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Though unable to resolve problems of endemic poverty, rampant ethno-religious violence, and crumbling infrastructure, Pakistan has pursued a remarkably deft foreign policy. Ever since its emergence from the end of the British colonial empire in South Asia, it has adroitly exploited its geostrategic location to extract concessions from the United States, successfully harried its arch-rival India, and developed and sustained a long-term strategic relationship with the People's Republic of China. These achievements, however, have been built on a foundation composed of half-truths, questionable claims, and outright lies.

In this article, we address five of the most egregious and pernicious myths that the Pakistani foreign and security policy establishment has propagated to promote what they deem to be Pakistan's vital interests. These myths have contributed to flawed U.S. policies toward Pakistan and have alienated India, the dominant power in the region with which the United States has sought greater cooperation since 2000. We then turn to a discussion of the implications of our analysis for the future of U.S. policy toward the country and the region.

Myth I: Pakistan Faces an Existential Threat from India

One of the most durable and persistent legends that Pakistan has promoted is that it faces an existential threat from India. As former president Pervez Musharraf

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stated in 2011, he deemed India to be an “existential threat” to Pakistan.¹ Accordingly, it needs to maintain a very substantial military and remain forever vigilant about the pernicious designs of its adversary. Yet, an examination of the historical record suggests wholly otherwise. Pakistan has been responsible for starting three wars with India (1947–48, 1965, and 1999) in an effort to seize the disputed territory of Kashmir. Pakistan also holds partial responsibility for another war in 1971, the genesis of which is more complicated.²

Unlike the other three, which were centered on Kashmir, the 1971 war began as an ethno-nationalist insurgency when a majority of Pakistan’s population rebelled against the state in East Pakistan after decades of repression, exploitation, and systematic efforts to deny those in East Pakistan equal rights. In the spring of 1971, the state initiated a brutal crackdown that ultimately became a genocide of the ethnic Bengalis in East Pakistan. As a result, India began training the Bengali rebels and readied for war in the summer, as refugees streamed across the border. Pakistan technically began the war in December 1971 with pre-emptive air strikes on an Indian airfield, which signaled India’s formal entry into the conflict. It was brief and ended with the emergence of independent Bangladesh. Pakistan generally takes no responsibility for that war, and uses India’s interference to buttress its claims that India is on a ceaseless quest to further destabilize if not outright fracture Pakistan.

Not only does Pakistan bear exclusive responsibility for all of these wars (with the possible exception of 1971), it also undertook actions that created the security competition in the first place. Pakistanis are wont to claim that the first war began in 1947 when non-state actors from the Pashtun areas of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the North West Frontier Province (now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) raided the princely state of Kashmir in hopes of seizing it for Pakistan as the Kashmiri sovereign, Hari Singh, aimed for independence. However, those raiders enjoyed the support of several Pakistani provincial governments, the apex Pakistani civilian leadership, as well as support from the mid-ranking echelons of the Pakistani army. These raiders invaded Kashmir despite the existence of a standstill agreement between Pakistan and the sovereign, which obliged Pakistan not to take military action. As the raiders neared Srinagar, Singh asked the new state of India for support. India was willing to do so under the condition that Singh join the new dominion of India, which he did. The war ended with about one-third of Kashmir under Pakistan’s control and the remainder under India’s.³ However, Pakistan has persistently sought to gain control over all of Kashmir, even though Pakistan was never entitled to the territory in the first place.⁴

Pakistan continues to justify its claims to Kashmir on the dubious grounds that it seeks to protect the rights of the Muslim majority population of the state from Indian repression. However, a review of Pakistan’s varied defense

writings on this subject suggest that Pakistan's claims to Kashmir stem from ideological obsessions rather than concerns over the welfare of Kashmiris or even security concerns.⁵ Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, then Pakistan's foreign minister, played an integral role in prodding the military dictator, Mohammed Ayub Khan, to start the second war over Kashmir with India in 1965. Ayub became convinced that a window of opportunity was closing—because of India's re-armament program after its 1962 war with China—and acted on Bhutto's urging. Despite qualitative military superiority on the battlefield thanks to U.S.-supplied weaponry, the Pakistani armed forces made no gains on the ground. At best, the war ended in a stalemate and the two parties returned to the *status quo ante*.

Pakistan had fecklessly initiated the war, and its aftermath exacted a toll on the military dictatorship of Ayub Khan. Pakistan's failure to wrest Kashmir from India generated much popular discontent against Khan's regime at a time when its economy was faltering anyway. Within five years, in the spring of 1971, Pakistan found itself in the throes of a civil war on the heels of its first free and fair election in 1970 because the outcome in its eastern wing was not to the liking of either Bhutto or the military establishment. Bhutto, who left Ayub's government after the 1965 war and formed the Pakistan People's Party, took a plurality, not a majority, of votes in West Pakistan. Even though Bhutto's party had not won enough votes to even veto proposals by the Awami League—the political party representing the interests of the ethnic Bengalis in East Pakistan—Bhutto insisted upon a power-sharing arrangement. Bengalis in the East concluded that the West would never honor them as full citizens.

Ultimately, all discussions about power-sharing reached an impasse as the Pakistani military embarked on a brutal crackdown in East Pakistan, which led to the flight of some ten million refugees into India. India began providing military training and support to some of these refugees, who formed the Mukti Bahini (“liberation force”) and engaged in insurgent activities against the Pakistan army. Throughout the summer of 1971, unable to cope with this refugee burden and faced with global indifference, India drew up war plans to rid itself of the refugee problem. Ultimately, Pakistan formally launched the war against India in early December 1971 to pre-empt Indian war plans, emulating Israel's preemptive airstrikes of 1967. This decision proved especially ill-fated for Pakistan: India easily defeated Pakistan in under two weeks. When Pakistan conceded defeat, East Pakistan emerged as an independent Bangladesh.

In the wake of this war, the region came to enjoy a period of long peace as Indian conventional superiority mostly contained Pakistani temptations.⁶ Yet,

Pakistan's claims to Kashmir stem from ideological obsessions rather than welfare concerns.

the military's intransigence toward India did not wholly abate. In the aftermath of the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests in 1998, the Pakistani military dusted off prior plans and made a series of incursions in a remote, desolate part of Kashmir known as Kargil.⁷ Indian forces, though initially caught napping, quickly rallied and managed to oust the intruders after using air power for the first time since the 1971 war.

This brief account of all the wars demonstrates that on no occasion did India choose to initiate hostilities, with the possible exception of the 1971 war. It has, from 1947 onwards, acted as a steadfast territorially status quo power in the region, even though it is mildly revisionist in the international system. It considered war against Pakistan in 1971 only when it had, for all practical purposes,

It is Pakistan—not India—that is the revisionist power.

exhausted diplomatic remedies to the refugee crisis.

Consequently, despite repeated statements from the highest quarters about India's putative hostile designs on Pakistan, it is Pakistan—not India—that is the revisionist power. In fact, India would have no interest in Pakistan were

it not for Pakistan's insistence upon harassing India through the use of armed proxies.

The only exception to this position involves the statements of some members of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a virulently anti-Muslim organization that is closely affiliated with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in India. In the wake of the BJP's assumption of office at the national level, key members of the RSS have resurrected the idea of "Akhand Bharat" ("undivided India") in public speeches. This view of India encompasses much of the states of South Asia including present-day Pakistan.⁸ That said, no individual within the present government has advanced such a claim.

Myth 2: Pakistan is a Victim of Terrorism

Apart from highlighting the ostensible, unyielding threat from India, Pakistani policymakers, especially in recent years, have dwelt on how Pakistan is a major victim of terrorism. They have especially sought to underscore their country's plight in light of its participation in the so-called "war on terror." For example, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, while addressing the United Nations general assembly, declared that "Pakistan is the primary victim of terrorism."⁹ At one level, this statement is not a complete falsehood. Pakistan has, indeed, suffered a host of terrorist and insurgent attacks in recent years and has witnessed considerable loss of innocent lives. However, a simple focus on domestic terrorist incidents in Pakistan

obscures other more compelling facts that explain why it has become an epicenter of terror in South Asia. Pakistan's present challenges with the so-called Pakistan Taliban are rooted in Pakistan's decades-long reliance upon a complicated array of militant groups that the state has nurtured for operations in India and Pakistan. We briefly discuss this history below.

The Pakistani state, since its inception, has been deeply involved in generating, organizing, and supporting a range of terrorist groups. It first chose to rely on *mujahideen* as early as December 1947 when it precipitated the first Kashmir war against India. At that time, as noted above, it armed and aided mostly Pashtun invaders who attacked the state of Jammu and Kashmir. These irregular forces quickly embarked upon a reign of terror engaging in looting, pillage, and raping.¹⁰

Even though Pakistan seized only one-third of the state, the country's security establishment reached an important conclusion in the wake of this conflict. It inferred that the use of proxy militant forces was an important means of augmenting Pakistan's organized military capabilities.¹¹ Not surprisingly, in the prelude to the 1965 war, once again it sent in *razakar* ("volunteer") infiltrators into the state with the goal of fomenting an internal rebellion. However, this strategy failed because the local citizenry quickly alerted Indian authorities.

In 1974, Pakistan deepened its use of militant proxies in Afghanistan. After Muhammad Daoud ousted his cousin, King Zahir Shah, to become President of Afghanistan and more rigorously began USSR-backed social reforms, Islamists rebelled. Daoud repressed them ruthlessly and they fled to Pakistan, which had long nursed their Islamist agenda. Bhutto established a cell within Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) to organize these Afghan insurgents into several manageable and effective proxy forces. Thus, when the Soviets crossed the Amu Darya in December 1979, the key so-called Afghan *mujahideen* groups were already formed and had already been operational inside Afghanistan with their bases in Pakistan. While Pakistan often contends that they were used to support Washington's jihad strategy against the Soviets, the truth is that Washington (as well as Saudi Arabia) eventually signed onto a strategy that Pakistan had forged and resourced on its own.

In fact, initially, the United States could not funnel overt security assistance to Pakistan: the United States had applied sanctions to Pakistan in April of 1979 due to technical advances in Pakistan's nuclear program. It took President Reagan's assumption of the presidency to waive those sanctions, a move that eventually permitted U.S. resources to flow to Pakistan in 1982. With U.S. and Saudi resources, Pakistan's production of so-called *mujahideen* to undertake operations in Afghanistan against the Soviets deepened. Pakistan was adamant that it control the distribution of resources. Pakistan privileged Islamist Pashtun groups, believing that they would further its perceived long-term strategic interests in Afghanistan. To that end, the ISI showered U.S. largesse on Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-

Islami, a *mujahideen* group led by an Islamist Pashtun that was particularly beholden to the ISI. Even though this group was not known for its particular battlefield prowess, Pakistan threw its weight behind this group because its own preferences were better aligned with those of the Pakistani state than most other Afghan *mujahideen* organizations.

Pakistan's reliance upon these militants continued after the Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan 1989. Unhappy with the April 1988 Geneva Accords that formally ended the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan—because it did not emplace an Islamist leader, as Pakistan had hoped—Pakistan continued backing its preferred militant group, led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. The United States withdrew from Afghanistan and Pakistan altogether by 1990, and essentially let Pakistan run the affairs of Afghanistan.

Later, after the death of Pakistan's third military general, General Zia-ul-Haq, in 1988, army-controlled democracy returned to Pakistan and Benazir Bhutto, the daughter of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, became the Prime Minister. Her government, despite its left-of-center rhetoric, threw its support to the newly formed Afghan Taliban when it realized Hekmatyar would not be able to deliver a stable, pro-Pakistan regime. The early Taliban recruits came from the refugee communities which had arisen in Afghanistan during the long years of the Soviet occupation.¹² Benazir Bhutto's Afghan policy relied upon General Naseerullah Babar, who was her Minister of the Interior. Babar had been the mastermind of the Afghan policy of Bhutto's father, which began in the early 1970s to forge a pliable regime in Kabul and included training Afghan Islamist dissidents to act about Afghanistan's pro-Moscow leadership. In the Taliban, the Pakistani security apparatus saw a robust arm for pursuing its long-held goal of securing strategic depth in Afghanistan through the presence of a pliant regime in Afghanistan.

From December 1989, Pakistan also enhanced its reliance upon Islamist militants in Kashmir after an indigenous uprising began after years of Indian political malfeasance in the state.¹³ With the outbreak of this rebellion, Pakistan's security establishment decided that they could utilize a range of battle-hardened *mujahideen* from the Afghan war and direct them into Kashmir. Most prominent amongst

these, of course, were the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), a terrorist organization that it spawned in the 1990s, and the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), another that it began in the early 2000s.

Of the two, the LeT remains the most closely aligned with the Pakistani state (JeM split in late 2001, with one faction turning against the state and the other remaining

loyal under the leadership of Masood Azhar.). Its founder, Hafiz Mohammed Sayeed, operates with complete impunity out of the group's base in the town of

The LeT remains closely aligned with the Pakistani state.

Muridke near the city of Lahore in Pakistan. According to informed sources, LeT-trained operatives orchestrated the swarming terrorist attack against a number of sites in Bombay (Mumbai) in November 2008.¹⁴ Repeated diplomatic demarches from New Delhi to Islamabad to prosecute the perpetrators of the terrorist attack have been met with various forms of deft stonewalling from Pakistan. The LeT, however, is no longer solely focused on attacking Indian targets. In more recent years, it has expanded the ambit of its activities to Afghanistan. Specifically, it has on a number of occasions attacked U.S. forces in the country.

It should be noted that Pakistan's use of militant proxies in India has not been limited to Islamists. From the late 1970s throughout the early 1990s, Pakistan directed the so-called Khalistani militants who were savaging India's northern state of Punjab, ostensibly seeking an independent state variously called "Sikhistan" or "Khalistan." This is in addition to supporting a range of ethno-nationalist insurgents in India's Northeast.

Pakistan's tortured history of relying upon Islamist militant groups is responsible for Pakistan's current internal security crisis. Following the events of 9/11, some commanders of militant groups who follow the Deobandi school of Islam rebelled against the state. These groups included the Kashmir-oriented Jaish-e-Mohammad as well as sectarian groups such as the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. These groups shared deep ideological affinities with and operational ties to the Afghan Taliban, who are also Deobandis. These Deobandi militant groups share an ideological infrastructure that includes mosques and madrassahs. Thousands of Deobandi militants fought alongside the Taliban in the early 1990s as they sought to consolidate power. Through their co-location with the Taliban in Afghanistan, many became closely tied to al-Qaeda as well. Some of these Pakistani militants were furious that President Musharraf began cooperating with the United States to overthrow the world's only Sharia government that was informed by the Deobandi tradition. Many fled to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) where the Afghan Taliban and their al-Qaeda associates sought sanctuary after the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan that commenced on October 7, 2001.

By 2007, a rag-tag ensemble of Deobandi militant commanders had organized themselves under the banner of the Tehreek-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan to attack the Pakistani state. Despite Pakistan's howls that it is a victim of terror, it is crucial to understand the origins of these groups. There would be no Pakistan Taliban had there been no Afghan Taliban or the various other Deobandi jihadi groups that Pakistan raised to kill Indians. Pakistan wants pity because its rabid jihadis are no longer under the state's control and have turned their guns, improvised explosive devices, and suicide bombers against their erstwhile Pakistani patrons.

Myth 3: India Decided to Go Nuclear First

An equally sturdy fable exists about the genesis of the Pakistani nuclear weapons program. Conventional wisdom says that Pakistan felt compelled to acquire nuclear weapons after India first tested a crude nuclear device in May 1974. Yet again, a careful examination of the available evidence suggests otherwise. While the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) was founded in 1956, its chairman reported to a “relatively junior officer in the Ministry of Industries and had no direct access to the chief executive,” and the civilian bureaucracy “had an apathetic attitude” towards the endeavor from the start.¹⁵ Bhutto was able to give the enervated enterprise a fillip in 1958, when he became the Minister of Fuel, Power, and Natural Resources. Until 1962, when his tenure ended, he lobbied the Ayub government for Pakistan to develop a robust civilian nuclear program and established the Pakistani Institute of Nuclear Sciences and Technology (PINSTECH).¹⁶ In his capacity as Foreign Minister (1958–1969), he sought to persuade President Ayub Khan to initiate a nuclear weapons program. Khan, however, had demurred. Ayub rebuffed Bhutto’s arguments, explaining that if Pakistan needed a bomb it would get one “off the shelf” from one of its partners. Ayub was concerned that such an acquisition would be a costly boondoggle that would further alienate the U.S. Johnson administration after the 1965 Indo-Pakistani war. (Following that war, the United States had imposed an arms embargo on both the warring parties.)¹⁷

After assuming power, Z.A. Bhutto prioritized Pakistan’s acquisition of a nuclear weapons capability. In January 1972, a few weeks after assuming power, he gathered several dozen of Pakistan’s nuclear scientists in Multan and directed them to produce a nuclear bomb within five years and placed Munir Ahmad Khan in charge of the Pakistani Atomic Energy Co. Khan reported directly to Bhutto. After this meeting, the program moved along multiple tracks, culminating in Pakistan’s acquisition of a nuclear weapons option toward the late 1980s.

Pakistan’s acquisition principally relied upon espionage to steal capabilities and a nuclear black market to obtain materials.¹⁸ Pakistan established

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a string of dummy companies abroad, the purchase of equipment under false premises, and the theft of blueprints for centrifuges from the Anglo-Dutch consortium, URENCO. As is now widely known, the misappropriation of the plans for the centrifuges was the work of a Pakistani metallurgist, Abdul Qadeer Khan. We also know from recent revelations that Pakistan had acquired a crude nuclear device

by 1984, if not earlier, long before the United States reimposed sanctions upon Pakistan in 1990 for having nuclear weapons.¹⁹ Thus while India’s nuclear test

in 1974 certainly boosted the Pakistani nuclear weapons program, it is palpably false to argue that it served as the trigger for the Pakistani quest for nuclear weapons. Pakistan's quest for a nuclear capability began before India's own test as the foregoing history attests.

Not only do Pakistanis promulgate the myth that it pursued a weapon only in response to India's test in 1974, they also complain that the United States has obsessed about Pakistan's nuclear self-defense to the demise of the U.S.–Pakistani bilateral relationship. As noted above, the Carter administration was deeply worried about Pakistan's pursuit of nuclear weapons and initially levied sanctions in April of 1979. Once the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, however, the United States actually chose to subordinate its nuclear nonproliferation commitments. According to Steve Coll, a noted U.S. journalist and former South Asia correspondent for *The Washington Post*, then-National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski explained to President Carter that the United States needed to secure Pakistan's support to oust the Soviets and that this would “require ... more guarantees to [Pakistan], more arms aid, and, alas, a decision that our security policy cannot be dictated by our non-proliferation policy.”²⁰ The United States subsequently waived sanctions, and Congress appropriated annual funds for a six-year program of economic and military aid that totaled \$3.2 billion. Despite continued warnings from the United States about its nuclear program, Pakistan went right on developing a weapons capability.²¹

Finally, the United States conditioned its continued assistance to Pakistan in 1985 on an annual presidential assessment and certification that Pakistan did not have nuclear weapons. This notorious legislation, the Pressler Amendment, is routinely distorted by Pakistan and its supporters as being designed explicitly to punish poor Pakistan; this claim is entirely false. Prior to the Amendment's passage, security assistance was possible only with a waiver of the 1979 sanctions; the Pressler Amendment actually *allowed* security assistance to Pakistan even though other parts of the U.S. government increasingly believed that Islamabad either had a nuclear weapon or was close to developing one. Crucially, the legislation was passed with the active involvement of Pakistan's foreign office, which was keen to resolve the emergent strategic impasse over competing U.S. nonproliferation and regional objectives on one hand and Pakistan's resolute intentions to acquire nuclear weapons on the other.

In 1990, when the United States withdrew from the region after the Soviet Union left Afghanistan, President George H.W. Bush declined to certify that Pakistan did not have a bomb—thus the economic sanctions, which had been waived since 1982, came into force. Despite Pakistani claims to the contrary, this was not a surprise. The U.S. ambassador to Pakistan, Robert Oakley, repeatedly warned Pakistani leadership of the inevitable consequences of proliferation.²² Pakistan's leadership made a calculated gamble: they chose the pursuit of nuclear weapons over the U.S. relationship, and have been trying to wriggle out of the consequences of that decision ever since.

Myth 4: Pakistan Has Been the United States' "Most Allied Ally"

Pakistanis are wont to argue that their country has been a loyal ally of the United States, and it is the United States that has been fickle. The roots of this view are tangled and can be traced to the early days of Pakistan's existence. When Pakistan became independent in 1947, it faced acute personnel shortages for all of its ministries. There had never been any precedent for governing Pakistan from the city of Karachi, and the vast majority of the apparatus of governance remained within India. While all of Pakistan's nascent ministries were understaffed, Pakistan's army was in even more of a shambles. In the wake of the Mutiny of 1857, which many South Asians call the "First War for Independence," the British concluded that Muslims were mostly responsible for the rebellion. Consequently, they decided that there would be no all-Muslim units.

When the time came in 1947 to divide the British Army in India and other armed forces between the newly formed states of India and Pakistan, this 90-year-old policy decision had enormous implications for Pakistan in particular. The armed forces, like the rest of the country's assets, were to be split roughly along communal lines—with 60 percent of the resources remaining within India and the remainder going to Pakistan. This meant that Pakistan's army and other armed forces received no complete units and faced much more severe officer shortages than did India. Moreover, India retained all of the fixed military assets, such as ordinance factories and educational facilities, with the exception of the command and staff college in Quetta. Pakistan had to stand up completely new training and command institutions.

Despite acute shortages in personnel and war material, Pakistan immediately launched its first war with India in an effort to seize Kashmir. Given Pakistan's precarious situation, it immediately turned to the United States. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Pakistan's founder and first leader, "invited the United States to become the principal source of external support" for Pakistan, and requested a \$2 billion loan over five years. These much-needed resources would enable Pakistan to recapitalize its armed forces. Concerns about India exclusively drove Pakistan's motivations; however, Pakistan's leaders understood that the principal U.S. concern was the Soviet Union and thus couched all its appeals in anti-Communist rhetoric.²³

The enormity of Pakistan's requests demonstrated Karachi's (the capital at that time) detachment from the realities of post-war U.S. interests. Washington had no interest in South Asia. Not only did the United States have little interest in picking up Pakistan's bills, in March of 1948, in response to the 1947–48 Kashmir War, it imposed an informal arms embargo on both India and Pakistan. The simplest reason for U.S. lack of interest in the Pakistani proposals was that South Asia was not a strategic priority. Moreover, the U.S. government assessed

that any benefits of arming Pakistan would be offset by the animosity and ill-will that doing so would inspire in New Delhi.

Mostly due to India's staunch commitment to non-alignment and U.S. sympathy for the unstable domestic standing of Pakistan's first prime minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, due to his advocacy for closer ties to Washington, some within the Truman administration became more concerned about the relationship with Pakistan. However, the United States did not change its policy and Pakistan's continued appeals for aid attracted ever more skepticism after Pakistan's refusal to contribute troops to the UN force fighting in Korea.²⁴

With the onset of the Korean War in June 1950, Washington decided to become more directly involved in security arrangements in the Middle East, rather than continuing to defer to the British largely because the war exacerbated U.S. perceptions of the Soviet threat to the region. During the final years of the Truman administration, support grew for engaging Pakistan in the defense of the Middle East in considerable part due to Pakistani inveigling as well as Pakistan's geographical proximity. While Pakistan seemed willing to participate in anti-Communist defense pacts, the Truman administration again demurred due to another military crisis in 1951 between India and Pakistan over Kashmir.²⁵

In October 1951, the pro-U.S. Liaquat Ali Khan was assassinated. However, the United States was unmoved by the potentially destabilizing consequences of his murder. Within two days of his death, Pakistan's former Foreign Secretary Ikramullah travelled to Washington to secure "as much military equipment as he could" either "as a gift, under a loan arrangement, or outright purchase."²⁶ Ikramullah reminded Washington of Pakistan's eagerness to participate in the defense of the Middle East, but also threatened that "[i]f Pakistan does not get assistance from the West, the Government's position will be grave. Pakistan may turn away from the West."²⁷ Even though the Truman administration remained indifferent to Pakistan, it did award Pakistan a small percentage of the requested military supplies and offered to provide economic and development assistance, mostly because it was vexed at India's continued intransigence. This assistance, however, did not result in Pakistan's blind allegiance to the United States.

The incoming Eisenhower administration, in contrast to its predecessors, immediately signaled a greater disposition toward Pakistan than India. His administration, persuaded by Pakistan's potential as a possible ally, began reconsidering how to integrate Pakistan into a revived northern-tier concept that was first envisioned by the Truman administration. This concept envisioned employing Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan to act as "cordon sanitaire" to check Soviet influence.²⁸ However, Pakistan's insistence on a defense guarantee against India remained a major obstacle to a U.S.–Pakistan defense agreement. While Washington was dismayed by India's non-aligned position, it still aspired to develop better

relations with the larger South Asian state. Equally important, Washington did not want to be drawn into Pakistan's interminable conflict with India over Kashmir.

While the United States remained wary of engaging Pakistan, Pakistan's new government, under Prime Minister Bogra (1951–53), continued to hound the United States for a guarantee. General Ayub Khan, now Pakistan's army chief, was particularly anxious to move the alliance forward. During a September 1953 visit to the United States, General Khan exclaimed to the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Henry Byroade, "For Christ's sake ... I didn't come here to look at barracks. Our army can be your army if you want us. But let's make a decision."²⁹ However, the U.S. government remained chary for two reasons. First, Washington understood that Pakistan articulated a shared concern about the communist threat even though it wanted the alliance principally to bolster Pakistan's capabilities against India. Pakistan had no interest in actually enjoining the fight against the communists. In fact, during this same period, Pakistan commenced its opening to Communist China.³⁰ Second, Washington remained concerned that increased closeness to Pakistan would adversely influence fraught U.S. relations with India.³¹

Ultimately, Washington elected to bring Pakistan into its alliance structure. Ironically, while it was U.S. disquiet about communist expansion in the Middle East that galvanized U.S. interest in bringing Pakistan into formal defense arrangements against the Soviets, the first anti-communist regional alliance that Pakistan joined was the South East Treaty Organization (SEATO), formalized in September 1954.³² To facilitate a U.S.–Pakistan bilateral security pact, in February 1954, Turkey (a NATO member) and Pakistan negotiated a bilateral treaty for military, economic, and cultural cooperation. This was the first meaningful step towards the so-called Northern Tier concept. Later that month, Iraq and Turkey signed a military agreement that became known as the "Baghdad Pact." Iran, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom soon joined, while the United States had observer status. (After Iraq withdrew in 1959, the pact became known as the Central Treaty Organization, or CENTO.)

The Pakistan–Turkey agreement provided the necessary justification for a formal military arrangement between the United States and Pakistan because Turkey was a NATO member. In May 1954, the United States and Pakistan signed a "Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement" (MDA), which was the first bilateral security agreement between the two states, and it formed the legal basis for U.S. assistance to Pakistan. Under the terms of the MDA, the United States would "make available to the Government of Pakistan such equipment, materials, services or other assistance as the Government of the United States may authorize in accordance with such terms and conditions as may be agreed."³³ In turn, Pakistan agreed that it would "use this assistance exclusively to maintain its internal

security, its legitimate self-defenses, or to permit it to participate in the defense of the area, or in the United Nations collective security arrangements and measures, and Pakistan will not undertake any act of aggression against any other nation.”³⁴

Pakistan was quick to exploit its new position and immediately requested military assistance. Over India’s strenuous objections, the Eisenhower government approved an initial tranche of \$30 million; however, Pakistan balked at the niggardly sum of U.S. assistance, and even threatened to withdraw from the alliance because it deemed the amount to be inadequate for its “new responsibilities.” This was a ludicrous demand, given that Pakistan had only joined these alliances once it had reassured itself that membership “implied no commitment that would detract from Pakistan’s defense capabilities or involve the country in a military engagement relating to Turkey’s membership in NATO.”³⁵

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was underwhelmed by Pakistan’s entreaties. He retorted that he was under the impression that “Pakistan had undertaken its anti-communist stand because it was right, not just to make itself eligible for certain sums of dollar aid.”³⁶ In the end, Washington offered a \$171 million program, a figure that was more appealing to Pakistan.³⁷ This would become a familiar trope in U.S.–Pakistan relations: Pakistan signed onto agreements motivated by causes other than the agreements themselves and then demanded ever-more lucrative remuneration for doing so. Washington in turn indulged Pakistan by rewarding it with ever-larger checks rather than chastising it for its duplicity. These are hardly the terms of engagement between “trusted allies.”

These are hardly the terms of engagement between “trusted allies.”

The United States had no illusion about Pakistan’s participation in these agreements. It understood fully that it did so because it wanted access to U.S. military equipment, training, and doctrine for the singular purpose of increasing its capability to confront its principal nemesis, India. Consequently, it was not clear what benefit Washington derived from this relationship. Pakistan received substantial military aid without incurring additional defense burdens from the alliances.

This began to change in 1959 when the United States provided Pakistan with more than a dozen U.S.-made F-104 supersonic fighter air platforms, in exchange for which Pakistan granted Washington permission to open a “communications facility” at Badaber airbase, near Peshawar. Americans flew U-2 spy aircraft into Soviet airspace from this base. Finally, Washington had something “of great importance for U.S. national security” from this alliance.³⁸ However, this amenity was short-lived. A few months later, in May 1960, the USSR shot down a U-2 and its pilot, Gary Powers, whose flight originated from Badaber

intending to fly across Soviet airspace to photograph defense installations. The USSR warned Pakistan that if it allowed the United States “to use Peshawar as a base of operations against the Soviet Union,” it would “retaliate immediately.”³⁹ Per the standing bilateral agreement at the time, the U.S. State Department asserted that it launched the U-2 flights without Pakistan’s knowledge; in turn, Pakistan followed through with a hail of protests that the flight was not authorized by Pakistan. This was the first time in the alliance that Pakistan bore risks. Consequently, Ayub began to distance himself from the United States as he sought to improve ties with Moscow and China.⁴⁰

The U.S.–Pakistan relationship was further troubled by U.S. military support to India during its war with China in 1962. Pakistan was enraged that Washington would aid non-aligned India, Pakistan’s sworn enemy. Pakistan was again disappointed in 1965. Pakistan had the hubris to claim that its membership in the CENTO (of which the United States was just an observer) and SEATO treaty alliances with the United States obliged the United States to support it. This was nonsense of the highest order; Pakistan started the war and the treaties only pertained to communist aggressors, not India. To make matters worse, Washington cut off all military aid to both India and Pakistan in response to the outbreak of war between the two states. Pakistan was disproportionately affected by the cutoff because it was dependent upon U.S. weapons systems, whereas India was not. Even though Ayub Khan admitted Pakistan’s role in the 1965 incursion against India, known as Operation Gibraltar,⁴¹ and even conceded that Pakistan had used U.S.-provided weapons in the operation, he still had the temerity to demand U.S. military support. The U.S. ambassador to Pakistan remonstrated to Foreign Minister Z.A. Bhutto that “[i]t was a fateful decision you took to plan, organize, and support the Mujahid [freedom fighter] operations.”⁴²

Later in 1971, during the third Indo–Pakistani war, Pakistan was once again disappointed with the anemic support it received from the United States even though it was not entitled to any, as Pakistan was still under sanctions from the 1965 war. Due to the affection that President Nixon and his national security advisor, Henry Kissinger, had for General Yahya Khan (then at the helm in Pakistan) and their equally visceral loathing of India’s Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the Nixon administration provided as much military assistance to Yahya Khan as the two could finagle. Owing to their personal ties with him, they preferred that Khan broker the historic opening with China instead of the other avenues that were available.⁴³ Following the loss of East Pakistan, Pakistan finally withdrew from SEATO. The relationship between the United States and Pakistan became ever more strained, including nuclear-related sanctions that the United States applied in April 1979. However, the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan would persuade Washington of the need to renew ties with Pakistan.

It should be noted that while Pakistan audaciously claimed that its treaty alliances should have protected it during its 1965 and 1971 wars with India (when they clearly did not), Pakistan did not participate in the Vietnam War. Equally brazen was Pakistan's persistent courting of communist China during this period. While Pakistan was able to subsidize its military recapitalization through both its alliances, Washington's return was comparably less with the exception of the U-2 operations that briefly ran out of Badaber.

As noted above, the U.S. and Pakistani interests again became closely allied during the anti-Soviet effort in Afghanistan during the 1980s. While Pakistan routinely asserts that the United States inveigled Pakistan into Washington's jihad in Afghanistan, this is highly inaccurate.⁴⁴ Pakistan began its jihad policy in 1974 and financed it with its own meager resources because it was a core Pakistani policy to do so. Also noted above, the so-called "mujahideen" groups were developed solely under Pakistan's direction and with Pakistani funds; in fact, U.S. assistance to the *mujahideen* effort did not begin to flow until 1982.⁴⁵ Abdul Sattar, who served as Pakistan's Foreign Minister under General Musharraf, is one of the Pakistan officials who concede this point. As he explains, 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."⁴⁶ Finally, the concept of waging the fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan in the lexicon of "jihad" was not the idea of the United States. Rather, Pakistan's then-military dictator Zia ul-Haq insisted upon doing so, and the United States acquiesced. Zia was adamant that the effort be waged on Islamist rather than ethnic terms for fears of encouraging Pakistan's own restive ethnic groups, such as the Pashtuns who contributed significant manpower to the anti-Soviet effort and who have nursed their demands for a separate Pashtunistan.

With the invocation of the Pressler Amendment in 1990, Pakistan and the United States again became estranged. It was not until the events of 9/11 that Pakistan's interests again aligned with U.S. strategic imperatives. Again, Pakistan would get the better end of the bargain. As is well known, the United States has furnished Pakistan with some \$31.3 billion since the events of 9/11.⁴⁷ During this period, Pakistan has continued to support U.S. enemies such as the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, the Lashkar-e-Taiba, and others who actually kill U.S. troops and their allies in Afghanistan. Recent outrages include the disclosure that the leader of the Taliban, Mullah Omar, died in a Pakistani hospital more than two years ago, as well as the fact that Osama bin Laden's compound was a

Waging the fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan in the lexicon of "jihad" was not a U.S. idea.

leisurely stroll from Pakistan's ostensibly prestigious military academy in Abbottabad.

Americans should be outraged by this. Yet despite every Pakistani perfidious act, the Americans continue to pay Pakistan. Why? White House officials interviewed by the authors explain this straightforwardly: Pakistan continues to cooperate on eliminating so-called al-Qaeda threats to the U.S. homeland. These same officials worry that, without these lucrative bribes, Pakistan will no longer act against al-Qaeda. Additionally, U.S. officials further fear that, should the United States stop writing these generous checks, it will lose visibility and

U.S. dollars actually subsidize the two things it most loathes: terrorists and nuclear weapons.

influence in Pakistan's nuclear program. After all, the biggest policy nightmare includes one of Pakistan's myriad terrorist groups acquiring nuclear assets or capabilities.⁴⁸

Ironically, U.S. timidity in calling Pakistan's bluff and endless illusion that its resources can reshape Pakistan's strategic preferences result in the perverse outcome that American dollars actually subsidize the two things it most loathes: Pakistan's proliferation of terrorists and nuclear weapons, including tactical nuclear weapons. In fact, Pakistan boldly

boasts about its development of tactical nuclear weapons.⁴⁹

Looking over this expanse of historical ties between the two states, it is not the case that Pakistan and the United States were tight allies, as some observers claim, and it is not the case that the United States was an overly perfidious partner in this relationship. In fact, both pursued relations with each other episodically driven by different strategic imperatives. And these periods of collaboration ended when their interests again drifted apart, eventually becoming impossible to reconcile with other national security concerns.

Myth 5: If Washington Changes Course, it will Pave the Path to Perdition

It has become accepted as fact that, should the United States change course on Pakistan and diminish its military or other assistance, or even strongly condition this assistance upon Pakistan's behavior comporting with U.S. national security interests, any number of dire consequences may ensue. Opponents of taking a harsher stance or even punitive approach toward Pakistan cite the 1990 aid cutoff as evidence for the folly of this path. They argue that the U.S. decision to re-impose sanctions upon Pakistan in 1990 resulted in the rise of the Taliban and the events of 9/11. They further note that sanctions historically have not

worked either, as they did not prevent Pakistan from testing its nuclear weapons in May 1998, after India tested its own some days earlier.

This logic is flawed for several reasons. First, there was nothing about the 1990 aid cutoff that required the United States to withdraw non-military aid to Afghanistan and allow Pakistan to dictate post-war events in that war-torn country. This decision to entirely withdraw from Afghanistan was fateful. As described above, after the United States and the Soviets made their exits, Pakistan continued to interfere in Afghan affairs first by backing Hekmatyar as he ravaged the country and then by backing the Taliban, who next ravaged the country as they consolidated control over most of it. As is well known, al-Qaeda co-located with the Taliban and used Afghanistan as a base to launch attacks against the United States and its interests. Worse yet, the United States even accepted the Taliban as the de facto government after it took Kabul in 1996. These decisions had absolutely nothing to do with the invocation of Pressler Amendment sanctions in 1990. Second, the argument that the sanctions did not stop Pakistan from testing in 1998 is also spurious for the simple reason that Pakistan had already developed a crude nuclear weapon by 1984 that, in extremis, could be tossed off an aircraft.⁵⁰ How could sanctions applied in 1990 undo events that had already transpired?

Another line of argument against any change in U.S. policy—such as a cessation of aid or permitting the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to hold Pakistan to account when it reneges from its commitments—is the facile claim that Pakistan will collapse without infusions of international resources. This narrative conjures a related bogeyman that, under such a scenario, the army may split with “radical Islamists” taking charge. Such a “radicalized” army could provide terrorists or even other states with nuclear weapons, material, or technologies. Even those who discount the possibility of the army splitting still proffer the possibility that terrorists would acquire nuclear weapons should Pakistan fracture.⁵¹

This line of thinking is also deeply problematic for several reasons. First, there is no evidence that the Pakistani state would in fact crack or that the army would splinter as imagined. Pakistan demonstrates a surprising resilience—for example, it held together despite losing half of its country and territory in 1971, and despite dire natural disasters such as the 2010 monsoon-related flood that covered one-fifth of its territory. In fact, that Pakistan survived at all given its above-noted unequal inheritance of the British Imperial legacy is a testament to the state’s capacity for resilience and durability. Second, there is also no solid evidence that such divisions exist in the Pakistan army which would imperil its unity. It is merely dangerous speculation. The army has exhibited no such tendencies despite the recent strain it has experienced due to battling the Pakistan Taliban. Third, there is every reason to believe that Pakistan does take nuclear security seriously. After all, the only thing that allows Pakistan to do what it

does—harass India with terrorists while hiding behind its nuclear retaliation capacity—is its nuclear program. If terrorists or other non-state or sub-state actors can compromise Pakistan’s nuclear program, so could India, the United States, or Israel.

There is every reason to believe that Pakistan does take nuclear security seriously.

This is Pakistan’s nightmare scenario: that the so-called “Hindu-Zionist-Crusader” alliance will attack Pakistan’s weapons facilities or otherwise undermine their readiness. In fact, Pakistan deliberately cultivates these fears so that it can extract rents from the international community. Pakistan in essence holds

the world ransom by threatening it with various doomsday scenarios. As South Asian commentators are fond of saying: “Pakistan negotiates with a gun to its own head.”⁵²

Finally, U.S. officials contend that any serious modification in the way the United States engages Pakistan will diminish both U.S. insights into Pakistan’s military and nuclear weapons program and U.S. ability to influence Pakistan to make incrementally less reckless decisions. They particularly worry that Pakistan will cease cooperating on al-Qaeda, putting the homeland at risk. They also worry that, without U.S. pecuniary bribes in the form of the Coalition Support Fund, Pakistan will stop targeting the terrorists menacing Pakistan itself. While this assumption seems to beggar rational thought, some within the U.S. government fear that without these bribes to do what sovereign states should do on their own, Pakistan will have neither the capacity nor will to fight these elements. Risk-averse policymakers and politicians prefer staying the sub-optimal course, knowing that Pakistan will be a marginal satisfier, rather than risk receiving no cooperation from Pakistan—or worse, motivating Pakistan to more actively undermine U.S. interests.

While these concerns are understandable, they contain considerable faults. First, there is no doubt that the United States receives too little value for the cooperation that it does receive. Second, it is highly questionable what influence and insights the United States has garnered from this largesse. While it is true that the United States was able to stage a complex intelligence operation to assassinate Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, it is also true that Pakistan denied his presence in the country for more than a decade. Though the United States insists that it needs influence and visibility into Pakistan’s nuclear weapons program, during this same period Pakistan has rapidly pursued tactical nuclear weapons, increased its ability to produce fissile material, and doubled down on a range of delivery mechanisms to address any gaps it perceives in its efforts to deter India from launching any punitive military campaign against it.

Re-Optimizing the U.S.–Pakistan Relationship

The United States should be actively seeking ways to extricate itself from Pakistan's exploitative policies rather than kowtowing to them. For too long, Pakistan has demanded compensation for doing what responsible states should do on their own. For example, it is preposterous that the United States must bribe Pakistan to eliminate threats posed by al-Qaeda from Pakistani soil or to eliminate those very terrorists who are killing Pakistanis. This demand is all the more outrageous when one recognizes that these terrorists are wholly and solely derived from the myriad militant groups that Pakistan has groomed to kill in Afghanistan and India.

There are several steps through which the United States can begin to disentangle itself from Pakistan's coercion strategy in an effort to better align U.S. investments with its priorities.

The first step in realigning U.S.–Pakistan relations is normalizing the value per dollar that Pakistan receives. What does this mean in practice? The United States must be very clear in issuing its core demands to Pakistan and tying assistance to meeting these demands. Currently, most forms of assistance have requirements (such as cessation of support to designated terrorist groups, civilian control over the military, insight into Pakistan's nuclear black marketing activities) that Pakistan must satisfy to receive funds; however, those funds go forward either by generously interpreting Pakistan's behavior as satisfying the demands or seeking a waiver of those requirements for U.S. national security reasons.

The only exception is \$300 million out of \$1 billion available for the CSF, which is contingent upon Pakistan undertaking satisfactory action to degrade the Haqqani network. This tranche of funds cannot be waived, and consequently has been withheld. Congress should therefore insist upon other measures that cannot be waived. Typically, presidents do not like such restrictions. However, without such ironclad requirements, the temptation of giving into political exigencies will always be present by the incorrect logic presented above.

In the near term, the United States should focus very explicitly upon Pakistan's dangerous vertical nuclear proliferation, including the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons, as well as horizontal proliferation to other states. Washington must also insist that it curtail its support to the Afghan Taliban, as well as allied networks such as the Haqqanis, and work with the United States and the Afghan governments to bring them to the negotiating table. Instead, the Pakistan government claims to support a process of reconciliation while continuing to aid

There are several steps through which the United States can begin to disentangle itself from Pakistan.

and abet their Afghan proxies on the battlefield. This support results in the deaths of thousands of Americans and tens of thousands of our Afghan and international allies. The United States should also demand that it continue cooperating on degrading al-Qaeda capabilities to harm the United States from Pakistani soil. Rather than rewarding Pakistan for doing this, the United States should warn Pakistan of the dire consequences should any attack against the United States or its assets take place from Pakistani soil.

The United States ostensibly cares about various terrorist groups, such as Lashkar-e-Taiba, which kill Americans in Afghanistan but mostly focus upon conducting attacks in India. However, to date, the United States has taken few concrete steps to force Pakistan to cease and desist supporting these groups, much less act against them. U.S. officials fear that any significant effort to punish Pakistan for this support will prompt Pakistan to cease supporting key activities most central to U.S. operations in Afghanistan and to securing the U.S. homeland. Such prevarication is not helpful. Pakistan continues to conclude that it can divide the militant landscape into those that are its assets, those that it must act against, and those to whom it can turn a blind eye. It does not behoove the United States to indulge any of Pakistan's jihad habits. Moreover, when the United States does not take its own laws seriously, why should Pakistan? Equally problematic is the question of how India can trust the United States as these two deepen their strategic relationship, when the United States turns a blind eye to those terrorists who harm India while prioritizing those groups that harm the United States.

Over the long term, Pakistan should not be compensated for these activities such as eliminating terror groups and degrading their ability to operate from Pakistani soil. These are the kinds of activities that responsible states should undertake on their own. That the United States currently pays Pakistan to do this is deeply vexing because Pakistan's intelligence agencies in one way or another create or nurture many of the very groups that Washington currently pays Pakistan to eliminate. With Washington's inadvertent acquiescence, Pakistan has turned its so-called counter-terrorism operations into a steady stream of revenue. Over the next five years, the United States must consider punitive policies should Pakistan fail to behave responsibly. The United States could declare Pakistan a state sponsor of terror, could indict Pakistanis (in and out of government) for supporting terrorists that are proscribed by the UN Security Council and/or the U.S. government, use Department of Treasury restrictions to seize funds that support terrorists, and even engage in special operations against terrorists and their supporters in and beyond Pakistan.

Washington must revisit the various myths that Pakistan itself propagates for rent-seeking purposes. Pakistan's insisting that it needs ever more conventional weapons and nuclear capabilities to challenge an India that seeks to undo it are

simply false. If the United States believes that there is any amount of aid that can make Pakistan feel secure about India, it is being taken for a ride. Pakistan's claim to U.S. resources based upon its past and present alliances with the United States, most recently in the war on terror, are similarly flawed. Pakistan has undermined most of the key U.S. interests in the region since 2001, yet it continues to receive handsome subsidy for these very actions from the United States. Pakistan's further claims to U.S. resources based upon the purported fact that it is a victim of terror are similarly suspect: Pakistan is the victim of the terrorist groups it has raised to kill in Afghanistan and India. What Pakistan is experiencing is a well-deserved blowback.

Finally, with respect to the specter that Pakistan's nuclear weapons will fall into the hands of nefarious state or non-state actors, or that Pakistan will use nuclear weapons against Indian forces, the United States should issue firm declaratory policies to mitigate these threats. With respect to the first, the United States should note that Pakistan claims to be a responsible nuclear weapons state and hold it to the standards it says it maintains. This means that should any of Pakistan's nuclear weapons, materials, or capabilities be implicated in any attack anywhere, the United States will hold Pakistan directly accountable. This can be done. After all, the United States has learned quite a bit about Pakistan's "nuclear signature" from the evidence gathered from Iran, Libya, and other aspects of AQ Khan's nuclear arms market.⁵³ When it comes to Pakistan threatening to use nuclear weapons against India during a conventional attack, the United States should also make it very clear to Pakistan that such first use is unacceptable, as it would break the nuclear taboo, and that India will not be alone in responding.

We are not advocating a complete cessation of aid to Pakistan, or worse still terminating diplomatic relations. We are arguing for a normal relationship with Pakistan where Pakistan is prepared for a soft-landing. In other words, the United States should be aiming to normalize its relationship with Pakistan, rather than seeking to "rent"—much less "buy"—better behavior from the problematic state through excessive military and economic assistance or by indulging it with aggrandized engagement frameworks such as a "strategic dialogue." Instead, the United States should treat Pakistan like an ordinary state, commensurate with its positive and negative attributes, and hold it accountable for the actions that it undertakes.

The United States should also stop indulging Pakistan's beliefs that it can ever be an equal to India because it will never be India's equal. Pakistan can never be made a "normal" nuclear state while it engages in the dangerous suite of policies it currently pursues. It can never be an honorable member in the community of nations while it actively uses terrorism behind its nuclear shield as a tool of foreign policy and even brandishes threats of using tactical nuclear weapons should any state seek to punish it for these outrages.⁵⁴ And it can never be the

state it is capable of being as long as it nurtures absurd notions about Indian aggression and harmful intent to justify an overgrown army that hogs the nation's resources while letting its population wallow in poverty and underdevelopment. We believe that the United States can do more with less. And even if Pakistan's behavior does not change as the United States realigns its engagement, the U.S. taxpayer can at least have the dignity of not subsidizing and incentivizing the very issues that worry their government the most: Pakistan's production of nuclear weapons and terrorism.

The United States and Pakistan have had various alliance relationships (1954–1965; 1979–1990; 2001–present), marked with more than their share of vicissitudes. In considerable part, the tensions in the relationship have, as we have highlighted, stemmed from a fundamental mismatch of interests and expectations. All five myths need dispelling. Pakistan does not face an existential threat from India, its nuclear weapons program did not stem from India's decision to test a nuclear weapon, it most assuredly is not an innocent victim of terror, it has not been a reliable U.S. ally, and a shift in U.S. policy will not lead to its imminent collapse.

Today U.S. policymakers, should they care to pay heed, possess ample evidence that both past and current policies have yielded only sub-optimal outcomes. Instead, those policies have been sustained by, among other things, these five pernicious myths that are indeed false. Armed with this knowledge and faced with the stakes involved, it is time to undertake a significant policy shift. Continuing to generously reward Pakistan for partially and fitfully meeting U.S. expectations amounts to support for an innately flawed set of policies based on myths that finally need to be laid to rest.

Notes

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