

Pakistan and the United States: Rebalancing the Relationship

Timothy Hoyt

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In Brief

- The most immediate threat to U.S. interests in Pakistan is further erosion of Pakistani institutions, *not* a near-term Islamist takeover.
- U.S. policy should focus on strengthening those institutions of Pakistani society that provide for economic well-being, political participation, the rule of law, and physical security.
- U.S. policy should encourage the Pakistani Army to disengage from politics while also increasing ties between the U.S. military and its Pakistani counterpart.

The assassination of Benazir Bhutto represents a critical point not only in Pakistani domestic politics, but also in U.S.-Pakistani relations. U.S. support for her return to Pakistan, and for a political coalition between Bhutto and Pervez Musharraf, reflected concerns about Pakistani stability after a summer of demonstrations against the regime, last autumn's emergency decree and suppression of domestic political opposition by Musharraf, and increasing jihadist pressure in the northwest and Swat valley. Bhutto's tough rhetoric against Islamist radicals supported U.S. aims and reflected U.S. interests. Her assassination leaves the United States without any obvious friend or ally in Pakistani electoral politics. Meanwhile, polls indicate that vast numbers of Pakistani voters hold Musharraf responsible for Bhutto's death, suggesting a continued erosion in his credibility, legitimacy, and potential effectiveness as ruler.

Now is the best time to take stock of the most likely scenarios that would menace U.S. bilateral relations with Pakistan, interests in the region, and efforts in the "war on terror." The most serious threat is *not* a short term collapse and Islamist takeover. It is,

Dr. Timothy Hoyt is a Professor of Strategy and Policy at the U.S. Naval War College. He has studied and taught on South Asian security issues for over 20 years. The views in this article are his own, and not those of the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Naval War College, the Department of Defense, or any other U.S. government agency.

instead, the continued erosion of institutions and traditions that provide for economic well-being and development, political representation and participation, and physical security. The continued decline of these institutions may set the stage for the expansion of ungoverned sanctuaries throughout Pakistan, and a substantially increased threat to the central government within a decade.

U.S. policy should focus on:

- helping the Pakistani Army disengage from domestic politics and hands-on governance;
- transitioning Pakistan's security focus from India and Kashmir to the more serious internal threat posed by jihadist groups—while ensuring that Pakistan's response to those groups is not to accommodate them and use them for foreign policy goals;
- emphasizing training and military education in the United States for as many mid-ranking Pakistani officers as possible;
- strengthening Pakistan's domestic institutions through an active program of training and assistance, focusing on continuing democratization, economic development, the education system, and improving law enforcement and local security capacity;
- working with allies in and outside the region to reassure Pakistan that we are sensitive to their security concerns while facilitating necessary reforms; and
- maintaining the safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal.

Impending nightmare? Pakistan after Bhutto

The December assassination of Benazir Bhutto, former Prime Minister of Pakistan, marks the effective end of a deeply troubled twenty year period in Pakistani domestic politics. This period was a grand experiment in Pakistani democracy, highlighted by a fierce competition between Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif for leadership under the shadow of the Pakistani Army's continued intervention in domestic politics. It also was a period of enormous variation in U.S.-Pakistan relations, marked by particularly strong relations during periods of military rule in the 1980s and early 21st century. The aftermath of this grisly assassination should be used as an opportunity for serious reflection on U.S. interests and policy.

Contrary to much of the commentary in the media, Pakistan is not rapidly descending into the abyss of an Islamist revolution. In fact, Pakistan possesses strong institutions that provide the basis for stability and economic prosperity in much of the country. Pakistan's political traditions and party infrastructure create opportunities for meaningful regional and national political participation in future elections—a process that should be dominated by moderate parties. In fact, because of their power, Musharraf's declaration of emergency rule was directed at these moderates. At a time when he was under intense

criticism at home and abroad, Musharraf promised to fight extremism, and then imprisoned the moderate opposition.

Although it is not teetering on the brink of imminent disaster, Pakistan faces significant security challenges. Radical jihadist groups, particularly on the western frontiers, have become increasingly autonomous and aggressive. The Army remains fixated on threats from India and dangerously entangled in domestic politics and governance. The law enforcement and intelligence agencies either lack the will and morale to confront internal threats or, more ominously, may be cooperating with jihadists for a variety of reasons.

U.S. policy can no longer focus purely on Pakistan as a security partner as it did in the early Cold War, in the 1980s, and in the “war on terror.” On each occasion, the United States tied itself to military regimes, and supplied copious amounts of military and economic assistance with relatively few strings attached. This policy has, for the most part, failed each time as Pakistan’s military leadership made choices—war in 1965, nuclear weapons development in the 1980s, and accommodation with Islamic jihadists in the 21st century—that conspicuously violate U.S. national interest, and appear (to U.S. observers) to be fatal breaches of trust.

Events of the last two years demonstrate that military rule is becoming increasingly unpopular and ineffective. Rather than relying on Musharraf, or some uniformed successor, the United States must instead adopt a broad interagency approach designed to reinforce existing institutions other than the Pakistani Army. Such a policy would require the United States to support elections, and accept the results. While Pakistan is not in danger of imminent Islamist revolution, the Islamist threat may emerge more gradually as a viable alternative if existing institutional structures prove incapable of, or are prevented from, providing meaningful political reform, economic opportunity, and representative government for the Pakistani people.

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The jihadist threat

The al Qaeda/Taliban threat to Pakistani society is serious. In 2007, more than 40 suicide-bombers killed over 700 citizens. Jihadist forces captured hundreds of soldiers in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), kidnapped, tortured and beheaded hundreds of citizens, and seized physical control of the Swat Valley, an affluent region that had always been under central government control. Pro-Taliban factions dominate or share control of regional

governments in the NWFP and Baluchistan, and radicals based in the Red Mosque in Islamabad disrupted order in the capital for months before succumbing in a bloody assault. Al Qaeda remains active on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistani border.

Despite this rising threat, radicals are poorly positioned to stage a coup, and the chance of any electoral success is remote. Islamist parties usually poll no more than 3-4% in Pakistani elections, and it may be even lower in February's scheduled elections. Islamist returns in 2002, when they received about 11% of the vote, increased sharply due to the lack of competition in the frontier areas, where major parties fielded no candidates. Their representation was also increased because the government deliberately limited the voting rolls and lists of potential candidates, and because many voters chose Islamist parties in order to protest the Musharraf regime. This apparent electoral success, therefore, is unlikely to be replicated unless future elections are similarly rigged.

In the regions where Islamists *have* gained political control through elections—the NWFP and Baluchistan—their record in governance is poor, and is reflected in local dissatisfaction. Radical Islamist support is currently restricted to relatively peripheral areas—the frontier, with low population density and little economic productivity, and occasional small centers in urban areas like the Red Mosque.¹ Moderate political parties, particularly Nawaz Sharif's PML-N, which supports some continued or even expanded use of *shari'a* in Pakistan's legal code, receive much greater support than their radical counterparts. This indicates that efforts by radical Islamist parties to use Islam as a *political* tool for radicalization will have only very limited success in the near future.

The larger threat: state erosion, not state collapse

A more serious, but longer-term, threat is the possibility of radical Islamists gradually gaining political legitimacy through the erosion of existing institutions and traditions. Forcibly eroding regime legitimacy through violence is a traditional terrorist tactic, and we should expect that al Qaeda and its Afghan and Pakistani Taliban allies will continue to use it.² Equally important but less headline-grabbing, is the erosion of these social structures through less violent means—poor governance, corruption, political intrigue, and most especially military interference in domestic politics. Any positive contribution the United States can make requires an inter-agency approach. The Department of Defense is uniquely positioned to work with Pakistan's Army, but history indicates that basing the U.S.-Pakistan relationship purely on security issues is a recipe for failure.

1. Where radicals are present in more urban or developed areas, it can easily be argued that this is a result of state policy – see below.

2. U.S. analysis tends to focus on the remote Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), which are the sanctuary for al Qaeda's foreign fighter contingents as well as, reportedly, the al Qaeda leadership. The occupants of this area are known as the "Pakistani Taliban." The leadership of the Afghan Taliban, including Mullah Omar, resides in the Pakistani city of Quetta, which is the main organizational and logistics base for Taliban efforts in Southern Afghanistan.

The Pakistani Army plays an intrusive, even corrupting role in political society. Retired officers dominate large sectors of the economy. The Army, and particularly the Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI), actively promoted the use of jihadists to combat the Soviets in Afghanistan, and later the Indians in Kashmir. At least five al Qaeda-linked movements in Pakistan or Afghanistan have links to ISI, which also provided (and probably still provides) advisors to the Taliban. The Army utilized jihadist forces as proxies for more than a decade, and their training camps still exist. Finally, the Army continues to focus on the threat from India, and even after six years of significant American military assistance remains poorly postured for, and unwilling to prioritize, counterinsurgency and internal threats.

U.S. policy, therefore, should be focused on two key issues: reshaping the role of the Pakistani Army, and maximizing the legitimacy and effectiveness of Pakistani non-military institutions. We must also recognize the limits of our policies. The United States can influence Pakistani decisions, but rarely dictate or control them. Focusing our efforts on these priorities will improve our chances of making changes that reflect both Pakistani and U.S. interests.

Disengage the Army from domestic politics and governance

The Pakistani Army's reputation as a respected national institution is endangered by its interference in both domestic politics and the economy. Maintaining a capable and professional military is crucial to the future stability of Pakistan, but the Army's reputation for efficiency is eroding due to its inability to manage complex economic issues and its constant interference in politics. Providing "golden parachutes" to retiring officers, and buying up productive enterprises as part of the massive military economic complex, provides the Army short-term benefits as an institution, but erodes its credibility with Pakistani elites *and* decreases Pakistan's long-term economic prospects. This summer's protests amply demonstrate public dissatisfaction with the military's continued role in domestic politics.

Musharraf is doing the right thing in seeking a "soft landing" and a transition to civilian rule. The main question is a matter of timing and his continuing role in the process. It is absolutely vital for Pakistan's long-term viability that the military get out of politics. Tempting though it may be to anoint General Kayani, or some other moderate military commander, as Musharraf's successor, both the United States and Pakistan are far better off keeping the military in the barracks. The military's ability to govern will continue to decline and continued efforts to run the country will only discredit two institutions—the political system and the military—that are vital to Pakistan's stability. Therefore, the military must withdraw (at a measured pace), and a multi-party political system must be encouraged. This must include the release of those political opponents of the regime imprisoned in the emergency, since almost none of them were imprisoned for terrorist offenses. It also requires the United States to work with the winners of the planned February election, regardless of who they are, even though any new administration will provide much less cooperation than the Musharraf regime provided in 2002-2003.

In point of fact, Musharraf's cooperation has declined steadily since that time anyway, and it is better in the long term for the United States to work with a popularly elected government.

Transition Pakistan's security focus from India to internal security

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The Pakistani Army must transition from a force focused on conventional warfare and cross-border covert operations to a general purpose force capable of managing a growing internal threat. As the U.S. military has found in Iraq, learning on the job can be costly both in casualties and in domestic political support. Jihadists in FATA, NWFP, and even Baluchistan have secured functional base areas that must be contained and gradually reduced if existing institutions are to remain credible and receive continued popular support.

Radical forces in the FATA have become closely allied with al Qaeda and adherents to its violent ideology. Four of the seven tribal agencies have been subjected to a form of ethnic cleansing, where tribal leaders and potential opponents have been slaughtered or driven from their homes. FATA remains an organizational center for al Qaeda operations and has been linked to attacks in both Europe and Afghanistan. It also provides a refuge both for al

Qaeda leadership cadres and for foreign fighters.

An additional element in this equation is a simple fact—the problem of radical Islam is much more widespread than either the United States or Pakistan choose to acknowledge, while still being well short of the “fall of the Shah” scenario which occasionally surfaces in the media. Radical enclaves can be found all over Pakistan, not just in FATA. Eleven out of the thirteen major al Qaeda figures killed or captured in Pakistan, for example, were located in urban areas, some as far south as Karachi. The assassination of Bhutto occurred in Punjab, as have several assassination attempts on President Musharraf himself. Pakistan's overt use of radical groups as a source of recruitment for jihadist proxy forces has created pockets of potential resistance even in the Pakistani heartland of Punjab and Sindh.

It is particularly convenient for Pakistan to focus on FATA, since the government can claim (with some legitimacy) that this is an area it has never really controlled. On the other hand, Pakistan has used this area to support training efforts for operations in Afghanistan in the 1980s, and Kashmir in the early-mid 1990s—suggesting it is not completely beyond government influence. More troubling is Pakistan's willingness to allow an enormous Taliban infrastructure in Quetta and northern Baluchistan, which provides the forces and logistic support for Taliban attacks on our NATO allies in the south of Afghanistan. Pakistan may believe it has control over these forces, but history suggests that its control is significantly limited. Saudi Arabia has suffered the consequences of attempting to organize and export

its radical elements. There is every reason to suspect that Pakistan will continue to suffer internal disruption as a result of similar policies.

We should not be afraid to point out that the very groups Pakistan used to cause so much trouble for India—and which were utilized to secure Pakistani objectives in Afghanistan—now appear to be attacking Pakistan itself. We need to stress that accommodation is not the answer, as Musharraf found in FATA. Pakistan remains tied to Pashtun groups in hopes of pressuring Kabul, but those groups in turn are linked with al Qaeda and other affiliated movements. Maintaining these groups in hopes of using them for Pakistani interests later is simply not an acceptable option—and, in fact, runs the risk of undermining Pakistani stability in the long term.

This is an area where the United States can provide both indirect and, if requested, direct assistance. We can, and should, re-focus our military assistance to Pakistan to help them with counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism. Pakistani efforts to subdue FATA have been costly and woefully unsuccessful. However, we should not succumb to the temptation of defining this as an easily-managed, short term problem. The decision to provide \$750 million over five years to “develop” FATA appears sadly unrealistic, since the Pakistani government has virtually no presence in the region and no NGO would possibly want to operate there.

A condition for continuing that support, however, should be signs of progress in other areas: curtailment of infiltration from Quetta and Baluchistan; evidence that the Army is beginning to incorporate counterinsurgency as a major element of doctrine; and closer cooperation in law enforcement and intelligence efforts. Applying lessons on tribal warfare from Iraq may have some value, but should not be viewed as an easy solution as the United States cannot have the kind of presence on the ground in FATA that it has in Iraq. Anything we do in FATA will either have to be done unilaterally—a course that is fraught with bad political consequences—or with Pakistani support. Operations in FATA will be difficult, and will undoubtedly alienate a Pakistani public that already views the United States as a threat, rather than as a friend. At a bare minimum, any military operations initiated in the area (or elsewhere in Pakistan—an option with even greater political and military risks) should weigh the political consequences carefully against the nature and priority of the target. Going after lower-level targets because we have an opportunity to act probably fails the cost/benefit test.

To be utterly realistic, re-focusing Pakistan’s Army on internal security while gradually transitioning it away from governing will not be easy. Nor will weaning the Army and ISI from their preference for jihadist proxies. Both, nevertheless, are necessary. The Army must realize that if it does not confront the jihadists now, in ten years its special role in Pakistani society may be in much greater jeopardy.

Reinvigorate our contacts with the Pakistani military at all levels

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, a number of radical officers—including Chief of the Army Mirza Aslam Beg and ISI chief Hamid Gul—reached prominent positions in the Pakistani Army (and therefore had significant impact on domestic and foreign policy). Musharraf has been careful with his promotions, and the higher ranks of the Army are now, generally, politically reliable. Because of the sanctions in the 1990s, however, the United States lost contact with a generation of Pakistani officers. It is absolutely vital for the United States and Pakistan to re-establish the strongest possible institutional connections between our officer corps at every level. Mid-level officers in particular should be brought to the United States for education and training opportunities—particularly focused on civil-military relations and on counter-insurgency doctrine and methods—at our expense. We need to know who may get promoted in five to ten years, and do everything we can to positively influence their perspective on the United States and the “war on terror.” In the film “Charlie Wilson’s War,” Representative Wilson off-handedly doubles assistance to the *mujahedin*. We need to be more systematic, but make similar or even larger increases in Pakistan’s share of the International Military Education and Training (IMET) budget. Small amounts of money in this account pay enormous dividends over time.

In addition, as part of the effort to facilitate changes in Pakistan’s military doctrine, we need to engage Pakistani and Indian military officers together in joint exercises, education, and even operations. Pakistani and Indian soldiers have served together with great professionalism in United Nations operations. Why not engage them in joint training? Or arrange Indian participation in anti-terrorism patrols with the Pakistani Navy in the Persian Gulf? Or bring more officers from both nations to our professional military institutions? These kinds of inexpensive confidence-building measures may create a greater sense of security on both sides, helping facilitate a reorientation of the Army’s doctrine and security focus. We should also encourage similar joint ventures between the Afghan and Pakistani militaries, which may over time facilitate cross-border cooperation.

Strengthen Pakistan’s non-military institutions

The United States must find ways to strengthen Pakistan’s existing institutions and traditions, and to reward success. Increased, targeted economic assistance will allow the political structure to provide jobs for young men and women. Funding the education system will help combat the reliance on often-suspect *madrassahs*, particularly if focused in the western provinces. A combination of education, jobs, and economic growth will be important in demonstrating the legitimacy of Pakistan’s traditional political and economic institutions and, correspondingly, reduce the likelihood that hostile radicals can use government ineffectiveness as a rallying cry to threaten the state. These tasks can only be accomplished through inter-agency coordination and increased, as well as focused, non-defense (and possibly international) funding.

The Pakistani Army cannot be the only institution which is utilized for counter-insurgency and internal security. The experience of the Zia period (1977-1988) suggests that an army with internal security duties may pick up bad habits, and create ultra-strong institutions that become very difficult to control, as was the case with ISI. In addition, “best practices” in both counter-insurgency and counterterrorism emphasize the importance of engaging law enforcement and the intelligence agencies. Paramilitary units like the Frontier Corps, regional and local police forces, and the intelligence services must all be supported, and reorganized if necessary. This will require funds and training.

The independent judiciary must be bolstered, and the rule of law reinforced, so that mullahs, tribes, and their followers cannot begin local reigns of terror or seize control of localities. Support for law enforcement—central, regional, and local—will help provide greater physical security and project an aura of government competence. This aid should be applied in a kind of “oil spot” strategy—first ensuring the adequacy of services and opportunity in the core areas of Sindh and Punjab, and then gradually encroaching into the embattled periphery in FATA, NWFP, and parts of Baluchistan. This “oil spot” strategy is intended to complement, not contradict, existing plans for FATA (among others). The intent is to ensure Pakistan does not lose any ground in the areas where institutions are still strong but subject to erosion.

Economic assistance will have to be phased-in gradually. U.S. aid should be expanded through a multi-stage process based on need, accountability, effectiveness, and capacity. Currently, U.S. institutions and NGOs cannot—or prefer not to—monitor the funding that is already being provided. In the past, the United States has used aid as a blunt instrument—granting it when we need Pakistan, and cutting it off entirely when they misbehave. That approach will no longer work. It has soured relations, and most Pakistanis view the United States as purely a “fair weather friend.” Instead, the United States should gradually increase requirements for Pakistani accountability. As accountability increases, so will effectiveness. The two combined can provide an argument for expanded cooperation where need is perceived and as capacity increases. The first and most obvious area for applying this principle is Operation Enduring Freedom support funds. Military assistance should also be tailored towards common threats. In this light, Pakistan needs counter-insurgency-related equipment rather than additional supplies of supersonic strike aircraft.

Working with allies

The United States needs to use its other coalition partners, allies, and friends to reassure Pakistan where it will help the relationship, and to confront Pakistan where current policies are unhelpful or dangerous. As the U.S. relationship with India improves, for example, the United States will act as an implicit security guarantor for the region—a role it has already played in the nuclear crises of 1999 and 2001-2002. The U.S. role in the Indian Ocean area and the U.S. Navy’s commitment to the Global Maritime Partnership concept ensure that trade will flow freely in the region. Britain and the Commonwealth can continue to provide diplomatic and economic support for Pakistan. Continued

economic assistance from our western and Asian allies, in a variety of forms, can provide positive incentives for Pakistani cooperation.

At the same time, however, the United States and our partners can also confront Pakistan on core issues. Key among these is Pakistan's support for the Afghan Taliban in Quetta. If Pakistan is concerned about the security of its western border, the United States should take steps to reassure it that the Afghan regime poses no threat, and that occasional mutterings about Pashtun nationalism or the illegitimacy of existing borders do not and will not have U.S. or international support. At the same time, we should note that Pakistan's support for radical Pashtuns has not been productive—these are the forces that have taken over FATA—and that the blowback from these efforts may be severe in Baluchistan and the NWFP as well. Finally, Britain and our NATO allies can also pressure Pakistan on their support for the Taliban, since their forces are closely engaged with the Taliban in southern Afghanistan on an all-too-regular basis.

Thinking in the long-term

U.S. government expertise on Pakistan, and indeed on the entire South Asian region, is woefully inadequate. Unfortunately, neither academe nor the think-tank community can do much to supplement it.³ The region contains roughly 25% of the world's population, two hostile nuclear powers, and the largest contingent of intransigent violent jihadists in the world. This is a potent, dangerous, and very volatile mix. Yet we remain desperately ill-equipped to construct and implement sound policies

India is the size of China, but the number of China experts vastly outnumbers those who have even rudimentary familiarity with India. Expertise on Bangladesh is even rarer. Pakistan has about as many people as Russia, but the number of Pakistani experts is almost minuscule, despite our long history of engagement and equally long history of failure.

Since the late 1970s, when government experts first spoke of “the arc of crisis,” the United States has confronted serious foreign policy challenges in the Indian Ocean region. These challenges will only increase in the 21st century as Asia becomes the center of the global economy, energy flows through the Indian Ocean provide the oil necessary for continued economic growth, and the United States and our coalition partners wage a protracted conflict against violent transnational movements. We remain intellectually ill-equipped to understand or think creatively about these challenges.

The United States simply must, as a matter of priority, develop greater expertise on Pakistan, and the institutional structure that will allow that expertise to play a greater role in policy formulation. This will require the methodical creation, through scholarships and dedicated study, of a sizeable cadre of experts on Pakistani politics, economics, society, and culture. This requires rewarding people who study

3. This is not intended as a slight against the small but dedicated community of regional experts, both in and out of government service.

Pakistan, and allowing them the time to become experts. This approach can and should be applied to the entire region.

One area we do not adequately understand, for example, is the peculiar symbiotic political relationship between the military and Pakistani elites. On the one hand, Pakistanis appear to desire democracy and greater political participation. On the other hand, elites regularly empower the Army, support its intervention in politics, and reward it by providing retired officers with lucrative employment in both the private and state sectors. The elites, in fact, *enable* military intervention in domestic politics on a regular basis—a cycle which, if not broken, may eventually endanger both the military and domestic political institutions.

Pakistani regional politics, ethnic relations, and culture are also vital areas for increased study. Understanding the dynamics of the Pakistani core areas—Punjab, Sindh, and portions of Baluchistan—are critical to understanding Pakistani domestic politics. Ethnicities which may pose separatist challenges, including the Pashtuns and Baluchis, are also crucial areas of study. Attempting to utilize tribes as security forces in regions like FATA, where very few Westerners in policy positions have ever even visited, may create inflated expectations and on-the-ground disasters. Using sociology to create strategies is a dangerous game when our ignorance of local cultures is so deep and profound.

The United States needs to think in the long term about our relationship with Pakistan—a truly vital country, given our commitment to Afghanistan and the region and the ongoing “war on terror.” This will require educating a cadre of experts and making sure they have the opportunities to inform policy. We must also lower our expectations: Pakistan does not perceive the jihadist threat the way we do (yet), and it may take some time before the seriousness and tenacity of that threat becomes evident.

We must help the Pakistanis buy time to reinforce their national institutions, particularly the judiciary, the electoral process, and the economy. This will limit the ability of jihadist radicals to appear as legitimate alternatives to a failing regime.

Above all, we must re-cast the nature of our relationship. We must reassure Pakistan that we will stay in the region—not a difficult task, given the ongoing conflict with al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. But we must also exercise the kind of diplomatic “tough love” that confronts them in areas of non-cooperation, like their harboring of Taliban in Quetta, and that constantly and vigorously reminds them that their bad habit of protecting jihadist forces for their own policy ends not only led to the deaths of thousands of innocents in the United States and the region, but may one day threaten the Pakistani state itself.

Building a New American Arsenal

The American Security Project (ASP) is a bipartisan initiative to educate the American public about the changing nature of national security in the 21st century.

Gone are the days when a nation's strength could be measured by bombers and battleships. Security in this new era requires a New American Arsenal harnessing all of America's strengths: the force of our diplomacy; the might of our military; the vigor of our economy; and the power of our ideals.

We believe that America must lead other nations in the pursuit of our common goals and shared security. We must confront international challenges with all the tools at our disposal. We must address emerging problems before they become security crises. And to do this, we must forge a new bipartisan consensus at home.

ASP brings together prominent American leaders, current and former members of Congress, retired military officers, and former government officials. Staff direct research on a broad range of issues and engages and empowers the American public by taking its findings directly to them.

We live in a time when the threats to our security are as complex and diverse as terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, climate change, failed and failing states, disease, and pandemics. The same-old solutions and partisan bickering won't do. America needs an honest dialogue about security that is as robust as it is realistic.

ASP exists to promote that dialogue, to forge consensus, and to spur constructive action so that America meets the challenges to its security while seizing the opportunities the new century offers.



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