

Pakistan's Defense and Strategic Relations with Major Powers



Author

Faizan Rashid is a Research Associate at the Centre for Security, Strategy and Policy Research (CSSPR). Faizan is a mechanical engineering graduate from the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST). He had previously worked as a Management Trainee at Shan Foods and as an Assistant Manager at Packages Limited. His research interests lie in environmental and public policy, climate change, and regional connectivity.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Research Assistant, CSSPR, Aqib Zaheer, for his invaluable assistance and support in collecting data for this report.

© The Center for Security, Strategy and Policy Research 2021

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of CSSPR or UOL.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical including photocopying, recording or any information storage or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the copyright holder.

Please direct all enquiries to the publishers. All imagery in this report is licensed under Creative Commons 2.0 from Unsplash.com, with thanks to all the photographers.

CSSPR

The Centre for Security, Strategy and Policy Research (CSSPR) is an autonomous policy research center housed in the University of Lahore (UOL), Lahore. It aims at generating research on issues relating to contemporary security and strategic aspects that affect Pakistan's domestic security environment and its international relations with other countries of the world. The Center aims to generate research-driven and nuanced discourses on how best to address security and strategic challenges that deny Pakistan the opportunity and ability to play its role as a responsible seventh Nuclear Weapon State in the world.

The Center conducts research, publishes, and holds conferences on a broad range of regional and international security, strategic, peace and conflict issues. Through this Center, we aim to establish national, regional and international linkages and collaborate with universities, think tanks, research institutes and eminent scholars from around the world, enabling national and international scholars and our students to use CSSPR's platform to deliberate upon issues that carry a global impact.

Center for Security, Strategy and Policy Research (CSSPR)

1-Km Defence Road
Lahore

Email: csspr@siss.uol.edu.pk
www.csspr.uol.edu.pk

University of Lahore (UOL)

1-Km Defence Road
Lahore

Email: info@uol.edu.pk
T: +92 423 2233888
www.uol.edu.pk

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Russia.....	2
China.....	5
France.....	7
Saudi Arabia.....	8
United States of America.....	9
Turkey.....	10
Conclusion.....	11

Pakistan's Defense and Strategic Relations with Major Powers

Introduction

Flanked by Afghanistan and Iran to the west, the Indian Ocean to the south, India to the east, and China to the north, Pakistan has not only played a pivotal role in global and regional politics in the past but also is strategically well-positioned and poised to play an important role in regional and international politics going forward. Its relations with its immediate neighbors and partners have resulted in triumphs and setbacks over the past seven decades. Owing to its acrimonious bilateral relations with an antagonistic New Delhi, tensions with an irredentist, unstable Kabul, and the shifting sands of regional and global politics, Islamabad has been forced to frame its foreign relations in the context of augmenting its security. This phenomenon, ever since Pakistan's inception, has increased the import of its defense relations with regional as well as global powers. From the height of the Cold War to that of the War on Terror, the defense components of Pakistan's relations with major powers have remained significant. Pakistan's pivotal strategic location brings with it a plethora of opportunities and challenges. Instability in the hood, coupled with the rise of revisionist proclivities and the return of great-power rivalries, has ensured that traditional security concerns will continue to elicit Pakistan's policy responses. Thus, it is imperative to understand how Pakistan's defense relations with important countries have fared till date, with a view to analyzing future pathways. This report surveys Pakistan's defense and strategic relations with major regional and global powers.

Russia

Pakistan and Russia have had a fraught diplomatic relationship in the past, one characterized by mutual distrust that teetered on the knife's edge of hostility. Misperceptions that emanated from Islamabad's Cold War-era alliance with Washington, its aversion to communism, and Moscow's strategic handshake with New Delhi, did not leave room for relations to develop. Certainly, Pakistan's security-centered ties with the United States, which were a product of the former's bid to secure itself from India and the latter's strategic interest to counter and deter communism, attenuated the prospect of establishing healthy Islamabad-Moscow relations. For instance, Pakistan, prioritizing its security vis-à-vis India, agreed to take part in western-sponsored military pacts, like the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). Starting from the 1950s, Pakistani air bases were utilized for photographic aerial reconnaissance and intelligence-gathering on the Soviet Union. The 1960 U-2 incident further vitiated Pak- Soviet relations, which were already marred by the Soviet Union's support to Afghanistan on the "Pashtunistan" issue and that to India on the Kashmir dispute.

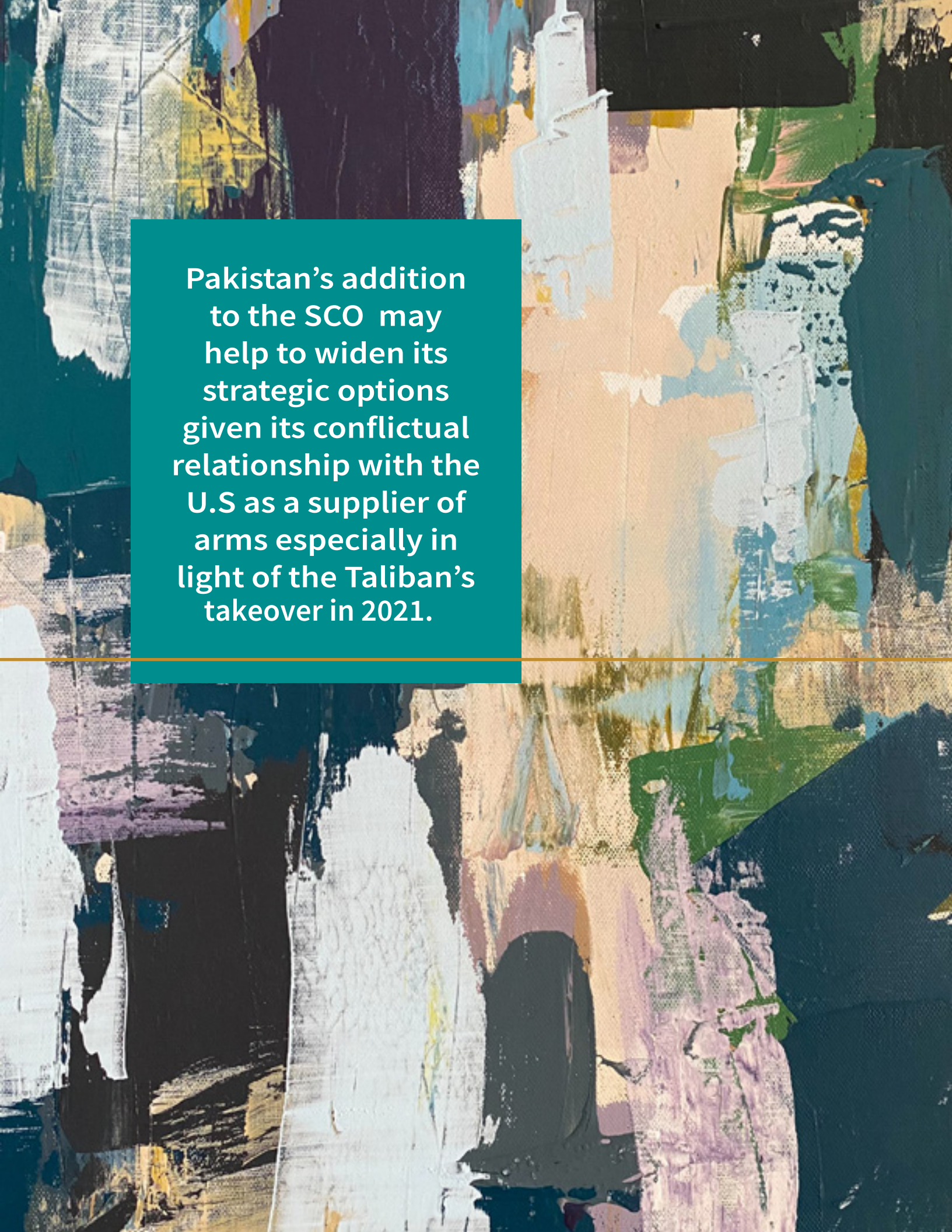
Rapprochement between Islamabad and Moscow was desired after the Western powers decided to grant large-scale military assistance to India in the wake of the 1962 Indo-Sino war. This decision

underscored the receding importance of military pacts as Pakistan found itself isolated from the Soviet Union while the Western powers failed to provide support on the Kashmir issue. The initial advantage of the western-sponsored pacts in consolidating Pakistan's defense against India did not translate into a long-term military balance as the American supply of arms served to escalate tensions in South Asia. Soviet policymakers, after the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Sino-India war, reoriented their South Asia policy which had hitherto centered exclusively on New Delhi. Instead of disengagement, Moscow sought a broader policy that included Islamabad in an effort to curtail Washington's and Beijing's forays in the region.

The 1965 Pak-India war saw the United States suspend arms supply to South Asia. The supply was discontinued altogether by April 1967. The Soviet Union, emphasizing its greater engagement with both South Asian states, mediated talks between Pakistan and India after the 1965 war at a summit in Tashkent, in January 1966. Moscow's apprehensions regarding Islamabad's commitment to the U.S.-sponsored military pacts were alleviated after the termination of American communications unit at Badaber, depriving the U.S. of its strategic advantage of reconnaissance. The Tashkent Conference, the Soviet's first major diplomatic venture in South Asian affairs, was successful because both parties agreed to restore the status quo ante and abjure war.¹ Détente was not achieved, but Moscow's reputation as a neutral guarantor of peace was established. Attempts were made during President Ayub's administration to foster trust and diplomatic relations, but Soviet arms sales to India, during and after the 1971 Indo-Pak war only stifled all attempts at developing bilateral relations. Pakistan had earlier facilitated an historic, gargantuan diplomatic opening between China and the United States. Simultaneously, Moscow and New Delhi signed the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation in August 1971, which provided India with support during the 1971 war. Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's trip to Moscow in 1974 found success, as evidenced by substantial Soviet economic investment in oil exploration and help in establishing the Steel Mills, but relations did not improve beyond economic investments.

Before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan had left SEATO and CENTO, both alliances that opposed Soviet influence. However, war in neighboring Afghanistan and Pakistan's resultant stewardship of the anti-Soviet jihad reinforced the antagonism between the two countries for much of the 1980s. While Pak-Soviet relations made little to no headway, close military and diplomatic ties between New Delhi and Moscow only served to harm the former's relations with Islamabad. The damage to Islamabad-Moscow ties caused by the Soviet-Afghan War was not easily repaired. Relations did defrost after the Soviet withdrawal, but Pakistan's support to the Mujahideen during the occupation remained a source of contention between both countries. In the 1990s, Pakistan was left to deal with the fallout of the Afghan War, Russia was emerging from Soviet Union's dissolution and experiencing internal instabilities while the U.S, under the terms of the Pressler Amendment, banned economic and military assistance to Pakistan.

The turn of the century saw both countries find mutual ground in combating the threat of terrorism. During the Musharraf era, Russia-Pakistan relations remained cordial as Russia generally supported the U.S.-led war against terrorism in Afghanistan. Despite Moscow's skepticism that the inclusion of both Pakistan and India would distract from the group's core objective, Russia endorsed Pakistan's bid to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and offered assistance in the expansion of Pakistan's coal and steel sectors. After the U.S. raid in Pakistan that killed Osama bin Laden, U.S.-Pakistan relations deteriorated to new depths. Pakistan's then- Army Chief General Ashfaq Kayani,



Pakistan's addition to the SCO may help to widen its strategic options given its conflictual relationship with the U.S as a supplier of arms especially in light of the Taliban's takeover in 2021.

in his visit to Moscow in 2011, convinced Russian officials to reconsider their ban on arms sales to Pakistan. After a series of bilateral consultations and diplomatic visits, Moscow lifted its arms embargo on Pakistan, recalibrating its South Asian policy.²

During the visit of Russian Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu in November 2014, a comprehensive defense cooperation agreement was signed that included “exchange of information on politico-military issues; cooperation for promoting international security; intensification of counter-terrorism and arms control activities; strengthening collaboration in various military fields...and sharing experiences in peacekeeping operations”.³ This agreement came about during the Crimean annexation and military intervention in Ukraine that led to heated tension between Russia and the West. During this visit, discussions also took place on tackling the problems of drug trafficking and international terrorism jointly.

Moscow’s shift in foreign policy may be attributed to apprehensions about terrorism that could spill over to the regions in its periphery, which had already been the target of terrorism from time to time. Unlike China, whose support for Pakistan’s candidature was never in doubt, Russian support for Pakistan’s inclusion into the SCO may underscore a change in Russian perception of Pakistan as a strategic ally in mitigating the expansive threat of terrorism from the region. Pakistan’s addition to the SCO may help widen its strategic options given its conflictual relationship with the U.S as a supplier of arms, especially in light of the Taliban’s takeover in 2021. The Pakistan Army Aviation Corps received four Mi-35M “Hind E” attack helicopters worth US\$ 153 million from Russia in August 2017 as part of an earlier deal.⁴ Both countries have also undertaken joint military exercises focused on cordon and search operations, hostage and rescue, and counterterrorism operations including the “Friendship” military exercises in 2017, the Arabian Monsoon naval drills in 2014 and 2015, and the Druzhba I-VI from 2016-2021.⁵ Russia participated in the Pakistan Navy-led Aman naval exercise, along with participants from the naval forces of 45 countries.

Pakistani troops have also received training at Russian military institutions after a joint agreement was signed at the first meeting of the Russia–Pakistan Joint Military Consultative Committee held in Islamabad in August 2018. General Qamar Bajwa, the Pakistan Army Chief, visited Moscow in 2018 and it was agreed to form the Joint Military Commission. After President Trump’s unilateral termination of Pakistan’s involvement in the U.S. International Military Education Program (IMET), Moscow and Islamabad signed the “Security Training Agreement” to train Pakistani military officers in Russian military institutions.⁶

Moscow is, slowly but surely, warming up to Islamabad’s adherence to non-alignment and its commitment to fostering a Eurasian vision of geoeconomics and connectivity. Russia has avoided pursuing a proactive role in the geopolitics of South Asia in the past and its foreign policy is dependent on the strategic and economic benefits that each nation brings to the table. Pakistan does not provide the same business opportunities, economic mileage, and diplomatic influence that India wields in the global forum. However, Pakistan’s geographic allocation is a greater political boon than it is a bane. Both Pakistan and Russia have had to reevaluate their mutual relations in light of each country’s external circumstances, with both states having a fraught relationship with the U.S. Pakistan-Russia bilateral relations are still at a nascent stage but Pakistan may prioritize



improving them given that a brazen India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi threatens Pakistan as well as the prospect of peace in South Asia. Pakistan has been besieged with the spillover of violence from across the Afghan border during the two-decade long War on Terror. This led to Pakistan facing domestic terrorist threats besides the looming hegemonic aspirations of India. Despite being the recipient of U.S reimbursement for the incremental costs associated with being a counterterrorism ally, Pakistan has lost troops, civilians, military equipment, and reserves through its involvement in the War. The high cost of defense modernization, a burden for Pakistan's fledging economy, may only be met by reestablishing all strategic channels of cooperation if Islamabad hopes to reduce the asymmetry against India. Joint military exercises and alternate forms of military engagement are new for both Moscow and Islamabad. There is greater room for better understanding of each other's tactical, operational, and strategic thought.

Defense officials from both countries have, in their consultative meetings, agreed to bolster defense relations between Islamabad and Moscow. They have highlighted the need for implementing the decisions that the two countries take to strengthen cooperation in military training, intelligence, and defense production.⁷

China

Favorable relations with China, a member of the P5, and as an immediate neighbor, are a key pillar of Pakistan's foreign policy after Pakistan recognized the People's Republic of China in 1951. As all-weather partners, both nations have historically shared a common Indian threat to their national security that helped generate a strong bond of entente. Strategic foresight for early Chinese recognition by the Pakistani leaders may have envisioned the objective, that after having the United Nations' (UN) seat and veto power, China could support Pakistan's standpoint on Kashmir in the UN Security Council.⁸ Chinese aspiration in the early years of the Cold War were stifled by U.S. policy of

containment of the communist bloc and China's territorial claims on Tibet and Taiwan. Fostering bilateral relations with China would have risked seeking the ire of the Western bloc, nevertheless, Pakistan pursued a policy of bilateralism with China and the U.S while earning Soviet's animosity. An economically-struggling Pakistan signed a barter agreement with Beijing in 1952 while it attained aid from the U.S under the 'Point-Four Program' signed with the-then U.S. President Truman.⁹

China and Pakistan were able to amicably sign a boundary agreement of the Sino-Pak border in 1962, removing any possibility of conflict of territorial boundaries, and a similar agreement was signed in March 1963 for Xinjiang and adjacent areas. Subsequent visits of Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai and Pakistani President Ayub Khan cemented a new era of partnership and mutually-beneficial bilateral relations. China supplied machinery worth 15 million PKR for the Heavy Mechanical Complex in Taxila in 1968 along with interest-free loans to develop Pakistan's nascent small industries and infrastructure.¹⁰ Once China conducted its Hydrogen bomb test in 1967, Pakistan found in Beijing the strategic bulwark it needed against India at the time. Pakistan was instrumental in bringing the United States – a major strategic ally – into contact with the eastern power that culminated into President Nixon's historic trip to Beijing in 1971. Hedging its bets on U.S and China, Pakistan wasn't successful in bilaterally engaging the Soviets. Like India, who immediately signed the USSR-India Treaty of Friendship and Peace after Nixon's trip to China. The 1970s, in a reversal of fortunes, marked the end of détente between the U.S and the Soviet Union and the beginning of détente between the U.S and China. Later on, in the 1970's, joint ventures between the two countries included the Heavy Mechanical Complex, Heavy Ordnance Foundry, and Pakistan's largest Aeronautical complex, followed by military assistance to the tune of USD 630 million.¹¹

Initially Pakistan heavily depended upon U.S aid, especially during the Soviet-Afghan War, but after the withdrawal of Soviet troops, bilateral aid was suspended in 1990 under the Pressler Amendment. This led Pakistan to find in China a more reliable ally with whom it could strengthen strategic ties. In recent years, development cooperation with China has sped up, and although military and technological transactions continue to dominate the relationship, the trends include extensive economic support and investment in a significant number of infrastructure projects, most famously the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

China sold its first units of the A-100 Multiple Rocket Launcher (MRL) to Pakistan in 2008 and since then Pakistan has built up the capacity to indigenously produce rockets for their MRL system.¹² In 2014, China exported military weapons worth \$394 million to Pakistan while by 2015, the export increased by 70% and China supplied arms to Pakistan worth \$565 million.¹³ Pakistan awarded a contract to China for four multi-role warship Type-054 frigates to their state-run China Shipbuilding Trading Company and HZ Shipyard in 2017.¹⁴

Developed jointly by Chengdu Aircraft Corporation (CAC) of China and by the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex (PAC), and powered by a single Russian-designed but Chinese-built Klimov RD-93 (RD-33 derivative) turbofan, the JF-17 Thunder exemplifies the strong bonds of friendship between the two neighbors. It has supplanted the American F-16Cs as the premier multirole fighter of the Pakistan Air Force.

Along with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the China-Pakistan military relationship deepened further when the Pakistan Army inducted its first batch of Chinese-made VT-4 battle tanks, built by the Chinese state-owned defense manufacturer, Norinco, in April 2020.¹⁵ A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between China and Pakistan in November 2020, aimed at enhancing defense cooperation between their respective armies. In December 2020, Chinese state media advertised a decision to sell 50 Wing Loong II unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs) to Pakistan.¹⁶

Both countries have participated in nine iterations of the Shaheen joint military exercises on which Pakistan's Chief of the Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa commented that these exercises would "improve combat capacity of both air forces substantially and also enhance interoperability".¹⁷

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) reported that Pakistan remained the main recipient of Chinese arms and accounted for 38% of Chinese arms exports in 2016–2020.¹⁸ In 2021, Pakistan commissioned China to integrate the HQ-9/P High to Medium Air Defence System (HIMADS) into Pakistan Army's Air Defence.¹⁹ The HQ-9/P is considered as a strategic long-range Surface to Air Missile (SAM) with remarkable flexibility and precision capable of intercepting multiple air targets including aircraft, cruise missiles and Beyond Visual Range Weapons at ranges over 100 kilometers with Single Shot Kill Probability. Despite a reduction of 23% in arms imports by Pakistan in the time period between 2011–2015 and 2016–2020, China has remained Pakistan's biggest importer. Outstanding orders of 50 combat aircraft, 8 submarines, and 4 frigates from China are scheduled for delivery by 2028.²⁰ In December 2021, Pakistan's Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid announced that the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) will perform a fly-over using the recently-purchased Chinese J-10 fighter jets in a monumental Republic Day Parade, on March 23, 2022.²¹ Pakistan planning to show the successful induction of the J-10 aircraft on a day as important as March 23 is indicative of the importance of Sino-Pak defense relations.

France

Initially, Pakistan and France had promising prospects for military partnership, as in 1967, France sold its first batch of Mirage fighters as well as submarine technology to Pakistan. The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) bought second-hand Mirage fighter jets decades later in 1990 followed by a contract signing in 1996 for the acquisition of 40 reconnaissance aircraft.²² Pakistan Navy further cemented a military partnership with the acquisition of Daphné class submarine and the submarine technology transfer of the Agosta class in 1994. In 2011, France stopped all sales of heavy military equipment to Pakistan to assuage Indian concerns as French companies found remarkable success in winning key defense contracts in India compared to economically struggling Pakistan. Gerard Longuet, the then French defense minister, said that "After the death of Osama bin Laden, Pakistan should be given an opportunity to explain its position vis-à-vis terrorism", as France did not want to be seen "feeding Pakistan's military ambitions".²³ However, one of the most noteworthy events in the history of Islamabad-Paris defense relations took place in the 1970s. Both countries signed, from 1973 until 1976, three contracts and agreements, for establishing a reprocessing plant. The bilateral agreement, signed in March 1976, called for placing the plant under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards. However, due to U.S. pressure and diplomacy, France backed out of the reprocessing deal. Later on, in 2009, France and Pakistan agreed to go ahead with a nuclear deal. However, there was a great deal of confusion as to what the deal would

entail. Pakistan, for its part, said France had agreed to transfer civilian nuclear technology, but the latter said cooperation would be extended in the field of nuclear safety.²⁴

Saudi Arabia

Military cooperation lies at the heart of historical and fraternal ties between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Defense cooperation was formalized by a 1967 accord and the dispatch of Pakistani military and air force trainers to Saudi Arabia. Pakistani fighter pilots protected the Kingdom from Yemeni incursions in 1969 while Pakistani engineers reportedly built Saudi fortifications along its border with Yemen.²⁵ Pakistani soldiers have been stationed in Saudi Arabia since the 1970s and the Pakistani military has given various kinds of training to Saudi soldiers and pilots.

The security understanding between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia was enhanced by the 1982 Protocol Agreement regarding the “Deputation of Pakistani Armed Personnel and Military Training” in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution. This resulted in the deployment of nearly 15,000 Pakistani troops to the kingdom who remained there for the duration of the Iran-Iraq War.²⁶ This deputation resulted in the Pakistani military apparatus fostering a unique military-to-military relation that has played a role in inter-governmental diplomacy. This interplay between the Saudi royalty and the civil-military elites in Pakistan has allowed for multi-faceted bilateral relations to develop.

Till 2016, Saudi Arabia was the largest importer of Pakistani arms including conventional weaponry and machinery.²⁷ Pakistan is one of the 41 members at the Saudi-led Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMAFT) which was launched by the Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman, in 2017. The coalition (IMAFT) was envisaged to serve as a platform for security cooperation, including provision of training, equipment and troops, and involvement of religious scholars for dealing with extremism. Former Pakistan Army Chief General Raheel Sharif, commands the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC). More than 20 major public and over 100 private sector firms are engaged in manufacturing defense-related products in Pakistan. The Pakistan Navy (PN) and Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF) have conducted numerous joint naval exercises including the Naseem Al Bahar XI in 2018, an advanced level maritime exercise involving almost all facets of naval forces.²⁸


The level of participation from both sides signifies the trust and mutual confidence between the two brotherly countries. The joint PN – RSNF naval exercise Naseem Al Bahr was aimed at enhancing interoperability and sharpening the tactical proficiency in Counter Piracy, Anti Air & Surface Warfare, and mine countermeasure warfare. Pakistani Army and the Saudi Royal Land Forces have conducted 7 iterations of the Al- Samsam military exercise.²⁹ Pakistan hosted the 45-nation naval exercise, Aman-21, where Saudi Arabia was an observer given the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.³⁰

United States of America

Although Pakistan and the U.S. have enjoyed strong economic and military ties, their history is plagued by periods of mistrust and antagonism. Pakistan's involvement was instrumental in the initial success of the U.S.-led SEATO pact to contain Soviet expansion in the early years of the Cold War. During the 1965 Indo-Pak war, U.S. military assistance was suspended to both countries, and Pakistan was not shown any preferential treatment in spite of its membership of the U.S.-sponsored multilateral defense cooperation mechanisms. Reconsidering its pro-U.S. policy, Pakistan sought broader engagement with neighboring China. Although relations improved with arms sales from Washington to Islamabad renewing in 1975, an embargo was placed on any future economic assistance to Pakistan in 1979 under the Symington Amendment, over concerns regarding Pakistan's nascent nuclear program. Restrictions were eventually abandoned when the U.S. found Pakistani assistance critical to obviating the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Politically-charged, isolated instances, such as the ransacking of the U.S. embassy in Islamabad in 1979, failed to disrupt Pak-US cooperation. Their mutual dependence allowed for waivers of legislative restriction that had previously stifled civilian and military aid. The then-President General Zia Ul-Haq refused the outgoing Carter administration's offer of USD 400 million in aid, until a USD 3.2 billion military and economic assistance program was agreed on in 1981.³¹ The two countries signed a second multi-year USD 4 billion economic development and security assistance program in 1986, but all developments and aid were terminated after the Pressler Amendment.³² However, successive U.S. Administrations "found ways to cautiously facilitate Pakistan."³³ For example, the H.W. Bush Administration, from 1990 until 1992, allowed private commercial sales amounting to \$100 million to Pakistan for defense articles. The Administration argued that it was not violating the Pressler Amendment.³⁴ Also, despite Pakistan's nuclear developments, the Clinton Administration and the Congress facilitated the release of \$368 million in lieu of defense assistance to Pakistan. Further, the Clinton Administration, according to Rabia Akhtar, was pressured by Pakistani lobbying to more or less reimburse money for the embargoed F16s.³⁵ Even though aid was suspended, Pakistan's nuclear testing brought strong condemnation from the U.S., as well as additional sanctions on humanitarian aid.

The September 11 Attacks and the subsequent War on Terror resulted in a paradigm shift for the U.S-Pak relations. General Musharraf's decision to support the U.S-led campaign in Afghanistan increased economic and military assistance to Pakistan, with a \$3 billion package commencing in 2005, and the designation of Pakistan as a major non-NATO ally.³⁶ In 2005, the U.S lifted their arm sales embargo and allowed for commercial sales of F-16 fighter aircraft after a 16-year hiatus. Under the Bush administration, Pakistan became a recipient of their Coalition Support Fund (CSF) that began reimbursing U.S. allies for their logistical and operational support of U.S.-led counterterrorism operations – till 2011, a decade into the war, some \$8.9 billion had been disbursed to Pakistan.³⁷

Beyond that, the Kerry-Lugar-Berman (KLB) bill passed in 2009, pledged to provide for USD 1.5 billion in non-military assistance annually for five years. The U.S insistence on carrying out drone attacks in the border regions of Pakistan to target leaders of the insurgency in Afghanistan was highly unpopular amongst Pakistani elites. Distrust between the two countries reached new depths after the killing of Osama Bin Laden in the Pakistani garrison town of Abbottabad in May 2011. As numerous allegations were levelled in Washington that the Government of Pakistan had shielded Osama bin Laden, Pak-U.S. cooperation collapsed Rapprochement began in 2015 with an overture



Prime Minister Imran Khan has stressed the need for a balanced approach to the Pak-U.S. relations that does not compromise Pakistan's interests and security going forward.

intended to bolster the tenuous bilateral partnership with the Obama Administration agreeing to sell eight F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan at subsidized rates. However, Washington decided to forgo the subsidy in 2016, over concerns by U.S lawmakers that Pakistan was not doing enough to fight terrorism. President Trump's administration, early into its term, accused Pakistan of providing safe havens to terrorists.

President Trump subsequently cancelled a USD 300 million disbursement to Pakistan on the grounds that Pakistan had failed to take decisive action against the Afghan Taliban terrorists.³⁸ Prime Minister Imran Khan has stressed the need for a balanced approach to Pak-U.S. relations that does not compromise Pakistan interests and security going forward. This is evidenced by his refusal to allow the U.S. to use Pakistani bases for counterterrorism operations.³⁹

Turkey

With historical foundations and owing to the prospects of a developing multipolar Eurasia, Pakistan and Turkey have found great benefit in cultivating a strong partnership in the defense and military sphere. Turkey's growing arms industry needs a bigger and reliable market, and Pakistan needs to diversify its sources of arms supplies. During the Cold War, Turkey could only provide upgrading services to Pakistani defense hardware. However, now, it directly sells indigenous arms to Pakistan. Turkish arms transfer to Pakistan from 2016-2019 amounted to around \$112 million.⁴⁰ In recent years, Pakistan has become Turkey's third-largest arms export market while Turkey has become Pakistan's fourth- largest source of arms. Future acquisitions may include the purchase of four MILGEM Ada-class corvettes, and 30 T-129 Atak helicopters.⁴¹ As both countries have a history of being subject to sanctions and embargoes, Istanbul and Islamabad are growing more inclined towards each other as Pakistan navigates French and U.S. arms-sale embargoes and restrictions. The Pakistan Navy commissioned a 17,000-ton fleet tanker from a Turkish defense contractor, Savunma Teknolojileri Mühendislik ve Ticaret A.Ş. (STM), in 2018.⁴² The very organization, it must be stressed, was awarded a contract to upgrade Agosta 90B submarines. The elaborate modernization of Agosta 90B submarines that Turkey has committed to undertaking is but reflective of the growing trust between the two countries, primarily because the project continues despite a string of restrictions and sanctions imposed by France. That said, the pace of the project's completion has been slow given that the STM has had to withstand French pressure. Pak-Turk naval cooperation has further improved after the signing of the MILGEM project, under which four corvettes will be built for the Pakistan Navy. Two of those will be built in Turkey while two will be built in Pakistan. Ankara has also agreed to buy 52 Super Mushshak aircraft from Islamabad. The aircraft are expected to be delivered to Turkey by 2022.

Further, the year 2021 saw both countries take their ties to the next level, with defense being one of the key areas in which cooperation increased. In that regard, the transfer of technology was identified as critical to strengthening Pak-Turk defense relations. This is evidenced by the fact that the Turkish Aerospace Inc set up its first office in Pakistan's National Science and Technology Park, focusing on radar technology, drones, and cyber warfare. What's more, Turkey's premier arms producer Turkish Aerospace Industry (TAI) signed a contract with Pakistan's missile manufacturer, National Engineering & Scientific Commission (NESCOM), to jointly produce the Turkish medium-altitude,

long-endurance (MALE) Anka armed drone. This deal will allow for the transfer of technology and resources between the two countries. That Turkish officials and manufacturers are enthused about this deal is reason enough to argue that it is likely to be a game-changer for Ankara-Islamabad strategic relations. Also, the battlefield performances of Anka drones inspire confidence, especially when it comes to their tactical efficacy. The successful completion of this project could also solidify the counterterrorism cooperation between the two countries, not least because of the effectiveness of drones like this in conducting strikes as part of kinetic operations against terrorists.

All this points to the fact that the positive momentum in Pak-Turk relations has permeated in the defense realm, too. High-level engagements between Ankara and Islamabad, coupled with a two-way commitment to altering the trajectories of their relations, augur well for the future. Strategic cooperation in the defense domain will be one of the mainstays of Pak-Turk relations going forward.

Conclusion

Pakistan's defense relations with major powers show a great deal of pragmatic maneuvering, with a view to achieving its national interests in a sea of partisanship, regional alliances, and diplomatic chicanery. Pakistan, in its early days, entered into partnerships to thwart threats from its eastern neighbor. A singular focus on dealing with India meant that the nature of its defense relations were decidedly narrow and dependent upon how other countries dealt with the latter. That said, Pakistan's focus on broadening the framework of national security and leveraging its geoeconomic power augurs well for the future of the country's defense relations with important regional and global actors, especially because defense procurements as well as a country's ability to become a defense supplier hinge upon its economic capacity. Thus, Pakistan's economic and military diplomacy will be critical to making it a very potent, reliable defense partner. Absent a strategic transformation of its economy, Pakistan would not be able to establish defense relations of a strategic nature, and, in the process, lose a chance to influence major powers. Also, one of the foci of the Government of Pakistan should be to expand its indigenous defense industrial base.

Endnotes

1. Pakistan's Relations with the U.S.S.R. in the 1960s, Zubeida Hasan, Royal Institute of International Affairs, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40394188>
2. Russia lifts arms embargo to Pakistan: report, Dawn News, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1110131>
3. Pakistan, Russia sign landmark defence cooperation agreement, Dawn News, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1145875>
4. Russia has made special upgrades in MI-35 military helicopters exported to Pakistan, Times of Islamabad, <https://timesofislamabad.com/04-Sep-2017/russia-has-made-special-upgrades-in-mi-35-military-helicopters-exported-to-pakistan>
5. Pak-Russia joint military exercise Druzhba-VI concludes, Express Tribune, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2324042/pak-russia-joint-military-exercise-druzhba-vi-concludes>
6. Bilateral Bond Between Pakistan and Russia Deepening, The Diplomat, <https://thediplomat.com/authors/niha-dagia/>
7. "Pakistan, Russia to strengthen military ties" Dawn, September 30, 2021, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1649224>
8. Amin, Shahid M. (2000). 'Pakistan's Relations with China in Pakistan's Foreign Policy — A Reappraisal, Pg 157, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
9. Pakistan-China Strategic Relationship: A Glorious Journey of 55 Years, Umbreen Javaid and Asifa Jahangir, Center for South Asian Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.
10. The Complete Guide To Sino-Pak Bilateral Relations (1951-2018), Courting the Law, <https://courtingthelaw.com/2018/08/04/commentary/the-complete-guide-to-sino-pak-bilateral-relations-1951-2018/>
11. Pakistan-China Strategic Relationship: A Glorious Journey of 55 Years, Umbreen Javaid and Asifa Jahangir, Center for South Asian Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.
12. These top 5 Pakistani-Chinese weapons made India jealous, Global Village Space, <https://www.globalvillagespace.com/these-top-5-pakistani-chinese-weapons-made-india-jealous/>
13. Pakistan-China Military and Security Ties: A Qualitative Analysis, Muhammad Jawad Hashmi, Sobia Jamil, Dr. Ashfaq Ahmed, Pakistan Social Sciences Review, <https://pssr.org.pk/issues/v3/2/pakistan-china-military-and-security-ties-a-qualitative-analysis.pdf>
14. China launches new warship for Pakistan, Andalou Agency, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/china-launches-new-warship-for-pakistan/2128308>
15. Pakistan Army inducts China-made VT-4 battle tanks, the Economic Times, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/pakistan-army-inducts-china-made-vt-4-battle-tanks/articleshow/84017081.cms>
16. The China-Pakistan Partnership Continues to Deepen, ORF, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/the-china-pakistan-partnership-continues-to-deepen/#:~:text=In%20December%2C%20Chinese%20state%20media,age%20stand%2Doff%20weapons.%E2%80%9D>
17. Pak-China joint air drills important to boost combat readiness, Dawn News, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1596590#:~:text=Gen%20Bajwa%20said%3A%20%E2%80%9CThe%20>

joint,synergy%20for%20better%20operational%20results.

18. Trends in International Arms Transfer, SIPRI, https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/fs_2103_at_2020.pdf

19. New air defence system commissioned into army, Dawn <https://www.dawn.com/news/1652071#:~:text=KARACHI%3A%20General%20Qamar%20Javed%20Bajwa,into%20Pakistan%20Army%20Air%20Defence>.

20. Trends in International Arms Transfer, SIPRI, https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/fs_2103_at_2020.pdf

21. Sebastien Roblin, “Minister: Pakistan Bought Chinese J-10 Jets To Counter India’s Rafales” Forbes, December 31, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/sebastienroblin/2021/12/31/minister-pakistan-bought-chinese-j-10-jets-to-counter-indias-rafales/?sh=2769bbf1ef2c>

22. France and Pakistan: Story of an Unwritten Alliance, Humaira Dar, Pakistan Vision Vol 14 No 2, Pg 57, http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/studies/PDF-FILES/Artical-3_v14_no2_13.pdf

23. France stops military equipment sales to Pakistan, the Economic Times, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/france-stops-military-equipment-sales-to-pakistan/articleshow/8608141.cms?from=mdr>

24. “Pakistan in 'French nuclear deal” BBC News, May 15, 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8052587.stm>

25. An overview of Pak-Saudi relations, Dawn News, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1463802>

26. Ibid

27. Saudi Arabia largest importer of Pakistani arms, Dawn News, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1256712>

28. Exercise Naseem Al Bahr XI between Pakistan Navy, RSNF, <https://nation.com.pk/17-Feb-2018/exercisenaseem-al-bahr-xi-between-pakistan-navy-rsnf-concludes>

29. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia joint military training 'Samsam 7' begins, Business Recorder, February 16, 2020, <https://www.brecorder.com/news/571499>

30. Aman-21 Naval Exercise: Evidence of Pakistan Turning the Tide on Terrorism, RUSI, <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/aman-21-naval-exercise-evidence-pakistan-turning-tide-terrorism>

31. US Afghan Relations: A Historical Perspective of Events of 9/11, Mussarat Jabeen, Muhammad Saleem Mazhar, Naheed S. Goraya, South Asian Studies, Research Journal of South Asian Studies Vol. 25, No. 1, January-June 2010, pp.143-173, <http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/csas/PDF/Dr.%20M.%20Saleem%20Mazhar%209.pdf>

32. Pakistan: U.S. Foreign Assistance, Susan B. Epstein, K. Alan Kronstadt, Congressional Research Service, <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4e4238572.pdf>

33. Rabia Akhtar, The Blind Eye: U.S. Nonproliferation Policy Towards Pakistan From Ford to Clinton. (Lahore, The University of Lahore Press, 2018), 334.

34. Ibid

35. Ibid,337.

36. Ibid

37. Ibid

38. Pentagon cancels aid to Pakistan over record on militants, Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/article/usa-pakistan-military-idINKCN1LI01T>
39. Imran Khan, “Imran Khan: Pakistan is ready to be a partner for peace in Afghanistan, but we will not host U.S. bases” The Washington Post, June 21, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/06/21/afghanistan-pakistan-imran-khan-peace-security-cooperation-us/>
40. The Turkey-Pakistan entente: Muslim middle powers align in Eurasia, Middle East Institute, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/turkey-pakistan-entente-muslim-middle-powers-align-eurasia>
41. Defense Port Turkey-South Asia expo to pave way for new exports, Daily Sabah, <https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/defense-port-turkey-south-asia-expo-to-pave-way-fornew-exports>
42. Pakistan Navy commissions warship built with Turkey, Anadolu Agency, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/pakistan-navy-commissions-warship-built-with-turkey/1283542>
43. Turkey To Buy 52 Pakistani Super Mushshak Trainers, Defense World, https://www.defenseworld.net/news/19266/Turkey_To_Buy_52_Pakistani_Super_Mushshak_Trainers