Bharatiya Janata Party, seek the annexation of Pakistan. The former Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee clearly affirmed this fact during his historic visit to the Minar-e-Pakistan monument in Lahore in 1999: "A stable, secure and prosperous Pakistan is in India's interest. Let no one in Pakistan be in doubt. India sincerely wishes Pakistan well."<sup>66</sup> Even the expectation of Pakistan's collapse and its reintegration into India—ideas some Indian politicians entertained in the immediate aftermath of independence—have long disappeared from the national imagination. Since at least 1971, all of India's prime ministers have desired stability in Pakistan if for no other reason than to avoid the

spillover effects of domestic crises across their borders. As Daniel S. Markey succinctly stated, "most Indian strategists see Pakistan as a huge mess, not one India would want to inherit even if it had the military tools to sweep across the border unobstructed."<sup>67</sup> India merely wants to be left alone: it desires that Islamabad and Rawalpindi concentrate on their own domestic challenges and, recognizing the futility of pursuing an unattainable parity with New Delhi, permit India to advance its great-power ambitions in ways that will not undermine Pakistan's security given its possession of nuclear weapons.

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Furthermore, India's equanimity is only reinforced by its satisfaction with the existing pattern of territorial control. New Delhi's formal position holds that the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir is legitimately India's, given the maharaja's accession in 1947; as such, Pakistan's continuing control over the one-third of the territory now in its possession is illegitimate and should be divested in favor of India. Both houses of India's parliament unanimously affirmed this long-standing position in 1994, but successive Indian governments have made few attempts to act upon the claim.<sup>68</sup> For all practical purposes, they have given up on seeking to recover "Pakistan-occupied Kashmir" and the northern territories of Gilgit and Baltistan, focusing their efforts on securing Pakistan's consent to legitimize, with possibly marginal modifications, the current Line of Control as the new international border between the two states.

Under Modi, India has undoubtedly become more vociferous about Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, but these broadsides, driven more by exasperation with Pakistani terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere than by irredentism, are mainly intended to remind the international community that India also has legitimate claims on Pakistani-controlled territory that it is not willing to cede without the appropriate *quid pro quos*.<sup>69</sup> Modi's controversial citation of Balochistan in his 2016 Independence Day speech was made with a similar intent.<sup>70</sup> Sartaj Aziz, former Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif's adviser on foreign policy, declared that "Modi's reference to Balochistan, which is an integral part of Pakistan, only proves Pakistan's contention that India, through its main intelligence agency RAW [the Research and Analysis Wing], has been fomenting terrorism in Balochistan."<sup>71</sup> However, Modi merely aimed to shine a spotlight on Pakistan's brutal suppression of the Baloch insurgency—to draw attention to Pakistan's failings as a state at a time when Islamabad constantly condemned Indian heavy-handedness in the Vale of Kashmir—rather than lay claims on the province or question its status as a constituent part of Pakistan.<sup>72</sup>

On such issues, Indian diplomacy has been generally conservative: apart from the 1971 war, New Delhi has consciously avoided actions that might undermine the territorial integrity of Pakistan, even when they might arguably offer some benefit or relief. Thus, for example, India has never supported Afghanistan's claims against Pakistan on the legitimacy of the Durand Line, although it could have followed the advice of those voices urging the contrary and joined with Kabul to make Pakistan's life more difficult on this issue.<sup>73</sup>

Because India is fundamentally satisfied with the territorial status quo in South Asia, including in Jammu and Kashmir, it has consistently declared its willingness to discuss the disputed state with Pakistan as part of a comprehensive "composite dialogue" that subsumes eight separate issues: confidence-building measures related to peace and security; the future of the military presence on, and the status of, the Siachen Glacier; water management relating to the Wullar Barrage/Tulbul Navigation Project; the status of Sir Creek; the enhancement of economic and commercial cooperation; the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking; the promotion of friendly exchanges; and, finally, the wrangle over Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>74</sup> The Indian calculus here is understandable, even if not always transparent: New Delhi seeks to ensure that any resolution of Jammu and Kashmir will not ensue piecemeal but rather as part of a final *reconciliation* that conclusively buries the hatchet between the two nations.

This approach is attractive to New Delhi because it is recognized that India would likely have to make most of its concessions on the smaller disputes, whereas Pakistan, almost certainly, would have to offer the biggest compromises on the larger and more consequential disagreements, such as those related to Jammu and Kashmir. Such an expectation is logical because

India, already possessing what it desires in the disputed state, seeks no further territorial adjustments, whereas Pakistan, desiring most, if not all, of Indian Kashmir, would have to reconcile itself to this land forever lying beyond its reach. Given this inevitability, Indian policymakers want to avoid a sequential negotiation in which Islamabad pockets New Delhi's concessions on the smaller issues first and then stonewalls India when the most nettlesome obstacles finally come up for discussion.

In any case, Modi has now maintained that any formal parleys will be contingent on Pakistan's termination of jihadi terrorism against India—a demand that has grown more incessant as the Pakistani military has expanded its low-intensity war beyond Jammu and Kashmir to

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India as a whole.<sup>75</sup> This is partly because India seeks to eliminate the Pakistan Army's potential ability to coercively bargain with India and force territorial changes at gunpoint. Although the Pakistan military's actual ability to compel India is more modest than it believes—because the huge power differentials in India's favor enable New Delhi to withstand any pressure—Indian policymakers recognize that if Rawalpindi is denuded of its jihadi instruments, Pakistan would have to accept the status quo whatever its qualms. The increased attention to terrorism internationally—particularly in the aftermath of

the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States—has only made India's tough diplomatic position on negotiations with Pakistan more tenable, as the latter's deep enmeshment with Islamist terrorism has deprived it of the sympathy that it might have otherwise enjoyed with respect to its territorial claims against India.<sup>76</sup>

Finally, India's status quo disposition in regards to Pakistan is corroborated by its burgeoning ambitions outside of South Asia. Since the end of the Cold War, Pakistan has simply ceased to be the constraining threat it once was for India. The attenuating Pakistani threat to Indian security actually began after Pakistan's resounding defeat in the 1971 war, but it took the confluence of other events—India's economic success after its post-1991 reforms, the rise of China as a new great power, and the transformation of U.S.-Indian relations—to further enable New Delhi to steadily shift its focus beyond its immediate vicinity.<sup>77</sup> However, none of this implies that Pakistan has ceased to be India's most threatening problem on a daily basis. The Indian state, to its own consternation, spends significant time and resources on coping with the depredations of Pakistani terrorism. While policymakers understand that the jihadi provocations are not an existential threat to the nation, they recognize the challenges

terrorism poses to political order and especially to the credibility of the government, which must protect its citizenry if it is to enjoy continued electoral support.<sup>78</sup>

Because Indian policymakers are also cognizant of the deeper threats that could emanate from Pakistan—in particular, a jihadi seizure of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances or the fundamental unraveling of the Pakistani state—they have consciously avoided pursuing strategies of tit-for-tat, such as supporting armed militants inside Pakistan in retaliation for Pakistan’s terrorist proxies perpetrating violence against India.<sup>79</sup> Although there are extensive Pakistani (and sometimes even Western) claims that India is engaged in these activities, the evidence proffered is suspect.<sup>80</sup> There is no doubt that Indian policymakers have been tempted by this option over the years, but even resolute governments, such as that headed by Modi, have resisted.<sup>81</sup> India’s primary strategy in dealing with Pakistani cross-border terrorism currently includes the interception of jihadi fighters as they cross the border, retaliatory firing across the Line of Control, and more infrequently, shallow penetrations by special forces across the frontier.<sup>82</sup> This strategy also includes the less direct approach of suspending diplomatic dialogue when Pakistani provocations prove excessive.<sup>83</sup>

More broadly, Indian leaders recognize that Pakistan must also confront its own problems with terrorism—most of which are unfortunate blowback from the Pakistani state’s efforts to nurture militant groups for operations against India.<sup>84</sup> A genuine effort by the Pakistani military to combat all terrorist groups residing in its country, particularly those outfits targeting India, would free New Delhi to focus on larger geostrategic objectives: coping with the rise of Chinese power along its border and in Asia writ large, building new intra-Asian balancing coalitions vis-à-vis China, and deepening ties with the United States and other nations to help manage Beijing’s new arrival in the Indian Ocean.<sup>85</sup> India has already begun to reorient its foreign, strategic, and military capabilities to service these more ambitious aims, and, if the trend gathers steam, Pakistan will become at best a “lesser included case” in Indian strategic planning.<sup>86</sup> New Delhi’s overall aim will be to avoid disturbing Islamabad unduly as it works to further reconfigure the international system to its advantage.

## PAKISTAN’S ANTI-STATUS-QUO DISPOSITION

In contrast to India’s disposition as a status quo power, Pakistan’s ideological fixation on India “as the ‘enemy state’ whose survival meant [the] end of the survival of Pakistan,”<sup>87</sup> its persistent conviction about its territorial losses being owed entirely to India’s “expansionist designs and her aggressive policies,”<sup>88</sup> and its “eternal drive for parity with India” combine to cast Pakistan as the exemplary anti-status-quo entity in the Indian subcontinent.<sup>89</sup> This inclination is manifested most acutely in Pakistan’s territorial irredentism, its determination to subvert India’s ascendancy as a great power, and its desire to avenge past vivisection. These objectives

undoubtedly reflect Pakistan's anti-status-quo propensities, and such a characterization does not entail a normative judgment, since Pakistan may have, even if only in its own introspection, good reasons for its revisionism. Rather, it is merely descriptive of Pakistan's desire to alter and improve its strategic circumstances through the repeated use of military force in different forms and under diverse conditions.<sup>90</sup>

That Pakistan exhibits such a proclivity is not surprising because it is deeply aggrieved, highly paranoid, and remarkably resourceful, all at the same time. Its grievances are anchored in a long-standing narrative about the myriad injustices inflicted upon the nation, primarily by India but also by others such as the United States. Its paranoia stems from the experience of repeated military defeats, fears about Pakistan's survival or its loss of autonomy arising from the actions of either outside powers or internal fragmentation, and the perpetual threat of marginalization relative to India. And its resourcefulness and ingenuity, which would usually be counted as a blessing, have often turned

out to be a curse because they have enabled the Pakistani state to pursue fruitless strategies of confrontation vis-à-vis India with repeatedly sorry consequences.<sup>91</sup>

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This emphasis on the "Pakistani state" highlights a distinctive element in matters of security, namely the central role of the army in the continuing confrontation with India.

Even before its first coup in 1958, the Pakistan

Army was the most powerful organ of the nation's "overdeveloped state"—Hamza Alavi's apt description of bureaucratic domination at the expense of the coherence, strength, and autonomy of society as a whole.<sup>92</sup> This preponderant power has enabled the military to annex resources, fashion the discourse about the Indian threat, and manipulate domestic politics so as to preserve its rule, even when it divests itself of the formal responsibility for governance. This hegemony endures because repeated bouts of military rule have severely weakened the other institutions of constitutional order and the pervasiveness of anti-Indian sentiments in Pakistan has provided a beneficial diversion.<sup>93</sup>

There is not a clear and permanent divide between civilians and the military in how they view India. The civilian bureaucracy in Pakistan has long come to terms with the military's domination of the polity, and it has internalized the latter's perceptions of the Indian threat as it slowly evolved to become the handmaid of a system of governance by fiat.<sup>94</sup> Civilian politicians outside the Islamic parties are not congenitally anti-India, but their lack of legitimacy,

mobilization capacity, and resources has often pushed them into political strategies that reward India-baiting—not to mention frequent dalliances with the military to get even with their rivals. As a result, they often end up abetting confrontations with India, even when they do not share the army’s visceral hatred of their larger neighbor.<sup>95</sup> Unsurprisingly, the Islamic political parties are generally anti-India based on their hermeneutic of differentiation-by-religion, and some have served to buttress the military’s strident policies.<sup>96</sup>

Although some civil society institutions have become stronger in recent years, they are often dexterously manipulated by the military, which has used “a variety of adaptive contestation mechanisms—including the mobilization of the media and the judiciary—that act as a continuing source of political instability and uncertainty.”<sup>97</sup> The recent “judicial coup,”<sup>98</sup> which forced the resignation of Sharif as a result of a tainted corruption investigation, only demonstrates how the courts can often end up doing the army’s bidding—thus continuing their long tradition of justifying bureaucratic domination under the “doctrine of necessity.”<sup>99</sup> Unfortunately, the larger Pakistani populace is still relatively weak, lying somewhere between indifference and hostility where India is concerned.<sup>100</sup> There is a small peace constituency dominated by a dwindling band of liberals in Pakistan, but the persistent inculcation of a hostile narrative about India and its motives through an “educational system [that] became hooked to officially concocted national soporifics very early on” has resulted in a higher tolerance of the military’s confrontational strategies than would be expected with an alternative vision of national interest.<sup>101</sup> As Iqbal Akhund, a Pakistani diplomat, has noted, “The Pakistani Muslim thinks of himself as heir to the Muslim Empire, descended from a race of conquerors and rulers. There is therefore a streak of militarism in Pakistan’s ethos, even at the popular level.”<sup>102</sup>

These factors have given the Pakistan Army enormous latitude to pursue highly belligerent policies toward India. As the receptacle of Pakistan’s deepest grievances against its eastern neighbor, as the defender of its Islamic identity against its Hindu rival, and as the wielder of the nation’s most lethal coercive capabilities, the men on horseback have pursued a seven-decades-long war against India. This campaign has been manifested sometimes in preemptive “offensive-defense” confrontations aimed at keeping a larger but more sluggish adversary off-balance, sometimes in an effort to cripple India through “a thousand cuts” that exploit its fractiousness, or increasingly through a nihilistic campaign of terrorism that, even if it remedies no particular political grievance, provides the Pakistani military with the satisfaction of vicariously punishing India.<sup>103</sup>

Pakistan, almost since its formation as an independent state, has continually employed force to try to resolve its varied and complex territorial disputes with India on favorable terms.

Given its contested borders and fear for its security, this temptation is not surprising. But it is astonishing that Pakistan persists with this strategy despite numerous defeats. Such behavior may seem anomalous, but, as C. Christine Fair has argued persuasively, “because the [Pakistan] army defines defeat in terms of being unable to mount a challenge to India either territorially or politically, the army will prefer to take risks than to do nothing at all, which is [what it views as truly] synonymous with defeat.”<sup>104</sup>

This calculus has survived only because India has never comprehensively vanquished the Pakistan Army; even in the 1971 war, India permitted the cream of the army’s combat forces to survive unscathed in the west. Thus, Rawalpindi continues to believe that even a hazardous confrontation with New Delhi is better for its institutional, and supposedly Pakistan’s national, interests than any resigned quiescence, which would only entrench India’s pernicious hegemony. In an era in which nuclear weapons are now firmly ensconced in South Asia, the possibility of a decisive Indian military victory that permanently extinguishes the Pakistan Army’s capacity for adventurousness is more evanescent than ever. As a result, Pakistani efforts to inflict enough pain on India to make it flinch but not so much as to precipitate serious conventional conflict—the “delicate balance of instability”—will likely persist as a central feature of South Asian security competition for a long time to come.<sup>105</sup>

## LUSTING FOR KASHMIR

No territorial conflict better illustrates this dynamic than the struggle over Jammu and Kashmir. This dispute not only concatenates, more than any other, all of Pakistan’s grievances against India, but it also exemplifies Pakistan’s unique revanchism:

A sense of grievance over a “lost territory” may come to dominate the internal and external politics of a country. France’s mourning over Alsace-Lorraine from 1870 to 1918, West German sensitiveness over the Oder-Neisser line in the 1950s and ’60s, the Arab obsession with Israel—all are examples of states and peoples who will not forget the lands that have been torn from them, [but] Pakistan is unique as a country with a sense of bitterness and grievance for territories that have never formed part of its polity.<sup>106</sup>

Since its failure to secure the Himalayan kingdom’s accession in 1947, Pakistan has continuously attempted to wrest Jammu and Kashmir away from India by various means of violence as a backstop to its irredentist diplomacy. At times, Pakistan’s praetorian state has supported invasions of the disputed territory by its own nationals functioning as irregular forces, attempted to foment insurrections by the residents of Jammu and Kashmir against India, initiated major wars aimed at recovering the desired territory, and unleashed a plethora of terrorist groups directed both at civilian and military targets inside Jammu and Kashmir

and throughout India.<sup>107</sup> The pertinacious desire to incorporate the former princely kingdom into Pakistan even led the Pakistan Army and its intelligence service to deliberately undermine the most significant indigenous Kashmiri militant group—the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front—because it was a secular outfit with a nationalist ideology that by seeking independence rejected the idea of integration with Pakistan.<sup>108</sup>

Each of these strategic gambles failed. The enormity of Indian power has enabled New Delhi to maintain control over Jammu and Kashmir, despite the inconveniences to India in terms of lives lost, resources expended, and goodwill forgone. And thus, it is obvious to all, including to the generals in Rawalpindi, that short of a miracle, Pakistan will never be able to seize the coveted state by force.<sup>109</sup>

It is not clear, however, what alternative aims Islamabad can pursue. Pakistan could, as it always advertises, champion the “right to self-determination [of the people of Jammu and Kashmir as] mandated by [the] UN Security Council resolutions.”<sup>110</sup> Although these resolutions actually contain no such directive, Pakistan would—if it genuinely believed in this objective—have to admit that its early and consistent refusal to withdraw troops from the disputed state after the 1949 ceasefire was what prevented the exercise of self-determination in the first place. This decision was shaped largely by Pakistan’s fear that a referendum might only confirm that the inhabitants prefer to remain with India or become independent—outcomes that Pakistan rejected historically.

In any case, with India having decisively rescinded the offer of a plebiscite, an effort by Pakistan to advance self-determination via stealthy support for an armed insurgency would only guarantee the sacrifice of a discontented populace, with little benefit to their freedom movement or to Pakistani interests—unless its aim is humiliating New Delhi diplomatically. Unfortunately for Pakistan, however, powerful states such as India are not so easily embarrassed, especially when their military responses can be plausibly justified by the need to protect their territorial integrity.

As a further fallback, Pakistan could support the Kashmiri insurgency to strengthen the population’s ability to bargain for better terms of integration with India. This goal, however, would require Islamabad to shed the pretense of ever recovering the disputed state—with all the ensuing implications for its ideological legitimation and its yearnings for territorial completeness.<sup>111</sup> Moreover, the aim is ambiguous, and the means for achieving it are at odds with the ends. Supporting rebel movements in Kashmir in order to assist the populace to secure a better bargain with New Delhi is misguided because the Indian constitution already contains uniquely favorable terms regulating the state’s merger with India.<sup>112</sup> The problem

has been implementation and, while successive central governments bear a good share of the blame, the state's political leaders—in their own venality, their problematic alliances with various national parties, and their alienation from their native population—have all made the quandary worse.<sup>113</sup> These obstacles cannot simply be overcome by Pakistani support for an insurgency. More dangerously, the strategy of supporting “the just aspirations of the Kashmiri people,”<sup>114</sup> through covert support for a violent uprising, only sets them up as targets in a war with a much more powerful state; because armed secession always invites determined national efforts at suppression, the restive population would end up trapped in an unequal contest that hurts the very interests of those segments that Pakistan is supposedly trying to protect.

The bottom line, therefore, is that, after seven decades of trying, there is clearly no method—including force—that would enable Pakistan to recover the state of Jammu and Kashmir from India. In the Vale of Kashmir, the primary locus of discontent, residents appear to have recognized this reality. Although they sympathize with the local resistance fighters belonging to the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen—which is now directed from Pakistan and has been recently designated a “foreign terrorist organization” by the Trump administration—they have few illusions about the ultimate success of any insurgency against the Indian state.<sup>115</sup> The Hurriyat leadership clearly does not either, as evinced by the fact that most of its members have been suborned by Indian and Pakistani intelligence agencies for years.<sup>116</sup> The current episodes of militant civil disobedience, therefore, mostly reflect the widespread estrangement, the continuing surliness toward India, and the suspicion of the political process.<sup>117</sup> Despite these realities, all but some 400 local Hizb-ul-Mujahideen insurgents seem resigned to the prospect of Indian dominance, despite their deep, but inchoate, yearning for the *azadi* that will never come.<sup>118</sup>

Because formal sovereignty “from” India is beyond reach, the best that the restive populace in the Vale of Kashmir can hope for is to achieve some kind of meaningful autonomy “within” India through the pathway of democratic contestation, which despite its flaws offers the only viable exit. There is no evidence today that Pakistan is prepared to support such a course, even though all other alternatives are futile. The continuing Pakistani incitement of violence inside Jammu and Kashmir, and increasingly throughout India using non-Kashmiri terror groups based in and operating out of Pakistan, then suggests that Rawalpindi's persistent bloodletting is driven less by territorial goals, though these formally persist, and more by other more intangible ambitions.

## RESTRAINING A GROWING HERCULES

Perhaps the most persistent driver of Pakistan's anti-status-quo disposition is its desire to subvert India's ascendancy as an emerging great power. This second manifestation of Pakistani revisionism has existed in embryonic form ever since its founding as a state and, not surprisingly,

stems from the fundamental asymmetries in national resources existing between itself and its rival, India. As Pakistan felt cheated of its territorial inheritance, was deprived of the physical assets that it should have received more willingly from India after Partition, and existed only by the reluctant consent of its larger and more powerful neighbor, the power disparities between the two competitors could not but be an enduring source of fear for the country. And its persistent desire to be recognized as India's peer has only accentuated this discomfort, because it reveals the vacuity of such a pretense. Accordingly, it would not be an exaggeration to say that Pakistan's history since 1947 has exemplified little other than a "strenuous struggle to achieve balance against India."<sup>119</sup>

The raw inequality in national capabilities—territorial size, economic strength, and military forces—between India and Pakistan at independence would have proven to be an unassailable source of threat to the new nation had it not been for three palliative realities. First, Pakistan's disorganized and much smaller economy performed admirably compared to India's for a few decades after its birth. With substantial U.S. economic assistance, an ambitious modernizing bureaucracy that was eventually dominated by the army, and relatively market-friendly economic policies (at least in the beginning), Pakistan chalked up impressive growth rates relative to India, thus producing an anomalous situation where the larger power underperformed relative to its potential in contrast to the smaller power, which overperformed relative to early expectations.<sup>120</sup>

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**Perhaps the most persistent driver of Pakistan's anti-status-quo disposition is its desire to subvert India's ascendancy as an emerging great power.**

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Second, because Pakistan's security managers did not judge the country's internal resources as sufficient enough to successfully ward off the perceived dangers posed by India, they conscientiously pursued membership in the U.S.-dominated, anti-Soviet alliances during the Cold War.<sup>121</sup> Although this affiliation ultimately failed to protect Pakistani interests in the manner its generals envisaged, decades of U.S. military assistance helped to mitigate the force imbalances with India, alleviate the difficult tradeoffs between guaranteeing security and meeting basic needs (due to Pakistan's larger expenditures on defense as a percentage of its gross national product), and, more problematically, strengthen praetorianism in Pakistan.<sup>122</sup>

Third, India's unwavering internal focus on state- and nation-building in the aftermath of independence actually afforded Pakistan a far more secure external environment than might have been the case if New Delhi had concentrated primarily on security competition.

Although Pakistani policymakers have a hard time conceding that India's concentration on development over defense—a staple of Indian policy throughout the Cold War<sup>123</sup>—provided them a greater respite, it is hard to dispute given India's general reluctance to initiate war with Pakistan and to pursue absolute victories even when Pakistan might have provoked the conflict.<sup>124</sup> This Indian forbearance does not necessarily constitute proof of virtue since it is derived principally from the “truncated power asymmetry” between India and Pakistan.<sup>125</sup> Yet the fact that New Delhi made no concerted effort to eliminate this deficiency is owed undoubtedly to the failures of India's early post-independence economic strategy and to its dogged pursuit of domestic goals over external aggrandizement.

These three factors combined to mitigate the power imbalances with India, and in terms of regional status, created “room [for Pakistan] to probe and contest the question of relative position” even though the “highly asymmetrical resource concentrations” were otherwise “obvious” in this dyad.<sup>126</sup> Pakistan's advantages proved to be transient, however, as the Cold War evolved. Islamabad's alliances could not avert major military defeats at Indian hands; India's economic growth rate steadily increased from the 1980s onward, especially after 1991; and India's progressive national success gradually permitted a much more outward-looking foreign policy.<sup>127</sup> Thus, since the 1971 defeat, Islamabad has been seeking alternative ways to remedy the power disparities between itself and New Delhi.

One evolving solution that has found great favor with Pakistani leaders is cementing strategic ties with China because of the latter's own conflicts with India. Pakistan's all-weather friendship with China has proven to be valuable not just for political and economic reasons but, most importantly, because this strategic partnership resulted in Chinese transfers of nuclear weapon designs, special nuclear materials, and various fissile material and missile production technologies, which permitted Rawalpindi to acquire the nuclear capabilities that reduced Indian relative power.<sup>128</sup> For almost all of Pakistan's security elites, the acquisition of nuclear weaponry has been the primary factor in “restoring the strategic balance between the two countries,” and for this reason, their debt to China is far greater than that owed to the United States.<sup>129</sup> Obviously, Pakistan's nuclear weapons by themselves cannot erase India's myriad advantages in economic strength, conventional military capability, and international prestige, but they do serve to prevent India from ever utilizing the totality of its resources to threaten the fundamental security of Pakistan through war (or conquest). And to that degree, Pakistan's nuclear weapons are, without a doubt, effective equalizers that limit New Delhi's ability to abuse its power-political advantages vis-à-vis Islamabad or to use them exploitatively.

The maturation of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, accordingly, should have dissipated the state's acute fear of overwhelming Indian power—rendering the power asymmetries insignificant.

But something else occurred instead. As Stephen P. Cohen, echoing Pakistani military calculations, insightfully pointed out in the earliest years of the nuclearization of the subcontinent, nuclear weapons not only permitted Pakistan to “punish an Indian attack so severely that it would be deterred at the start” but also “enable[d] Pakistan to reopen the Kashmir issue by the threat of force . . . [since] a Pakistani leadership that was bold enough could attack and seize Kashmir at a time when India was in disarray.”<sup>130</sup>

Thus, nuclear weapons in Pakistani hands, far from being just deterrents against Indian adventurism, in fact, provided Rawalpindi with a license to support insurgencies within, or terrorism against, India as a means of wearing it down and slowing its rise.<sup>131</sup> This strategy has stimulated Pakistan’s construction of a large, diversified, and ever-expanding nuclear arsenal, which serves to prevent any significant Indian retaliation against Pakistan’s persistent low-intensity war for fear of sparking a nuclear holocaust. Nuclear coercion in this form serves to shackle India and prevent it from fully focusing on consolidating its economic achievements and enlarging its geopolitical reach beyond South Asia, thereby retarding the realization of its great power ambitions on the world stage. Munir Akram, a veteran Pakistani diplomat, illuminated this calculus when he plainly declared, “The most proximate impediment to India’s quest for Great Power status remains Pakistan. So long as Pakistan does not accept India’s regional pre-eminence, other South Asian states will also resist Indian diktat. India cannot feel free to play a great global power role so long as it is strategically tied down in South Asia by Pakistan.”<sup>132</sup>

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The Pakistani military’s support for terrorism against India today, consequently, is no longer motivated merely by a rational fear of New Delhi. That justification—the need to keep India off-balance as it became more powerful and to lock down the superior Indian Army in burdensome internal security operations—made sense at a time when Pakistan’s nuclear capabilities were relatively immature and its conventional military capabilities were hampered by extended U.S. sanctions on Islamabad.<sup>133</sup> Today, when the Pakistani nuclear arsenal is perhaps the fastest growing in the world, is highly diversified, continues to benefit from Chinese technology, and is larger than even India’s, the defensive rationalizations for attempting to undermine India’s upward trajectory are no longer persuasive. Rather, tying India down in South Asia is a strategy to *prove* Pakistan’s strategic equality with its larger neighbor and ensures that India cannot play the international role it aspires to in ways that would limit Pakistan’s autonomy. The desire to effectively counter New Delhi’s growing power explains better than

any other hypothesis why Rawalpindi has, in recent decades, supported terrorist groups operating not just in Jammu and Kashmir but throughout India. Recovering the claimed territory is no longer the only prize; thwarting India's rise is now the greater reward.<sup>134</sup>

It is not uncommon for smaller states to challenge the hegemony of more powerful neighbors—even when meaningful success lies forever beyond reach.<sup>135</sup> Numerous Latin American states, for example, resisted U.S. power for many decades; and some countries, such as Cuba and Venezuela, have often adopted costly strategies of opposition despite their long-term futility. Yet, Pakistan is perhaps unique because of its willingness to continually confront India militarily, even in the face of serial defeats and the risk of nuclear escalation. This perilous behavior is largely a result of the Pakistan Army's culture, which prefers even limited defeat to political surrender to India, and the persistence of the truncated power asymmetry between the two countries, which has prevented New Delhi from being able to vanquish Rawalpindi's military resistance through a decisive defeat that fundamentally reconfigures the "entrenched, unelected, and opaque 'deep state'"<sup>136</sup> in Pakistan.<sup>137</sup>

Consequently, although Rawalpindi's actions provoke episodic crises with India and prevent the normalization of bilateral ties, the perpetuation of conflict brings at least one clear benefit to the Pakistan Army: a further strengthening of its political and economic dominance within the polity.<sup>138</sup> Since Pakistan's birth, internal and external conflicts have enabled the military to dominate domestic politics and the very processes of state making to the point where the Pakistan Army has "renounced its [initially] apolitical role as the guardian of the state to become just another interest group vying to preserve its control over the state itself"<sup>139</sup>—a process that has culminated in "*L'Etat, c'est militaire.*"<sup>140</sup> The resolution of Pakistan's numerous disputes with India thus becomes doubly difficult because, even if satisfactory solutions could be devised, the Pakistan Army has no incentives to entertain them if the end result dethrones the military from its privileged power in and over the state. Perpetual conflict with India, which does not provoke either cataclysmic war or categorical defeat, is accordingly essential because, whatever its costs to the nation, it preserves the internal hegemony of the Pakistan Army more or less without question.

## EXACTING REVENGE AS A DUTY

The domestic hegemony of the military has a bearing on both the future of Pakistani democracy and Pakistan's fortunes as a country, but the Pakistan Army pursues unending conflict with India because of yet another preoccupation: its quest to avenge the country's vivisection in 1971. This third bilateral war not only left a searing impression on the Pakistani military but has also shaped subcontinental security competition ever since. It permanently bisected Pakistan and created the new state of Bangladesh; it humiliated the Pakistan Army when tens

of thousands of its personnel surrendered to their Indian counterparts; and it exploded the two-nation theory that undergirded the ideology of Pakistan by proving that Islam was an inadequate glue to hold Jinnah's creation together. By thus unraveling Pakistan's geopolitical structure, deflating the army's image as the effective guardian of the state, and exposing the hollowness of its founding justification all in one go, the events of 1971 have arguably entrenched Pakistan's animosity toward India even more than those in 1947.<sup>141</sup>

The differing Indian perceptions of the 1971 war only exacerbate this friction. From New Delhi's perspective, the creation of Bangladesh was ultimately a consequence of (1) Pakistan's internal colonialism toward its erstwhile eastern wing, (2) the collusion between the Pakistan Army and civilian politicians in the west to deny Mujibur Rahman the opportunity to lead Pakistan despite his victory in the 1971 national elections, and (3) the Pakistan Army's brutal crackdown on the civilian population of East Pakistan. This suppression provoked a civil war in the province, the migration of thousands of refugees to India, and a conventional war initiated by Pakistan in the west to divert Indian support from the Bengali insurgency in the east.<sup>142</sup> Even those international observers who acknowledge that India's military aid to the insurgency was critical to Pakistan's defeat in 1971 agree that this outcome was ultimately rooted less in Indian malfeasance than in Pakistan's failures as a nation, the wanton mismanagement of its politics, and, ultimately, the army's disastrous prosecution of the war at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels.<sup>143</sup>

The Pakistan military, however, even when acknowledging these factors today, highlights India's intervention in the conflict as the decisive variable that ensured the destruction of its country.<sup>144</sup> This is not an unreasonable judgment, because, absent India's contributions, the struggles in East Pakistan might have continued interminably and without any successful dénouement. But pointing to India's critical catalytic role in 1971 does not imply, as the Pakistan Army often asserts, that New Delhi's intervention was a deliberate product of long-standing hostile ambitions oriented toward cutting Pakistan down to size irrespective of the circumstantial provocations.<sup>145</sup>

The Pakistan Army's perceptions of India's role set the stage for the subsequent decades-long vendetta against its larger rival. As Stephen P. Cohen phrased it, "For the army and its civilian supporters, the major lesson of 1971 was that Pakistan had the moral right, if not the obligation, to pay India back in kind."<sup>146</sup> The resulting "psychological and moral justification within Pakistan to meddle in India, whether in Punjab or in Kashmir" was, accordingly, strengthened since the "Pakistani establishment believed that it was [only] paying India back in the same coin by fostering and supporting an insurgency in these states."<sup>147</sup> This campaign, which has now metastasized into efforts at abetting terrorism through the use of Pakistani or Indian

nationals throughout India, is however characterized by one important difference: no sensible Pakistani leader today believes that inflicting pain on India will actually lead to its enervation or its downfall. The evidence thus far corroborates this perception insofar as India has chalked up high growth rates even in the years when Pakistani-supported terrorism has been at its peak; neither has India's international reputation faltered, even when it has pursued highly repressive strategies aimed at defeating the many threats confronting the state.<sup>148</sup>

Of course, India's economic performance would likely be even better without the presence of Pakistani terrorism. How much better is harder to judge, but one study, attempting to quantify the lost gains (or "desgrowth"), suggests that New Delhi has sacrificed anywhere between

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**Because the army's efforts cannot paralyze India or curtail its upward trajectory, Rawalpindi's current low-intensity war against New Delhi is actually astrategic: it lacks a rational and realizable end.**

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approximately one to two percent growth in its gross national product in any given year between 2004 and 2013.<sup>149</sup> Although the study's findings may not be universally substantiated, they at least indicate that the economic costs of Pakistani terrorism are not trivial. But this conclusion should offer no consolation to Rawalpindi if (1) India's economic performance is still vastly better than Pakistan's, (2) India can sustain high growth rates because of continued internal transformations, and (3)

New Delhi continues to judge the political costs of changing its policies to be far higher than the marginal economic costs of terrorism. These realities together ensure that India will hold fast to its standing policies, despite any Pakistani attempts at coercion.

Because the army's efforts cannot paralyze India or curtail its upward trajectory, Rawalpindi's current low-intensity war against New Delhi is actually astrategic: it lacks a rational and realizable end, but it will not be terminated simply for that reason, because it is also driven *inter alia* by the "almost ineradicable need for vengeance" to requite the "persistent shame and humiliation" produced by the debacle in 1971.<sup>150</sup> Scholars who have studied the relationship between national defeat and a subsequent quest for cathartic revenge emphasize that "a revengeful retaliator mainly seeks emotional satisfaction at the suffering of another or derives pleasure from such suffering."<sup>151</sup> Further, such a search for satisfaction often "leads revengers to use excessive force, to harm innocents, and to employ far more violence than was used against them originally."<sup>152</sup> Many of these insights are evident in Pakistan's support of terrorism against India; the campaign persists despite there being little tangible benefit to Islamabad or Rawalpindi except that it has come to constitute its own reward. This phenomenon, which one prominent scholar, Robert Harkavy, has characterized as "narcissistic rage," "provides the

link between, on the one hand, shame and humiliation—aggregated to the collectivity of the nation—and on the other, aggressiveness and vengeance.”<sup>153</sup>

Besides lacking a feasible end, Pakistani-supported terrorism, deriving from the army’s conviction “that any insult or slight must be avenged, not only to punish the aggression of an enemy but to honor the sacrifices of earlier generations,”<sup>154</sup> is now afflicting both its civilian population and, increasingly, the military itself. The threat posed by jihadi groups that have turned against their erstwhile sponsors should have changed the Pakistan Army’s attitude toward supporting terrorism entirely. But, despite a growing consensus within the Pakistani polity that the state’s support of terrorist groups is unacceptable, the Pakistan Army has not changed course—at least not in practical terms. The army has indeed gone to great lengths to convince the international community that it has abandoned its former policy of distinguishing between “good” and “bad” terrorists—what one scholar has labeled Pakistan’s “shocking strategic shift”<sup>155</sup>—but the evidence suggests that this purported reorientation is “pure fiction.”<sup>156</sup> Even though the new effort at targeting some militants within Pakistan—almost exclusively those training their guns at the Pakistan Army and the state—is serious, the Pakistani military is nonetheless continuing to coddle others.<sup>157</sup> This segmented counterterrorism strategy serves multiple purposes: while it limits the number of enemies that the Pakistani security forces have to confront all at once, it simultaneously protects those proxies that have continuing utility for the army’s perpetual struggle against India.

The enduring desire to harness terrorist groups for strategic purposes suggests that the Pakistan Army has essentially concluded that while it may suffer some pain as a result of a few surrogates “breaking bad,” the far greater satisfaction derived from harming India is worth the inconveniences associated with the ricochet effects of state-sponsored terrorism. This behavior is almost predictable because “revengers, unlike ‘mere’ sadists or evildoers, will often disregard the material costs and risks that counter-injury might incur. In fact, revengers might anticipate such costs and still proceed with the infliction of pain and suffering upon those who harmed them.”<sup>158</sup>

Pakistani strategists may rationalize these costs as necessary to secure some larger gains, such as tying down the Indian Army, which might otherwise be employed for aggression against Pakistan; limiting India’s growth rates and its accumulation of national power; or constraining New Delhi’s ability to play a major role on the global stage. In the final analysis, however, the evidence does not justify these calculations because India’s choices are far more consequential on such matters than any initiatives undertaken by Pakistan. All that the Pakistan Army’s current strategies vis-à-vis India produce, therefore, is a perpetual war that cannot be terminated short of Indian leaders’ conceding to Pakistan’s demands for territorial change in Jammu

and Kashmir, depressing India's upward geopolitical trajectory in ways that might assuage Pakistani fears, and providentially undoing the humiliating outcome of the 1971 war.

The Indian objective of ratification and normalization and the Pakistani objective of revision and normalization are thus, and will remain for a long time to come, in absolute conflict. Both nations undoubtedly seek peaceful bilateral relations in principle. But India desires Pakistan's ratified consent to the current political realities, whereas Pakistan seeks to revise its current circumstances at multiple levels in order to produce absolute security by recovering the territories it believes to be its own

and attaining full recognition by India of its essential equality. Unfortunately for peace and security in the subcontinent, the only way in which Rawalpindi's desire for ironclad safety can be satisfied is for India to be reduced to Pakistan's own stature—physically, strategically, and psychologically.

Since such a diminution is impossible by natural means, Rawalpindi appears determined to secure at least a simulacrum of its benefits by

inflicting jihadi terrorism against India under the protective shadow of Pakistan's nuclear weaponry. In this device, Pakistan has found an effective instrument of coercion that is not easily defeated. Confronted by such a challenge, India finds that even its superior national power is difficult to employ for purposes of deterring or compelling Pakistan without putting at risk its other national objectives—preserving the peace that enables it to sustain high economic growth rates and an international reputation for responsible state behavior.<sup>159</sup> Not surprisingly, then, suspending diplomatic dialogue with Pakistan in response to egregious acts of terrorism or other transgressions remains the lone instrument within easy reach.

This Indian reaction, however, has had only a marginal impact on the Pakistan Army and its terrorist proxies: the historical record suggests that conspicuous attacks on Indian targets are just as likely to occur when New Delhi makes dramatic peace overtures toward Islamabad as when the effort at rapprochement lies in deep hibernation. Given this fact, India's efforts to induce Pakistan's ratification of the status quo and the normalization of bilateral relations seem just as futile as the frequent international calls—most pronounced in the aftermath of a crisis—for “a sustained and resilient dialogue” between the two countries.<sup>160</sup>

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**India finds that even its superior national power is difficult to employ for purposes of deterring or compelling Pakistan without putting at risk its other national objectives.**

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## CUTTING THE GORDIAN KNOT

*CAN DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENT PRODUCE A LASTING PEACE?*

The enduring security competition between India and Pakistan persists because, thanks to competing outlooks, past history, and present circumstances, the national strategies of the two nations are in absolute conflict. Breaking out of this logjam, accordingly, requires one or the other state (or both) to change either its (their) strategic objectives or the means pursued toward their realization. The capacity of the two nations to shift course, however, is far from even. India holds the upper hand in terms of its satisfaction with the status quo and its ability to maintain it, leaving the onus for ending the conflict predominantly with Pakistan.

### INDIA'S NEGOTIATING ADVANTAGE

In this context, India is unlikely to change its national aims largely because, as the status quo power, it is convinced that it is on the right side. Although it views the partition of the undivided Raj as unnecessary and tragic, it believes that, having occurred, this bifurcation must now be respected and treated as a *fait accompli*. India's position on this issue, in fact, mirrors Pakistan's own stance on the Durand Line vis-à-vis Afghanistan: just as Islamabad argues that Kabul should honor the inheritance of history and reconcile itself to its current eastern boundary with Pakistan, New Delhi likewise holds that both Rawalpindi and Islamabad should come to terms with their present eastern border with India. No matter how dissatisfying that may be, Indian policymakers deeply believe that any attempts to undo borders could lead to

the unraveling of the modern postcolonial states in South Asia and hence must be avoided at all costs. Furthermore, they reason that if India could overcome the scars of having lost a substantial portion of its pre-independence territory to Pakistan's creation, both Islamabad and Rawalpindi must adjust to Jammu and Kashmir's accession to India—especially given that Pakistan never had any legitimate right to the state other than its own ideation and because its grievances about this “lost” territory are ultimately grounded entirely on “the perpetuation of a legend of injustice regarding the frontier line in the Punjab.”<sup>161</sup>

Given this view, India is only likely to entertain some marginal adjustments in the existing boundaries, if mutually negotiated without coercion. It simply cannot accept, therefore, the oft-repeated Pakistani claim that the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir remains “the unfinished business of Partition.”<sup>162</sup>

The only unfinished business, from New Delhi's perspective, remains Pakistan's acceptance of and respect for the past, especially the British legal framework that governed the accession of the Princely States, granting their rulers freedom to choose which of the two successor dominions they would join. As noted by A. G. Noorani, both the Indian and Pakistani positions are actually ironic. Each state reversed its political attitude in regard to the accession of Jammu and Kashmir: New Delhi, having traditionally championed the voice of people, ended up supporting the maharaja's right to choose, and Pakistan, having originally championed the maharaja's right to choose, ended up advocating a plebiscite.<sup>163</sup>

The evolution of this winding road merits closer consideration. India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, qualified his demand for the maharaja's accession in 1947, when the latter committed his cause to India in the face of the Pakistani invasion of his kingdom by insisting that—despite “the risk of infuriating the ruler and facilitating a Pakistani military fait accompli”—the “accession had to be seen to emanate from the people of the Kashmir” and not merely the beleaguered potentate.<sup>164</sup> Accordingly, Nehru demanded “substantial political reforms and concessions to the popular leader Sheikh [Mohammed] Abdullah and his National Conference party,” which was the dominant political formation in the kingdom at the time. “Only once this was done, did the Nehru government accept Kashmir's instrument of accession, and send Indian troops to the state on the request of both the Maharaja and Sheikh Abdullah.”<sup>165</sup>

The Indian emphasis on satisfying popular sentiment publicly persisted until 1954, when New Delhi became acutely concerned that Pakistan's incipient membership in the U.S.-led Cold War military alliances permitted it to acquire the weaponry necessary to reinforce its presence in occupied Kashmir. Because previous UN resolutions mandating the withdrawal

of Pakistan's forces were never implemented—thus making an impartial test of the popular will impossible—Nehru quietly discarded his commitment to a plebiscite in favor of simply seeking a ratification of the territorial status quo. Even if this evolution in the Indian position had not occurred, however, the maharaja's formal accession was all that was required for a legitimate integration with India based on a strict constructionist reading of the Indian Independence Act. The idea of testing the weight of local opinion in the cases of contentious accession remained a foundational component of the Indian National Congress's advocacy, not a legal requirement mandated by the departing Raj. Consequently, as far as India is concerned today, the sole unfinished business remaining from Partition is Pakistan's cessation of interference in India's internal affairs, including those related to Jammu and Kashmir.

However strongly Pakistan contests this narrative, it enjoys support across the political spectrum in India. Although there are often vigorous debates about the best strategy for coping with the frequent unrest inside Jammu and Kashmir, there is consensus about the legality of its accession to India and a pervasive conviction that India cannot cede any part of its territory to Pakistan, especially as a result of coercion. When dissent is sometimes voiced—for example, the well-known author and activist Arundhati Roy reportedly declared that India is an “occupying force” in Kashmir and that “India needs *azadi* from Kashmir as much as Kashmir needs *azadi* from India”<sup>166</sup>—it captures public attention, but mostly because it is both anguished and rare. Even those Indians who believe New Delhi should be more generous toward the aspirations of the Kashmiris in the Vale would have a hard time supporting its secession, by either violent or peaceful means, in order to attain political tranquility.

The Government of India certainly holds the same view but with even greater conviction. And because India is the more powerful of the two competitors and does not engage in terrorism to recover territory now currently in Pakistan's possession, it only needs to protect what it controls already. Despite its formal position on “Pakistan-occupied Kashmir,” India has no irredentist agenda and only seeks to legitimize the ownership of those areas it currently governs. The task facing Indian policy is thus much easier, because the entire edifice of international law pertaining to self-defense and the protection of national territory is presumptively in its favor. As a result, India does not feel impelled to change its national aims or the means currently employed to secure them in order to procure peace with Pakistan.

In any case, it is not clear that any significant alterations here would produce the desired peace. Even if India were to surrender the Vale of Kashmir to Pakistan—presumably the minimal territorial demand that would satisfy Rawalpindi's amour propre—such a capitulation is unlikely to engender any enduring reconciliation between India and Pakistan. In fact, given the depth of Pakistani military resentments, any territorial renunciation could result in

a doubling of efforts by Pakistan to fracture India even more and bring it closer to parity with Pakistan so as to conclusively eliminate the threat posed by New Delhi's superior power. The discomfiting reality is that the territorial adjustments that might have tempered the antagonisms on both sides in 1948 are unlikely, four wars and seven decades later, to produce the same effect today.

India's power-political dominance within South Asia will remain a permanent obstacle to any meaningful peace with Pakistan as long as Rawalpindi defines security, as one prominent scholar of international security, T. V. Paul, put it, in terms of "sustain[ing] the idea of strategic parity with India and constantly striv[ing] for symmetry, a strategy that only a warrior state can pursue in such a relentless fashion."<sup>167</sup> Because even India's abandonment of Jammu and Kashmir (or parts thereof) to Pakistan would not diminish India's organic hegemony in the region, appeasing Rawalpindi's revanchist passions or its deep animosity toward India provides no assurance of any lasting peace between the two nations.

It is to his credit that Pakistan's former president and army chief, General Pervez Musharraf, was able to acknowledge and candidly declare that "there is a threat to Pakistan from India. [But] the threat is not Kashmir alone. It goes [a] little beyond that."<sup>168</sup> Noting that the real danger flows from "India's desire to dominate the Pakistani economy and [its] foreign policy," a problem inherent in India's "hegemonistic designs,"<sup>169</sup> Musharraf forthrightly flagged the central issue—India's overwhelming power—which affects all aspects of Pakistan's foreign policy: namely its national security, economic interests, international concerns, ideological claims, and principles on issues such as Jammu and Kashmir (about which Pakistan has been "concerned since [its] independence").<sup>170</sup> Precisely because the manifest realities of Indian dominance can neither be wished away nor eliminated by any means short of nuclear war, New Delhi cannot alter either its circumstances or its national aims—or, with important qualifications (to be discussed later), even its prevailing strategies—in ways that would satisfy Pakistan sufficiently to ensure a permanent peace in South Asia.

## PAKISTAN'S REVISIONIST PREDICAMENT

Forging a path to peace in the subcontinent, therefore, becomes primarily a function of Islamabad's and Rawalpindi's choices, because Pakistan remains the state most dissatisfied with the current political realities. This inference may seem unfair in some deontological sense because it privileges the status quo, but any policy that is not grounded in "the effectual truth of the thing," as Niccolò Machiavelli concluded, "learns . . . ruin rather than . . . preservation."<sup>171</sup> Accordingly, the conclusion is justified because it accords with three inescapable realities. First, Pakistan will never be able to secure control over the Vale of Kashmir, let alone all of Jammu and Kashmir, irrespective of how intense its campaign of insurgency and

terrorism becomes within the coveted territories and beyond. Second, Pakistan will never be able to comparably avenge the disaster of 1971 through either conventional or subconventional war in the face of India's larger military capabilities. Even nuclear war, though suicidal for both sides, would arguably ravage Pakistan even more than it would India because of the disparity in their capacity for regeneration. Third, Pakistan will never be able to obtain parity of treatment with India because of the resolute differentials in national strength, performance, and prospects, as well as the evolving course of international politics.

If Pakistan is able to develop a strategic policy that accommodates these realities, the prospects for peace become brighter because it would eliminate the inveterate resistance that currently dampens hope for a meaningful reconciliation between the two countries. As Girija Shankar Bajpai, the first secretary general in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, declared in 1951: "So long as there is hate, intense hate, in the heart of Pakistanis against India, no settlement that may be reached will be either sincere or enduring."<sup>172</sup>

A shift in Pakistan's orientation could evolve in one of two ways: either through a transformative change in the structures of rule within Pakistan or through a modification of the Pakistan Army's strategic aims (along with concomitant changes in its methods and culture).

### IS CIVILIAN RULE IN PAKISTAN LIKELY?

Because the fundamental drivers of the bilateral feud remain the Pakistan Army's uncompromising hatred of India *and* its control over the Pakistani state—which ensures that its own preferences in regard to New Delhi are Islamabad's *de facto* preferences as well—any radical alteration that results in meaningful civilian control over Pakistan's strategic choices offers hope for compromise and possibly peace with India. This expectation is anchored largely in some version of democratic peace theory, which argues with substantial corroboration that democratic regimes are unlikely to pursue bellicose competition with other similarly governed states for both structural and normative reasons. The former suggests that representative institutions, by holding officials accountable to a wider electorate, make war unattractive for both government and citizenry because its high individual costs to the politician and its high collective costs to the polity in the case of strategic failure make alternative mechanisms to secure their political goals far more persuasive; the latter, in contrast, argues that the prevalence of liberal values ensures nonviolent conflict resolution among democratic states because their governments' respect for their citizens' interests invariably transcends their national borders.<sup>173</sup>

The rich literature and debates about democratic peace theory cannot be adjudicated here, but the broad approach incorporating both structural and normative elements offers a plausible exit from the Pakistani military's relentless revisionism if a civilian leadership capable of

steering the country toward peace and development—as opposed to confrontation—could be found. For starters, however, this would require that Pakistan become an effective democracy as opposed to merely an elected democracy in which, as is the case now, civilian leaders govern but the men in uniform rule—at least on all consequential matters pertaining to Pakistan’s nuclear weapons program and its relations with key states such as Afghanistan, India, and the United States.<sup>174</sup> An effective democracy, which offers the promise of a reorientation in Pakistan’s national strategy, would encompass three elements: (1) a powerful elected prime minister whose writ runs across the entire executive branch of the state, including and especially the military, the intelligence services, and other bureaucracies responsible for managing issues related to war and peace; (2) a larger political system that is comprehensively democratic and characterized by the rule of law to which the government is subordinated, that requires regular competitive elections, and that supports a citizenry with juridical rights and basic freedoms of speech, religion, and organization; and (3) a civil society that is characterized by a liberal temper so as to create space for the expression of competing interests and to minimize the aggressive nationalism that could otherwise disfigure any social mobilization natural to democratic states.

Pakistan is far from being an effective democracy in this sense. Although in recent years it has achieved the peaceful transfer of power from one civilian dispensation to another, it nonetheless remains a “praetorian democracy,” where “the military allows multiparty elections to determine who will staff the formal machinery of government, while reserving for itself control over key domains of power. Not only is the military not subordinate to civilian rule, but also the elected government operates within circumscribed boundaries. Mechanisms, both constitutional and other, exist for removing the elected government when it exceeds its authority—a judgment the military reserves for itself.”<sup>175</sup>

The recent experience of the two civilian governments, under former president Asif Ali Zardari and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif (especially the latter’s premature exit), confirm this description of Pakistan’s democracy. What is unsettling about Pakistan’s praetorian dispensation, however, is that it does not seem to be a transitory phase en route to achieving a genuinely empowered representative regime, but rather an enduring terminus. As Chaitram Singh and Michael Bailey depressingly conclude, “it strains credulity that Pakistan’s transition to liberal democracy is inevitable. A slide toward authoritarianism seems at least as likely as a burst of liberal democracy in Pakistan, and more likely still is a continuation of what has been observed for the past few decades—oscillations between periods of electoral democracy, along with military oversight, and direct military rule, with dramatic curtailment of civil liberties.”<sup>176</sup>

If this judgment is affirmed—and there is little evidence to suggest otherwise—the prospects of an effective civilian government emerging in Pakistan in the near future are dim, and, if

so, the likelihood that the structural and normative conditions posited by democratic peace theory could intersect to provide Pakistan with an exit from its internecine competition with India is also correspondingly small. The constant frustrations that Sharif faced in mending fences with India—from his own military—only proves the point.<sup>177</sup>

### CAN THE PAKISTAN ARMY CHANGE ITS STRIPES?

Under these circumstances, a more peaceful future instead rests on the possibility that the Pakistani military might eventually perceive its interests to be better served by eschewing confrontation with India altogether. Such a momentous shift in attitude could occur if (1) the costs of the current strategy of perpetual war with India are judged to considerably exceed its direct benefits to the Pakistan Army specifically or to the Pakistani nation more generally; (2) the Pakistani military faces significant coercion from global powers, such that the costs of its continuing jihad become prohibitive for its institutional interests; or (3) the Pakistan Army comes to enjoy a sufficiently idiosyncratic leadership that desires pursuing peace with India to secure those gains that eluded it through confrontation. Unfortunately, none of these three alternative pathways offer much hope for a breakthrough anytime soon.

### ARE THE COSTS OF WAR EXORBITANT—AND TO WHOM?

There is already a vast body of evidence suggesting that the Pakistan Army's strategy of fighting India either through conventional war or incessant jihad has taken a huge toll on Pakistan's fortunes as a state, its ability to improve the livelihood of its people, and its reputation as a responsible actor in the international system.<sup>178</sup> Yet these maladies have not undermined the equities of the Pakistan Army as a powerful interest group in national politics. To the contrary, the more precarious Pakistan's security situation has become as a result of the army's successive strategic failures, the tighter the military's lock on political power, financial resources, and policy direction.<sup>179</sup> This perverse phenomenology, apparent since Pakistan's founding as a state, has provoked the caustic joke, "Every country has its own army. But in Pakistan, the army has its own country."<sup>180</sup>

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**The more precarious Pakistan's security situation has become as a result of the army's successive strategic failures, the tighter the military's lock on political power, financial resources, and policy direction.**

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Even the blowback from terrorism that Pakistan now suffers as a result of the army's nurturing of various Islamist militants has not produced any fundamental reconsideration of its long-standing commitment to "jihad as [a] grand strategy."<sup>181</sup> In part, this is because Pakistani

society has suffered more than the Pakistani military. Even when the horrific consequences of terrorism do affect the army, however, they have been exploited to justify its claims on public revenue and political power, as well as the upsurge in diversionary rhetoric that hurls blame at various foreign powers, ranging from Afghanistan to India to the United States. Whatever the costs to Pakistan—or even to the Pakistan Army—may be, its military leaders are convinced that their jihadi proxies constitute, on balance, a strategic asset that enables them to both control weaker neighbors, such as Afghanistan, and confront stronger powers, such as India, without the open dangers of major conventional war—all the while simultaneously congealing the khaki hegemony in Pakistan's domestic politics.<sup>182</sup> The tradeoffs associated with such a strategy, all things considered, are then judged to be acceptable, making the search for any other alternatives such as peace even less appealing.

This calculus is only reinforced by the recognition that India, the principal adversary, cannot easily engage in any compellence designed to force the Pakistan Army to forgo wielding the instrument of nuclear-shadowed terrorism. For New Delhi to be able to achieve this aim, it must be capable of inflicting great and continuous pain on the Pakistan Army that threatens serious losses. India does not possess any diplomatic or economic instruments of coercion that can achieve this objective peacefully, and the principal military alternatives—limited conventional war or retaliatory, tit-for-tat, low-intensity conflicts—bring other risks, including the dangers of escalation. Furthermore, they are not assured immediate or enduring success; worst of all, they could potentially imperil India's larger developmental goals and its quest for great power status.<sup>183</sup> In any event, punishing revengers such as Pakistan is always difficult because their willingness to suffer pain is great as long as their victims suffer intolerably as well. This alone makes the aim of persuading the Pakistan Army to seek peaceful alternatives to enervating conflict all the more challenging.

#### CAN EXTERNAL COERCION DELIVER?

If India lacks the means to effortlessly and unilaterally raise the costs of Pakistan's current addiction to terrorism, the prospects of the Pakistan Army being coerced by global powers toward more peaceful strategies of reconciliation appear equally bleak. This conclusion may seem counterintuitive, given the vast disparity in capabilities between Pakistan and any of the great powers in the international system. But it is amply justified because the disproportion in capabilities matters less than the weaknesses in incentives and motivations.

Although the threat of terrorism over time has increased in prominence as a danger to international security, the great powers' interest in Pakistani terrorism hinges mainly on whether they are the specific targets. Consequently, while they are all united in principle against terrorism, many are understandably often unwilling to confront the Pakistani threat if it does not affect

them directly or if it is only a lower priority in their hierarchy of problems. The two countries that are pertinent here are China and the United States. Beijing and Washington are arguably in the best position to coerce the Pakistan Army into abjuring terrorism because both have been victimized by terrorism emanating from Pakistan and both, in comparison to the other great powers, still enjoy extraordinary influence with Islamabad and Rawalpindi.<sup>184</sup>

China has the upper hand in this regard as, over the last few decades, it has become Pakistan's greatest protector, having provided it with nuclear weapons technology, conventional arms, and now significant economic assistance. The Pakistan Army in particular enjoys privileged relations with the Chinese state because both are united in their rivalry with India.<sup>185</sup> As a consequence, Pakistani military leaders are deeply attentive to even the most mildly articulated Chinese desires, bending backward to appease China whenever the health of their bilateral relationship is threatened. For example, when militants from the East Turkistan Islamic Movement—an armed group that trained in Pakistan and operated out of its territory—conducted attacks in the restive western Chinese province of Xinjiang during the 1990s, the Pakistani intelligence services quickly moved to suppress the group's operations in response to Chinese complaints. Similarly, former president and retired general Pervez Musharraf undertook a bloody siege in 2007 at the Red Mosque in the heart of Islamabad to free seven Chinese masseuses who were abducted by an Islamist “vice and virtue” squad. Though this incident would bring the Pakistan Army into an unwanted war with some of its erstwhile proxies, China, “Pakistan's all-weather friend whose requests could not be ignored,”<sup>186</sup> compelled the president's immediate action, which contributed toward roiling the country and ultimately weakened his presidency.<sup>187</sup>

Given its own suffering at the hands of terrorism emerging from Pakistan, Beijing could—if it wanted to—press Rawalpindi to conclusively end its policy of nurturing jihad for strategic purposes. Such a demand would have a significant impact in changing Pakistan's larger direction. But China has consistently demurred from leaning on Pakistan, often citing its “long-standing principle of noninterference in the affairs of other sovereign nations.”<sup>188</sup> It has instead taken a differentiated approach that mirrors Pakistan's own war against terrorism. Beijing demands that Pakistan crack down on those terrorist groups that attack its own interests—with Rawalpindi promptly complying—while it simultaneously discounts Pakistan's apathy in rooting out other jihadi proxies. Thus, for example, in response to foreign criticisms of Pakistan's coddling of terrorists, China's foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying, recently insisted that “Pakistan has made huge efforts and great sacrifices in fighting terrorism . . . [that] the international community should respect.”<sup>189</sup> Consistent with this dualism, China has been the

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**Beijing and Washington are arguably in the best position to coerce the Pakistan Army into abjuring terrorism.**

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only permanent member of the UN Security Council to persistently block the Indian effort to have the Jaish-e-Mohammad's chief, Masood Azhar, declared as an UN-designated terrorist, even though the group itself has long been formally recognized in the United States as a "foreign terrorist organization."

The evidence suggests, therefore, that China will do whatever it takes to defeat the militants that threaten its security even as it abets Pakistan's efforts to protect those terrorist groups that train their guns on India—a strategy colored fundamentally by Beijing's geopolitical rivalries with New Delhi.<sup>190</sup> As Andrew Small has observed, "China has been intimately involved in Pakistan's history of using irregular forces as an instrument of its military strategy," going back to the 1960s.<sup>191</sup> Even though China has now shifted away from supporting low-intensity conflicts against India, its approach to confronting terrorism remains fundamentally self-serving. As Small remarks, "As a result of its own concerns with domestic terrorism, China has often been portrayed as if it is naturally aligned with states facing similar threats. In many respects, however, its security is parasitic on the fact that these groups consider the United States, India and other countries to be higher priority targets."<sup>192</sup> Given this fact, and the synergistic Sino-Pakistani rivalry with India, it is highly unlikely that Beijing will ever press Rawalpindi to terminate its terrorism against New Delhi. This eliminates perhaps the best external avenue for persuading Pakistan to consider peaceful solutions to its conflict with India.

The United States is unlikely to persuade Rawalpindi either, but for different reasons. For many years, the United States has been a victim of Pakistan's enmeshment with terrorism.<sup>193</sup> In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks, Washington had to confront the fact that a Taliban regime that owed its existence largely to Pakistan's political and military support was sheltering al-Qaeda's leadership. Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda's founder and the organizer of the attacks, found refuge in Pakistan until his death; and today, several terrorist and insurgent groups operating out of Pakistan, such as the Haqqani network and the Afghan Taliban, continue to target and kill U.S. and Afghan soldiers in Afghanistan. The role of the Pakistan Army and its intelligence services in funding, equipping, training, and protecting these groups—as well as the other outfits targeting India—is well-known to the U.S. government.<sup>194</sup>

Following the September 2001 attacks, the United States employed heavy-handed diplomatic coercion to compel then Pakistani president, Musharraf, to cut his nation's links with the Taliban and join the United States in its newly declared global war on terror. If Musharraf is to be believed, the threat levied by former U.S. deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage—that Pakistan should be "prepared to be bombed back to the Stone Age" if it stayed its previous course<sup>195</sup>—had the desired effect, at least on some counts. Pakistan joined Washington's war against al-Qaeda and collected billions of dollars in new U.S. assistance along the way,

which was intended to both assist and reward Islamabad and Rawalpindi as they progressively lopped off the tentacles of terrorism that had grown deep roots in Pakistan.<sup>196</sup>

In retrospect, it appears that Rawalpindi had no intention of making a clean break with terrorism—especially once Musharraf left office—because of its critical importance to the military’s enduring goals of confronting India and Finlandizing Afghanistan. Accordingly, Pakistan never conclusively delivered on Musharraf’s early promises, including those induced by the United States during the India-Pakistan crisis of 2001–2002.<sup>197</sup> The Pakistan Army and its intelligence services continued to feign support for the U.S. campaign against the Taliban, even as they (1) undermined it by protecting the latter’s leadership in Pakistan and supporting their insurgency; (2) promptly reversed their initial efforts to control the anti-Indian terrorist groups, once the conditions changed after Musharraf’s departure; and (3) despite the ricochet effects of terrorism against the Pakistani state, never made comprehensive efforts to dismantle the underlying infrastructure of terrorism as was originally promised.

Despite its awareness of Pakistan’s betrayal on all counts, the United States proved incapable of compelling Rawalpindi to uphold its commitment to permanently abandon its reliance on terrorism.<sup>198</sup> First, the U.S. government, especially following the September 2001 attacks, was focused on gutting al-Qaeda, blinding itself to Pakistani duplicity in regard to its support for the Taliban. As long as Rawalpindi assisted Washington in ferreting out important al-Qaeda operatives in Pakistan, the United States overlooked continuing Pakistani assistance to the Taliban and was content to accept the vague Pakistani promises of suppressing anti-Indian terrorist groups—primarily to prevent New Delhi from conducting any punitive retaliation that might disrupt Pakistani support of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan.<sup>199</sup>

Second, U.S. dependence on Pakistan for its ground and air lines of communication to Afghanistan—necessary to support the U.S. troops operating there—gave Rawalpindi enormous leverage over the United States.<sup>200</sup> Essentially, no matter how untrustworthy the Pakistan Army proved to be in suppressing the Taliban and the other terrorist groups operating against Afghanistan and India, Washington could never replicate its threat of bombing Pakistan “back to the Stone Age” without risking the vital transportation corridors necessary for the sustainment of U.S. military operations in a landlocked country at a time when other alternatives, such as Iranian or Russian lines of communications, were constrained for political and technical reasons.<sup>201</sup>

The chokehold that Pakistan enjoys on the United States, thanks entirely to geography, has thus neutralized Washington’s superior coercive capacity. Unfortunately, the reality is that the United States continues to rely on Pakistani cooperation to prosecute a costly war where

success has proved elusive—precisely because, even as Rawalpindi assists Washington with the access necessary to attack the Taliban, it simultaneously aids the very enemies that the United States is attempting to defeat. Notably, the Pakistani gambit of holding the United States hostage has actually intensified over time, given that U.S. counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan and along the Afghan-Pakistan border now employ Predator drones whose viability depends entirely on Pakistan's willingness to permit the sacrosanct air corridors in which these unmanned combat aerial vehicles can operate without challenge or suppression.<sup>202</sup>

Third, the United States' inability to coerce Pakistan into changing course on terrorism has been compounded by bureaucratic politics in Washington.<sup>203</sup> After almost two decades of renewed U.S.-Pakistan counterterrorism cooperation, diverging interests within the U.S. government are making a coherent strategy toward Pakistan difficult to produce. Various offices within the departments of state and defense, as well as in the intelligence community, have different equities to protect in regard to specific U.S. counterterrorism objectives and U.S.-Pakistan relations more generally. As a result, any course of action aimed foremost at pressuring Pakistan runs afoul of other competing interests, which have proven hard to balance for both substantive and institutional reasons. Even if combating Pakistani-supported terrorism were the only goal, it would be difficult to garner full support for a policy focused on suppressing anti-Indian jihadi groups as a first priority if it conflicted with defeating other militant outfits more threatening to U.S. interests.

The successful Pakistani strategy of being able to negotiate “with a gun to its own head”<sup>204</sup> only makes the challenge more difficult, because nothing frightens U.S. policymakers more than the prospect of precipitating either the collapse or the Islamist takeover of a nuclear-armed Pakistan. Although both contingencies are quite far-fetched, the possibility that they might be provoked by some coercive U.S. policy aimed at Pakistan's leadership—even one directed toward penalizing any terrorism that undermines U.S. interests, let alone India's—gives Washington pause and thereby preserves Rawalpindi's freedom to employ terrorism for strategic ends.<sup>205</sup>

Accordingly, the prospects of great power coercion of Pakistan are dismal. China has the capacity to compel Pakistan to constrain its terrorism toward India but lacks the motivation to do so because of its own rivalry with New Delhi. The United States has stronger impetus in principle to confront Pakistan's reliance on terrorism but is handicapped in different ways with respect to penalizing Rawalpindi.<sup>206</sup> Washington could escape this trap only if Pakistan's terrorist proxies were to conduct mass-casualty attacks on U.S. soil or allied homelands or if the threats of a major India-Pakistan conventional war and nuclear escalation were to increase—circumstances that the Pakistani intelligence services (and possibly even

various jihadi groups) work assiduously to avoid because of the anticipated U.S. response. The evidence thus far suggests that, absent such triggers, even the presence of a sympathetic, pro-Indian, great power such as the United States is insufficient to force Pakistan to divest itself of what it believes to be its winning weapon: state-supported jihadis that operate under the protective cover of its nuclear weaponry.<sup>207</sup>

#### UNILATERAL CHANGES IN PAKISTAN'S GRAND STRATEGY?

If neither the costs of blowback from terrorism nor the prospects of great power coercion can weaken the Pakistan Army's attraction to jihadi terrorism, the only remaining hope is that the army might one day enjoy a sufficiently enlightened—and in historical terms, idiosyncratic—leadership that, recognizing the costs of persistent conflict with India, looks for ways to sever its links with jihadi terrorism in favor of a permanent reconciliation with New Delhi. Such a change would represent a fundamental transformation, unlike the innumerable “strategic shifts” advertised by the Pakistan Army in recent years—all of which have turned out to be either premature or fraudulent.

The general who could engineer such a strategic reorientation would have to shepherd several significant policy shifts: the reconciliation of the Pakistan Army to the status quo on the issues of disputed territory (especially in Jammu and Kashmir), the acceptance of India's ascendancy as a reality to be managed peacefully, and the renunciation of revenge for Pakistan's past military defeats. Any military leader capable of pursuing such goals would have to be willing to buck the inherited strategic culture of the Pakistan Army, which prefers continued affray, despite possible military reverses, to political inaction where India is concerned. He must also be ready to subordinate the army's institutional interests—namely, its desire to maintain Pakistan as a garrison state with a permanent war economy, albeit with protected privileges—to the nation's need for sustained economic growth and peaceful development. Furthermore, he must be an officer who is not Islamist, or else he would pursue perpetual confrontation with India on ideological grounds that transcend the specificity of the various disputes. And, finally, he must not measure his professional success (or protect his corporate survival) by consistently having to demonstrate his capacity to stand up to India or to confront it reflexively.

Given the history of the Pakistan Army and its leadership thus far, any officer who measures up to these criteria would almost assuredly be a maverick. This kind of individual could indeed lead the breakout to peaceful solutions with India, though the prospective permanence of such breakthroughs would be uncertain if the larger institution remained unreformed. Although military institutions occasionally produce leaders who are dramatic exceptions to the norm—men who aim to do the right things—their rise is invariably random and their

legacies are often short-lived because they run against the grain of institutional structures that invariably just aim to do things right.<sup>208</sup>

In all its history, the Pakistan Army has produced only one such maverick, Musharraf, who after becoming the country's president through a coup, actually spearheaded what remains to date the most serious—and creative—solution to resolving the vexing dispute with India over Jammu and Kashmir. Interestingly, Musharraf did not initially meet all the criteria of an idiosyncratic military leader who could make peace with India. He was admittedly resolutely anti-Islamist, having become a target of Islamic militants who despised his support for Washington's campaign against al-Qaeda. But although he was a product of the army's

deeply anti-Indian ethos—a disposition that was perhaps accentuated as a result of his migration to Pakistan as a refugee from India at the time of Partition—he was nonetheless able to muster a measure of autonomy from that pernicious culture for three serendipitous reasons.

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### **Musharraf spearheaded what remains to date the most serious—and creative—solution to resolving the vexing dispute with India over Jammu and Kashmir.**

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First, as the architect of the unprovoked Pakistani aggression against India at Kargil in 1999, when Musharraf was Pakistan's chief of army staff, his

belligerent attitude toward New Delhi was sufficiently well proven—whatever the doubts about his Indian origins might have been. The 1999 incursion, in fact, elevated his standing within the Pakistani military: it confirmed his reputation as an aggressive, risk-acceptant commander willing to take on the army's detested rival and, in a paradoxical way, gave him the freedom to explore peace with India.<sup>209</sup> The embarrassing outcome of that conflict actually taught Musharraf that the international community, and especially the United States, would not look kindly upon any further Pakistani efforts to, as then president Bill Clinton phrased it, “redraw borders with blood.”<sup>210</sup> An alternative solution was therefore necessary.

Second, the global war on terror, which Washington had press-ganged Musharraf to join despite his own acute reservations, signaled to him that Pakistan's jihadi proxies were now a wasting asset. The increasing international opposition to all kinds of violent revisionism following September 11, 2001, made the long-standing Pakistani reliance on terrorism as a strategic instrument progressively untenable and deepened his realization that insurgent violence against India was inviting more international pressure on Rawalpindi than on New Delhi—consequently impelling him to look for diplomatic exits to Pakistan's rivalry with India. Toward that end, he began to boldly offer a new agenda of “enlightened moderation” within Pakistan and advocated the same reform program for the entire Islamic *ummah*

globally.<sup>211</sup> As a complement to this project, he sought a rapprochement with India, based on the Pakistan Army's constraining its terrorism against India as a prelude to both sides committing to "move beyond their stated positions."<sup>212</sup>

Third, the rise of Islamist radicalism, which led to the attacks in the United States and increasingly threatened the well-being of Pakistan itself, convinced Musharraf that the internecine conflict with India could end up destroying Jinnah's creation from within at exactly the time that both Rawalpindi and Islamabad were quickly running out of ways to cope with steadily rising Indian power.<sup>213</sup> The traditional conviction of the Pakistani military—that it would permanently have sufficient resources to sustain its burdensome defense against India—appeared increasingly hollow to Musharraf. Pakistan's economy was performing poorly and was dependent on international bailouts, the Indian military had demonstrated its capacity to defeat Pakistani adventurism even in the face of strategic and tactical surprise, and the international community not only welcomed India's rise but also appeared inclined to support it—in sharp contrast to the steadily deepening dismay with Pakistan.<sup>214</sup>

These three factors, which might have paralyzed a more diffident leader, only motivated the audacious Musharraf to embark on a new path: attempting to resolve the most difficult territorial quarrel with India by transforming the nature of the wrangle itself. From the time he commandeered the presidency in Pakistan, Musharraf struggled to find a solution to the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir that would be compatible with India's inviolable bottom line: no further territorial changes in the inherited boundaries. As then Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh framed it, "Short of secession, short of redrawing boundaries, the Indian establishment can live with anything."<sup>215</sup> The genius of Musharraf's and Singh's diplomacy was that, in using back-channel negotiations that spanned twenty meetings mostly in Dubai between 2005 and 2007, they converged upon a framework that held the promise of making the Line of Control that divided the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir "irrelevant,"<sup>216</sup> as Musharraf phrased it, or "just lines on a map,"<sup>217</sup> as Singh phrased it.

In October 2006, Musharraf's envoy, Tariq Aziz, and Singh's representative, Satinder Lambah, reached an initial agreement. The full details are still not public, but the understanding pertained to the interim status of Jammu and Kashmir and was to have remained in force initially for fifteen years, pending a final settlement.<sup>218</sup> The broad accord hinged on the acceptance of "open borders" across the divided state. This would enable both sides to claim victory: India could maintain its position that no territorial change would indeed occur, while Pakistan could truthfully claim that a fundamental transformation had transpired because the functional boundary—the Line of Control—would no longer prevent the movement of the authenticated native populations and their associated intercourse on both sides. As Lambah

would later note, “This is particularly essential as on both sides of the Line of Control live not only the same ethnic groups but also divided families.”<sup>219</sup>

Both countries accepted the prerogative of designating “sensitive areas” within the state that would not come under the agreement’s purview, though both also concurred that neither the Vale of Kashmir (in India) nor Azad Jammu and Kashmir (in Pakistan) would be treated as sensitive areas, so as to permit a genuine integration of the most heavily populated Muslim-majority areas of the former princely kingdom. In this context, India was expected to designate the Jammu and Ladakh regions as sensitive areas (because of their respective Hindu majority and Buddhist plurality), whereas Pakistan was expected to designate the northern areas of Gilgit and Baltistan as its sensitive areas (because of their Shia majorities and their proximity to China). Furthermore, both nations committed to thin down their troop levels within the state to the minimum required for border security and law and order, especially in populated areas, so as to reduce the levels of threat experienced by the local inhabitants. And, finally, both sides agreed “to ensure self-governance for internal management in all areas on the same basis on both sides of the Line of Control.”<sup>220</sup> In that context and after difficult deliberations, they accepted the need for a “joint mechanism,”<sup>221</sup> which—working with the established representative institutions on both sides—would oversee matters pertaining to “Tourism, Travel, Pilgrimages to Shrines, Trade, Health, Education, and Culture,”<sup>222</sup> as well as any other forms of social intercourse; monitor the practical implementation of the agreement in these areas; and settle any differences that might arise on the ground.

The agreement ultimately made improving the lives of ordinary Kashmiris, rather than the formal exchange of contested territory, the new litmus test of political acceptability. It represented a transformative shift in Pakistan’s previous position on at least five counts: First, Musharraf resiled from the previous Pakistani insistence that the fate of Jammu and Kashmir had to be decided solely by the UN Security Council resolutions calling for a plebiscite, instead favoring a bilaterally negotiated agreement between India and Pakistan (as New Delhi has demanded since the 1971 Simla Accord). Second, the old Pakistani mantra of “the right to self-determination” for the Kashmiris was replaced by a commitment to “self-government” on both sides of the Line of Control (which required more changes in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir than it did in its Indian counterpart). Third, the rejection of religion as a criterion for resolving the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir was indelibly formalized (since the agreement, consistent with the long-standing Indian rejection of the two-nation theory as the basis of Partition, provided for no territorial changes on confessional lines). Fourth, Musharraf advised the Kashmiri separatists to begin negotiating with New Delhi, thereby superseding the previous Pakistani insistence that India’s internal solutions to the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir were illegitimate in the face of Pakistan’s valid claims (thus reinforcing New Delhi’s long-standing attempts at incorporating the dissidents into the Indian polity). Fifth,

Musharraf's clear acceptance that the Line of Control would remain the formal boundary between the two parts of the divided state—demarcating the limits of sovereignty enjoyed by each, even as the perimeter's significance was to be diminished by various administrative devices—remained the starkest evidence of how far Pakistan had travelled toward compromise with India (effectively conceding to New Delhi's position that no territory would be transferred between the two nations).<sup>223</sup> In sum, the back-channel agreement between Musharraf and Singh represented the most consequential reversal to date of Pakistan's persistent efforts to wrest control over the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir (or at least its Vale) from India.

The agreement represented a change in New Delhi's strategy as well: instead of adamantly asserting that the kingdom's accession to India was “final and irrevocable” and that the only thing left for discussion was “how the parts of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) can be again included in India,”<sup>224</sup> Singh found a way to accommodate Pakistan's interests without giving up on the legal foundations of Indian claims. Pakistan undoubtedly conceded much more than India, but this outcome only reflected the reality that New Delhi already controlled the territory it wanted, whereas Pakistan could never hope to secure its claims—as the almost seventy-year history of the conflict has abundantly demonstrated—against any resolute Indian opposition.

Given that the agreement ensured that Jammu and Kashmir would neither secede nor achieve independence, India sought to assuage Pakistani sensitivities by consenting to certain “institutional arrangements” that would permit both nations to cooperate on the specific issues affecting their populations on either side of the Line of Control.<sup>225</sup> Although the exact constitution of these arrangements was far from settled in October 2006—with Pakistan seeking a “governing council” that would serve as “a joint management system at the top for both sides of the Line of Control . . . [in order to] make the Line of Control irrelevant” and India envisioning a “cooperative, consultative mechanism so as to maximize the gains of cooperation in solving problems of social and economic development of the region”<sup>226</sup>—the quintessential feature of the back-channel agreement was that it preserved the existing structures of formal sovereignty in Jammu and Kashmir even as it reduced their political salience.

Indeed, this was the fundamental breakthrough: permitting the *de facto* unification of a fractured state despite its *de jure* division. Obviously, more details would have to be settled to make the accord effective—including, and most importantly, Pakistan's conclusive renunciation and elimination of terrorism—if the notion of open borders and the reduction of troops in populated areas were to have had any compelling meaning for India. Yet Pakistani-supported terrorism in India had been sufficiently stanchied, and a breakthrough of enough significance had been achieved for Musharraf and Singh to contemplate unveiling the accord after the May

2007 state elections in India. Unfortunately for both leaders—and their respective nations—Musharraf’s fears and hubris combined to precipitate a confrontation with the chief justice of Pakistan in March 2007<sup>227</sup>—an altercation that severely weakened Musharraf, opened the door to his final exit, and prevented consummation of the boldest agreement ever reached, however incompletely, between India and Pakistan. As Singh would later lament in a May 2, 2009, interview, “General Musharraf and I had nearly reached an agreement, a non-territorial solution to all problems, but then General Musharraf got into many difficulties with the Chief Justice and other forces and therefore the whole process came to a halt.”<sup>228</sup>

This tragic dénouement notwithstanding, the important point is that such a significant exit from the India-Pakistan rivalry could only have been negotiated by an idiosyncratic but self-assured military leader in Pakistan. Any civilian government in Islamabad that attempted such a feat would have been accused of a sellout and likely overthrown by the men on horseback in Rawalpindi. Only a Pakistani army chief—in full command of his own service, the military more generally, and the state at large—could pull off such a breakthrough. Of course, selling such a deal after it was concluded to the wider polity—and even to the armed forces itself—would have been challenging, but the Pakistan Army has generally been a disciplined force and its chief’s decisions usually carry the day because there are no effective competing centers of power within the nation that can undermine them.

For this reason, Mani Shankar Aiyar, for example, has argued that “army rule in Pakistan is in India’s interest” because “history would appear to indicate that while democracy is wonderful for the people of Pakistan, life for India is much better assured when Pakistan is under the thumb of a military dictatorship!”<sup>229</sup> While such an argument is plausible, it is not sufficiently probative because Musharraf was actually the exception, not the rule. This is not to say that past Pakistani army chiefs did not make some decisions that benefited New Delhi, but none of them have ever made a transformative choice that ran against the institutional interests of the praetorian state and, in doing so, truly elevated the well-being of their country over that of their tribe in uniform.

This conclusion is corroborated by the fact that, although Musharraf kept the corporate leadership of the Pakistan Army informed about his efforts at seeking a rapprochement with India, both his civilian and his military successors unceremoniously jettisoned the back-channel agreement as soon as he fell from power. Former president Asif Zardari might have continued the negotiations if he had been a stronger leader, but the Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist attacks in Bombay in November 2008—which were supported by Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence—finally ended any hope for progress.<sup>230</sup> At any rate, his own prime minister at the time, Yousaf Raza Gillani, publicly dismissed the agreement long before the attacks in an

effort to flaunt his own authority, arguing that the confidential proposals previously discussed with India were “half-baked things that didn’t have the mandate of Parliament.”<sup>231</sup> Former general Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, Musharraf’s successor as the Pakistan Army’s chief of staff, was even more disingenuous: although he—along with Pakistan’s foreign minister, Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, and the foreign secretary, Riaz Mohammad Khan—was part of the core group set up by Musharraf to monitor the progress of the back-channel negotiations, Kayani quickly distanced himself from the settlement upon taking office. He went as far as telling senior U.S. officials in the Obama administration that Musharraf had operated independently, that he was unaware of the agreement’s details, and that it was, at any rate, untenable because it did not enjoy the support of the army’s corps commanders.

On the last count, Kayani was arguably being truthful, thus confirming that the likelihood of another bold and idiosyncratic Pakistani military leader coming to power is quite small, given the entrenched strategic culture of the Pakistan Army and its institutional interest in continued tension with New Delhi. This reality then suggests that, for the foreseeable future, Pakistan’s strategic aims will continue to remain irredentist, revisionist, and vengeful; and its reliance on jihadi terrorism as a competitive strategy with India will persist both because of its perceived benefits and because Pakistan believes it to be a key instrument in changing the unacceptable ideological, territorial, and power-political status quo.

The drumbeat from within South Asia and the great powers for a renewed India-Pakistan dialogue will nevertheless continue, partly as a reflexive invocation and partly in the hope that it might somehow produce a peace that spares the subcontinent and the world at large of the horrors of any major conventional or nuclear conflict in South Asia. If the Musharraf-Singh back-channel agreement achieved nothing else, it served to delineate what the outline of a solution to one vexing problem between India and Pakistan might be. That solution has been staring both nations in the face ever since, but there seems to be no one in Pakistan who has the political capacity *and* willingness to pick up the threads and bring that tapestry to completion. The only entity that currently has the capacity to close on a deal—the Pakistan Army—has little interest in doing so, while the other center that undoubtedly would benefit from any agreement—the civilian government—has virtually no capacity to even begin the process.

Despite his credentials as a Hindu nationalist, Modi had expended significant capital in attempting to entice his former Pakistani counterpart, Nawaz Sharif, to embark on a new relationship with India—one that might put an end to terrorism against India and sustain a dialogue that could one day lead both sides to either complete what Musharraf and Singh had begun or produce some other solution that ratifies the prevailing status quo (see the timeline next page).<sup>232</sup> There is no evidence, however, that these efforts, whatever their impact

## ARROWS AND OLIVE BRANCHES

### DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS SINCE NARENDRA MODI'S ELECTION

<b>MAY 2014</b>	Narendra Modi is sworn in as the prime minister of India, with all heads of state from the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), including prime minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan, in attendance. Modi and Sharif hold talks in New Delhi and express willingness to begin a new era of bilateral relations.
<b>AUGUST 2014</b>	India calls off foreign secretary talks with Pakistan in response to a meeting between the Pakistani high commissioner and Kashmiri separatists.
<b>JULY 2015</b>	Modi and Sharif agree to restart the dialogue process.
<b>AUGUST 2015</b>	Planned national security adviser talks are cancelled following a dispute regarding the content.
<b>NOVEMBER 2015</b>	Modi and Sharif meet on the sidelines of the Paris Climate Change Conference and reiterate their commitment to the dialogue process.
<b>DECEMBER 2015</b>	Modi makes an unscheduled stop in Lahore to attend Sharif's granddaughter's wedding, and both countries announce that their foreign secretaries will meet in January 2016. Delegations of national security advisers and foreign ministers also meet in Bangkok and Islamabad, respectively.
<b>JANUARY 2016</b>	Terrorists attack the Indian Air Force base in Pathankot, killing six Indian defense personnel and leading to the postponement of foreign secretary talks.
<b>MARCH 2016</b>	Pakistan arrests former Indian naval officer Kulbhushan Jadhav on charges of espionage. India disputes the charges.
<b>MARCH 2016</b>	A Pakistani investigation team visits Pathankot airbase, but Pakistan refuses a reciprocal visit by Indian investigators, later claiming that the Pathankot attack was staged by the Indian government.
<b>APRIL 2016</b>	Pakistan unilaterally suspends the peace dialogue process, expressing its desire for a comprehensive dialogue rather than initial discussions focused on terrorism. Indian and Pakistani foreign secretaries meet in New Delhi at the sidelines of the Heart of Asia conference without any progress on dialogue.

<b>SEPTEMBER 2016</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terrorists attack the Indian Army's base in Uri, in Jammu and Kashmir, killing nineteen Indian soldiers. India cancels its participation in the 19th SAARC Summit in Islamabad. Subsequently, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka also withdraw from the summit.</li> </ul>
<b>SEPTEMBER 2016</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• India suspends the Indus Water Commission talks until Pakistani-supported terrorism in India ends.</li> </ul>
<b>SEPTEMBER 2016</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Indian Army states that it has conducted surgical strikes against suspected terrorist bases in "Pakistan-occupied Kashmir." Indian and Pakistani national security advisers subsequently agree to reduce tensions on the Line of Control.</li> </ul>
<b>OCTOBER 2016</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• India and Pakistan each expel one member of the other's high commission.</li> </ul>
<b>NOVEMBER 2016</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ceasefire violations at the Line of Control and international border increase.</li> </ul>
<b>JANUARY 2017</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indian leaders issue statements until April 2017 in various fora, calling for Pakistan to reject terrorism and pursue peace with India.</li> </ul>
<b>APRIL 2017</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A military tribunal sentences Kulbhusan Jadhav to death, leading to the cancellation of a high-level meeting between the Indian Coast Guard and the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency.</li> </ul>
<b>MAY 2017</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The International Court of Justice stays Jadhav's execution, ruling that India should have been granted consular access to its national per the Vienna Convention.</li> </ul>
<b>JUNE 2017</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite back-channel efforts to arrange a formal meeting, Modi and Sharif have only a fleeting encounter at the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Astana.</li> </ul>
<b>JULY 2017</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Pakistani Supreme Court rules to remove Sharif as prime minister.</li> </ul>

on Nawaz Sharif might have been, had any beneficial consequence in changing the Pakistan Army's calculus in regards to peace with India.<sup>233</sup> In fact, they may have only hastened Sharif's political demise.<sup>234</sup> All of which goes to prove that if Modi's efforts ever succeed, they will not do so because a resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute leads to reconciliation between India and Pakistan. To the contrary, an authentic rapprochement between India and Pakistan will have to precede the efforts at conflict resolution so that even if the problems over Jammu and Kashmir are settled, Pakistan does not feel impelled to continually wield the instrument of terrorism to hamper India's rise or to avenge a past that is now beyond alteration.

## FLAWED ARGUMENTS FOR ENGAGEMENT

As the above analysis illustrates, a lasting cordiality between India and Pakistan ultimately hinges on the Pakistan Army reconciling itself to India's strategic superiority within South Asia. It cannot be induced by continual bilateral engagement, irrespective of whether it is structured or nonstructured or whether it is conducted through open diplomacy or secret parleys. Rather, a durable peace requires a change in the underlying structural condition that perpetuates the conflict: the desire of the Pakistani generals to violently challenge India in the hope of erasing the subordination that Rawalpindi perceives as unacceptable, unfair, or disadvantageous to Pakistan. As Ahmed Rashid has remarked, "There is perhaps no other political-military elite in the world whose aspirations for great-power regional status, whose desire to overextend and outmatch itself with meager resources, so outstrips reality as that of Pakistan. If it did not have such dire consequences for 170 million Pakistanis and nearly 2 billion people living in South Asia, this magical thinking would be amusing."<sup>235</sup>

None of the following three common justifications for bilateral engagement—which each purports to explain how an “uninterrupted and uninteruptible” India-Pakistan dialogue could erase such “magical thinking” to produce peace—proves particularly persuasive on closer scrutiny.

*Continual bilateral engagement can induce the Pakistani military to negotiate an end to terrorism against India.*<sup>236</sup> The notion that Rawalpindi can be induced to abjure terrorism through negotiations is certain to be rejected outright by New Delhi because it would be tantamount to a moral hazard: rewarding the Pakistan Army to eschew something that it ought to abstain from in the first place. Even if such principled considerations are out of place in international politics, there are sound pragmatic reasons for India to refuse any negotiations with Pakistan over the cessation of terrorism because such a bargain would only ensure that New Delhi remained a victim of continuous blackmail by Rawalpindi. In effect, the Pakistan Army's strategy of bleeding India would be vindicated by such a discussion, permitting the generals to turn the tap of terrorism on and off as appropriate to secure those concessions that might otherwise not be forthcoming at the diplomatic table. For this reason, India has consistently

rejected any suggestion that it negotiate an end to Pakistani terrorism through dialogue, insisting instead that Rawalpindi must end its low-intensity conflict against India as a precondition for any peace process to even begin.

It should not be remarkable then that the most successful compromise to date—Musharraf’s celebrated back-channel endeavor—commenced only after he had curbed the cross-border infiltration of terrorist groups into India, froze the infrastructure that sustained them in Pakistan, and tacitly accepted that India would not be coerced into negotiating with Pakistan so long as Rawalpindi wielded the instruments of terror—even though the end result of such sequencing would be the legitimation of all of New Delhi’s extant advantages. Precisely because this is exactly the outcome that India wants Pakistani civilian and military leaders to be reconciled to—prior to the onset of any negotiations—New Delhi will never seek to bargain with Rawalpindi for an end to terrorism against India, being fully prepared instead to cope with such Pakistani depredations until its military leadership recognizes that violence will never produce the gains they seek. Consequently, Indian leaders are happy to pursue continual bilateral engagement with Pakistan if they judge that the process would provide the generals in Rawalpindi with the face-saving cover that is necessary to screen any *ex ante* shift toward peace with India. But they do not believe, with good justification, that any dialogue would produce such a shift *ex post* or that it could be purchased through the promise of a discussion absent demonstrated evidence of Rawalpindi’s desire to change course at the outset.

*Continual bilateral engagement can induce the Pakistani military to change its strategic aims by providing tangible benefits that make inflicting pain on India less attractive.*<sup>237</sup> The argument that a steady improvement in bilateral ties could provide Pakistan with many tangible benefits that make the relentless war against India needless has much to commend it—that is, until the difficult questions of what benefits, to whom, and how valuable these gains are relative to the tradeoffs are considered. There is little doubt that, in the abstract, the benefits of peace are greater than the benefits of conflict. But, in practice, the answers are not that obvious or persuasive. If bilateral engagement implies greater gains for the Pakistani polity in terms of expanded trade and deepened intersocietal ties with India, as well as a more peaceful environment for Pakistan’s national endeavors, the benefits of normal relations between India and Pakistan are indeed significant. But the promise of such rewards has not proven to be sufficiently impressive to the Pakistan Army, even if it is judged to be desirable by the country’s civilian leaders or civil society. Thus, for instance, Islamabad has been unable to implement its long-standing promise to extend a most-favored-nation trade status to India, despite the latter having done so in 1996 to Pakistan. The simple reason for this failure of reciprocity has been the Pakistani military’s desire to treat normalized trading relations as a chip to force India into negotiating the thornier issues, such as the status of Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>238</sup>

The impasse over Pakistan's extending most-favored-nation status to India illustrates the principal weakness of the argument that a sustained bilateral dialogue can provide Pakistan with the benefits that make inflicting pain on India less attractive. By withholding from its own country the gains that would emerge from regular trade with India, the Pakistan Army in effect reaffirms that it does not value any benefits to Pakistan that could undermine its ability to compel New Delhi to negotiate on those issues that are more important to its particular institutional equities. By making common cause with those Pakistani constituencies that might lose out from freer trade with India, the military seeks to obscure the fact that anything contributing toward better bilateral ties—whatever the advantages for Islamabad may be—

singularly undermines its own interest in avoiding compromise with India, which then enables it to preserve its lock on power and on national resources in Pakistan indefinitely.

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**Unless the peace process produces direct benefits for the Pakistani military—and these gains are both tangible and psychic—its incentives to support any reconciliation are minimal.**

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Unless the peace process produces direct benefits for the Pakistani military—and these gains are both tangible and psychic—its incentives to support any reconciliation are minimal. This calculus is deeply entrenched because what is perceived as beneficial to Pakistan's well-being

is not necessarily viewed as advantageous for its armed forces. For this reason, even modest improvements in economic ties, travel and transit arrangements, people-to-people relations, cooperation against crime and drug trafficking, and confidence-building measures pertaining to peace and security between India and Pakistan—while countenanced because of their low costs—never suffice to force change in the military's larger strategy of inflicting pain on India. While the leadership in Rawalpindi will accept many quotidian improvements in these areas, they will not judge them sufficient to give up using terrorism to change India's posture on the territorial disputes, retard its rise, or punish it for various real or imagined humiliations.

*Continual bilateral engagement can slowly erode the internal balance of power within Pakistan against the military and in favor of civilian authority, thus enabling transformative solutions that reshape the competition with India.*<sup>239</sup> One argument most frequently and quietly uttered by Pakistani officials is that a sustained dialogue between India and Pakistan is in New Delhi's long-term interests because it enables the civilian leadership in Islamabad—which presumably values peace with India more than its uniformed counterparts—to slowly recover power from Rawalpindi by demonstrating to a skeptical military and populace that peaceful engagement with India actually pays off better than armed confrontation. In effect, this claim relies on the expectation that continuous diplomatic engagement, even if it yields only small gains on those issues that matter little to the military but offers some benefits to Pakistan as a

whole, will demonstrate sufficiently the superiority of dialogue over conflict; the champions of cooperation would thus be slowly empowered and, as a result, could improve their political standing in domestic politics relative to the more obdurate and bellicose military.

Even if this contention were justified, however, it is likely to provide little consolation to New Delhi because the process by which civilian authority in Pakistan could actually regain power over and against the military would by its very nature be prolonged—with eventual victory for Islamabad over Rawalpindi anything but assured. In the interim, India would still have to cope with the ravages of the Pakistan Army's campaign of terrorism while persisting in a continuing dialogue, hopeful that at some point in the indeterminate future this doggedness will contribute toward dethroning its real enemies within Pakistan. Despite its distastefulness, Singh had reconciled himself to the logic of this approach for want of better alternatives. Taking his bearings from its high near-term costs rather than its remote promises, Modi seems to have rejected his predecessor's approach for equally understandable reasons.

The burdens imposed by continual engagement with Pakistan despite continuing terrorism against India are indeed significant, and its tenability is questionable because the ultimate dominance of civilian authority is not guaranteed, nor is there any surety that civilian governments in Pakistan would be as wedded to peace with India as their diplomats' rhetoric sometimes suggests. The historical evidence suggests that weak civilian regimes in Pakistan have often resorted to competitive baiting of India for narrow political gains, sometimes even conniving with the military to target their civilian rivals as well as New Delhi. For all these reasons, Indian leaders, no matter how much they may value their personal relations with their civilian Pakistani counterparts, would find it difficult to commit to an uninterrupted engagement with Islamabad in the hope of eventually empowering their friends there, when the latter consistently demonstrate their inability to arrest the military's campaign of terrorism against India. No one has regretted this tragedy more than Modi, who watched Sharif—an individual who clearly desired good relations with India—become the latest victim of this pernicious intramural competition within Pakistan.

The expectation that continued engagement with Pakistan's civilian authority could produce transformative solutions that end the India-Pakistan conflict falters on similar grounds. Over the years, various ideas that could dramatically change the course of political rivalries within the subcontinent have been introduced with some regularity. The idea of a genuine South Asian free trade agreement, the expansion of the Afghan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement to include India, and the institutionalization of an effective cooperative security architecture in the region have all been proffered as metamorphic devices to mitigate the geopolitical competition between India and Pakistan.<sup>240</sup>

Many of these solutions, if implemented as envisaged, would make a great difference to enhancing peace and security but only in the long run. Even if John Maynard Keynes's cautionary admonition—"this long run is a misleading guide to current affairs. In the long run we are all dead"<sup>241</sup>—is disregarded, it turns out that all the transformative fixes presented thus far promptly collide against the same structural impediments: the institutions that value them the most—arguably the civilian offices in Islamabad—are incapable of actualizing any significant initiatives that threaten the supremacy and the prerogatives of the Pakistani military, which has few incentives to support such solutions for the same reason. The hope that continual Indian engagement with Pakistan would provide significant exits from their conflicts, therefore, fades quickly.

The depressing upshot of this discussion is that persistent engagement between India and Pakistan, whether configured formally as a composite dialogue or informally through some other devices, consistently fails to alter the fundamental impediment that has prevented a resolution of the underlying conflict—namely, the inability of the Pakistan Army to accept that it cannot either through terrorism or negotiations compel India to surrender on a range of disputed issues when it has failed to procure such an outcome even through war in the past.

Given this obstacle, the arguments for continued dialogue then shift onto weaker rationales, such as providing cover for direct back-channel negotiations—which actually do not require any overt parleys either for their initiation or consummation—or decreasing the opportunities for international intervention aimed at pressing India to conciliate. However plausible the latter justification might be, India is sufficiently powerful to resist external coercion on any issue involving Pakistan, especially because Rawalpindi has no great power champions other than China. Even Beijing's capacity to press New Delhi on this issue is weak, and there are no incentives for China to utilize any coercive instruments of national power against India merely to force it to engage in a diplomatic dialogue with Pakistan—however valuable that might otherwise be for Chinese interests.

There are other sensible justifications for continued India-Pakistan dialogue, but their limitations must also be clearly appreciated. For example, an ongoing engagement could (1) help create personal bonds between diplomats and an institutional understanding across key governmental ministries in the two countries; (2) produce mechanisms that could help to deescalate a serious crisis between the two nuclear-armed powers and, if nothing else, serve as a "circuit-breaker"—something to be jettisoned in lieu of military action that might otherwise be provoked by grave terrorist attacks; (3) be useful for maintaining the standing of the elected governments on both sides, thus yielding benefits vis-à-vis some constituencies domestically; and (4) improve the global reputation of both nations as responsible entities.

All these are prudent reasons for sustaining a continued bilateral conversation and, to the degree possible, both India and Pakistan should obviously seek to secure their gains. But the bounds of such engagement should also be recognized: it serves mainly the tactical purpose of managing the conflict rather than fundamentally resolving it. Of course, in circumstances where conclusively settling the dispute proves elusive, regulating it may be all that is feasible and, for that reason, may actually be desirable as a justification for unending engagement. But because a dialogue conducted mainly to buffer a conflict from getting out of control does not and cannot redress its elemental causes, it will always be hostage to interruptions that ensue when egregious terrorist attacks against India occur as a natural consequence of Pakistan's grand strategy.

Although regulating the conflict may help to avoid major armed confrontations on occasion, there is no assurance that even palliative solutions will be durable as long as Pakistani nuclear coercion through jihadi terrorism persists. The advocates of an uninterrupted and uninterruptible dialogue between India and Pakistan believe that consistent engagement can induce the Pakistan military to change its worldview and its behavior toward India over time. For this reason, it is sometimes suggested that India should engage in a dialogue with the Pakistan Army directly, rather than wasting its time in conversations with civilian officials in Islamabad. It is unlikely that this alternate approach would be successful, partly because Rawalpindi would never want to take formal responsibility for any peace negotiations with New Delhi. If this process were to fail—and fail it will because the army's grievances are visceral and therefore hard to mollify through any negotiation that would satisfy both India and Pakistan simultaneously—the generals in Rawalpindi would prefer that Islamabad bear the discredit alone. This calculus permits them to feign noninvolvement and avoid responsibility for making hard choices, while the likely infructuousness of the process provides further justification for their continued truculence toward India.

The path to conflict resolution, even through unceasing India-Pakistan peace talks between civilians on both sides or between the Indian government and the Pakistani military, therefore, appears profoundly fallow. Despite being necessary and even desirable, they fail, for deeper underlying reasons, to yield much in resolving the fundamental problems of security competition besetting the two South Asian rivals. If the Pakistan Army ever changes its strategy toward India, such a transformation would come about for reasons other than a persistence of dialogue.





## CONCLUSION

### *THE PERILS OF ENCOURAGING PEACE THROUGH BLACKMAIL*

The unyielding antagonism between India and Pakistan remains one of the greatest tragedies of Asian politics. This enduring rivalry has undermined peace and prosperity throughout South Asia, and it has inhibited the economic development of close to one-fifth of the human race. The India-Pakistan competition not only poses a threat to human life in these countries every day but also, and even worse, harbors the risk of major war between two powerful states. Although both sides have learned to live with an insidious kind of “ugly stability” over the past few decades, their troubled bilateral relations raise fears that they might be hurtling toward a crisis that could eventuate possibly in nuclear use.<sup>242</sup>

The United States, obviously, has great stakes in preventing such a disaster. But it also seeks to realize other important regional goals, such as protecting Pakistan’s nuclear weapons from loss or diversion, preventing serious internal crises in Pakistan, securing stability in Afghanistan, and deepening economic integration within South Asia and beyond—all of which seem to be affected in some way by the antipathy between India and Pakistan. Given this perception, it is not surprising that successive administrations in Washington have repeatedly called for a sustained dialogue between New Delhi and Islamabad in the hope that such parleys might eventually lead to a reconciliation between the two rivals, thus stabilizing the region and advancing important U.S. interests. Several U.S. presidents have occasionally been tempted to mediate negotiations between the two South Asian rivals, eager that they might spur India and Pakistan to reach a compromise.

Although India has consistently dismissed the value of such intervention—because of its fears that any U.S. activism might only embolden Rawalpindi in its resistance toward New Delhi—it has always been conscious that, as a responsible state in the international system, it cannot suspend diplomatic intercourse with Pakistan permanently. Despite the current hiatus in India-Pakistan relations, it is therefore inevitable that New Delhi will reengage in the composite dialogue with Islamabad. If all goes well, there may be modest progress in some of the issue areas under discussion.<sup>243</sup> Under especially propitious conditions, this conversation might even yield some gains on Jammu and Kashmir, but a conclusive resolution is fundamentally beyond reach because of the vast chasm still existing between both sides.

As discussed in this report, a solution to the problem of Jammu and Kashmir is conceivable only if one or both countries are willing to move away from their abiding positions, which as they stand are in fundamental conflict. India has no reason to retreat from its current posture because it holds the most important cards: it already controls the territory it values; it possesses the requisite resources to maintain its dominance, despite any local restiveness that might peak from time to time; and the international community has acquiesced to New Delhi's efforts at protecting what it views as its national integrity. Pakistan, in contrast, can only make things difficult for India through a continued campaign of terrorism and insurgency, but neither Rawalpindi nor the disaffected populace in the Vale of Kashmir can change the prevailing territorial status quo by force.

This leaves Pakistan with the choice of either coming to terms with the current realities or persisting in a futile effort to weaken its more powerful neighbor through subconventional conflict, despite the costs imposed by such a strategy on itself. Even if both sides agreed to a solution along the lines previously proposed by Musharraf and Singh—a compromise that would require Pakistan to live with the prevailing division of territory—the other drivers of Rawalpindi's revisionism would still remain: the Pakistan Army's fears about Indian ascendancy constricting its nation's autonomy and its desire to avenge past humiliations at India's hands. The impact of a permanent peace on the army's enduring desire for primacy in Pakistan's politics and for a controlling interest in its economy cannot be consoling for the generals either.

Eradicating all these causes of quarrel permanently would require Pakistan—or, more precisely, its army and its intelligence services—to be fundamentally reconciled to the fact that all outstanding disputes, if they are ever resolved, will ultimately be decided on terms that are largely favorable to India because its relative superiority, its status quo disposition, its growing ascendancy beyond South Asia, and its intensifying international embrace make Pakistan's grasp for parity with its larger neighbor a perpetually quixotic endeavor. While these considerations do not diminish Pakistan's formal—Westphalian—equality with India,

they nevertheless highlight the power disparity between the two countries, which, in the final analysis, determines all outcomes in competitive international politics.

The reluctance of the Pakistan Army to accept the substantive consequences of Pakistan's inferiority to India magnifies the grievances that lie at the root of the strategic competition between the two states. The most obvious explanation for this recalcitrance is the army's own interest in preserving power within Pakistan itself. These variables have been highlighted in this report, but a more comprehensive explanation would include many other factors as well. The issue of worldview, and the army's self-image as the guardian of the ideology of Pakistan, would have to be accorded an important role. The army's interest in utilizing external conflicts to protect its own institutional integrity would also acquire relevance. Likewise, the strong cognitive and motivational biases that have distorted the army's perception of both its circumstances and those of India—and the manner in which these conceptions are reproduced organizationally within the military—would have to be acknowledged.

Beyond these domestic factors, however, other elements are significant as well. The capacity of nuclear weapons to provide license for Pakistan's low-intensity wars against India has already been flagged. But the intrusion of the great powers—especially China on Pakistan's behalf, motivated in part by its own rivalries with India, and the United States, with its own complex relationships with Pakistan, China, and India—has not been dealt with at length because it is beyond the scope of this report. Yet, any extended analysis of the India-Pakistan relationship would have to recognize how larger international competitions have cemented the extant primordial rivalry within South Asia.

Finally, the weaknesses of democracy in both India and Pakistan, the thin levels of economic interdependence, and the absence of any pacifying regional institutions have all contributed to making the India-Pakistan conflict quite unlike most other disputes found elsewhere in the world. These considerations taken in their entirety lead to one ineluctable conclusion: the antagonism between India and Pakistan is neither simple nor shallow, and its endurance, nay its intensification, is a consequence of the coalescence of particular disputes, emotional traumas, and widening relative capacities—a corrosive amalgam that does not lend itself to easy resolution even through a sustained conversation between the two sides.<sup>244</sup>

It is not clear that U.S. policymakers appreciate this reality sufficiently because their perpetual invocations for dialogue reflect a failure to understand that the processes of diplomacy alone cannot overcome the fundamental differences of interest. Because these variances exist—whatever their sources—and because they are crucial, any solutions that materialize will be shaped largely by the relative balance of power. Precisely because Pakistan is attempting to

clinch outcomes that lie well beyond its natural capacity to procure, the persistent U.S. exhortations for India-Pakistan negotiations actually undermine Washington's objective of securing peace on the subcontinent.

The continual call for discussions between the two rivals—without further qualifications—suggests that there is another solution besides the one largely anchored in an acceptance of the facts as they are. Pakistan's strategy of attempting to negotiate with India through terrorism under the cover of its nuclear weaponry is intended to either change the asymmetry in the current power balance by wearing India down or precipitate acute crises with New Delhi that would inveigle stronger nations, especially the United States, into forcing bilateral negotiations that might enable Rawalpindi to get a better deal than it could otherwise. In other words, Pakistan seeks to transform the current adverse realities to its advantage.<sup>245</sup>

If the United States wants to advance stability in South Asia, it must set upon a course that, instead of merely urging talks, presses Pakistan to realistically accept its circumstances vis-à-vis India. That requires, most importantly, a determined effort to compel the “deep state”

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in Rawalpindi to sunder its links with jihadi terrorism because, as long as the Pakistani military believes that its Islamist proxies can indeed force India toward the negotiations that U.S. policymakers advocate, it has no incentives to give up state-sponsored terrorism as a device for coercing Indian compliance. This dynamic, accordingly, means that Washington's entreaties for a sustained and resilient dialogue are not merely futile but actually undermine its very real interest in preserving order: Pakistan's

blackmail will not succeed in pushing India toward any negotiations to begin with, but, even worse, may actually incite it into military retaliation against Rawalpindi's provocations, which can further set back the quest for tranquility on the subcontinent.

A resolute U.S. effort to induce Pakistan to give up terrorism would tangibly advance peace in South Asia: by denuding Pakistan of the one instrument that fallaciously promises improved bilateral outcomes through violence, it would force both Islamabad and Rawalpindi to negotiate with India on the basis of their true strength and thus move toward results that, however favorable they may be to New Delhi, are fundamentally consonant with the real bargaining power of the two disputants. Because India will never accept any other ending, nor can it be compelled to, the recommendation that “the United States should facilitate an India-Pakistan dialogue on the full range of economic and political issues”<sup>246</sup> is both

simplistic and counterproductive: simplistic because it fails to appreciate that the absence of peace is not the result of the two nations' inability to have a conversation but rather the consequence of Pakistan's desire for a better outcome than what its negotiating power permits it to enjoy; and counterproductive because if the United States were to inject itself into the India-Pakistan imbroglio, its strategic weight would be perceived in both Islamabad and Rawalpindi as tilting the negotiating scales in their favor, thereby creating opportunities for levying even greater demands on India and, as a consequence, making a successful negotiation simply impossible to conclude.

The heart of the problem with any kind of U.S. intervention in the India-Pakistan dispute—whether it is labeled facilitation, mediation, or intercession—is that it prevents Pakistan from negotiating on the basis of its innate power. Instead, it holds out the false hope that the strength of the United States could be co-opted into procuring outcomes that otherwise lie beyond reach. This danger is exacerbated by the fact that Pakistan is a paranoid state: consequently, what it believes to be necessary for its security or its interests cannot be obtained without imposing highly onerous and, by implication, unacceptable terms on others, including India, to begin with.

Should the United States inject itself into the India-Pakistan stalemate in these circumstances, it will have lost on three counts: first, it will have been suckered by Pakistan into intervening on behalf of a weaker state that seeks to avoid accepting the realities that could lead to resolving at least some of the disputes with India; second, by incurring Indian displeasure, it will have lost India as a strategic partner on matters far more important to the United States outside of South Asia; and third, for all these inconveniences, it will have made resolving the disputes between India and Pakistan even harder than they are already because there is nothing Washington can give to New Delhi to surrender its upper hand or to Rawalpindi to accept a graceful submission.

The best course of action for the United States, therefore, is to stay out of the India-Pakistan contention altogether, leaving it up to both states to reach any agreements they can based on their relative power. If Washington must inject itself into this process—outside of crisis management, where its interventions are perhaps necessary—it should lean on Pakistan to rid itself of its jihadi instruments so that the United States does not become an accessory to Rawalpindi's strategy of extortionary engagement. Washington must resist, for both political and moral reasons, any complicity with the Pakistan Army's quest for dividends through blackmail. This is now essential because of the risks posed to regional stability, the U.S. and allied homelands, and ultimately, the viability of Pakistan itself. Absent such concerted action by the United States, no India-Pakistan peace talks will be worth a damn.



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