

PAKISTAN'S STRATEGIC CULTURE

*Implications for How Pakistan Perceives
and Counters Threats*

By C. Christine Fair



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— FOREWORD —

The 2016–17 edition in the National Bureau of Asian Research’s *Strategic Asia* series, *Understanding Strategic Cultures in the Asia-Pacific*, is the second in a three-volume project to assess the nature of geopolitical competition in the Asia-Pacific. Last year’s volume examined the resources available to a range of major powers in the region and the ability of each country’s political system to convert those resources into military and diplomatic power. The 2016–17 volume builds on the first, examining the same seven states in order to better understand how each country’s distinctive strategic culture affects its pursuit of strategic objectives and national power.

In this NBR Special Report, which supplements this year’s *Strategic Asia* volume, C. Christine Fair examines the strategic culture of Pakistan and its implications for U.S. policy. She argues that Pakistan’s security perceptions are deeply rooted within the Pakistan Army, which perpetuates the image of the country as an insecure and incomplete state bordered on one side by Afghanistan (perceived as a source of instability) and on the other by India (perceived as a regional hegemon that wishes to dominate or destroy Pakistan). This perspective has been engrained within the army and conveyed to society at large.

Pakistan’s strategic culture has induced the state to use ideological tools to foster nationalism, pursue strategic depth in Afghanistan by interfering in that state’s affairs, and utilize proxy fighters in the struggle with India. These policies endure because U.S. efforts to induce Pakistan to adopt a less destabilizing approach have not succeeded. Fair concludes that if the United States wishes to force change in Pakistan, it must come to realize that enhanced pressure will not necessarily destabilize the state, and that the benefits of more decisively inducing change in the country’s strategic outlook far outweigh those of allowing the status quo to persist.

Alison Szalwinski and Michael Wills
The National Bureau of Asian Research

Pakistan's Strategic Culture: Implications for How Pakistan Perceives and Counters Threats

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NOTE: Sections of this report are adapted from the author's work *Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army's Way of War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). The reader is advised to consult this book for more detail on methods and data.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report analyzes four key concepts undergirding the Pakistan Army's strategic culture and considers the implications for U.S. and Indian efforts to manage the threat from Pakistan.

MAIN ARGUMENT

Pakistan remains a staunchly revisionist state that both continues to assert territorial equities in Kashmir and seeks to resist India's rise in the international system. Its revisionism motivated it to start wars in 1947–48, 1965, and 1999, all of which it failed to win, as well as to sustain a proxy war in Kashmir, the most recent campaign of which began in 1989. Pakistan has adopted several strategies to manage its security environment, including ideological tools, the pursuit of strategic depth in Afghanistan, and the use of proxy fighters under its expanding nuclear umbrella. Pakistan continues to pursue these strategies even though they are very unlikely to succeed and have imposed a high cost on the state. Much of its behavior, however, can be explained by the strategic culture of the Pakistan Army. This culture is characterized by four beliefs: (1) that Pakistan is an insecure and incomplete state, (2) that Afghanistan is a source of instability, (3) that India rejects the two-nation theory and seeks to dominate or destroy Pakistan, and (4) that India is a regional hegemon that must be resisted. The Pakistan Army controls most levers of power with respect to national security and foreign policy, as well as domestic policies that influence these domains. Moreover, this strategic culture is enduring and unlikely to change, as will be demonstrated by a study of Pakistani military publications.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Pakistan's security perceptions are deeply entrenched within the army, which has successfully cultivated support among wide swathes of Pakistanis.
- Past U.S. efforts to induce Pakistan to be less dangerous have failed principally because they have relied on inducements that have actually rewarded the country for its reckless behavior. The challenge for the U.S., therefore, is to devise a suite of compelling strategies that can alter Pakistan's cost-benefit calculus in using nonstate actors.
- For the U.S. to fail to adopt such compelling strategies would be to accept that Pakistan will become ever more dangerous while being subsidized by U.S. taxpayers and multilateral institutions.

Pakistan is a territorially revisionist state in that it seeks to secure control over all the disputed territory of Kashmir even though Pakistan was never entitled to this territory under the terms of partition set by Britain when it decolonized the subcontinent in 1947.¹ Pakistan is revisionist in another sense, as well, in that it seeks to impede India's rise in the global system. India, in contrast, is territorially satisfied with the status quo but mildly revisionist with respect to its place in the international system.² Pakistan's insistence on these revisionist aims has implications for how the Pakistan Army uses instruments of force and other elements of national power. Since 1947, Pakistan has remained locked in an enduring rivalry³ with India: it began (and failed to win) wars over Kashmir in 1947–48, 1965, and 1999 and has sustained a proxy war in Kashmir in hopes of coercing India to abandon it.⁴ Pakistan's revisionist agenda not only has posed heavy costs on the state; in recent years it also has directly affected the security of Pakistani citizens and even the stability of the state itself. Current members and direct descendants of many of the militant groups spawned by Pakistan's intelligence agencies now target the country's civilian, military, and intelligence institutions, as well as its citizens.⁵ Moreover, the pursuit of Kashmir has imposed significant economic costs on the Pakistani state.⁶ Still, these revisionist goals endure despite the accretion of evidence that Pakistan cannot achieve them even modestly at present and is less likely to prevail in the future as the power differential with India continues to expand.⁷

Pakistan should have abandoned its revisionism long ago. After all, “good strategy will...ensure that objectives are attained while poor strategy will lead to the ineffective execution of a state's power...It is also assumed that strategies that fail to attain a state's objectives will, in all probability, evolve or be abandoned.”⁸ However, Pakistan remains resolutely revisionist, even though persevering with this policy will impose greater costs on the state while increasingly setting it up to fail. Given India's ascent and Pakistan's decline in the international system, game rationality predicts that Pakistan should come to some accommodation with India sooner rather than later, as conceding defeat earlier will be less costly than doing so in the future when the power differential between them is even larger.⁹

The army's strategic culture explains much—albeit not all—of this puzzling behavior. I focus on the army rather than the Pakistan government or other sociopolitical formations because the army dominates decision-making with respect to domestic and foreign policy and will likely continue to do so for the policy-relevant future. In other words, this report posits that the strategic culture of the

¹ Whereas some scholars may use the term “revisionist” with respect to the territorial status quo, I use this term in a more general sense to denote a state's desire not only to change borders but also to alter political orders.

² C. Raja Mohan, “India and the Balance of Power,” *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2006, 17–32.

³ An enduring rivalry is characterized as “conflicts between two or more states [that] last more than two decades with several militarized interstate disputes punctuating the relationship.” See T.V. Paul, *The India-Pakistan Conflict: An Enduring Rivalry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3.

⁴ Praveen Swami, *India, Pakistan and the Secret Jihad: The Covert War in Kashmir, 1947–2005* (London: Routledge, 2007); and C. Christine Fair, *Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army's Way of War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁵ C. Christine Fair, “The Militant Challenge in Pakistan,” *Asia Policy*, no. 11 (2011): 105–37; Zahid Hussain, *The Scorpion's Tail* (New York: Free Press, 2010); and Swami, *India, Pakistan and the Secret Jihad*.

⁶ Shahid Javed Burkie, “Kashmir: A Problem in Search of a Solution,” United States Institute of Peace, *Peaceworks*, no. 59, March 2007. <http://www.usip.org/files/resources/PWmarch2007.pdf>.

⁷ Fair, *Fighting to the End*.

⁸ John Glenn, “Realism versus Strategic Culture: Competition and Collaboration,” *International Studies Review* 11, no. 3 (2009): 533.

⁹ Game rationality derives from the work of Thomas Schelling and posits that there is an ahistorical and acultural, universal strategic calculus that guides a rational player's decision-making based on available information. This theory implies that multiple actors would make the same choices using this universal cost-benefit calculus and the same information to attain a stated objective. Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960).

army is functionally equivalent to that of Pakistan for most intents and purposes because the army controls most of the levers of power that influence the country's behavior in the international system and has the dominant voice in domestic policy on critical issues of national security.¹⁰

One of the most enduring features of this strategic culture is that the army construes threats in ideological and civilizational terms. Its claim to Kashmir is embedded in the pre-partition “two-nation theory,” according to which Pakistan is the homeland of South Asia's Muslims. To effectuate fully the larger project of partition and the two-nation theory, Kashmir—the only Muslim-majority state in contemporary India—must join Pakistan. This is reflected in the common slogan *Kashmir, Pakistan banega* (Kashmir will become Pakistan). Equally important, the army construes its conflict with India in civilizational terms in which “Muslim Pakistan” must resist the designs and ruses of a devious “Hindu India.”

Four principal themes undergird the strategic culture of the Pakistan Army. One theme is its enduring belief that Pakistan was born an insecure and incomplete state due to the ways in which Britain executed the partition of the Raj. Second, the army regards Afghanistan as a source of instability due to the intentions of the Afghan state both on its own and in collusion with India. Third, it charges India with being implacably opposed to Pakistan's existence and seeking to undermine the ideological moorings of the state, if not the state itself. In extrema, the Pakistan Army believes that India would destroy Pakistan if it could. Fourth, the army believes that India seeks to be a regional hegemon and impose its will on Pakistan and neighboring countries. This report details how the army operationalizes these strategic concepts as well as the tools that it has developed over time to contend with these perceptions.

The remainder of this report is organized as follows. The first section describes how the notion of strategic culture helps explain Pakistan's obdurate revisionism and the policies that ensue. It then develops in greater detail the four key concepts entrenched in the army's strategic culture discussed above. In the second section, I describe both the ways in which the Pakistan Army operationalizes these concepts and the tools it uses to manage them. Finally, the report concludes with a discussion of implications for U.S. and Indian efforts to contend with the threat from Pakistan.

The Strategic Culture of the Pakistan Army

What Is Strategic Culture?

Proponents of strategic culture aver that the concept can explain the national security objectives that states formulate as well as the choices that they make to actuate these objectives.¹¹ This report employs a definition offered by Alastair Iain Johnston, which he derived from the work of Clifford Geertz:

¹⁰ Fair, *Fighting to the End*. See also Stephen P. Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004).

¹¹ International relations scholars debate whether and, if so, how culture matters in international politics. See, for example, Rudra Chaudhuri, “Why Culture Matters: Revisiting the Sino-Indian Border War of 1962,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 32, no. 6 (2009): 841–69; and Michael C. Desch, “Culture Clash: Assessing the Importance of Ideas in Security Studies,” *International Security* 23, no. 1 (1998): 141–70. Scholars disagree about what strategic culture is and how it can be defined and operationalized. Even if one concedes that the notion is intellectually justified, how does one demonstrate that state behavior (the dependent variable) is causally influenced by strategic culture (the independent variable)? Others note with concern that it is easy to overly essentialize the subject of inquiry and produce crude, if not racist or ethnocentric, caricatures. See, for example, George K. Tanham, *Indian Strategic Thought: An Interpretive Essay* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 1992); and Joel Larus, *Culture and Political-Military Behavior: The Hindus in Premodern India* (Calcutta: Minerva, 1979).

Strategic culture is an integrated system of symbols (e.g., argumentation structures, languages, analogies, metaphors) which acts to establish pervasive and long-lasting strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs, and by clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the strategic preferences seem uniquely realistic and efficacious.¹²

There are two constituent parts of Johnston's "system of symbols." The first concerns the basic assumptions that the institution in question and its stakeholders hold concerning the strategic environment. These assumptions provide important information that is shared among key stakeholders and reduces uncertainty about the strategic environment. Importantly, they emerge from "deeply historical sources, not from the current environment."¹³ The second element of the system of symbols is an operational understanding of the means that are the most efficacious for managing threats, contingent on how the institution understands its strategic environment. Johnston argues that while it is very difficult to relate strategic culture to specific behavioral choices—in part because the evidentiary requirements are quite onerous—scholars should at least be able to demonstrate how strategic culture limits the options available to the institution in question.¹⁴ In the analysis that follows, I ask these questions of the Pakistan Army. My principal data sources are decades of professional publications authored by Pakistani military officers.

The Four Key Features of the Pakistan Army's Strategic Culture

From my extensive perusal of Pakistani military publications and memoirs of officers, I delineate four persistent themes, summarized in **Table 1**.¹⁵

Enduring belief in Pakistan as an insecure and incomplete state. First and foremost, the army understands Pakistan to be an insecure and incomplete state that was born from an inherently unfair partition process in 1947. Thus, it views partition as an incomplete process. There are several contentions that undergird this first perception. Pakistan was not an equal inheritor of the institutions of the Raj, given that most of those institutions remained in what is now India. Pakistan, being the smaller and poorer state, had to simultaneously craft the apparatus of governing while also contending with a humanitarian disaster stemming from partition that was far greater in magnitude than that experienced by India. Without evidence, the Pakistan Army continues to gripe that the British conspired to carve up the Punjab Province with the intent of allocating specific districts to India that would enable it to invade Kashmir with ground forces.¹⁶ The army believes that premeditated activities related to the formal division of the Raj, as well as unplanned violent incidents stemming from partition, bequeathed to Pakistan insecure and ill-defined borders, crippling human capital deficits, an intractable security competition with India, and inadequate resources with which to contend with these myriad challenges.

¹² Alistair Iain Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture," *International Security* 19, no. 4 (1995): 46. See also Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

¹³ Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture," 46.

¹⁴ Alistair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 37.

¹⁵ This section draws extensively on Fair, *Fighting to the End*.

¹⁶ Shereen Ilahi, "The Radcliffe Boundary Commission and the Fate of Kashmir," *India Review* 2, no. 1 (2003): 77–102. Pakistanis believe that Kashmir should belong to Pakistan even though neither the Indian Independence Act of 1947 nor the Radcliffe Commission, which oversaw partition, ordained such an outcome. Pakistanis rest their claim to Kashmir on the aforementioned two-nation theory, despite the fact that the concept had no legal standing. Successive civilian leaders, as well as army chiefs (including the current one), assert that Kashmir is the "unfinished agenda" of partition. See "Kashmir Is Unfinished Agenda Which Hinders Regional Peace: Gen Raheel," *Dawn*, October 2, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1210468/kashmir-is-unfinished-agenda-which-hinders-regional-peace-gen-raheel>.

TABLE 1 The Pakistan Army's system of symbols

Strategic beliefs about the threat environment	Strategies for operationalizing these beliefs	Tools to manage threats
Pakistan is an insecure and incomplete state.	Defend Pakistan's ideological and geographic frontiers; finish the "unfinished" process of partition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instrumentalize Islam. • Conduct asymmetric conflict, war, politics, and diplomacy.
Afghanistan is source of instability (often in collusion with India).	Develop strategic depth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a forward vs. close border policy with respect to Afghanistan. • Use FATA/Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as a buffer.
India is opposed to the two-nation theory and seeks to dominate or destroy Pakistan.	Sustain public and military appetite for indefinite civilizational war.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wage wars and conflict with India as defensive jihad against <i>kufar</i> (nonbelievers). • Misrepresent all wars with India. • Cast Pakistan Army as "Islamic warriors."
India is a hegemon that must be resisted.	View risk-taking (e.g., in Kargil in 2001 and 2008) as always preferable to doing nothing, which amounts to defeat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threaten jihad under a nuclear umbrella. • Develop external ties. • Cultivate militants.

The belief that Afghanistan is a source of instability. A second core tenet of the army's strategic culture is its belief that it inherited the most dangerous frontier of the British Raj—the border with Afghanistan—but received a small fraction of the Raj's resources to manage this threat. Despite popular commentary to the contrary, Pakistan's quest for "strategic depth" began at independence and was in fact inherited from British security managers.¹⁷ Through most of Pakistan's history, the concept of strategic depth has implied political—not physical—depth in Afghanistan by which the army has sought to cultivate a regime in Afghanistan that is favorably disposed toward Pakistan while hostile to India. This policy aimed to restrict Indian access to Afghanistan, fearing that India could harm Pakistan's interests if it were allowed a significant presence there. Only General Mirza Aslam Beg (Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's army chief) conceived of strategic depth as a physical place where Pakistan could emplace military assets to protect them from an Indian assault.¹⁸

While some analysts reduce Pakistan's concerns in Afghanistan to its desire to restrict India's presence there and thus hinder any plan to destabilize Pakistan's western restive border,¹⁹ these apprehensions originate from the actions of the Afghan state in the early years of Pakistan's independence. For example, Afghanistan rejected Pakistan's bid to join the United Nations;

¹⁷ Christian Tripodi, *The Edge of Empire: The British Political Officer and Tribal Administration on the North-West Frontier 1877–1947* (Farham: Ashgate, 2011); Joshua T. White, "The Shape of Frontier Rule: Governance and Transition, from the Raj to the Modern Pakistani Frontier," *Asian Security* 4, no. 3 (2008): 219–43; and Rizwan Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy in Afghanistan* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005).

¹⁸ Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy in Afghanistan*.

¹⁹ See, for example, Barnett R. Rubin and Ahmed Rashid, "From Great Game to Grand Bargain: Ending Chaos in Afghanistan and Pakistan," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2008.

rejected the Durand Line as the boundary between Pakistan and Afghanistan; made irredentist claims on large swathes of Pakistani territory in Baluchistan, the North-West Frontier Province, and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA); and aided and abetted Baluch and Pashtun separatists, among other provocations. Pakistani writers both in and out of uniform have attributed Afghanistan's intrepidity to India's instigation.²⁰ This conviction about the intertwined nature of the Afghan and Indian threats and the ability of Afghanistan, either on its own or with Indian assistance, to destabilize Pakistan has been a constant theme in Pakistani military and even civilian discourses.²¹

Since 2001, under the security umbrella of the United States and NATO, India has re-established its presence in Afghanistan. Given the enduring nature of Pakistan's threat perceptions about Afghanistan and its potential for collusion with India, it should come as no surprise that Pakistan believes that "the active Indian presence in Afghanistan is pushing Pakistan for a two-front war."²² It would be foolish to simply dismiss these apprehensions simply because Pakistan has failed to marshal the requisite credible evidence to support its claims.

The belief that India is opposed to the two-nation theory and seeks to dominate or destroy Pakistan. A third critical component of the army's strategic culture is the unwavering conviction that India, obdurately opposed to the two-nation theory, cannot countenance Pakistan's existence as a Muslim state and consequently seeks to dominate or destroy it. Ayub Khan offers some of the earliest synthesis of this kind of ideation about India. Drawing from Pakistan's partition-related experiences, he avowed that India is unable "to reconcile herself to our existence as a sovereign independent State. The Indian attitude can only be explained in pathological terms. The Indian leaders have a deep hatred for the Muslims....From the beginning, India was determined to make things difficult for us."²³ Ayub's writings evince a belief that should Pakistan's ideology fail, then the state itself would fail as well. To ensure the success of this ideology, and thus of Pakistan itself, his government had to actively promote it and secure its legitimacy within Pakistan. This conviction that India seeks to undermine, if not destroy, Pakistan was given further ballast by India's decisive victory in the 1971 India-Pakistan War.²⁴ This belief about India continues to animate both the rhetoric and actions of the Pakistan Army. Lest one believe that this conviction is obsolete or anachronous, in September 2016, amid rising bilateral tensions over India's retaliatory punitive strikes on Pakistani terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, Pakistan's Inter-Services Public Relations declared that "Pakistan's armed forces together with our resilient

²⁰ For example, General Mohammad Ayub Khan wrote that Afghanistan was emboldened to challenge Pakistan due to "constant Indian propaganda [that] Pakistan could not survive as a separate State. The Afghan rulers believed this to be true and decided to stake a claim to our territory before Pakistan disintegrated....In this way the idea of an artificial State of Pkhtoonistan [sic] inside our borders was made an issue by the Afghan rulers....In this claim the Afghans were backed by India whose interests lay in ensuring that in the event of a war with us over Kashmir, the Afghans should open a second front against Pakistan on the North West Frontier....The Indians thought that they would be able to hem us in and embarrass us by a pincer movement." See Mohammad Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters: A Political Autobiography* (1967; repr., Islamabad: Mr. Books, 2006), 197.

²¹ See, for example, Fazal Muqem Khan, *The Story of the Pakistan Army* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1963); M. Aslam Siddiqi, "Can Pakistan Stay Neutral?" *Pakistan Horizon* 11, no. 2 (1958): 70-78; and Israr Ahmad Ghumman, "Pakistan's Geostrategic Environment and Military System," *Pakistan Army Journal* 31 (1990): 26-37.

²² Muhammad Khan, "Security Environment in South Asia," *Hilal* 48 (2011): 19.

²³ Khan, *Friends Not Masters*, 135. Elsewhere in the same text, Ayub asserts that "India's hegemonic impulses, its implacable hostility to Pakistan, and the intolerance of the Hindu priestly caste, the Brahmins, contends that India was not content with her present sphere of influence and she knew that Pakistan had the will and the capacity to frustrate her expansionist designs. She wanted to browbeat us into subservience. All we wanted was to live as equal and honourable neighbors, but to that India would never agree. It was Brahmin chauvinism and arrogance that had forced us to seek a homeland of our own where we could order our life according to our thinking and faith... There was [a] fundamental opposition between the ideologies of India and Pakistan." Khan, *Friends Not Masters*, 194-95.

²⁴ Gary J. Bass, *The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013).

nation have surmounted every challenge and will thwart any sinister design against integrity and sovereignty of Pakistan in [the] future as well.”²⁵

The belief that India is a hegemon that must be resisted. The fourth concept in the Pakistan Army’s strategic culture concerns the existential threat from India directly, from its ability to collude with its neighbors, and from its rise in the international system. Again, Ayub Khan gave an early voice to this belief. He asserted in 1967 that behind all the Indo-Pakistan discord is “India’s ambition to absorb Pakistan or turn her into a satellite....From the day of independence, Pakistan was involved in a bitter and prolonged struggle for her very existence and survival....Indian efforts in the field of foreign policy were all directed towards one aim, the isolation of Pakistan and its disintegration.”²⁶ Later writers echo this same concern. In 1971, Major Mohammad Aslam Zuberi opined that “extremists [in India] still dream of Akhund Bharat [an undivided India]. Even moderates would like to see Pakistan in a position of India’s satellite” after which “Pakistan would be reduced to a status of an innocuous spectator.”²⁷ In 1985, Major Khalid Mehmud wrote that “India has its peculiar perception of security for South Asia and wants to impose its security and economic system upon the entire region....It also wants to restrict the foreign policy choices and options of its neighbours and wants them to make their policies compatible with the Indian foreign policy objectives.”²⁸ Another author writing in this vein suggested in 1988 that “India has ambitions to play a much wider role than just being confined to South Asia. Many in India believe that it is destined to have a global role, and some even visualize it as ranking immediately behind the superpowers and alongside powers like China.”²⁹

The implications of Indian aspirations (as they appear in Pakistani defense publications) are ominous for Pakistan and the army. Writing in March 1990, Lieutenant Colonel Israr Ahma Ghumman summarized Pakistan’s predicament as a small state confronting “multidirectional threats to her security due to her geostrategic importance, national policies and ideological stance. Pakistan remains sandwiched between an expanding ideology [the Soviet Union] and a hegemonic neighbor [India] forcing it to live in a perpetual state of external conflict.” Ghumman believed that India would inevitably become the “dominant regional power,” but “she finds Pakistan a much smaller country, as the sole embarrassing stumbling block.” While this is of some comfort, he further noted that “India is in modernization of her armed forces. Once the Indian military might is developed, it is likely to be unleashed [on] Pakistan at a time of her choosing.” For Ghumman, the “immediate threat to Pakistan emanates from hegemonic designs of hostile India, which considers Pakistan as a stumbling block in her way to achieving a regional power status.”³⁰ The twinned narratives of India as a regional hegemon with nefarious intent and Pakistan as the sole country to resist persist in Pakistani security discourse.³¹

²⁵ Syed Samme Abbas, “Pakistan Fully Prepared to Respond to Any Threat: Gen Raheel,” *Dawn*, September 19, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1284742>.

²⁶ Khan, *Friends Not Masters*, 135–37.

²⁷ Muhammad Aslam Zuberi, “The Challenge of a Nuclear India,” *Pakistan Army Journal* 13 (1971): 22.

²⁸ Khalid Mehmud, “India’s Posture as a Regional Power,” *Pakistan Army Journal* 26 (1985): 4.

²⁹ Farhat Khalid, “India’s Nuclear Capability and Delivery System,” *Pakistan Army Journal* 29 (1988): 2–7.

³⁰ Ghumman, “Pakistan’s Geostrategic Environment and Military System,” 26–27.

³¹ See, for example, “Pakistan Only Hurdle to Indian ‘Hegemony’ in South Asia: Sartaj Aziz,” *Business Standard*, June 21, 2106, http://www.business-standard.com/article/international/pakistan-only-hurdle-to-indian-hegemony-in-south-asia-sartaj-aziz-116062100210_1.html; and Syed Sammer Abbas, “Pakistan Fully Aware of India’s Nefarious Designs, Gen Raheel Tells Modi,” *Dawn*, September 2, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1281375>.

Operationalizing and Managing the Threats

This section first explains how Pakistan operationalizes the four security perceptions that are deeply rooted in the army's strategic culture and, second, details the tools that the army has developed to manage these threats. Table 1 (p. 6) summarizes these conclusions using Johnston's rubric of "system of symbols."³²

Pakistan Is an Insecure and Incomplete State

The Pakistan Army operationalizes its partition-rooted apprehensions in two ways. First, the army must defend Pakistan's ideological and geographic frontiers. Second, it must "finish" the process of partition, which means seizing Kashmir and fulfilling the promise of the two-nation theory.³³ It is imperative to understand that the two-nation formula was not merely part of a strategy for achieving an independent Pakistan; rather, this concept persists as a strong ideological basis for contemporary Pakistan despite the battering it has endured.³⁴ The Pakistan Army's professional journals continue to refer to the two-nation formula as a critical element of the so-called ideology of Pakistan, of which the Pakistan Army is the defender. While the prominence of this concept is often attributed to the Islamizing efforts of Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq, in fact its importance predates him. Pakistan's first military leader, General Ayub Khan, explained in his autobiography:

[Man's] greatest yearning is for an ideology for which he should be able to lay down his life....Such an ideology with us is obviously that of Islam. It was on that basis that we fought for and got Pakistan, but having got it, we failed to order our lives in accordance with it. The main reason is that we have failed to define that ideology in as simple and understandable form.³⁵

He devotes an entire chapter to discussing how he understands Islam as an ideology of and for Pakistan.³⁶

Khan saw reliance on Islam as a means of overcoming the various weaknesses of the Pakistani state that stem from the divisive ethnic aspirations among the peoples who found themselves trapped within it, often against their will.³⁷ He explained this role for Islam as follows in 1960:

Prior to 1947, our nationalism was based more on an idea than on any territorial definition. Till then, ideologically we were Muslims; territorially we happened to be Indians; and parochially we were a conglomeration of at least eleven smaller, provincial loyalties. But when suddenly Pakistan emerged as a reality, we who had got together from every nook and corner of the vast sub-continent of India were faced with the task of transforming all our traditional, territorial and parochial loyalties into one great loyalty for the new state of Pakistan.³⁸

Islam was to be that "one great loyalty." Khan believed that should this ideology fail, then the Pakistani state would fail as well. To ensure the success of this ideology, and thus of Pakistan itself,

³² Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture."

³³ Ishtiaq Ahmed, "The Unfinished Partition," *Friday Times*, October 23, 2015, <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/the-unfinished-partition>.

³⁴ For further discussion, see Fair, *Fighting to the End*; and Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan*.

³⁵ Khan, *Friends Not Masters*, 221–22.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 209–51.

³⁷ Husain Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005).

³⁸ Mohammad Ayub Khan, "Pakistan Perspective," *Foreign Affairs* 38 (1960): 549.

his government actively promoted his vision of Islam as a national ideology and worked to secure its legitimacy within Pakistan.³⁹ Notably, all subsequent military dictators would appeal to Islam in various ways to justify their regimes and concomitant policies, including Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan, Zia-ul-Haq, and even Pervez Musharraf.⁴⁰

Various authors in Pakistan's military journals argue that this ideology offers several strategic benefits: building national character and thus attracting better recruits to the armed forces, producing better "Muslim" soldiers who would be more competent to fight the ever-more numerous Hindu foes, and inspiring citizen soldiers to defend their country's ideological and geographic frontiers.⁴¹ Equally important, writers in Pakistan's professional journals also use Islam, the ideology of Pakistan, and the two-nation theory to sustain popular appetite for unending conflict with India and the army's continued dominance over Pakistan's internal and external affairs because the army alone has retained a pure commitment to Islam.⁴² These authors also depict all of Pakistan's conflict with India as "defensive jihads," which implies that each of Pakistan's wars with India has been defensive and that India is steadfast in its efforts to destroy Pakistan.⁴³

According to the narrative established by the army and promulgated throughout Pakistani society, India is an inexorable foe. The jihad that Pakistan must fight is not merely soldiers' work; rather, it "is a sacred duty" that "is obligatory for every man, woman and child. It has to be an all-encompassing, cohesive effort of the entire nation, manifested through its Armed Forces."⁴⁴ Many of Pakistan's defense writers go to great ends to situate Pakistan's war with India within a larger landscape of Islamic battles. Thus, the Pakistan Army is not just fighting for its own parochial interests; rather, it is defending Islam itself. Several authors believe that indoctrinating soldiers on the basis of Islam would raise fighter morale and prepare soldiers for the endless battles ahead.⁴⁵

The way in which the army has instrumentalized Islam buttresses the principal tool with which it seeks to seize Kashmir and fulfill the promise of partition: the use of nonstate actors employed in a variety of ways. As is well known, Pakistan has used Islamist proxies in India since 1947 and

³⁹ Rubina Saigol, "Becoming A Modern Nation: Educational Discourse in the Early Years of Ayub Khan (1958–64)," Council of Social Sciences Pakistan, Monograph Series, no. 3, 2003, http://www.cospak.org/monographs/monograph_rubina.pdf; K.K. Aziz, *The Murder of History: A Critique of History Textbooks Used in Pakistan* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publishing, 2010); A.H. Nayyar and Ahmed Salim, "The Subtle Subversion: The State of Curricula and Textbooks in Pakistan: Urdu, English, Social Studies and Civics," Sustainable Development Policy Institute, 2003, <http://www.sdpi.org/publications/files/State%20of%20Curr&TextBooks.pdf>; Marie-Carline Lall, "Educate to Hate: The Use of Education in the Creation of Antagonistic National Identities in India and Pakistan," *Compare* 38, no. 1 (2008): 103–19; Iftikhar Ahmed, "Islam, Democracy and Citizenship Education: An Examination of the Social Studies Curriculum in Pakistan," *Current Issues in Comparative Education* 7, no. 1 (2004): 39–49; and Fair, *Fighting to the End*.

⁴⁰ See Stephen P. Cohen, *The Pakistan Army* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military*; and Pervez Musharraf (presidential address to the nation, September 19, 2001), available at <http://presidentmusharraf.wordpress.com/2006/07/13/address-19-september-2001>.

⁴¹ For more on these strategic benefits, see, among others, Muhammad Bashir, "National Character," *Pakistan Army Journal* 3 (1961): 47–55; Syed Shahid Abbas Naqvi, "Motivation of Armed Forces: Towards Our Ideology," *Pakistan Army Journal* 15 (1973): 58–63; Mohammad Ali, "An Analytical Study of Situation in Sindh," *Pakistan Army Journal* 32 (1991): 78–87; Inamul Haq, *Islamic Motivation and National Defence* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1991); Asif Mahmood, "Significance of National Integration in Nation Building," in *Pakistan Army Green Book 2000: Role of Pakistan Army in Nation Building* (Rawalpindi: Pakistan Army General Headquarters, 2000), 110–22; and Jamshed Ali, "India—A Super Power! Myth or Reality," *Pakistan Defence Review* 2 (1990): 96–107.

⁴² See, among others, Khan, *The Story of the Pakistan Army*; Mahmud Akhtar, "Need for National Integration in Pakistan," *Pakistan Army Journal* 34 (1993/94): 108–15; and Asif Duraiz Akhtar, "Nation Building," in *Pakistan Army Green Book 2000*, 1–3.

⁴³ For more on these depictions, see, for example, Syed Nawab Alam Barhvi, "Iqbal's Concept of Jihad," *Pakistan Army Journal* 32 (1991): 87–97. See also Qaisar Farooqui, "Islamic Concept of Preparedness," *Pakistan Army Journal* 33 (1992): 10–24; Saifi Ahmad Naqvi, "Motivation Training in Pakistan Army," in *Pakistan Army Green Book 1994: Training in the Army* (Rawalpindi: Pakistan Army General Headquarters, 1994), 179–85; and Syed Shahid Abbas Naqvi, "Motivation of Armed Forces: Towards Our Ideology," *Pakistan Army Journal* 15 (1973): 58–63.

⁴⁴ Farooqui, "Islamic Concept of Preparedness," 23.

⁴⁵ Farrukh Jamshed Chohan, "Morale-Motivation," *Pakistan Army Journal* 41 (1998): 43–62; Bashir Ahmad, "Morale: From the Early Muslim Campaigns," *Pakistan Army Journal* 5 (1963): 6–13; Haq, *Islamic Motivation and National Defence*; and *Pakistan Army Green Book 1990: Year of the Junior Leaders* (Rawalpindi: Pakistan Army General Headquarters, 1990).

in Afghanistan since the late 1950s. The country's defense journals demonstrated an early focus on the utility of guerilla warfare.⁴⁶ Ironically, Pakistan honed its interest in this form of warfare while undergoing training with U.S. forces, which were keen to have Pakistani fighters assist the United States in waging counterinsurgency operations.⁴⁷ Throughout the 1960s, Pakistani defense writers focused on several interrelated but distinct concepts, including the importance of infiltration, the need to develop a people's army for both defensive and offensive operations against India, and the utility of a people's war.⁴⁸

By 1971, defense writers began explicitly linking Pakistan's revisionist goals with the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Zuberi asserted that the best way to fend off Indian hegemonic designs was to develop a basic nuclear deterrent.⁴⁹ Prior to the 1971 war and India's 1974 detonation of a nuclear device, such writings were relatively rare. In the years that followed, Pakistan's defense writers began positing that the nuclear environment created opportunities for Pakistan to employ low-intensity conflict with greater impunity. In 1984, Stephen Cohen observed that a Pakistani nuclear weapon, "besides neutralizing an assumed Indian nuclear force, would provide the umbrella under which Pakistan could reopen the Kashmir issue."⁵⁰ Pakistan's defense literature offers numerous examples of this thinking as well. Writing in 1988, Anwari recommended that Pakistan develop nuclear weapons and means of delivery to "avoid being presented with a *fait accompli*" by India.⁵¹ He also suggested that "guerrilla warfare" should be part of Pakistan's deterrence package and that India must be aware of this capability. Major General Asif Duraiz Akhtar, writing in the 2000 edition of the *Pakistan Army Green Book*, opined that the "nuclear explosions of 1998 have brought a semblance of equilibrium in the region...[and have] put the conventional all-out war scenario on the back burner." He added that "this situation leaves the room open for low intensity conflict (proxy war) or the war with limited aims restricted to confines of disputed areas, e.g. Indian-held Kashmir and Siachin."⁵² Brigadier Muhammad Ifzal extends this conception of limited war under the nuclear umbrella: "While retaining the capability to undertake large-scale limited conventional operations both defensive[ly] and offensive[ly], Pakistan's army concept for limited war will fundamentally hinge on asymmetric warfare and nuclear deterrence against India."⁵³ Ifzal, understanding that India has its own redlines, cautions Pakistan to prosecute low-intensity conflict with care, so as not to exceed the "tolerance threshold of the Indians" while at the same time "disallowing Indians to reach the patience threshold of the Kashmiris."⁵⁴

⁴⁶ C.H.A. East, "Guerilla Warfare," *Pakistan Army Journal* 1 (1958): 57–66; and Edward F. Downey Jr., "Theory of Guerrilla Warfare," *Military Review* 39, no. 5 (1959): 45–55.

⁴⁷ Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan*.

⁴⁸ S.A. El Edroos, "Infiltration: A Form of Attack," *Pakistan Army Journal* 3 (1961): 3–15; A.A.K. Niazi, "A New Look at Infiltration," *Pakistan Army Journal* 6 (1964); Muhammad Akram, "Dien Bien Phu," *Pakistan Army Journal* 13 (1971): 29–37; Reuben D. Parker, "Infiltration as a Form of Maneuver," *Pakistan Army Journal* 6 (1964); Shamsul Haq Qazi, "A Case for Citizen Army," in *ibid.*, 18–25; Mohammad Shafi, "The Effectiveness of Guerilla Warfare," *Pakistan Army Journal* 5 (1963): 4–11; and Aslam Siddiqi, *A Path for Pakistan* (Karachi: Pakistan Publishing House, 1964).

⁴⁹ Zuberi, "The Challenge of a Nuclear India."

⁵⁰ Cohen, *The Pakistan Army*, 153.

⁵¹ Masood Navid Anwari, "Deterrence—Hope or Reality," *Pakistan Army Journal* 29 (1988): 47.

⁵² Akhtar, "Nation Building," 1.

⁵³ Muhammad Ifzal, "Concept of Limited War," in *Pakistan Army Green Book 2004: Limited War* (Rawalpindi: Pakistan Army General Headquarters, 2004), 17.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 17. For a similar argument see Shaukat Iqbal, "Present and Future Conflict Environments in Pakistan: Challenges for Pakistan Army and the Way Forward," in *Pakistan Army Green Book 2008: Future Conflict Environment* (Rawalpindi: Pakistan Army General Headquarters, 2008), 43–50.

We now know that when Anwari was recommending that Pakistan develop nuclear weapons, it either had already developed a crude nuclear device or was close to doing so.⁵⁵ Irrespective of what capabilities Pakistan possessed, the key enabling concept that seemed to motivate Pakistani defense analysts was the notion of ambiguity. General Zia-ul-Haq himself explained this in the late 1980s, when he said “that ambiguity is the essence of deterrence.”⁵⁶ General Beg similarly explained that a “state of uncertainty and ambiguity...serve[s] as a meaningful deterrence.”⁵⁷ Cultivating this ambiguity, and thus strategic instability, is a central element of what Paul Kapur describes as the “instability-instability paradox” that characterizes Indo-Pakistan security competition and allows Pakistan to rely on nonstate actors to conduct attacks in India with impunity.⁵⁸

Pakistan’s most recent innovation has been the pursuit of so-called battlefield nuclear weapons. According to Zulfiqar Khan, a senior analyst in Pakistan’s Ministry of Defence, Pakistan is inducting tactical nuclear weapons and deploying them along its borders with India to induce “restraining effects that are based on the fear of nuclear war.”⁵⁹ This will afford Pakistan escalation dominance in a crisis with India, perhaps to deter a crisis in the first place or—if necessary—to prosecute and win a conflict. Given India’s conventional forces, Khan argues that “Pakistan should focus on maintaining the balance of terror with appropriate strategy...instead of indulging in [a] conventional forces number game.”⁶⁰ Furthermore, “any transparency [in Pakistan’s nuclear doctrine]...would only undermine Pakistan’s ability to deter India’s calibration of ‘Cold Start Strategy’ or limited conflict thinking, to its peril.”⁶¹ This too contributes to Kapur’s instability-instability paradox.⁶² Greater instability at the strategic level plays to Pakistan’s advantage and permits it to engage in destabilizing activities at lower levels of the conflict spectrum with complete impunity.

Afghanistan Is a Source of Instability

To manage its fears of Afghan intransigence and Indo-Afghan collusion to destabilize Pakistan, Pakistan has long relied on the policy of strategic depth. As noted briefly above, this policy has generally implied political rather than physical depth. The tools that Pakistan has used to pursue this concept resemble in many respects the political structures developed by the British in the early nineteenth century. The British alternated between a more aggressive forward policy in Afghanistan and a more internally focused “close border policy.”⁶³ The former involved more direct military intervention while the latter focused on defending the borders of the Raj. This system envisioned a series of concentric buffers.⁶⁴ The Amu Darya was the hard boundary between British

⁵⁵ Abdul Sattar, a former foreign minister, claims that Pakistan had a nuclear device as early as 1983. See Abdul Sattar, *Pakistan’s Foreign Policy 1947–2005* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2007). Feroz H. Khan, formerly of Pakistan’s Strategic Plans Directorate, claims that Pakistan possessed a “large bomb that could be delivered...by a C-130” as early as 1984. See Feroz H. Khan, *Eating Grass: The Making of the Pakistani Bomb* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 189.

⁵⁶ Gregory F. Giles and James F. Doyle, “Indian and Pakistani Views on Nuclear Deterrence,” *Comparative Strategy* 5, no. 2 (1996): 147.

⁵⁷ “Documentation: General Mirza Aslam Beg’s Major Presentations,” *Defense Journal* 17 (1991): 42.

⁵⁸ Paul S. Kapur, *Dangerous Deterrent: Nuclear Weapons Proliferation and Conflict in South Asia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

⁵⁹ Zulfiqar Khan, “Tactical Nuclear Weapons and Pakistan’s Option of Offensive-Deterrence,” in *Nuclear Pakistan: Strategic Dimensions*, ed. Zulfiqar Khan (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁶² Kapur, *Dangerous Deterrent*.

⁶³ Fair, *Fighting to the End*.

⁶⁴ Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy in Afghanistan*.

and Russian interests, and Afghanistan was to be a buffer state. FATA constitutes another buffer between Afghanistan and so-called settled Pashtun areas in the North-West Frontier Province.⁶⁵

Upon independence, Pakistan largely retained this strategy, and it only recently formally jettisoned the name North-West Frontier Province in favor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. However, Pakistan has retained the colonial-era FATA governance structure because it affords the state—and the army in particular—numerous advantages.⁶⁶ FATA has long hosted training sites from which militants could operate easily in Afghanistan or deploy to Kashmir or other sites in India.

Pakistan also developed other tools to manage the politics in Afghanistan, namely political Islam and Islamic militancy. Pakistan's key allies were the Islamist political parties Jamaat-e-Islami and the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam. They remain so to date. Over time, these groups became the army's partners in developing, promoting, and policing the ideology of Pakistan, first at home and then abroad. By 1960, the country's intelligence agencies, acting under the auspices of the army, encouraged Pakistani Islamist parties to "pursue a forward policy of seeking ideological allies in Afghanistan,"⁶⁷ and these parties became the principal foes of the Afghan Communists.⁶⁸

As noted above, Pakistan and Afghanistan had tense relations from 1948 onward when Afghanistan rejected Pakistan's inclusion in the United Nations. However, Afghanistan's tilt toward the Soviet Union and the efforts of the communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan disquieted Pakistan's military and even civilian leadership, which were both committed to an Islamic ideology. By 1973, events in Afghanistan had turned for the worst from Pakistan's point of view. In July of that year, Mohammad Daoud Khan ousted his cousin, King Zahir Shah, and began a more aggressive modernization campaign and brutal crackdown against Islamists, many of whom fled to Pakistan or Iran. Daoud Khan antagonized Pakistan, which was under the thumb of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (Pakistan's civilian autocrat), by supporting the Baluch insurgency, rejecting the Durand Line, and supporting Pashtuns in Pakistan who were calling for a greater Pashtunistan.

In 1973, Bhutto, exhausted with Daoud's antics, ordered Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) to lead covert actions in Afghanistan.⁶⁹ Bhutto's forward policy relied on Islamist elements in Afghanistan opposed to both Daoud Khan's liberalizing regime and his efforts to expel them. The decision to mobilize Afghan Islamists was driven by strategic considerations: the Afghan Islamists did not support Kabul's territorial claims on Pakistani territory, and they opposed friendly ties with India.⁷⁰ In that same year, Pakistan established training camps for them in North and South Waziristan within FATA. Not only were these Pashtun-dominated agencies a virtual black hole in which the press could not operate, but they were also conveniently located on the border of Afghanistan's eastern provinces of Paktia, Logar, and Paktika. There was already a large Pakistani military garrison at Razmak (in South Waziristan), and troops were also stationed in Mohmand Agency in FATA. The North-West Frontier Province units of the Frontier Corps—a paramilitary organization whose recruits come from FATA but whose officers are seconded from the Pakistan

⁶⁵ Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy in Afghanistan*; and Fair, *Fighting to the End*. Note that a similar structure existed (and in some ways continues to exist) in Baluchistan as described in Tripodi, *The Edge of Empire*.

⁶⁶ White, "The Shape of Frontier Rule."

⁶⁷ Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military*, 167.

⁶⁸ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

⁶⁹ Khalid Mahmud Arif, *Working with Zia: Pakistan Power Politics, 1977–1988* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 306–7.

⁷⁰ Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy in Afghanistan*, 79.

Army—were ordered to organize and train the Afghans, and the unit’s inspector general, then brigadier Naseerullah Khan Babar, was placed in charge of the overall operation.⁷¹

Pakistan backed a series of Islamist insurrections in Afghanistan. While Daoud Khan easily crushed these uprisings, he used them as an excuse to arrest even mainstream Islamists, prompting even more Islamists to flee to Pakistan.⁷² Pakistan enlisted Afghan Islamists into the Frontier Corps, while the ISI and the army’s elite Special Services Group trained them to keep these efforts as covert as possible. Between 1973 and 1977, Pakistan’s armed forces trained around five-thousand militants to fight the Daoud Khan regime.⁷³ By the time the Soviet Union had crossed the Amu Darya, Zia-ul-Haq’s army and the ISI had already created the key Islamist groups that would become the cornerstone of the anti-Soviet jihad. Throughout 1978, Pakistan reduced the 50 Afghan resistance groups into 7 militias, provided them with training, and deepened links between Pakistani and Afghan Islamist groups.⁷⁴ For more than a year after the Soviet invasion, Pakistan “continued to support the Afghan resistance...providing it modest assistance out of its own meager resources.” Pakistan’s motives were clear: “the Mujahideen would be fighting also for Pakistan’s own security and independence.”⁷⁵ General Khalid Mahmud Arif, Zia-ul-Haq’s vice chief of army staff, similarly explained that “Pakistan adopted the...option to protect her national interest and to uphold a vital principal” by providing “covert assistance to the *Mujahideen*.”⁷⁶

Such machinations have become a staple of Pakistani strategy in Afghanistan. Pakistan has long preferred Islamists to do its bidding because it believes that Islamists both will be more sympathetic to its strategic concerns regarding India’s presence and will perhaps be less aggressive in rejecting the Durand Line as the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Conversely, Pakistan has long avoided empowering non-Islamist ethnic groups through financial assistance because it fears that mobilizing Afghans along ethnic rather than religious lines will have adverse implications for its own fractious Pashtun population, which has long harbored assorted grievances against the state. This explains Pakistan’s conviction since the early 1990s that Afghanistan would be less ill-disposed toward Pakistani interests under some degree of Taliban control. The key takeaway from the foregoing exposition is that Pakistan’s threat perceptions of Afghanistan, as well as the tools it has developed to manage these apprehensions, are long-standing and not simply reducible to India.

India’s Opposition to Pakistan’s Existence and the Two-Nation Theory

The Pakistan Army principally operationalizes the belief that India seeks to destroy Pakistan by sustaining public appetite for an indefinite civilizational war. It should be noted that the army materially benefits from this perception and consequently does much to ensure that ordinary Pakistanis believe that India unyieldingly rejects Pakistan’s existence and is bent on destroying it. After all, if there were to be no civilizational or ideological conflict, the two nations could reconcile and peace would be possible. Under such circumstances, the Pakistan Army would have

⁷¹ Ironically, after the September 11 attacks, the United States sought to use the Frontier Corps as a tool to fight the Taliban, without understanding its historical role in training Islamist militants. Author’s interviews with U.S. Department of Defense officials, 2008. The results of Washington’s efforts were at best mixed. See C. Christine Fair and Seth G. Jones, “Pakistan’s War Within,” *Survival* 51, no. 6 (2009): 161–88.

⁷² Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

⁷³ Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy in Afghanistan*.

⁷⁴ Sattar, *Pakistan’s Foreign Policy 1947–2005*.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁷⁶ Arif, *Working with Zia*, 314.

little justification for its large conventional posture and little ability to sustain the argument that it is the institution that can best guarantee Pakistanis' security and well-being.

Pakistan has cultivated an array of ideological means to manage this foundational fear of India's intentions. First, it depicts all conflicts with India as "defense" and even "defensive jihad." It is quite remarkable that Pakistan is able to sustain this fiction given that Pakistanis are freely able to access information from which they can learn that Pakistan began the wars in 1947–48, 1965, and 1999.⁷⁷ Moreover, the army has cultivated the perception that these wars were waged not simply to defend Pakistan but to defend the edifice of Islam itself. Pakistan makes heavy use of Islamic terminology to imbue these wars with such status. For example, fighters in the conflict against the *kufar* (nonbelievers) are *ghazis* (warriors) if they return alive or *shaheed* (martyrs) if they are killed in battle. India is therefore not just an enemy country; it represents an ideological and even theological foe that must be resisted at all costs.

The Pakistan Army's Conviction That It Must Challenge India at All Costs

Finally, for the Pakistan Army, defeat comes only when it can no longer resist India. This means that Pakistan is willing to take considerable risks in relations with India because doing nothing is the *sine qua non* of defeat for the army. The two tools that the army developed to prosecute these aims have been discussed at length above: namely, the training of militants and the promotion of jihad under its nuclear umbrella. Part of the reason this set of options is so attractive is that it is relatively inexpensive while being effective and offering plausible deniability. The cost of employing militants is a fraction of Pakistan's overall defense budget of nearly \$7 billion. For this reason, Pakistan has also used regular and paramilitary forces disguised as militants. Even the best Indian countermeasures cannot prevent every attack, and Pakistan's nuclear deterrent makes a punishing Indian retaliation for even the deadliest outrage extremely unlikely.

At the same time, Pakistan uses its nuclear arsenal to blackmail actors such as the United States to ensure that it is never truly cut off from international aid. In fact, Pakistan's dalliance with tactical nuclear weapons exacerbates U.S. fears about terrorists obtaining nuclear weapons, materials, or know-how. While this strategy is unlikely to coerce India to make concessions, it does provide Pakistan with diplomatic success. After each flare-up, the international community implores both India and Pakistan to work toward peace, thus handing Pakistan a victory at home and abroad by imposing a false equivalence between the two sides. The Pakistan Army then uses such international statements to build domestic support for its tactics.

Conclusions and Implications

The preceding discussion reveals the enduring nature of the Pakistan Army's strategic cultural perceptions, some of which even pre-date partition. This is not to say that they have not evolved over time. Indeed, one could argue that Pakistan's reliance on nonstate actors evolved considerably with the introduction of nuclear weapons, or at least the introduction of nuclear overhang. Pakistan's fusing of its nonstate actor policy with its concepts of nuclear deterrence has created

⁷⁷ From the army's point of view, it actually won the 1999 Kargil War, but the pusillanimous civilian government snatched the army's defeat from the jaws of victory. See Ashley J. Tellis, C. Christine Fair, and Jamison Jo Medby, *Limited Conflicts under the Nuclear Umbrella: Indian and Pakistani Lessons from the Kargil Crisis* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2001).

a strategy that is very difficult to defeat without accepting extreme risk. Similarly, Pakistan's perceptions of the Afghan threat quickly became imbricated with its concerns about India.

These strategic cultural perceptions leave very little room for reforming Pakistan. The traditional U.S. approach toward the country has involved financial and military assistance, ostensibly guided by the logic that such aid could help it feel less insecure and thus resolve its conflicts with India and Afghanistan. This would permit Pakistan to put down the jihadi proxies and roll back its policy of reckless proliferation. Such optimism, however, is ill-founded. Pakistan's apprehensions about India and Afghanistan are ideological as well as material. Eliminating Pakistan's material sources of disquiet cannot address the ideological concerns about its environment and even rewards Pakistan for the behaviors it has adopted to manage these perceived threats.

For reasons that I noted above, even if Pakistan were to be truly governed by civilians, it is not likely that the country would behave differently for the simple reason that the army has effectively ensured that its core strategic beliefs and the tools to manage them are also embraced by ordinary Pakistanis. This implies that a more genuinely democratic structure would not necessarily result in Pakistan abandoning its revisionism toward India in Kashmir or beyond.

These conclusions, if even modestly accurate, leave policymakers with a serious dilemma: how can the United States, India, or other interested parties dissuade Pakistan from relying on Islamist militants under its nuclear umbrella as a principal tool of foreign policy? The tools that policymakers tend to employ, such as economic and security assistance, do not produce positive change and even incentivize Pakistan to continue with its current suite of behaviors. What policy options devolve from this present analysis?

First and critically, it is important to understand that Pakistan currently faces no disincentive to using Islamist terrorism under its expanding nuclear umbrella. Moreover, the country faces no credible disincentive to curtail its pursuit of reckless nuclear technologies—such as battlefield nuclear weapons—because they both raise the cost of Indian action and mobilize the international community to intervene in a crisis, which shields Pakistan from the consequences of its behavior.⁷⁸ The challenge to the international community therefore is twofold: compel Pakistan to desist from employing Islamist militants as tools of foreign policy and remove the international community from Pakistan's nuclear coercion loop.⁷⁹

While a comprehensive assessment of a compellence campaign that could achieve these twinned objectives is beyond the scope of this essay, a number of options exist. These options rely on two assumptions. The first is that Pakistan is a stable instability and is not in fact likely to fail, as is often posited.⁸⁰ The second assumption is that in the event of a conflict between India and Pakistan, China will be as unengaged as it was during Pakistan's wars with India in 1965, 1971, and 1999.⁸¹

First, the United States must remove itself from Pakistan's nuclear coercion loop. Rather than shouldering the burden of preventing proliferation to state or nonstate actors, the U.S. government should encumber Pakistan with responsibility for securing its nuclear materials and technology. Washington should make a declaratory statement that Pakistan will be responsible for any

⁷⁸ Tellis et al., *Limited Conflicts under the Nuclear Umbrella*.

⁷⁹ Compellence means something very specific here, namely, the use of threats to coerce an adversary to do something. Deterrence, by contrast, entails issuing threats to prevent an adversary from initiating undesired actions. Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).

⁸⁰ C. Christine Fair, "Honor Our Fallen by Getting Real on Pakistan," *War on the Rocks*, May 26, 2015, <http://warontherocks.com/2015/05/honor-our-fallen-by-getting-real-on-pakistan>.

⁸¹ Tellis et al., *Limited Conflicts under the Nuclear Umbrella*. The recommendations that follow draw on C. Christine Fair, "A New Way of Engaging Pakistan," *Lawfare*, April 11, 2016, <https://lawfareblog.com/new-way-engaging-pakistan>.

incident involving nonstate actors and its nuclear materials. The international community is in a good position to identify a putative Pakistani role because the country's "nuclear signature" is well known. The U.S. government should also make clear to Pakistan that should the country engage in first use of nuclear weapons on an adversary, that adversary will not be on its own in retaliating. Further, Washington should consider undertaking countermeasures to subvert Pakistan's program, as it did with Iran, and even consider imposing the kinds of sanctions that crippled Iran and brought Tehran to the negotiating table. Pakistan is not, has not, and will not be a responsible nuclear state if left to its own devices because it has grown accustomed to using its program to coerce the international community into supporting the state by fostering the belief that Pakistan is too dangerous to fail.⁸²

Second, the U.S. government must cease providing Pakistan with positive incentives to produce "good jihadi assets" while fighting "terrorists of the Pakistani state." Pakistan is engaging in simple asset-banking: as long as there are terrorists in the country who must be killed, Washington will continue remunerating Pakistan to do so. Instead, Washington should incentivize the country to abandon Islamist terrorists as tools of foreign policy. This is admittedly easier said than done. To do so, the U.S. government should stop reimbursing Pakistan for its domestic expenditures to eliminate domestic terrorists.⁸³ Pakistan should not be compensated to do what sovereign states are expected to do. Additionally, Washington should stop furnishing Pakistan with strategic weapon systems. Instead, it should provide a narrow set of platforms that have proven utility in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations. None of these platforms should have significant value in fighting India. The United States should also offer Pakistan military training in these areas, as well other areas that fit squarely within the rubric of domestic security, such as natural disaster relief. The United States should remain willing to provide counterinsurgency and police training to Pakistani security forces, along with other forms of assistance to Pakistan's shamolic justice system, should it permit the United States to so and should the United States be able to provide meaningful assistance to these organizations.⁸⁴

Third, Washington must make clear that it will declare Pakistan to be a state sponsor of terrorism. Such a declaration will impose sweeping and devastating sanctions. To preempt such an outcome, the United States should provide a timeline of concrete steps that Pakistan must take against the various militant groups it now supports. The first such step is ceasing active support for these groups and constricting their space for operations and recruitment; ultimately, Washington should demand the elimination of the remnants. Even if Pakistan is willing to do so, this will be a long-term project akin to any disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program. Pakistan has trained tens of thousands of militants, if not more. However, the United States should provide no economic support for these efforts as long as Pakistan continues to actively raise, nurture, support, and deploy so-called jihadis for state goals.⁸⁵

⁸² Fair, "A New Way of Engaging Pakistan."

⁸³ The program under which the United States did this was known as Coalition Support Funds. See Susan B. Epstein and Alan K. Kronstadt, "Pakistan: U.S. Foreign Assistance," Congressional Research Service, CRS Report for Congress, R41856, July 1, 2013, <https://www.fas.org/spp/crs/row/R41856.pdf>. The United States has substantially revised the reimbursement mechanism in the current National Defense Authorization Act. See U.S. House of Representatives, *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016: Report of the Committee on Armed Services*, 114th Cong., 1st sess., report 114-102 (Washington, D.C., 2016), <https://www.congress.gov/114/crpt/hrpt102/CRPT-114hrpt102.pdf>.

⁸⁴ Fair, "A New Way of Engaging Pakistan."

⁸⁵ Ibid.

If Pakistan remains recalcitrant, the United States must develop negative inducements and the concomitant political will to use them. It needs to be willing to target specific individuals who are providing material support to terrorist groups and individuals. This means international prosecution, designation and seizure of accounts by the U.S. Department of Treasury, and visa denials. Pakistan's civilian and military officials enjoy coming to the United States for medical treatment, holidays, and educational opportunities for their children. There are two UN instruments that can facilitate such negative inducements. First, UN Security Resolution (UNSCR) 1373, adopted in 2001, obligates all states to prevent and suppress terrorists' ability to recruit, train, raise funds, and otherwise carry out terrorist attacks. This is a Chapter VII resolution, which means that states that fail to honor this obligation may be subject to force by the UN or member states. Following the Pakistan-sponsored attacks on Mumbai in 2008, the United States and China conspired to protect Pakistan from the punitive measures merited by UNSCR 1373.⁸⁶ A second instrument is UNSCR 1267, according to which persons designated as providing support to al Qaeda and allied terrorist groups are precluded from travel, cannot have a bank account, and are not entitled to possess weapons. Admittedly, the third deprivation cannot be enforced when these individuals enjoy state sanctuary like that provided by Pakistan. To derive the most benefit from these designations, the persons listed should be of operational importance, such as being pivotal in moving money or recruiting personnel for militant operations. Given that China may resist such efforts, the United States will need to make diplomatic efforts to force China to explain why it shields terrorists.

Fourth, the United States should be willing to review all forms of bilateral economic support as well the pressure it exerts on multilateral organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, which continues to provide loans despite Pakistan's repeated failures to make due on its own commitments.⁸⁷ Pakistan is heavily dependent on these sources of assistance, and the United States and its partners should overcome their collective reticence to deploy punitive measures. Although Pakistan has cultivated the impression that it is too dangerous to fail, the country is more stable than is generally appreciated.

Fifth, even if the United States' risk tolerance is too low to pursue the above options, it can modestly curb Pakistan's appetite for terrorist misadventures by depriving the country of the principal benefit it seeks: international attention to Kashmir. Official U.S. statements that encourage India and Pakistan to achieve "peaceful resolution of outstanding issues, including Kashmir," reward Pakistan for its malfeasance while treating India as an equal cause of conflict. India is in fact a victim of Pakistani terrorism.⁸⁸ By acknowledging Kashmir as a disputed area, the United States demonstrates either an enormous historical ignorance of the issues or an intention to placate Pakistan at the costs of facts, law, and history. Worse yet, it rewards Pakistan for the continued use of terrorism in Kashmir and elsewhere in India.⁸⁹ Consistent with historical facts, Washington should refuse to even mention Kashmir in its various statements with and about Pakistan. It should also abstain from making statements that encourage India to engage with Pakistan on the subject for the simple reason that such language could be perceived as legitimizing Pakistan's

⁸⁶ George Perkovich and Toby Dalton, *Not War, Not Peace: Motivating Pakistan to Prevent Cross-Border Terrorism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 237.

⁸⁸ "U.S., Pak Call for Resolving Kashmir Issue through Dialogue," *Indian Express*, March 2, 2016, <http://indianexpress.com/article/world/world-news/us-pak-call-for-resolving-kashmir-issue-through-dialogue>.

⁸⁹ Fair, "A New Way of Engaging Pakistan."

contention that it is seeking peace from India. While it would be preferable for the United States to adopt strong language placing the onus of the conflict firmly on Pakistan, a middle ground may simply be omitting such language altogether. Not only is Pakistan very sensitive to these kinds of signals, this approach advances U.S. interests in discouraging Pakistani terrorism by depriving Pakistan of this much-desired reward.

More generally, the U.S. National Security Council and U.S. Departments of State and Defense, as well as the various intelligence agencies and other stakeholders, should consider revising the United States' official position on the Kashmir dispute. It may well be time for the U.S. government to officially adopt support for converting the Line of Control into the international boundary. Such a position would require India to forgo any claims on Pakistan-administered Kashmir while allowing Pakistan to retain territory it currently controls. Absent political will in Washington to accept greater risk and consider a different approach that punishes Islamabad for its behaviors, policymakers in both capitals are left with the unpleasant task of managing this issue, even though the costs of such management and the magnitude of potential threats are likely to be larger in the future.

Given the enduring nature of the Pakistan Army's strategic culture, the U.S. government must abandon its worn policy approaches to Pakistan. The stakes are simply too high to continue the past policies with the expectation that they will have different impacts. It is time for a new approach to Pakistan.



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