Pakistan Background Information Overview

As a strategic state in the region and a key U.S. ally for counter terror efforts in Afghanistan, Pakistan is a critical actor capable of significantly impacting all its neighbors as well as U.S. foreign and national security policy in the region. Pakistan is the world’s sixth most populous country with a population in excess of 170 million people. An ethnically and linguistically diverse country, Pakistan’s recent history has been characterized by periods of military rule, political instability and conflicts with neighboring India. The country continues to face challenging problems including terrorism, poverty, illiteracy and corruption.

A regional power, Pakistan has the world’s seventh largest military and as a declared nuclear state is the only Muslim country with nuclear weapons. Having been shunned by the international community following the development and testing of nuclear weapons in 1998, Pakistan became a strategic U.S. ally in the war on terror following September 11th. As a strategic U.S. ally, Pakistan has been widely considered a critical factor for U.S. counter terror efforts in Afghanistan since Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) has served as a safe haven for insurgents fleeing Afghanistan. While Pakistan, under U.S. pressure, has undertaken efforts to clear out insurgents from the FATA region many feel Pakistan’s efforts have been insufficient.

Despite U.S. pressure and leverage through economic incentive packages, Pakistan’s primary geostrategic concern is India and this concern is the driving force for Pakistan’s foreign and security policy. The antipathy between the Pakistan and India dates back to August 1947 when Britain partitioned the religiously and ethnically diverse Indian empire into two independent states. The Kashmir region continues to be the major flashpoint of tensions between India and Pakistan. Pakistan has tried various methods, from diplomacy the direct use of force, to wrest the remainder of Kashmir from Indian control. For the past fifteen years, it has covertly supported a violent insurgency that, together with India’s heavy handed response, has ravaged Kashmir. Despite the threat of the Kashmir conflict escalating into nuclear conflict, India and Pakistan are unable to agree on an effective political process to reduce tensions or resolve the issue.

Government Structure

Pakistan is parliamentary democracy. The legislature is bi-cameral and comprised of a 342 member National Assembly and a 100 member Senate. The judicial system is comprised of Federal Islamic Courts, provincial high courts, and a Supreme Court.

President and Prime Minister

The President is elected by an electoral college and acts as the head of state and the Commander in chief of the country’s armed forces. The President has substantial power, including the authority to dismiss the parliament. The prime minister acts as the head of the government and is traditionally the leader of the largest party in the National Assembly. The terms of the President and Prime Minister are independent of one another.
**Administrative Provinces**

Pakistan is divided into four administrative provinces Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan. Local governments are organized into a three tier system of districts, tehsils, and union councils, each of which has an elected body. The provinces enjoy considerable autonomy, but this has caused tensions with central government. Pakistan’s government exercises jurisdiction over the western parts of the Kashmir region and the federally administered tribal areas in the northwestern region of the country.

**Military Structure**

**Ministry of Defense:** The Minister of Defense is a civilian who chairs the Defense Council of Pakistan. The ministry is responsible for the defense of Pakistan as well as civil aviation.

**Joint Chiefs of Staff:** The Joint Chiefs of Staff deals with all problems bearing on the military aspects of state security and is charged with integrating and coordinating the three services. The three branches within the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee deal with planning, training, and logistics. Affiliated with the committee are the offices of the engineer in chief, the director general of medical service, the director of inter-services intelligence, and the director of inter-services public relations.

**Inter-Services Intelligence:** The ISI is tasked with collection of foreign and domestic intelligence; co-ordination of intelligence functions of the three military services; surveillance over its cadre, foreigners, the media, politically active segments of Pakistani society, diplomats of other countries accredited to Pakistan and Pakistani diplomats serving outside the country; the interception and monitoring of communications; and the conduct of covert offensive operations. Critics of the ISI say that it has become a state within a state, answerable neither to the leadership of the army, nor to the President or the Prime Minister. The result is there has been no real supervision of the ISI, and corruption, narcotics, and money have all come into play, further complicating the political scenario. Drug money was used by ISI to finance not only the Afghanistan war, but also the ongoing proxy war against India in Kashmir and Northeast India. The ISI reportedly has a total of about 10,000 officers and staff members, a number which does not include informants and assets. It is organized into divisions responsible for distinct functions: intelligence estimates and assessments; political intelligence; counter-intelligence; operations in Jammu and Kashmir; foreign espionage; signals intelligence; and technical support. In addition, it also has an explosives and chemical warfare section.

A history of sponsoring extremism is prevalent in ISI. During the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, ISI monitored the activities of and provided advice and support to the mujahidin. The ISI trained about 83,000 Afghan Mujahideen between 1983 to 1997 and dispatched them to
Afghanistan. The ISI continued to actively participate in Afghan Civil War, supporting the Taliban in their fight against the Rabbani government. Backing of the Taliban would officially end after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001; however, there are suspicions that sympathetic elements of the ISI continue to aid Taliban fighters. ISI has been engaged in covertly supporting the Kashmiri Mujahideen in their fight against the Indian authorities in Kashmir.

**Pakistan Army:** Since the founding of Pakistan, the army has been key in holding the state together, promoting a feeling of nationhood among disparate peoples and providing a bastion of selfless service in the midst of a venal government system. All too frequently, the Pakistan Army has felt the need to take over the government, cleanse it of corruption and try to reform its bureaucracy before returning it to civilian control. Army control of the government has all too often led to a corrupt military regime that eventually collapsed.

The Pakistan Army is the largest branch of the Pakistan Armed Forces, and is mainly responsible for protection of the state borders, the security of administered territories and defending the national interests of Pakistan within the framework of its international obligations. Since the September 11th terrorist attacks, Pakistani military forces have been extensively engaged in the War on Terrorism against Taliban and Al Qaeda extremists. In times of natural disaster army engineers, medical and logistics personnel, and the armed forces played a major role in bringing relief and supplies.

The Pakistani Army is an all-volunteer force; current manpower is at 550,000 active troops with 500,000 in reserves. The army is divided into six infantry regiments dispersed throughout the country. There are also armored, artillery, engineer, aviation, engineering, and signal corps. Equipment consists of purchases from the United States, Russia, and China. One significant capability is 80 United States supplied Ah-1 Cobra attack helicopters. The Pakistani army is large, but not up to the same strength as its main rival, India.

**Pakistan Air Force:**

The Pakistan Air Force is the leading air arm of the Pakistan Armed Forces and is primarily tasked with the aerial defense of Pakistan with a secondary role of providing air support to the Pakistan Army and the Pakistan Navy. The PAF also has a tertiary role of providing strategic air transport and logistics capability to Pakistan. The PAF employs approximately 65,000 full-time personnel (including approximately 3,000 pilots) and, currently, operates 450 combat aircraft as well as various transport and training aircraft.

In light of Pakistan's significant contribution to the War on Terror, the United States and Western European countries, namely Germany and France, lifted their defense related sanctions on Pakistan; enabling the country to once again seek advanced Western military hardware. Existing
F-16s have been upgraded, and several brand new aircraft have been delivered. Sweden has delivered a Saab 2000 Erieye Airborne Early Warning & Control aircraft. Ukraine has delivered 4 planes providing Pakistan Air to Air refueling capabilities. Air operations are conducted from 10 bases distributed throughout Pakistan.

Its best capabilities are 39 JF-17 fighter planes developed jointly with China and 63 F-16s. There is a significant transport capability utilizing C-130s. There are also 3 Dassault Falcons capable of Electronic Warfare and smaller UAVs capable of recon.

**Pakistan Navy:**
The Pakistan Navy is the naval warfare/service branch of the Pakistan Armed Forces. Pakistan's Navy is responsible for Pakistan's 1,046 kilometers coastline along the Arabian Sea and the defense of important civilian harbors and military bases. The Pakistan Navy is currently undergoing extensive modernization and expansion as part of Pakistan's role in the War on Terror. Since 2001, the Pakistan Navy has increased and expanded its operational scope and has been given greater national and international responsibility in countering the threat of sea-based global terrorism, drug smuggling and trafficking issues. Since 2004, Pakistan Navy became a member of the primarily NATO Combined Task Force – 150.

As of 2011, the Pakistan Navy has approximately 22,000 active duty personnel. This includes 1,200 Pakistan Navy Marines. In addition there were 5,000 reserves. The Navy is also supported by 2,000 personnel in the Maritime Security Agency and 2,500 personnel of the Coast Guard. The Navy consists of about 20 major ships as well as smaller patrol boats. Most were made by the UK, France, and China.

**Pakistan Nuclear Forces**
Pakistan has an estimated 90-110 nuclear warheads. Pakistan probably assigns its F-16A/B aircraft to the nuclear role, although some Mirage Vs could also have a nuclear mission. The F-16A/Bs were supplied by the United States between 1983 and 1987, and the units with the nuclear mission probably include Squadrons 9 and 11 at Sargodha Air Base, which is located 160 km (100 miles) northwest of Lahore. Pakistan’s F-16A/Bs, which have a range of 1,600 km most likely carry a single bomb on the centerline pylon. Pakistan has three operational nuclear-capable ballistic missiles: the short-range Ghaznavi (290 KM range) and Shaheen-1 (450 KM range) and the medium-range Ghauri (1,500 KM range). It has at least three other nuclear-capable ballistic missiles under development: the medium-range Shaheen-2 (2000 KM range), which may soon be operational, and the short-range Abdali (180 KM range) and Nasr (60 KM range) systems. Pakistan has recently deployed two new cruise missiles, the Babur (600 KM range) and Ra’ad (350 KM range).
Despite its political instability, Pakistan continues to steadily expand its nuclear capabilities and competencies; in fact, it has the world's fastest-growing nuclear stockpile. Pakistan is building two new plutonium production reactors and a new reprocessing facility with which it will be able to fabricate more nuclear weapons fuel. It is also developing new delivery systems. Enhancements to Pakistan's nuclear forces include a new nuclear-capable medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM), the development of two new nuclear-capable short-range ballistic missiles, and the development of two new nuclear-capable cruise missiles.

**Nuclear Doctrine**
Pakistan maintains a *first strike* option as its nuclear doctrine. In the event of a war between Pakistan and India, the Indian numerical superiority in men and conventional arms is likely to overwhelm Pakistan. In a deteriorating military situation, when an Indian conventional attack is likely to break through Pakistani defenses, or has already breached the main defense line causing a major setback to the defense, which cannot be restored by conventional means, the government would be left with no other option except to use nuclear weapons to stabilize the situation. India's superiority in conventional arms and manpower would have to be offset by nuclear weapons.
The political will to use nuclear weapons is essential to prevent a conventional armed conflict, which could later on escalate into a nuclear war. Professor Stephen P. Cohen feels that Pakistan would use what he calls an 'option-enhancing policy'. This would entail a stage-by-stage approach in which the nuclear threat is increased at each step to deter India from attacking. These stages are as follows:
1. A public or private warning.
2. A demonstration explosion of a small nuclear weapon on Pakistani soil.
3. The use of (a) nuclear weapon(s) on Pakistani soil against Indian attacking forces.
4. The use of (a) nuclear weapon(s) against critical but purely military targets on Indian soil, probably in thinly populated areas in the desert or semi-desert, causing the least collateral damage.

Some weapon systems would be in reserve for the counter-value role. These weapons would be safe from Indian attack as some would be airborne while the ground based ones are mobile and could be moved around the country.

**Primary Alliances**

**China**
Pakistan’s strategic alliance with China is being increasingly strengthened and deepened through China’s extensive investments in Pakistan’s infrastructure, military, and the provision of civilian nuclear assistance. Pakistan provides China a test-bed for Chinese exports of sophisticated arms such as submarines as well as nuclear reactors and, in time, finance. In return for contracts, China offers protection. It gives diplomatic cover in multilateral forums to Pakistan's prized nuclear program and dissuades fears about a possible proliferation of nuclear technologies. The
plans in this strategic alliance are most ambitious in the areas of defense. In addition to collaboration with China on the JF-17 Thunder fighter, officials have also said they have begun negotiations to buy up to six submarines, which would help Pakistan project a naval power it has lacked since its creation 64 years ago at the end of British rule in India.

While Pakistan is very pleased with its growing partnership with China, Chinese officials have expressed concern over Pakistan’s instability and the north-eastern region of the country’s ties to the Muslim-dominated province to Xinjiang. The Chinese are also concerned with lengthy delays in executing infrastructure projects and a lack of purposefulness. Furthermore, Pakistan’s economic partnership with China is still overshadowed by Chinese-Indian trade. Bilateral trade between Pakistan and China is about $8.7bn a year and Beijing asserts this can rise to $15bn in three years; the figure is dwarfed by faster-growing Chinese-Indian trade, which stood last year at $60bn.

This alliance is of increasing concern to both India and the U.S. Fearing military encirclement, New Delhi’s politicians and military command frequently voice their concerns about China's military and nuclear assistance to Pakistan. Even though the U.S. has invested $20 billion in Pakistan over the course of the last ten years, many analysts argue that the patterns of trade and investment between Pakistan and China will soon displace the U.S. as Pakistan’s primary ally. In addition, Pakistan's army has been lobbying for a formal defense pact with China in the wake of the U.S. raid that killed bin Laden. This shift would have a major impact on the strategic position of the U.S. in the region.

United States
Since 2001, the U.S. has pumped billions of dollars of economic, military, and humanitarian aid to Pakistan with the expectation that Pakistan will be a staunch ally against the spread of Islamic terrorism. However, anti-American sentiment in Pakistan has only grown, and spiked in 2011. The U.S. has long pressed Pakistan to push insurgents fleeing Afghanistan out of tribal safe havens along the border, often times with minimal success. While the Pakistan army denies giving direct aid to Taliban groups, particularly the Haqqani network, it also says it won't launch an offensive to kick them out. Moreover, with over 3,000 Pakistani soldiers killed and thousands more injured in border fights with militants as part of the anti-terror war, Pakistan’s military has grown weary of Washington's repeated calls for Pakistan to do more.

After ten years of post-9/11 counter terrorism cooperation and military and economic assistance, the U.S. and Pakistan are lowering expectations for what the two nations will do together and planning for a period of more limited contact. Pakistan has stated that it will further reduce the number of U.S. military personnel in Pakistan, limit military exchanges with the U.S., and has turned towards strengthening its relationship with China. The change in the U.S.-Pakistan alliance is due to a series of diplomatic crises over the past year that have further strained an
already difficult partnership based around the U.S. goal of stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan and a reduction in Islamic-inspired terrorism. This series of crises includes the U.S. killing of Osama bin Laden and the NATO airstrike that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers.

Because of this troubled history and current uncertainties about Pakistan’s domestic stability, its close military ties China, its fractious relations with India and Afghanistan, and its checkered history of control over nuclear weapons technology, some observers warn that Pakistan is “at best a reluctant supporter of U.S. goals and at worst a potential long-term adversary.”

Pakistan Military Bases

Pakistan Army Corps Bases
Kashmir

Kashmir, officially referred to as Jammu and Kashmir, is an 86,000-square-mile region (about the size of Idaho) in northwest India and northeast Pakistan. The region has been violently disputed by India and Pakistan since their 1947 partition, which created Pakistan as the Muslim counterpart to Hindu-majority India. The lingering dispute has resulted into perpetual state of hostilities between India and Pakistan and already led them to three wars. It is also responsible for persistent atmosphere of belligerence along the Line of Control (LOC) in Kashmir, numerous military escalations, widespread regional impoverishment and severe bitterness in bilateral relations. It has also led to the massive arming of both sides and to the present nuclearization of South Asia. Certain Kashmiri independence groups believe that Kashmir should be independent of both India and Pakistan.
In August 1947 when the Indian subcontinent became independent from Britain, all the rulers of the 565 princely states, whose lands comprised two-fifths of India and a population 99 million, had to decide which of the two new dominions to join, India or Pakistan. The ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, whose state was situated between the two new countries, could not decide which country to join. He was Hindu, but his population was predominantly Muslim. He therefore did nothing. Instead he signed a "standstill" agreement with Pakistan in order that services such as trade, travel and communication would be uninterrupted. India did not sign a similar agreement.

India claims the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir and as of 2010, administers approximately 43% of the region, including most of Jammu, the Kashmir Valley, Ladakh, and the Siachen Glacier. India's claims are contested by Pakistan, which controls approximately 37% of Kashmir, namely Azad Kashmir and the northern areas of Gilgit and Baltistan.

Pakistan considers Kashmir a disputed territory and terms Indian occupation of Kashmir, based on the alleged “Instrument of Accession”, to be fraudulent and illegal. It also proclaims that Kashmir’s final status is to be decided by giving its people the right of self-determination through a plebiscite in the light of pending UN resolutions. Pakistan feels morally and politically bound to support the cause of the people of Kashmir and considers the ongoing freedom
movement in Kashmir as legitimate and indigenous in nature. Pakistan also contends that it faces existential threat to its survival from India mainly over the Kashmir Dispute, which seriously inhibits its desire to employ the optimal military capability on the AfPak border. It, therefore, considers that the resolution of the Kashmir Dispute will have great impact on its capacity to defeat militancy in the Tribal Areas. It seeks active UN, US and EU’s role, albeit internationalization of the issue, for facilitation of the conflict-resolution in the face of Indian intransigent attitude in bilateral discussions.