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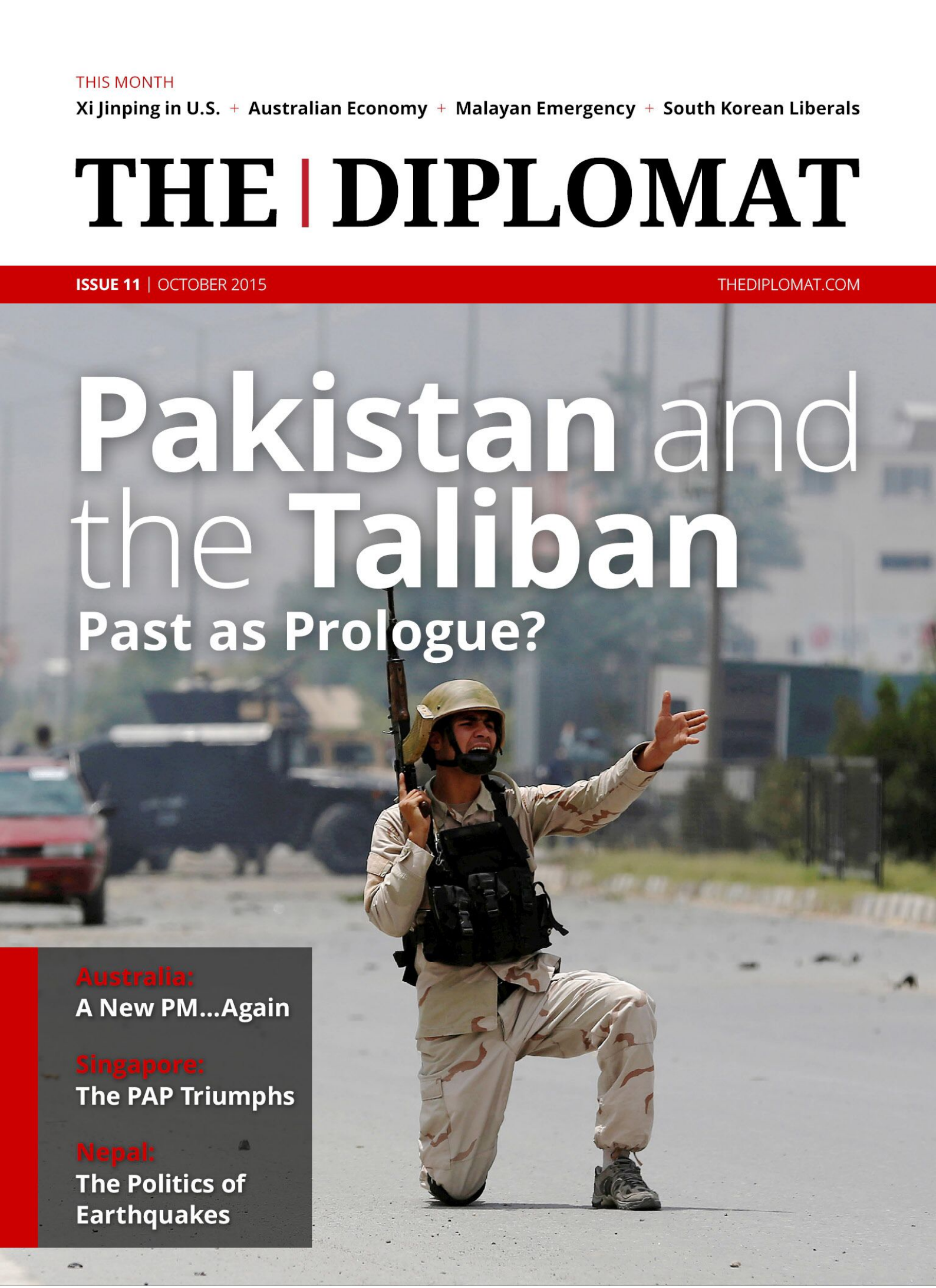
Pakistan and the Taliban

Past as Prologue?



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Pakistan and the Taliban: Past as Prologue?

After riding the Islamist militancy tiger for decades, Pakistan now has a problem..

C. Christine Fair

To understand the significance of the Taliban to Pakistan, it is important to understand the historically fraught ties not only between India and Pakistan, but also between Pakistan and Afghanistan. While it is commonly believed that Pakistan's relationship with groups such as the Taliban emerged during the anti-Soviet jihad, this is a considerable understatement of the relationship. In fact, Pakistan's dalliance with Islamist politics and Islamist militant groups in Afghanistan dates back to the earliest days of Pakistan's independence. This attests to the enduring security challenges that Pakistan perceives in Afghanistan. Whether these fears are founded or not, Pakistan acts upon them as if they are fact.

Pakistan – unlike the United States – is asymmetrically motivated to stay the course in Afghanistan. Having successfully manipulated jihadi groups for decades, Pakistan has grown insouciant about its ability to continue riding this tiger. However, recent developments such as the announced death of Mullah Omar and the splits within the Taliban, as well as the emergence of ISIS in Afghanistan and Pakistan, raise the stakes for Islamabad. It is unlikely that Pakistan will be able to regain the kind of control that it exercised over the Taliban in the past. The most likely outcome is ever-deepening violence in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Unfortunately, as the world saw on 9/11, the sequelae of these developments are not likely to be confined to Afghanistan or Pakistan.

A Quest for Strategic Depth

Pakistan has been motivated to manipulate affairs in Afghanistan since the earliest years of Pakistan's independence in 1947, when the British decolonized South Asia by cleaving the subcontinent into two independent states, India and Pakistan, in a bloody partition that killed as many as a million and instigated the largest migration of humans known to modern history. The sanguinary legacy of partition and the communal cleansing it galvanized, as well as the territorial dispute over Kashmir which Pakistan commenced in 1947, has left India and Pakistan as bitter rivals ever since with Pakistan seeking to change maps through violence. While Pakistan's antagonisms with regard to India are well known, Pakistan also has pursued an interventionist agenda in Afghanistan from the earliest years of independence. The reasons for this are numerous.

First, Afghanistan voted against Pakistan's inclusion into the United Nations. Pakistan believed this was at India's insistence, even though there is no evidence to support this contention. Second, Afghanistan rejected the validity of the Durand Line, which is the boundary that separates Afghanistan from Pakistan. The Durand Line was negotiated by a British civil servant, Sir Mortimer Durand, and the Afghan King, Abdur Rehman, in 1893 as the border between the British Raj and Afghanistan. In 1947, Afghanistan argued that Pakistan seceded from the Raj and therefore the agreement was null and void. While Afghanistan's position has no standing in international law, it is an enduring irritant to Pakistan. Third, after months of escalating tensions with Pakistan, Afghan forces invaded Pakistan in September 1950. Lastly, Afghanistan advanced irredentist claims on large swathes of Pakistan's territory populated by ethnic Pashtuns.

These claims on Pakistan's territory were deeply disturbing for Pakistan because the territory Afghanistan claimed included much of Balochistan, all of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas

(FATA), as well what was then known as the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). (The NWFP is now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)). However, Afghanistan's position was also worrisome due to political events prior to partition. The Muslim League, which was the political party that argued for the founding of Pakistan as a homeland for South Asia's Muslims, initially found little support for the idea of Pakistan in the territories that eventually became the western wing of the country. Many people living in the frontier regions abutting Afghanistan never signed onto the project of Pakistan. The Khudai Khidmatgar (Servants of God), a Pashtun ethnic movement, coalesced in 1929 under Abdul Ghaffar Khan's leadership. While the movement was fiercely anti-colonial, it also vigorously and uncompromisingly opposed the partition of the Raj and the creation of Pakistan. Ghaffar Khan, viewing the Muslim League as pro-British allied with the Congress Party, which rejected partition and went on to lead independent India. He resisted the Muslim League and its effort to achieve an independent Pakistan until Pakistan had become a fait accompli. Even then, however, Ghaffar and his fellow Pashtun nationalists demanded that the British grant them an independent state as well, instead of forcing them to join the newly-created Pakistan. The British did not grant this demand.

Pakistan's security managers viewed nationalist Pashtuns – who resisted Pakistan's creation, made overt demands for independence, and espoused support for India – as a serious internal threat, both due to their antipathy to the state but also because they could be manipulated by Afghanistan or India against the state. While Pashtuns were a challenge to Pakistan's authority, so were the ethnic Baloch in Balochistan who also resisted inclusion into Pakistan. Balochistan, which shares a long border with Afghanistan and Iran, would similarly be vulnerable to manipulations from Afghanistan's soil.

Afghanistan's varied antagonisms toward the state, coupled with the putative internal threats posed by ethnic Baloch and Pashtuns residing in areas adjacent to Afghanistan, influenced how Pakistan crafted foreign policies to contend with the external challenges emanating from Afghanistan and domestic policies for its own frontier areas. Pakistan's security managers chose to retain much of the security architecture that the British forged. This included the pursuit of so-called strategic depth, as well as the colonial-era governance structure over these territories.

To understand Pakistan's obsession with Afghanistan, it is important to know that in some ways, the newly-formed Pakistani state faced even greater security threats than did the British Raj. The boundary between Afghanistan and the Raj was not disputed, and Afghan leaders could not credibly challenge British rule except by exploiting internal issues. Pakistan, in contrast, quickly became involved in disputes over a high percentage of its borders: Afghanistan was committed to undoing the territorial status quo vis-à-vis Pakistan, while Pakistan itself sought to revise the territorial status quo with India. To compound matters further, until 1971 when East Pakistan seceded and became Bangladesh, Pakistan's entire eastern wing was surrounded by India.

While these early security concerns about Afghanistan were most squarely tied to Afghan positions and their impacts upon Pakistan's domestic security challenges, over time Afghanistan and India became increasingly close, partly as a function of their mutual hostility towards Pakistan but also due to the alliance structures of the Cold War. Pakistan was allied to the United States through multiple treaties and, out of deference to Pakistani sentiment, the U.S. largely remained un-engaged in Afghanistan until 1982. Afghanistan, which came into the international system as a rentier state, required external resources to pay its bills. When Afghanistan ousted the British in the early 20th century, Russia stepped in to play its role. India, which eschewed alliances, nonetheless grew increasingly close to the Soviet Union. Through the 1970s India's

influence in Afghanistan deepened. Thus Afghanistan was not only a source of interference on its own, but it also afforded India a launching pad from which it could destabilize Pakistan.

Pakistan's Islamist Addiction

To manage the myriad threats that emanated from Afghanistan, Pakistan turned to a cast of allies that would become the centerpiece of Pakistani foreign policy: Islamists and Islamist militants. By 1960, Pakistan's intelligence agencies, acting under the auspices of the army, were encouraging Pakistan's Islamist parties to advance the country's pursuit of strategic depth by forging ideological allies in Afghanistan. As Afghanistan came increasingly under the influence of the Soviet Union, Pakistan's Islamist parties and their Afghan allies became the principal foes of Afghan communists. The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), founded in 1965, was itself divided between rival wings. While the Communist factions competed for power and influence, Islamists were also responding to the spread of leftist ideology.

By the mid-1950s, Islamist politics had become firmly entrenched in Kabul, with Islamists gathering at Kabul University to debate campus Marxists. These Islamists were Pakistan's earliest allies, largely due the mediation of Pakistan's own Islamist parties, most notably the Jamaat-e-Islami. By 1973, the Islamists conducted their first *shura* (leadership council) in the home of Burhanuddin Rabbani, a junior member of the Sharia faculty at Kabul University. The shura elected Rabbani as its leader and Ghulam Rasul Sayyaf, also at the Kabul University, as deputy leader. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who was a student, assumed command of political activities. The latter became known as the *Jamiat-i-Islami* (Islamic Society) which would form the nucleus of the various mujahideen groups that Pakistan began to instrumentalize in its efforts to manipulate Afghanistan's internal affairs.

As events in Afghanistan began to churn with the pro-Pashtunistan Sardar Mohammad Daoud ousting King Zahir Shah in 1973, Pakistan's insurgency in Balochistan intensified and Pakistan responded with brutal military force. Afghanistan vigorously opposed military action in Balochistan while simultaneously prosecuting its claims upon Pashtun territories in Pakistan. In 1973, the authoritarian civilian leader Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, exhausted with Afghanistan and its varied policies, ordered the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) to lead covert actions in Afghanistan. The Inspector General of the Frontier Constabulary and the Director General of the ISI jointly conducted intelligence missions inside Afghanistan. Islamist leaders such as Hekmatyar and Rabbani routinely met with Pakistani intelligence. Bhutto, as well as all subsequent Pakistani leaders, chose Islamists as their instruments of interference in Afghanistan. Pakistan feared using ethnicity-based opposition because of the potential backlash such an approach could have for its own restive ethnic groups on the border areas.

By 1973, many Islamist leaders were already ensconced in militant training camps that the ISI established for them in North and South Waziristan agencies in the FATA. This laid the foundation for a larger anti-Soviet, so-called jihad effort in the 1980s, with American, Saudi, and other funders. These Pashtun-dominated agencies in FATA were a black hole, inaccessible to the press and conveniently located on the border with Afghanistan's eastern provinces of Paktia, Logar and Paktika. Moreover, Pakistan's military had a large garrison at Razmak (in the northern part of South Waziristan, near the southern boundary with North Waziristan). Pakistani security forces were also stationed in Mohmand agency abutting the northeastern, Pashtun-dominated, Afghan provinces of Nangarhar and Kunar. Pakistan's leadership ordered the Frontier Corps, a paramilitary organization whose recruits come from FATA, but whose officers are seconded from the Pakistan army, to organize and train the Afghans. The unit's inspector general, Brigadier (later Major General) Naseerullah Khan Babar oversaw the entire operation to train the Islamist militants. Hekmatyar and Ahmad Shah Massoud (who would later become an enemy of Pakistan and a target of the Taliban in the mid-1990s) were among the first to receive Pakistani training. Between 1973 and 1977, Pakistan's armed forces trained some 5,000 militants to fight the Daoud regime.

During their time in Pakistan, Afghan Islamists forged ever-deeper ties with Pakistan's Islamists, in particular members of the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islami, both of which were closely tied to the military and received funding from Saudi Arabia, among other donors. Hekmatyar would go on to form Hizb-e-Islami-Afghanistan, which had ideological ties to JI leadership in Pakistan (R. Hussain 2005; Haqqani 2005; Rubin 2002). Contrary to popular perceptions, Pakistan undertook these initiatives well before the Soviets crossed the Amu Darya and long before the United States became involved. In other words, when the United States and others became involved in Afghanistan after the Soviet invasion on Christmas Day, 1979, they were augmenting and resourcing a policy that Pakistan had developed and funded on its own, driven by its own security imperatives.

Throughout 1978, Lt. General Fazle Haq, of the ISI and operating at Zia's orders, managed to collapse about fifty Afghan resistance groups into a more manageable cadre. Other ISI operatives worked to foster deeper ties between Pakistani and Afghan Islamist groups while the Frontier Corps was tasked with training the burgeoning Islamist militias. These collective efforts resulted in seven major Sunni Afghan Islamist militant groups, in addition to a few important Shia militias that enjoyed more support from Iran. These groups were developed solely under Pakistan's direction and with Pakistani funds; in fact, American assistance to the mujahideen effort did not begin to flow until 1982 because the United States had sanctioned Pakistan in April 1979 for developments in its nuclear weapons program. The United States was unable to overtly fund Pakistan until Ronald Reagan became president in 1981 and worked with Congress to get those sanctions waived.

In April 1988, the Soviet Union signed the Geneva Accords, which signaled the end of the war. At the time of the Soviet withdrawal, the Afghan state, which was unable to pay its bills on its own, could not function with any degree of autonomy. Afghanistan verged on collapse. Mohammad Najibullah, the president installed by the Russians, faced the daunting challenge of reviving political institutions and restoring their legitimacy. The composition of the political elite had also changed during the war: on the regime side, traditional authority figures had been supplanted by party cadres, while armed militants filled the ranks of the opposition. However, even though Pakistan threw all of its resources at undermining his regime, Najibullah retained control until 1992 due to sustained economic assistance from the Soviet Union. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, financial support dried up and Najibullah's government succumbed to anti-regime militants on April 16, 1992.

Various militia factions led by different mujahideen commanders fought to control the state, with Pakistan supporting Hekmatyar. On April 24, 1992, a temporary political solution was forged (the Peshawar Accord) according to which the major militia commanders would rotate as presidents. This arrangement collapsed when Burhanuddin Rabbani refused to cede power as planned. Rabbani clung to power for four years, during which time the competing mujahidin parties never cohered around a single approach to governing the country. The protracted civil war ravaged Afghanistan and destroyed Kabul. Rabbani's government lasted until 1996 when it fell to the Taliban.

The Rise, Fall, and Resurgence of the Taliban

The Taliban first appeared in 1994 in Kandahar, where they gained fame by opposing the local branches of the various "mujahideen" factions that fought in the Afghan jihad. By the mid-1990s, Afghans began referring to these predatory militia commanders as "warlords" because of the destruction they wreaked upon Kabul in their struggle to control the capitol and the country. At that time, the principal warlords were Ahmad Shah Massoud's Northern Alliance and Hekmatyar's Hizb-e-Islami. In contrast to these venal purveyors of violence and mayhem, the Taliban garnered popular support because they promised – and indeed delivered – security, freedom of movement without harassment, and swift justice.

The members of the Taliban movement, which began in southern Afghanistan, were almost exclusively Pashtuns, and heavily reliant upon kinship networks in Afghanistan and prominent madrassas near Ghazni and Kandahar. Despite these important moorings in Afghanistan, the Taliban's most significant organizational and ideological connections were to Pakistan. Throughout the 1980s, Pakistan created hundreds of madrassas in the NWFP and FATA to produce mujahideen for the jihad to repel the Soviets from Afghanistan. With respect to the Taliban, the madrassas linked to the Deobandi movement were crucial. The Afghan Taliban's first generation of recruits were drawn from these madrassas. Mullah Omar, a veteran mujahideen commander who had been running a madrassa in Kandahar, led the movement. To underscore its links to these madrassas, the movement named itself the Taliban, the Persian plural of *talib* (student).

The Taliban first came into contact with the Pakistani political establishment through their ties to a faction of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islami, the Pakistani Deobandi political party, which at that time was headed by Maulana Fazlur Rehman. Rehman was a critical political partner of Benazir Bhutto, the daughter of Z.A. Bhutto, who became prime minister of Pakistan after Zia al Haq died in a 1988 plane accident. Rehman facilitated contacts between the Taliban and Major-General Naseerullah Khan Babar, who began providing logistical and other support to the Taliban. (Babar, as noted above, oversaw Pakistan's Afghan policy during Z.A. Bhutto's government.) The ISI, having reached the conclusion that Hekmatyar would never be able to forge a stable, pro-Pakistan government in Afghanistan, welcomed the Taliban as a new, and hopefully more viable, alternative.

The Taliban aimed to establish an Islamic government in Afghanistan from the wreckage left by the feuding warlords. Afghans, exhausted by war and the warlords' predations, generally welcomed the Taliban and their promise of security and peace. The Taliban prioritized reestablishing law and order. They abolished the various checkpoints that the warlords had established along the highways, from which they extracted bribes in return for safe passage. Many of the commanders at these checkpoints were known to rape women and young boys. Afghans widely lauded the Taliban for restoring safe passage along Afghanistan's roads. Traders and truckers, who had long been victimized by the warlords, were particularly supportive of the Taliban. As they moved out from Kandahar, the Taliban co-opted local warlords and institutions to expand their area of control.

Despite these important efforts, however, the Taliban would not have been able to capture the vast majority of the country on their own. The ISI, as well as the Pakistani army and Air Force, provided massive covert assistance, which enabled the Taliban to expel the largely Tajik Northern Alliance regime from Kabul by 1996. With deepening support from Pakistan, the Taliban had secured control over most of Afghanistan by 1998.

However, as the Taliban continued to consolidate their power, Afghans increasingly feared them due to their reliance upon grotesque physical punishment to enforce their version of Sharia, their denial of female educational and employment opportunities, and their coercive repertoire to compel men and women alike to abide by their harsh edicts. While the Taliban controlled much of the country, Ahmad Shah Massoud's Northern Alliance, with its base in the Panjshir valley, was the only source of resistance to the Taliban.

The Taliban did not truly deliver all that Pakistan had hoped. They did not settle the international border by acquiescing to the Durand Line, and they harbored many of Pakistan's sectarian and criminal elements. They brought disgrace upon Pakistan, which was one of only three states that supported the regime. Still, perhaps the most important thing the Taliban did deliver was one of the most important considerations for the Pakistan army: The Taliban managed to keep India away from sensitive parts of Afghanistan. During the Taliban's regime, the Indian presence was restricted to Massoud's Panjshir Valley, where they provided assistance to the Northern Alliance, along with Iran and other regional partners discomfited by the Taliban.

After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the United States presented Pakistan with a clear ultimatum: Pakistan would be with the United States in its military efforts in Afghanistan, or it would be against it with all of the consequences that would accompany that status. That military operation, Operation Enduring Freedom, commenced on October 7, 2001. Pakistan had several expectations of the United States in exchange for this support, which various U.S. officials nursed to varying degrees.

First, Pakistan wanted assurances that the Northern Alliance would not take Kabul as the Taliban fell. The Northern Alliance was the only militia organization to have successfully countered the Taliban. However, the U.S. military presence was small and unable to prevent this outcome. Unfortunately, the United States did not understand that Pakistan viewed the Northern Alliance as India's proxy. From Pakistan's point of view, the Americans had more or less handed the keys of Kabul to India.

Second, Pakistan hoped the United States would take a more proactive stance in resolving the ongoing dispute between India and Pakistan over the disposition of Kashmir. The United States, in fact, had little appetite for Pakistan's remonstrations on this issue.

Third, Pakistan expected that its "strategic assets" (nuclear weapons and delivery systems) would remain intact. While this assurance was technically honored, it was significantly eroded by the 2005 Indo-U.S. civilian nuclear deal. This bomb-friendly deal was part of ongoing U.S. efforts to help India become a global power, which included military assistance and missile cooperation, among other forms of military and civilian technical cooperation.

It would have been impossible for any decision-maker in Islamabad not to realize that Pakistan's strategic interests were greatly degraded by the Global War on Terror (GWOT), despite Islamabad being rewarded handsomely by the United States for supporting the effort. By 2004, under the leadership of its then president, General Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan had concluded that the emergent order in Afghanistan would welcome India's expanding presence and was likely to be hostile to Pakistan.

By 2005, if not earlier, Pakistan had done another U-turn. Islamabad began fully backing the resurgence of the Taliban under the leadership of Mullah Omar, who was based in the city of Quetta in Pakistan's Balochistan province. The Taliban, who fled to Pakistan after the U.S. invasion, took advantage of their sanctuaries in Pakistan to re-emerge as a formidable insurgent force that would erode the new Afghan government and challenge the United States and its NATO and Afghan allies for more than a decade.

Initially, the American government under President George W. Bush was reluctant to believe that Pakistan had double-crossed the United States. This was, in part, because the United States and its NATO partners did not fully understand that Afghanistan was experiencing a full-fledged insurgency until 2007, if not later. During that time, the United States was mostly focused upon capturing and eliminating members of Al Qaeda. Pakistan seemed to deliver on that front. Thus it was not until 2008 when the entirety of the U.S. government fully understood the extent and scale of Pakistan's double dealings.

By 2009, the commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan, General Stanley McChrystal, argued that the United States had to dedicate more troops to the country if it hoped to reverse the Taliban's gains. President Barack Obama acquiesced to his generals even though the available evidence suggests he knew Pakistan was the bigger problem. The surge rendered the United States even more dependent upon Pakistan because it required an increased logistical throughput, the vast majority of which travelled through Pakistan, in order to fight the war in Afghanistan.

Since the commencement of the war, Pakistan has received about $30 billion from the United States in aid and lucrative reimbursements for its own military operations. The United States has continued to reward Pakistan even though it has become abjectly clear that Pakistan has undermined the U.S. war efforts in Afghanistan at every turn. The United States and its international and Afghan partners have paid a heavy price in blood and treasure battling the Taliban and their allies, such as the Haqqani Network and Lashkar-e-Taiba. At the same time, Pakistan has continued to provide these same groups with sanctuary, military and financial assistance, operational planning and guidance, as well as political and diplomatic cover. Without Pakistan's extensive support, the Taliban would not have been able survive U.S. and allied operations. It is questionable whether the Taliban could have become a serious insurgent organization in the first instance without the ample perquisites provided to the organization by Pakistan. Despite the thousands of dead American and coalition soldiers and tens of thousands of dead Afghan partners, American officials in Congress, the U.S. Departments of State and Defense, and even the White House facilitate ongoing support to Pakistan in the face of the mountain of evidence that Pakistan is not a partner — much less an ally — but a hostile state dedicated to undercutting U.S. interests in the region and beyond.

Pakistan and the Taliban Today

As the preceding historical discussion underscores, Pakistan has enduring interests in Afghanistan. Unlike the United States, it has the resources and willpower to continue manipulating events in Afghanistan. Over the past fourteen years, some things have changed. Many of the new Taliban commanders are disgusted with the continued interference of Pakistan. They understand that Pakistan's interests are self-serving and only seek to use the Taliban to secure its own interests. With the recent announcement that Mullah Omar died some two years ago in a hospital in Pakistan's megacity of Karachi, many Taliban are angry that the core Taliban leadership, with ISI connivance, covered up his death and issued false statements in his name to secure their interests. This has caused a significant rift today, with some Taliban commanders rejecting Mullah Omar's successor Mullah Akhtar Mansour. Disgruntled Taliban commanders have even defected to the Islamic State. All of these developments are a challenge to Pakistan, which has long relied upon the Taliban to secure its interest in Afghanistan.

In fact, the United States pinned its hopes on Pakistan to deliver a political settlement between the current Afghan government, the United States, NATO, and the Taliban. Such a deal would give power to the Taliban that they did not have to fight for in the ballot box. Pakistan may well have succeeded had Afghanistan's intelligence agency, the NDS, not leaked the news of Mullah Omar's death.

Pakistan is now struggling to regain control of the movement. The stakes are high. The Islamic State is a serious risk to Pakistan, as many of its own domestic Islamist militant groups have pledged allegiance to the movement. In addition, Pakistan's erstwhile proxies have long splintered and turned against the state. Many now operate under the banner of the Pakistani Taliban, the leadership of which has sanctuary in Afghanistan. Pakistan believes that Afghanistan, the United States, and India actively support this leadership and its war against Pakistan. Equally disconcerting, much of the Taliban's cadres and leadership harbor deep resentment of Pakistan for its callous orchestrations in their country. Any territory under the control of anti-Pakistan Taliban or ISIS commanders can become a sanctuary for the myriad terrorist groups targeting the Pakistani state.

Despite riding the Islamist militancy tiger for decades with few adverse consequences, Pakistan now seems to be truly in trouble. Further, it has little appreciation of the extent of the problems it confronts, and thus no genuine plan to manage the deepening crises devolving from its long addiction to jihad. While it is easy to disregard Pakistan's predicament as amply deserved, the emerging chaos in Afghanistan and Pakistan is unlikely to remain localized to those states. There is little hope that the international community can do much to mitigate the looming crises until Pakistan understands that its varied domestic militancy problems stem from its enduring use of jihad as a tool of foreign policy. Pakistan also needs to accept Afghanistan as a neighbor rather than a client state to be manipulated cynically. Worse yet, the attention of the international community has shifted from South Asia to the Middle East as the Islamic State ravages Syria and Iraq.

Given that Pakistan is likely to remain committed to using jihadi groups to prosecute its interests in Afghanistan and India, the time has long since come for the international community to recognize that Pakistan cannot be part of any solution to the insecurity that plagues South Asia because it is the source of these problems. Coddling and financially rewarding Pakistan for its criminality cannot continue. Instead, the international community led by the United States, the United Kingdom, and Pakistan's neighbors must act in concert to adopt harsh measures to contain Pakistan and the jihadi menaces that it exports.

However, Pakistan has little fear that such dire scenarios will come to pass. It relies upon its expanding nuclear weapon program and menagerie of terrorist organizations to foster international fears that the country's collapse may permit its own troubled terrorist spawn to obtain these weapons. In turn, the international community kowtows to this nuclear blackmail with contempt but little resistance. This most certainly guarantees more loss of life in war-torn Afghanistan. And there is really nothing the international community can do to prevent this outcome unless it develops the courage to confront the problem at its roots: Pakistan's military, the intelligence agency it controls, and the jihadis they churn out to kill in Afghanistan and India.

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