



The Rocky U.S.-Pakistan Security Relationship

Updated on August 21, 2015

The recent [news](#) indicating the United States may withhold millions in military aid to Pakistan has raised questions again about Pakistan's commitment to counterterrorism efforts despite [billions](#) in U.S. security assistance to the country in the past decade. Since the United States first provided military aid to Pakistan, the U.S. government has restricted that assistance at least five times and resumed the aid at least four times. The timeline below highlights the major changes in this rocky U.S.-Pakistan security since Pakistan first became a country.

I. U.S. Places Embargo on Pakistan (1947-1951)

- Embargo later lifted due to fear of Communist influence
 - Pakistan had begun trade with Communist Czechoslovakia

II. U.S. Cultivates Military Alliance with Pakistan (1952-1958)

- **1951:** Nationalized Iranian oil creates a potential threat to western oil interests
 - U.S. Air Force [needed](#) possible sites for air bases and manpower of the Pakistani army for other military strategies in West Asia. Nationalization of Iranian oil gave the matter more urgency
- **1953:** Military Assistant Agreement [signed](#) between U.S. and Pakistan. Pakistani military divided between two divisions:
 - Military Assistance Program (MAP) forces (U.S. funded)
 - Non-MAP forces
- **1954-1955:** Pakistan signs the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) with the United States
 - Established in opposition to the rise of Arab nationalist movements in Middle East and South Asia, and to serve as a military alliance placing pressure over the Soviet Union
 - 1958: The alliance [failed](#) during the Kassem Coup in Iraq—Pakistan was unable to intervene

III. U.S. Places an Embargo on U.S. Military Supplies to Pakistan (1965-1971)

- **1965:** U.S. Embargo placed on Pakistan after it attempts to wrest Kashmir from India through military force (Indo-Pak War of 1965)
 - Strong Pak-China relations emerge
- **1971:** U.S. President Nixon foresees Pakistan as viable tool to help build U.S.-China relations
 - U.S. tilts towards Pakistan during Indo-Pak War of 1971

- U.S. used Pakistan to **formulate** relations with China as a leverage to Soviets in the wake of the Vietnam War

IV. U.S. Cuts Military and Economic Aid to Pakistan (1978-1979)

- **1978:** U.S. suspends aid to Pakistan due to Pakistan's agreement with France to obtain a large spent fuel nuclear **reprocessing plant**
- **1979:** Carter Administration imposes military and economic sanctions due to Pakistan's Nuclear Program. U.S. blocks Pakistan's attempts to enrich uranium
 - Actions taken under the **Symington Amendment** to the Foreign Assistance Act 1961

V. Congress Waives Sanctions on Pakistan (1980-1988)

- **1980:** Congress waives Symington Amendment sanctions on Pakistan, citing national security concerns
 - U.S. under the Carter Administration pledges military assistance to Pakistan following Soviet intervention in Afghanistan
 - The **Carter Doctrine** installed the use of military force in the Gulf region if necessary. U.S. begins plans for a **Rapid Deployment Force** in response to the crisis in the Gulf (Iranian Revolution of 1979)—U.S. seeks Pakistan's engagement
- U.S. with Pakistan's assistance helps fund and train Islamist fundamentalist "guerilla groups" (i.e. Hekmatyer and Taliban)
- **1981:** Reagan Administration announces agreement on \$3.2 billion package of economic assistance and military sales credit for the next five years
 - Third largest aid program, weighing in behind Israel and Egypt
- **1986:** U.S. under Reagan Administration **agreed** to \$4.02 billion military and economic aid package for the next six years

VI. Pakistan Re-sanctioned Under The Pressler Amendment, Due to its Nuclear Program (1989-2001)

- Soviet Union departs Afghanistan, U.S.-Pakistan relationship comes to a halt
- **1989-2001:** Pakistan remains under U.S. sanctions
- **1998:** Pakistan declared as a Nuclear power

VII. Post-9/11 and War on Terror (2002-2011)

- **2001:** On September 22nd, the Glenn, Symington and Pressler sanctions on Pakistan were **waived** under Brownback II due to U.S. national security concerns
 - U.S. waived coup-related sanctions in accordance with Section 508 of the Foreign Assistance Act, along with the "democracy sanctions," imposed on Pakistan when Musharraf took over in a military coup in 1999
 - U.S. **granted** \$187.7 million in aid to Pakistan
- **2002:** Aid increased to Pakistan by 11-fold, \$2 billion
 - Pakistan's military **dispatched** approximately 80,000 troops in the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) for the first time in 55 years, in search of Taliban and Al Qaeda

- **2004:** Pakistan under U.S. pressure **launched** military offensive in South Waziristan (tribal agency in FATA)—which then unleashed tribal warfare in FATA
- **2006:** Waziristan Accord
 - Peace agreement **held** between Pakistan’s government and militants in North Waziristan (tribal agency in FATA)
 - **2008:** U.S. Congress passes legislation requiring Pentagon and State Department to **certify** Pakistan’s commitment in fighting terrorism before releasing aid
 - **2009:** Initiation of Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act (**Kerry-Lugar Bill**) to triple development aid to Pakistan
 - Action undermined by the Pakistani military
 - **2010:** Economic Aid increased to **\$1.43 billion**

VIII. U.S. Suspends Military Aid to Pakistan (2011-2012)

- **2011:** U.S. **suspends** \$800 million in military aid to Pakistan for FY 2012; relations between two countries become adversarial
 - The \$800 million represents 40 percent of the nearly **\$2 billion** in U.S. military aid to Pakistan
 - **January 2011:** Raymond Davis kills two Pakistani civilians
 - **May 2011:** Osama bin Laden found and killed by U.S. special forces in a compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan (a garrison town)
 - **May 2011:** Taliban attack Mehran Naval Air Base in retaliation to Osama bin Laden raid
 - **November 2011:** NATO attacks Pakistan security personnel and soldiers at a Salala check post located near Pakistan-Afghanistan border

IX. U.S. Resumes Military and Economic Aid to Pakistan (2013-present)

- **2013:** U.S. **releases** more than \$1.6 billion in military and economic aid to Pakistan
 - Aid resumed due to confluence of signs of greater cooperation and commitment in counterterrorism efforts
- **June 2014:** Pakistan begins military operation ‘Zarb-e-Azb’ in North Waziristan—despite being previously reluctant to operate in the region due to its own national interests
- **December 2014:** Congress **restricts most U.S. military aid** to Pakistan in FY 2015 funded through the State and Defense Department unless the administration certifies that Pakistan is doing several items, including taking steps to end support for the Haqqani Network and other such groups. The administration may use a national security waiver for most of the aid, expect \$300 million in Pentagon funded **Coalition Support Funds**.
- **February 2015:** State and Defense Department request new funding for Pakistan
 - State Department **requests** \$265 million in military aid through Foreign Military Financing to Pakistan for FY2016
 - Defense Department requests at estimated **\$1.3 billion in military aid** to Pakistan through the Coalition Support Funds for FY 2016