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PAKISTAN'S UNENDING WAR ON CIVIL SOCIETY

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Pakistan continues to burnish its credentials as a state sponsor of terrorism abroad and as a repressive, murderous environment for dissidents at home. It is a well-known fact that Pakistan's military and intelligence agencies provide a full suite of state support to a deadly menagerie of militant groups

(<http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/07/pakistan-friend-or-foe-in-the-fight-against-terrorism.php>)

proscribed by the United Nations, the United States, and others. Pakistan's military and intelligence agencies fete terrorist organizations such as Lashkar-e-Taiba/Jamaat-ud-Dawa

(<http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/printips/view/79>), Jaish-e-Mohammad

(<https://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/jem.html>), the Afghan Taliban,

(<https://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/afghan-taliban.html>) and the Haqqani Network

(https://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/haqqani_network.html), among numerous other groups with state protection as well as financial, diplomatic, political, and military assistance. The leaders of these groups are free to assemble and

address large groups, under the protection of security forces. They are free to disseminate their views on a variety of

social media without any restraint. They appear on Pakistan's various television shows as popular "talking heads." While Pakistan disingenuously claims it is waging a war on terrorists with its National Action Plan (known more appropriately as "NAP") for purposes of receiving assistance from the United State and other partners, Pakistan is waging a real war on its critics at home and abroad. The United States needs to hold this state accountable. It should apply sanctions, deny security assistance payments, and limit the provision of military equipment and training to those that are narrowly suited for internal security operations while offering Islamabad no advantages in its incessant warmongering towards India.

War on Civil Society

Pakistani civil society has borne the brunt of the state's predations for decades. Since 2005, ethnic dissidents have renewed their insurgency (<http://carnegieendowment.org/2013/04/11/balochistan-state-versus-nation-pub-51488>) in the western province of Balochistan, following the rape of a Baloch doctor by a military man, which the army tried to cover up. While the rape triggered the current phase of the insurgency, the people of Balochistan have also been disquieted by Pakistan's efforts to make the province ripe for Chinese exploitation under the guise of the Chinese-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) (<http://thediplomat.com/2016/08/balochistan-the-troubled-heart-of-the-cpec/>). Since 2005, the Pakistani state has waged a conventional war against the Baloch and has disappeared, tortured, and murdered Baloch ethnics (<https://www.hrw.org/report/2011/07/28/we-can-torture-kill-or-keep-you-years/enforced-disappearances-pakistan-security>) who oppose the state's policies. Pakistan claims that these Baloch activists are terrorists who enjoy support from India. While some of the Baloch dissidents do engage in terrorism (i.e. targeting Punjabi teachers and other civilians), Pakistan has not marshalled convincing evidence for its claim that India is behind the unrest in the province. (Pakistan claims that it captured an Indian spy in Balochistan in March 2016 (<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-india-idUSKCN0WR0VC>). Indian intelligence claim that the former naval officer (<http://www.ibtimes.co.in/india-rejects-spy-confession-video-asks-pakistan-consular-access-672620>) — turned businessman — was abducted from Iran and that he was not actually a spy.)

Pakistan's army and the intelligence agencies it controls have also targeted civil society activists who report on human rights violations in Balochistan. In April 2015, Sabeen Mahmud (<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/04/pakistani-rights-activist-sabeen-mahmud-killed-150424210251526.html>), a prominent Pakistani social and human rights activist, was shot dead after she hosted an event in her Karachi café that discussed Balochistan's "disappeared people." Previously, the army pressured LUMS, a prestigious university in Lahore, to cancel a similar event (<http://tribune.com.pk/story/867356/campus-freedoms-lums-students-faculty-protest-cancellation-of-balochistan-discussion-event/>) intended to educate students about the state's actions in Balochistan. The state has also brutalized other foes of CPEC (<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/In-PoKs-Gilgit-protests-against-crackdown-by-Pakistani-security-forces/articleshow/53682722.cms>) in the northern areas of Gilgit-Baltistan.

In August 2016, Pakistan passed a new law (<http://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/pakistan-national-assembly-passes-new-cybercrime-law/>), the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016 (http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1470910659_707.pdf). This law broadened Pakistan's ability to crackdown on its critics rather than terrorists and criminals. The law allows the government to " censor online content and to criminalize internet user activity under extremely broad and vague criteria. The law also sanctions government authorities to access data of internet users without judicial review or oversight (<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/pakistan>)." While in principle this is a civilian affair, the government acquiesced (<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/158580-Govt-accepts-its-role-in-checking-cyber-crimes>) to the ISI's demand for "legal cover for action against those allegedly committing online crimes against the state and undermining the national security and [law makers] had to agree with the proposal. Consistent with Pakistan's war on civil society, this law is not being used to restrict the myriad Pakistani terrorists who avidly use social media to spread their messages of "jihad" and other violent fatuwa." (<http://www.linkedin.com/shareArticle?mini=true&ro=true&trk=EasySocialShareButtons&title=Pakistan%E2%80%99s+Unending+War+on+Civil+Society&url=https://warontherocks.com/2017/01/pakistans-unending-war-on-civil-society/>)

The first victims of this law were, in fact, civil society activists who were well-known for their reformist views expounded through social media. Pakistan's security agencies disappeared [Waqas Goraya](https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/profile/waqas-goraya) (<https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/profile/waqas-goraya>) and [Asim Saeed](https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/disappearance-asim-saeed) (<https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/disappearance-asim-saeed>) on January 4, [Salman Haider](https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/disappearance-salman-haider) (<https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/disappearance-salman-haider>) on January 6, and [Ahmed Raza Naseer](https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/disappearance-ahmed-raza-naseer) (<https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/disappearance-ahmed-raza-naseer>) on January 7. Their "crimes" included promoting (<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/01/pakistanfour-rights-activists-missing-week-170109142007148.html>) progressive, inclusive, and secular views that undermined the state-sponsored narrative of exclusivist definitions of Sunni Islam, support for Islamist terrorism and insurgency as tools of state policy, while also decrying the lack of protection for religious minorities and members of Muslim sects in Pakistan. To make matters worse, Pakistan's religious fanatics have [filed charges of blasphemy](https://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/pakistan/application-seeking-blasphemy-case-against-missing-activists-filed-in-islamabad/) (<https://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/pakistan/application-seeking-blasphemy-case-against-missing-activists-filed-in-islamabad/>) against these men. This effectively ensures that when these men are released, they will face a serious death threat. [Persons in Pakistan accused of blasphemy are frequently murdered by vigilantes who are never punished for their bloody crimes](http://www.nytimes.com/2001/05/12/world/death-to-blasphemers-islam-s-grip-on-pakistan.html) (<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/05/12/world/death-to-blasphemers-islam-s-grip-on-pakistan.html>).

This is surely an [underestimate of the numbers of persons taken](http://countercurrentnews.com/2017/01/nine-activist-bloggers-missing-within-the-first-week-of-2017-where-are-they/) (<http://countercurrentnews.com/2017/01/nine-activist-bloggers-missing-within-the-first-week-of-2017-where-are-they/>) by Pakistan's agencies. Naseer was taken along with a friend who recently came from Holland. In August 2015, Pakistan disappeared [Zeenat Shahzadi](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-36149315) (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-36149315>), a 24-year-old female reporter who had been investigating the [case of Hamid Ansari](http://www.cjfe.org/the_kidnapping_of_zeenat_shahzadi) (http://www.cjfe.org/the_kidnapping_of_zeenat_shahzadi), an Indian citizen who disappeared while in Pakistan in November 2012. In May 2011, [Saleem Shahzad](http://therealnews.com/t2/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=33&Itemid=74&jumival=733) (http://therealnews.com/t2/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=33&Itemid=74&jumival=733), a journalist who exposed security lapses as well as infiltration of the armed forces by the Islamists, was murdered by Pakistani intelligence. After these attacks, as well as an attack on a popular television host, [Hamid Mir](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/30/isi-accused-of-targeting-journalists-pakistan-amnesty-international) (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/30/isi-accused-of-targeting-journalists-pakistan-amnesty-international>), dozens of journalists told Amnesty International about the threats they endured. According to [Amnesty International](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/30/isi-accused-of-targeting-journalists-pakistan-amnesty-international) (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/30/isi-accused-of-targeting-journalists-pakistan-amnesty-international>):

[J]ournalists are particularly at risk when exposing security lapses by the military, or the army's alleged links to banned military groups such as the Taliban. Also highly sensitive are stories about abuses committed by security forces fighting separatist rebels in the province of Balochistan.

Not only has Pakistan's premiere intelligence agency waged a war on critics at home, they have also waged a war on [critics abroad](http://www.christinefair.net/pubs/War%20on%20Scholars.pdf) (<http://www.christinefair.net/pubs/War%20on%20Scholars.pdf>). In addition to [threatening me with gang rape](https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/96617-US-professors-anti-Pak-agenda) (<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/96617-US-professors-anti-Pak-agenda>) by an entire regiment in 2011 because they were unhappy with the research I was doing on the [Pakistan Army](http://www.amazon.in/Fighting-End-Pakistan-Armys-Way/dp/0199892709) (<http://www.amazon.in/Fighting-End-Pakistan-Armys-Way/dp/0199892709>), the ISI has waged a sustained information operations campaign against

(<http://savefrom.net/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com/watch?v=DQTTLDXqIAU>) [recent video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQTTLDXqIAU) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQTTLDXqIAU>) [including this](https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/96617-US-professors-anti-Pak-agenda) [recent video](https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/96617-US-professors-anti-Pak-agenda) (<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/96617-US-professors-anti-Pak-agenda>) [in February 2016](https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/96617-US-professors-anti-Pak-agenda), a known ISI-writer planted a story about me and my colleagues in the [Pakistan Observer](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/c-christine-fair/pakistans-war-on-scholars_b_9286542.html) after Georgetown hosted Ambassador Husain Haqqani to discuss his most recent book. After I wrote about the ISI's war on scholars (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/c-christine-fair/pakistans-war-on-scholars_b_9286542.html), the [Pakistan Observer](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/c-christine-fair/pakistans-war-on-scholars_b_9286542.html) removed the noxious and slanderous article. In addition, the Pakistan Embassy has insisted that neither Husain

Haqqani nor myself be invited to the National Defense University (NDU) in Washington when Pakistan military delegations visit. Shockingly, the NDU acquiesced (<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/pakistan-continues-playing-the-victim-card-to-reap-maximum-military-benefits-from-the-us/articleshow/54381316.cms>). These ruses are examples of the myriad efforts by Pakistan's intelligence agencies to manipulate Pakistan's print, radio, and televised media as a part of the state's discourse construction (http://www.amazon.com/Roots-Rhetoric-Politics-Nuclear-Pakistan-ebook/dp/B000QCS6KI/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1456081164&sr=8-1&keywords=Pakistan+and+India+nuclear+Nizamani) and efforts to manage information produced about Pakistan abroad. In fact, the ISI, has a media management wing (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-13272009>) dedicated to such efforts.

What Should the United States Do?

At first blush, one may ask why is this America's responsibility? The answer is simple: The United States has aided and abetted the Pakistani military and intelligence agencies through its ample provision of security assistance. It is therefore responsible for how these funds are used. Of the \$33 billion spent on Pakistan since 2001, \$22 billion went to security assistance and military payments through the lucrative Coalitions Support Fund. In addition, the United States is supposed to deny security assistance to security forces that engage in human rights abuses per the Leahy Amendment. According to current American law, the U.S. government is required to impose Leahy Amendment (<http://www.humanrights.gov/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/leahy-vetting-law-policy-and-process.pdf>) sanctions on any unit engaging in human rights violations. Despite outrageous human rights abuses by Pakistan's military, the United States has turned a blind eye with one exception in 2010 (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/oct/22/us-cut-pakistan-military-aid>) when a video showing mass execution went viral. However, the import of this punishment was obviated by the simultaneous announcement of a \$2 billion aid package (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/oct/22/us-cut-pakistan-military-aid>). The United States has fostered the environment of impunity in which the army and its intelligence organizations currently operate.

Given my belief that the United States has done much to encourage the conditions in which the army operates, it needs to act swiftly to address the immediate crisis of these activists whose lives are in jeopardy. The United States needs to get these men released and arrange for their safe resettlement out of Pakistan. With blasphemy charges hanging over their head, they are unlikely to survive long even if the ISI were to release them.

Next, the United States needs to punish Pakistan's armed forces and intelligence agencies for these and other crimes such as the unending campaign of violence in Balochistan.

During his confirmation hearing, Secretary of Defense James Mattis questioned the wisdom (<http://www.dawn.com/news/1308504/conditions-on-security-assistance-to-pakistan-failed-to-yield-results-mattis>) of placing conditions on security assistance to Pakistan. Mattis argued that conditionalities have not incentivized positive Pakistani behavioral changes. This is a dangerous conclusion. The real problem, in fact, is that *most* of the assistance has *not* been conditioned. In other words, Pakistan has suffered no significant penalties for its suite of noxious policies most notably Islamist terrorism under its nuclear umbrella that endanger the region and the world. If the past is prologue, the new administration may not learn the drivers of Pakistan's behavior until it is too late (<https://warontherocks.com/2015/06/how-pakistan-beguiles-the-americans-a-guide-for-foreign-officials/>).

In light of Pakistan's persistent intransigence, the time has long come to cease reimbursing Pakistan for its security operations. Pakistan is obligated under U. N. Security Council resolution 1373

(https://www.unodc.org/pdf/crime/terrorism/res_1373_english.pdf) to ensure that terrorists do not act on its soil.

Why should the United States reimburse Pakistan for following through on this obligation? Moreover, such payments

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do not incentivize Pakistan to shut down all terrorists operating on its soil. Rather, these disbursements incentivize Pakistan to continue recruiting new terrorists who will do its bidding in India and Afghanistan, while conducting partial operations against those that oppose the state.

Second, the United States should restrict its security assistance to Pakistan to include only the narrowly selected weapons systems and training programs that are best suited for internal security operations which offer no significant added capability in Pakistan's perduring interest in fighting India. Given that the majority of American and allied deaths in Afghanistan are due to the Pakistan's proxies (i.e. the Taliban, the Haqqani network, Lashkar-e-Taiba), how can the United States continue viewing Pakistan as an ally? The evidence is clear: Pakistan's army and the intelligence agencies it oversees are enemies of the United States and should be treated as such.

Finally, the United States should apply Leahy Amendment sanctions (<https://www.humanrights.gov/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/leahy-vetting-law-policy-and-process.pdf>) to those units that have engaged in human rights abuses. The United States should work through the defense attachés at post to vigorously collect information on those units engaging in these abuses. There is no question that such abuses are ongoing. The only question is which units are doing it. The U.S. government should take its own laws seriously and apply them as required. It is simply not acceptable to continue ignoring this legal obligation while pandering to Pakistan's security forces and intelligence agencies whose perfidy is illimitable.

The Pakistan military is waging a war on democracy at home and wars in Afghanistan and India with the subsidy of the United States. So far, Washington has shown nothing but pusillanimity and cupidity in contending with Pakistan even though Pakistan is the root cause of American failures in Afghanistan as well as insecurity throughout South Asia and beyond. Unless the United States stops somnambulating in its management of the threats that Pakistan's army and ISI pose to itself and to its neighbors, more people will die. And, Washington will bear considerable responsibility for those deaths.

Christine Fair is an associate professor in the Security Studies Program in Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. She is the author of Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army's Way of War and co-editor of Pakistan's Enduring Challenges (<http://www.amazon.in/Pakistans-Enduring-Challenges-Christine-Fair/dp/081224690X>).

Commentary

PAKISTAN'S NAVAL TRANSFORMATION: DANGEROUS DELUSIONS, SOARING AMBITIONS

(<https://warontherocks.com/2016/12/pakistans-naval-transformation-dangerous-delusions-soaring-ambitions/>)



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GETTING SOUTH ASIA ON TRACK: IDEAS FOR THE NEXT PRESIDENT

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