



Senate I

US-Pakistan Relations

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Introduction

The relations between the United States and Pakistan are complicated, and it is important to decide how best to deal with the problem at hand. In the past sixty years, the US has undergone periods of alliance with Pakistan, during which the US provided military and monetary aid to Pakistan, and periods with less positive interaction. The United States' five main concerns with Pakistan are currently nuclear weapons and missile proliferation, South Asian and Afghan stability in the face of extremist militants, countering narcotics trafficking, democratization and human rights, and economic reform.

Summary of the Problem

Pakistan became independent of Great Britain in 1947. Soon after, the US formed an alliance with Pakistan, allowing the US to have a military base in Pakistani territory to protect against the Soviet Union in exchange for monetary and military aid. Since the British government had split its colony India into the separate states of India (which was majority Hindu) and Pakistan (which was majority Muslim) upon granting them independence, tensions and conflicts existed between the two nations. Pakistan understood its alliance with the US to include guaranteed support against India, but the US did not view their agreement as committing it to either Pakistan or India. When Pakistan needed help in a war against India, and the US, who had been secretly aiding both sides militarily, failed to provide them with aid, Pakistan began to question their alliance and started to distance itself from the US.

Since then, there have been periods of closer ties and more distancing between the US and Pakistan. Once the US discovered Pakistan's **uranium enrichment** facility, part of its nuclear program, in 1979, the US stopped aiding Pakistan economically for a time. Relations also worsened after Pakistani protesters, based on false information, burned down the US embassy there. Throughout the 1980s, US-Pakistan relations improved as the US re-established its military base in Pakistan and agreed to provide them with aid if they were certified every year not to have a nuclear weapon. In the 1990s, after the Cold War thawed and the US suspended aid to Pakistan, the two nations did not have much of a relationship.

More recently, US-Pakistan relations have become quite compli-

Uranium enrichment—the process of converting naturally occurring uranium into a form which allows it to be used in nuclear weapons

cated. Pakistan expanded their nuclear program, leading the US to completely stop sending aid in 1998. Further upsetting their relationship were reports of Pakistan assisting Libya, Iran, and North Korea in developing their own nuclear programs. Many human rights organizations have criticized the Pakistani government for placing limits on numerous freedoms and for being undemocratic, including a six-week period in 2007 of **emergency rule**, during which the president took control of the media and its Supreme Court. While Pakistan joined forces with the US in the War on Terror following the September 11th attacks, some al-Qaeda and Taliban members have been hiding in Pakistan, and the sincerity of the Pakistani government's counterterrorism efforts has been questioned. In fighting these terrorists, President Obama has escalated a series of unmanned airstrikes that has proven to be very successful, but their high casualty rates and impingement on Pakistan's **sovereignty** have made this tactic controversial. Pakistan is also suspected of being involved in trafficking Afghan opium. Although Pakistan's economy has grown in the past decade, more reform is needed, as it still imports basic commodities and has a high poverty rate.

emergency rule—
government declaration that may suspend normal functions of government and some civil liberties during a period of emergency

sovereignty—*the quality of a government being free from external control*

Recent Developments

First Summit Meeting of Friends of Democratic Pakistan

On September 24th, 2009, US President Barack Obama, Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, and UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown co-chaired the first Summit of the Friends of Democratic Pakistan, which also included leaders of several other countries.

In the spirit of partnership, the leaders discussed improving Pakistan's institutions and helping Pakistan revive its economy. They applauded Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts and application of the rule of law in fighting extremism.

More US Aid to Pakistan

Secretary of State Hilary Clinton visited Pakistan, and on October 28th, 2009, announced more US aid programs. The US is giving Pakistan \$56 million to assist people internally displaced by violence in Pakistan, which is added to the \$165 million the US provided for similar programs in late July. The US is also providing \$85 million for Pakistani women and families in need, \$45 million for Pakistan's Higher Education Commission, \$125 million for the first phase of the Pakistan Signature Energy Program, which aims to increase electricity output and improve overall effectiveness of local utilities providers, and \$103.5 million for Pakistan's law enforcement and border security, including training in human rights for police.

President Obama's New Strategy for War in Afghanistan

President Obama addressed the nation on December 1st, 2009 with a plan to send more US troops into Afghanistan and prepare the Afghan military for a responsible transitioning out of US troops. Another part of his new strategy was to form a more effective partnership with Pakistan, as al-Qaeda is a common enemy. He planned to help Pakistan target the groups that pose the biggest threat to both Pakistan and the US and to provide non-military aid to Pakistan (for democracy, development, and **displaced persons**), some of which would continue after the fighting. He also emphasized the importance of trust and respect between the two nations.

displaced persons—
*people who are forced
to flee their homes*

Focus of Debate

Conservative View

Conservatives tend to think that the US should focus on increasing Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts by taking a more active role. They stress the importance of military aid as part of an aggressive stance against terrorists, but also recognize the significance of assisting Pakistan in democratizing their government and reforming their economy.

Liberal View

Liberals favor a less military-based approach towards Pakistan and instead favor improving US-Pakistan relations through other means. They support setting benchmarks for Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts and revising US policy as conditions change. Most liberals support President Obama's plan for US-Pakistan relations.

Presidential View

In March 2009, President Obama announced a new, more flexible plan for dealings with Pakistan and Afghanistan. Along with increased aid to Pakistan and communication with other countries involved in the region, the plan calls for frequent progress reports on the effectiveness of all efforts.

Questions to Consider

When formulating a bill, senators should keep in mind how active and aggressive they think the US should be in Pakistani counterterrorism policy, how the US can best prevent extremists living in Pakistan from having nuclear weapons, and how the US can justify the amount of aid it gives to Pakistan, given the current economic problems within the US.

Conclusion

Pakistan is important to the US, particularly right now, while we are at war in Afghanistan. How the US decides to involve itself in Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts and other aspects of the government can have lasting effects, so think about what type of approach would be most effective.

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