

A Strategy of “Congagement” toward Pakistan

As Pakistan undertakes a comprehensive review of its relationship with the United States, the United States should similarly review its approach to Pakistan. In the ten years since the 9/11 attacks, the key threat in South Asia has been the nexus between the Pakistani military as well as security services and the syndicate of violent extremist groups—al-Qaeda, the Taliban, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and other insurgents—operating against the United States, Afghanistan, and India. During the Bush and Obama administrations, the United States has sought to induce Pakistani leaders to break with these groups. While Pakistan has cooperated to a degree against some of them, the U.S. strategy has failed to transform Pakistan’s behavior.

For much of the past decade, an assumption of U.S. policy has been that Pakistan is an ally, or at least that it can become one through sufficient U.S. engagement. The notion stemmed both from Islamabad’s official assurances and the tangible but limited support that Pakistan provided for some U.S. objectives (e.g., permitting U.S. use of supply lines into Afghanistan, allowing coalition use of Pakistani air space for air operations into Afghanistan, and targeting al-Qaeda operatives). Yet, it is now clear that Pakistan’s posture has been at best mixed, at once supporting and undermining U.S. interests on counterterrorism and Afghanistan. The revelation that Osama bin Laden was sheltering in a

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compound in a Pakistani military city has bolstered the view that Islamabad is an adversary. There have been increasing calls for a coercive strategy vis-à-vis Pakistan.

A better way to conceptualize the Pakistani challenge is to recognize that Pakistan fits into a category of states that are both things at once: ally and adversary. The national interests of these states, as defined by key elites and policymakers, are consistent with some U.S. goals but opposed to others. Conceptions of the national interest may differ between competing institutions within the state. The policies they pursue are malleable to varying degrees, and the extent to which they support or oppose the United States can vary by issues and the circumstances. Unlike genuine allies, the United States shares with these states only some common interests and only limited strategic like-mindedness. Their goals, outlooks, and policies often come into conflict. Such states have incentives to cooperate with the United States—at least on a tactical level—on some issues. But the relationship is not founded on a clear and genuine basis of understanding, and relations can degenerate into periods of tension or crisis.

Pakistan fits into a category of states that are both ally and adversary.

Pakistan fits neatly into this category of states. On a spectrum of allies and adversaries, Pakistan falls somewhere in the middle, alongside states such as China and Russia. In such cases, the key to developing an effective U.S. strategy is to understand the motivations informing the conduct of these states. Pakistan's strategic motivations are shaped in large part by its fragmented polity and the parochial outlook and interests of its military institutions.

Pakistan sees violent extremist groups as vital instruments of an ambitious imperial policy. Perpetuating a climate of insecurity allows the military to justify its disproportionate claim on national resources.

Engagement alone has proven insufficient to alter Pakistan's strategic calculus. Accordingly, the United States should shift to a new paradigm of "conengagement," applying a mixed arsenal of methods to contain Pakistan's dangerous and destabilizing policies but also to engage Islamabad to sustain existing cooperation and incentivize it to move toward more.

Sources of Pakistani Conduct

Many societies have conflicting currents in the narratives and political imperatives that drive their foreign policies. The United States, for example, has typically been pulled in two directions. During its early years, the United States largely sought to distance itself from international affairs, instead focusing

on developing internally and securing its immediate neighborhood. The animating idea was to lead not by intervention but by example, so that the novel political system of the United States would stand as an inspiration to others. In the 20th century, two catastrophic world wars and the global ideological competition with the Soviet Union compelled the United States to engage directly in the balance of power in Eurasia.

Pakistan is divided between two competing philosophical strands. The dominant view in Islamabad is that Pakistan should advance its national interests through the support and use of violent groups. A minority view would have Pakistan develop its internal strength and become more integrated with Central and South Asian neighbors, believing that this would produce more security and prosperity.

The dominant Pakistani worldview is grounded in an acute sense of deprivation rooted in the country’s origins. During British rule of the subcontinent, power in India shifted from the Muslim rulers of the Mughal Empire to the leaders of Hindu social groups, who consolidated their claims as India moved toward independence in 1947. The division of the subcontinent into predominantly-Muslim Pakistan and majority-Hindu India reflected the view of key Muslim leaders that their imperial legacy would be lost if Muslims were submerged in a larger regional cultural entity. There is evidence that the British fostered this mindset and, at partition, encouraged the projection of Pakistani influence and power over Afghanistan. Pakistani elites acquired a worldview premised on a sense of their own superiority and a consequent feeling of entitlement in the quest for influence in their neighborhood. Pakistan incorporated Pashtun areas of Afghanistan over the opposition of the Afghan leadership, fueling a territorial dispute that persists to the present.

At the same time, the Pakistani elite was acutely aware that it ruled over a fragmented polity. Its country was composed of Punjabis, Bengalis, Pashtuns, Sindhis, Baluch, and other minorities, with distinct cultures and sometimes diverging aspirations. It knew that it could only reclaim its assumed great power legacy if it kept this fractured society intact. Sensing its own vulnerability, it projected its fears into its reading of the strategies of neighboring powers. For instance, the loss of East Pakistan in 1971, when it broke away to become Bangladesh, was blamed on India’s intervention. The narrative downplayed Islamabad’s treatment of the Bengali minority and its unwillingness to share power or recognize Bengali electoral successes with power-sharing at the national level. According to this worldview, the central dilemma for Pakistani

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policy is to find a way to preserve the integrity of Pakistan and then reclaim a place among the world's first-tier powers.

The dominant worldview interacted with dynamics produced by the internal political composition of the Pakistani state. The Punjabis, the largest ethnic group in West Pakistan after partition, dominated the elite and particularly the senior officer corps of the military. At the same time, the military came

to see itself as the embodiment of the idea of Pakistan and to see others as unworthy or too untrustworthy to rule. This meant that the Pakistani military needed a way to legitimize its rule and its claim to a disproportionate share of national resources. The military was also aware of the vulnerability of the state because of resentments against Punjabi domination among Pashtuns, Baluch, and Sindhis. In turn, this created fears in the minds of the Punjabi elite that India or other powers would be able to exploit those resentments.

The requirements of Pakistan's political structure created dilemmas for the Punjabi-dominated military. How was it to secure popular support for a government dominated by one ethnic group? How was it to maintain its privileged position in society and thwart efforts by civilians to subordinate the military to the government? How was it to project power on behalf of its imperial project given its weak internal and regional position, a weakness confirmed in the military defeats of 1965 and 1971 at the hand of India?

An answer emerged over time. At first, the real and perceived threat from India was exploited to unify the country and to secure acceptance of the national-security state. Later, the Pakistani elite, and the military under President Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq (1977–1988) in particular, used Islam as a vehicle to legitimize Punjabi rule. Understanding that all ethnic groups were overwhelmingly Muslim, political Islam was promulgated as a state ideology. In the 1980s, the Pakistani military discovered that Islamist insurgents and militias were an effective instrument of policy in bleeding the Soviets in Afghanistan, which stood in stark contrast to Pakistan's defeats in conventional wars with India in 1965 and 1971. After the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, Pakistan turned this instrument on India, fostering an insurgency in Kashmir and terrorist attacks elsewhere. At the same time, civilian governments in the 1990s, which could not secure control over defense policy, were dependent on the military and security services to keep militant groups in check within Pakistan itself.

Though this has been the dominant worldview of the Pakistani state, a minority view has focused on the need for Pakistan to modernize its society and

economy. The minority view is present to varying degrees in Pakistan’s traditional political parties, business community, modernist civil society, judiciary, and even the military. The minority view is premised on the fact that the people of Pakistan have a long legacy of living in the diverse civilizational space of Central and South Asia. The area currently constituting Pakistan has had deep ethnic, religious, familial, and commercial ties across a subcontinent that has no natural boundaries.

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Since 9/11, the dominant worldview of the Pakistani military has led to deep ties with extremists and terrorist groups. Pakistan’s security services provide them with sanctuaries and active support in launching cross-border attacks into Afghanistan and India. The civilian government of current President Asif Ali Zardari (who is ethnically Baluch), as well as some members of the national-security establishment, has evinced interest in elevating the alternative worldview. They seek reconciliation with Afghanistan and India, the development of Pakistan’s economy, and regional integration. Though advocates of both views exist within the Pakistani political system, those who seek geopolitical aggrandizement are dominant.

Engagement: A Mixed Record

Since 9/11, the Bush and Obama administrations both have sought to use engagement to secure cooperation from Pakistan on counterterrorism, Afghanistan, nonproliferation, and to strengthen Pakistani civil institutions. Engagement has entailed expanding bilateral dialogue at the political and military levels. The United States has also sought to integrate Pakistan into regional forums with Afghanistan and India. It has collaborated with Pakistan’s military and intelligence services to encourage collaboration against terrorists and extremists, build confidence, and establish habits of cooperation. The United States has increased economic ties by lifting sanctions and providing development assistance. It has also provided substantial military assistance and designated Pakistan as a “major non-NATO ally” to ease the transfer of military technologies. From 2002–2011, the United States appropriated about \$7 billion in economic aid as well as \$14 billion in military assistance, and supported multi-billion dollar loan packages through the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This extensive engagement has yielded mixed results at best.

In the fight against terrorism, Pakistan has carried out some significant positive actions. After 9/11, it provided overflight corridors and active

cooperation in Operation Enduring Freedom to topple the Taliban government. It has shared some intelligence and led operations against al-Qaeda and anti-Pakistan terrorist groups on its territory, leading to the capture or deaths of scores of low- and middle-level operatives and the capture of several senior figures such as Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. From 2004 until late 2011, Pakistan cooperated in a CIA-led drone strike campaign, operated out of Shamsi Air Base in Baluchistan, that enabled the surveillance and targeting of al-Qaeda operatives.

However, this cooperation had limits. Pakistan continued to work with, and provide active support to, insurgent and terrorist groups operating against Afghanistan and India. One of those groups, Lashkar-e-Taiba, conducted the terrorist raid against Indians and Americans in Mumbai in November 2008. This attack brought Pakistan and India to the verge of conflict, requiring the diplomatic intervention of the United States to prevent a dangerous escalation. The discovery of Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, living near the Pakistani equivalent of West Point, demonstrated to many in the United States that the Pakistani military had continued ties to even this most dangerous terrorist organization.

Engagement produced similarly mixed results with respect to stabilizing Afghanistan. Pakistan participated in the Bonn Process in 2001–2002 and consulted extensively with U.S. military and intelligence officials during the process of establishing a transitional Afghan government. U.S. policy sought to limit the involvement of neighboring powers, including Pakistan's rivals such as India and Russia, in rebuilding Afghan security institutions. The United States also worked to achieve political balance among Afghan groups in the government in Kabul, consciously reducing the dominance of the Northern Alliance which Pakistan viewed as an Indian proxy.

At one level, Pakistan provided important support, particularly by providing air and land access to Afghanistan to supply U.S. and coalition forces. However, over time, Pakistan adopted a double game, simultaneously providing sanctuary and active support to insurgents operating against Afghanistan. This support enabled the Taliban, the Haqqani network, and Hezb-i-Islami to launch attacks from bases in western Pakistan, targeting Afghans, coalition forces, and civilian aid workers. Such attacks rose gradually from 2002–2005, and then escalated dramatically in 2006 and every year thereafter. Despite Pakistani denials, Washington now believes that the Pakistani intelligence service—the Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)—is directly implicated in working with these groups. It further assesses that these insurgents are supported by an extensive infrastructure of factories constructing sophisticated improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Despite its remonstrations, Pakistan has refused to roll up these networks, sanctuaries, or bomb factories. Also, Pakistan

has failed to secure the logistical routes for supplies flowing through Pakistan, leading to the loss of up to 15 percent of shipments in 2008. Pakistan has repeatedly interrupted the flow of supplies to NATO forces in Afghanistan during periods of tense relations with the United States.

In light of these problems, both the Bush and Obama administrations intensified U.S. efforts to engage Pakistan more deeply, to understand Pakistan’s concerns in regard to Afghanistan, and to accommodate its legitimate interests. Officially, Pakistan denied any support for the Afghan insurgency, despite the fact that the United States had incontrovertible evidence to the contrary.

Regarding proliferation, the principal U.S. concerns have been the security of Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal and Pakistan’s sharing of nuclear weapons capabilities with other countries or non-state actors. Since the discovery of the A.Q. Khan network, which involved sharing nuclear technology with several rogue regimes including Libya, North Korea, and Iran, Pakistan has bolstered command and control and implemented stricter export controls over the nuclear program—measures that have earned praise from U.S. officials. Pakistan has also cooperated to a certain degree with international efforts, accepting assistance from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on a nuclear security plan and joining the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

However, like Pakistan’s cooperation in fighting terrorism, this cooperation has had its limits. Though Islamabad accepts U.S. funds and some equipment and training on export controls, it offers little in the way of transparency. Indeed, Pakistan has provided the United States with only minimal access to A.Q. Khan, leaving critical questions about the network unanswered. Pakistani leaders also have repeatedly affirmed that Islamabad is unwilling to provide the United States with any kind of access to or influence over the nuclear program, even for the purpose of working cooperatively on strengthening security over nuclear materials. Nor has Pakistan responded positively to U.S. efforts to uphold the nuclear nonproliferation regime. Pakistan remains a primary impediment to international enactment of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), citing its fears of the Indian nuclear arsenal.

Engagement with Pakistan is increasingly failing on its own terms. The strategy assumes that continued dialogue and assistance will preserve existing benefits of cooperation, and hopefully will shape Pakistani behavior in a positive direction over time. The trajectory of the past years, however, does not support such an expectation—intensified engagement and outreach have not produced a corresponding increase in cooperation or trust. Nor has this approach precluded a string of crises stemming from Pakistan’s adversarial policies in Afghanistan and on terrorism. With policies of engagement serving as the linchpin of the U.S. strategy toward Pakistan, the military and intelligence services have

repeatedly shown their willingness to retaliate against the United States by suspending or withdrawing from joint programs or activities.

In light of all these difficulties, some are now suggesting that the United States adopt a confrontational approach or a policy of containment. But such a policy would forfeit the partial cooperation that Pakistan has been willing to provide in the areas of counterterrorism, Afghanistan, and nonproliferation. It would reduce the opportunity to find positive new initiatives that could shift Pakistan's behavior toward a more constructive path. It would undermine the chance to work with Pakistanis who do not share the expansionist worldview, including liberal and secular elements in the military who see Pakistan's better interests in reconciliation with its neighbors and pursuing win-win solutions at a regional level.

A Strategy of “Congagement”

A new U.S. strategy should account for the significant leverage the United States maintains over Pakistan. Because Pakistan is struggling economically, the United States has leverage through the prospect of economic assistance, particularly budget support, and its influence over IMF decisions to provide loans following on the \$11 billion package secured three years ago. Though

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Pakistani leaders claim that they can do without this support, many economists are doubtful, particularly because it would require difficult budgetary and tax decisions. In addition, Pakistan benefits economically from the transit of U.S. supplies to Afghanistan. More broadly, the United States is in a position to help foster regional economic integration through the New Silk Road initiative, which seeks to open up trade linkages between Central and South Asia.

Militarily, Pakistan seeks to purchase U.S. weapons systems, particularly those needed to maintain a balance of power with India. Since 9/11, the Pakistani military has received billions of dollars of payments in Coalition Support Funds, which reimburse expenditures made to support the war on terror. These subventions represent a significant portion of the Pakistani defense budget. At the political level, the United States can influence the policies of other major powers—particularly Europe, Japan, and Russia—on issues of importance to Pakistan. It can also approach Saudi Arabia and China, countries seen as lifelines for Pakistan when tensions arise in relations with the United States.

A strategy of “congagement” should purposefully combine elements of containment and engagement. In the case of Pakistan, congagement should

constrain or impose costs on the Pakistani military’s support of insurgent and terrorist groups. At the same time, congagement can allow the United States to maintain policies that potentially will open opportunities for Pakistan to embrace more constructive policies.

To constrain the military’s destabilizing policies, the United States should adopt several measures. First, and most important, Pakistan should be obliged to live off its own internal revenues to the greatest extent possible. Money is fungible. Any budgetary support, whether bilateral or multilateral, creates the opportunity to continue to support the insurgents and militants who are destabilizing the region. Until Pakistan stops supporting these extremists, the United States should withhold bilateral assistance going through the Pakistani government, work against new multilateral loan packages, and continue to put Coalition Support Fund payments into an escrow account; other donor states should be urged to take a similar line of action. Saudi Arabia and China, both of whom stand to be targeted by some of the extremists operating in Pakistan, should be asked not to step into the breach with their own assistance or loans. The goal should be to put the budget for supporting the extremists in competition with other elements of the Pakistani budget, including the sustainment of Pakistan’s conventional forces.

Second, the United States should stockpile supplies in Afghanistan and use the Northern Distribution Network—the supply lines reaching Afghanistan from the north—to the maximum extent possible. The Pakistani military believes that it has leverage over the coalition because a large proportion of NATO supplies transits their territory. In recent months, they have suspended the movement of these convoys to signal their displeasure with the United States after U.S. military strikes in the border areas accidentally killed more than two dozen Pakistani soldiers. Even though deliveries via the northern route are more expensive, establishing the ability to do without the Pakistani routes will change the calculus of Pakistan’s military leaders. As the level of U.S. and other NATO forces in Afghanistan declines, the northern routes, along with air delivery, will become sufficient to sustain coalition forces. By stockpiling and expanding the northern routes, the United States should seek to reach that crossover point as soon as possible.

Third, the United States should conclude a strategic partnership agreement with Afghanistan that entails a commitment to uphold the country’s independence and territorial integrity, while providing for an enduring

The strategy need not pursue containment and engagement in equal measure; it depends on Pakistan.

presence of U.S. forces. It is not clear whether President Hamid Karzai personally is committed to concluding a partnership agreement, as he appears to be resisting reasonable proposals on the two issues standing in the way of concluding the agreement: joint coalition–Afghan night raids and coalition forces holding Afghan prisoners. However, most Afghans fear U.S. abandonment and would like the partnership agreement to be concluded as soon as possible. Also, concluding this agreement is essential to curb counterproductive hedging behavior by Afghan leaders and political groups. As long as significant doubt exists about the future relationship with the United States, the tendency will be for Afghans to focus on parochial interests and short-term calculations rather than pulling together and investing for the long term.

Moreover, the U.S.–Afghanistan strategic partnership can consolidate regional progress. Part of Pakistan’s motivation for using proxies to destabilize Afghanistan is a fear that its rivals—particularly India, Iran, and Russia—will gain an edge in the competition following U.S. disengagement. An essential element to reshaping Pakistan’s conduct is to defeat the tactic of using insurgents and terrorists to extend Islamabad’s geopolitical influence. Thus, the strategic partnership agreement is vital not just for Afghanistan but also for the future of the region.

The agreement could provide for a ten-year program of cooperation, subject to renewal by both parties. It will take at least that long to stabilize Afghanistan and to build enduring regional relations. Institution building and economic development undertaken in the midst of armed conflict is profoundly difficult. If it were not for Pakistan’s destabilizing actions, the Afghan state-building project would take a lot less time and expense. In the security domain, the United States might consider committing to retaining an enduring presence of as many as 20,000 to 35,000 troops, configured to train and mentor Afghan forces, provide key intelligence and other enablers, and maintain Special Forces units in theater for actions needed to support Afghan forces or deal with the challenge of sanctuaries in Pakistan. This residual force will be essential to keep pressure on the continuing al-Qaeda threat in the region and for limited regional contingencies.

Also, the United States should be willing to commit to assist with others in building Afghan National Security Forces to a level of 400,000 (240,000 Afghan National Army and 160,000 Afghan National Police) if the threat remains at the present high level while the United States and its partners reduce their forces. If the threat diminishes, part of the force could be shifted into a national reserves force or the number could be reduced. Working with other partners, the United States should fund the difference between what this force costs and what the Afghan government can afford to pay, with the understanding that the

Afghan contribution will rise as the economy develops and government revenues rise.

Fourth, as long as Pakistan provides sanctuary and support to insurgents operating against Afghanistan, the United States should be prepared to engage in direct strikes against these targets. To date, direct action has been taken largely by missiles fired from unmanned aerial drones. Though the nature of a military campaign against the sanctuaries should be designed as part of an overall counterinsurgency strategy, the United States should not limit itself to drone strikes. As the number of U.S. forces declines, it will probably become more important to strike at the sanctuaries in order to tamp down the level of the insurgent threat in Afghanistan.

Fifth, the United States should seek to mediate a rapprochement between Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as pursue a regional diplomatic strategy to constrain Pakistan’s conduct, while also seeking to address legitimate Pakistani concerns. In looking at the Afghanistan–Pakistan relationship, it is clear that achieving progress here could have an exceptionally high payoff in reshaping Pakistani conduct. In Afghanistan, Pakistan may be acting out of a fear of Indian influence, a foreboding about nationalist appeals to Pashtun nationalists, worries about sharing water resources, or the pursuit of imperial aggrandizement. In fact, it could be acting out of all of those motivations. The challenge of mediation is to explore whether those interests that are legitimate and reasonable can be addressed through an agreement between the parties, reinforced by confidence-building measures as well as monitoring and verification processes. This process might also dovetail with efforts to explore a reconciliation process with the Taliban or elements within the Taliban. Though initial contacts between the sides have not been promising, the United States should seek to reintegrate Taliban into the Afghan political system. There are elements that are resentful of Pakistani ill-treatment, and they might be willing to make this leap. If they can be appealed to as Afghans, and if they can be freed from Pakistani control, it is feasible to make progress on this front.

A wider global engagement, sponsored by the United Nations, should bring together the major Eurasian powers—China, India, and Russia—that have a stake in the stabilization and normalization of Afghanistan. Each has been the victim of terrorist attacks by groups that were based or trained in the Afghanistan–Pakistan region in the 1990s or 2000s. All would benefit from regional growth and economic integration. The objective should be the formation of a concert of powers to support the stabilization of Afghanistan. This concert could negotiate redlines on the influence and activities of regional powers in Afghanistan, designed in a way to allay concerns that one rival was gaining advantage over another. It could provide a forum where issues and complaints could be brought, investigated, and resolved. It might also be a

vehicle to channel contributions into trust funds to support and sustain Afghan National Security Forces and to finance the infrastructure of the New Silk Road. Combined with the U.S. mediation between Kabul and Islamabad, this diplomacy could be the bridge to creating a context that reduces Pakistan's motivations to engage in destabilizing conduct. Longer term, it could shift the balance of power within the Pakistani government away from the military and ISI toward more stabilizing forces in Pakistani society.

Sixth, as appropriate, the United States should put the international spotlight on Pakistan's actions. The United States has sufficient evidence of Pakistan's role in fostering the insurgency in Afghanistan to bring the issue before the UN Security Council. It could also use the Council to impanel an independent investigation into the presence of bin Laden in a Pakistani military city. Moreover, the United States could seek to designate Pakistan's proxy groups as international terrorist organizations, which carries consequences for individuals and states that support such groups. It could even designate specific Pakistani military and intelligence officers for travel restrictions or sanctions based on their association with and support of violent extremist groups. The use of targeted sanctions, which have been refined and used to great effect vis-à-vis Iran, could be productive avenues to put pressure precisely on those Pakistani leaders and organizations who implement Pakistan's destabilizing policies.

However, the steps needed to constrain Pakistan should be complemented with policies to offer the country a better path forward. The United States should continue engagement with Pakistani civil society, including funding for joint efforts with U.S. organizations and support for improving education in Pakistan. U.S. efforts to promote the New Silk Road—both by reducing tariff and bureaucratic impediments to trade and by finding ways to fund the building of roads, railroads, pipelines, and other infrastructure to connect Central and South Asia economically—not only gives all countries a greater stake in stability rather than conflict, but also strengthens interest groups within each country that have economic interests which can only be advanced in a stable environment. In addition, engagement should include programs to support the Pakistani private sector, particularly through an enterprise fund, insurance from the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) for U.S. investments in Pakistan, and greater access to U.S. markets. Programs to strengthen Pakistan's democratic institutions, to enhance transparency in government, and to advance reform should also be supported. Even within the security sector, the United States should continue programs related to nuclear security, to training civilian law enforcement, and to officer education and exchange programs designed to foster common outlooks and values with the next generation of Pakistani military leaders.

A Better Way Forward

Although shaping Pakistani conduct is a tough puzzle to solve, a strategy of congagement offers better prospects than the failed strategies of engagement or containment alone. Congagement would focus on constraining and thwarting the belligerent aspects of Pakistani conduct that are rooted in a zero-sum mindset seeking imperial aggrandizement, while encouraging those sectors of Pakistani society and those political actors who can see a path forward for their people which is based on positive-sum regional integration and political reconciliation. At the same time, the diplomatic components of congagement seek both to develop a broader coalition to check Pakistan’s disruptive behavior and focus specifically on finding ways to address legitimate and reasonable interests that some in Pakistan believe are at risk.

Implementing a strategy of congagement does not necessarily entail a set of policies that pursue containment and engagement in equal measure. Rather, it allows the United States and its partners to calibrate the mix of policies at any given time based on Pakistani behavior. In this sense, it is a flexible policy to be adjusted on the basis of the effects it is achieving. If Pakistan proves resistant to evolving its policies in a positive direction, even when its legitimate interests are taken into account, the balance of policies must shift toward containment. If Pakistan moves away from the zero-sum mindset dominating its national security policies, it will find a receptive response not only from the United States but also Afghanistan and other countries in the region that seek constructive relations with Islamabad.