



# **RUSSIA AND PAKISTAN**

## **Shared Challenges and Common Opportunities**

Vladimir Moskalenko  
and Petr Topychkanov



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Carnegie Moscow Center  
16/2 Tverskaya  
Moscow, 125009, Russia  
Tel: +7 495 935 8904  
Fax: +7 495 935 8906  
[info@Carnegie.ru](mailto:info@Carnegie.ru)

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## About the Authors

**Vladimir Moskalenko** is chief research associate at the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, and a professor at the Institute of Asian and African Studies, Moscow State University. He previously served as head of the Pakistan Study Center at the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences. He is the author and editor of more than fifteen books, including *The Three Constitutions of Pakistan* (with Yu. Gankovsky) (Karachi, 1978); *A Political History of Pakistan, 1947–2007* (with V. Belokrenitsky) (Karachi, 2013); *Sila i Slabost Pakistana* [Strengths and Weaknesses of Pakistan] (with P. Topychkanov) (Moscow, 2013), and nearly three hundred articles.

**Petr Topychkanov** is an associate in the Carnegie Moscow Center’s Nonproliferation Program. Previously, he taught courses on the modern history of the South Asian countries at Moscow State University’s Institute of Asian and African Studies, the Institute of Practical Oriental Studies, and St. Tikhon’s Orthodox University of the Humanities. He is the author of more than one hundred publications, including “Pakistan nakanune vyborov” [Pakistan on the Eve of the Elections] (with V. Moskalenko), *Asia and Africa Today*, 2007; *Islam and the Paths of Pakistan’s Political Development* (Moscow, 2009); and “Pakistan i mezhreligiozniy razlom” [Pakistan and Inter-Religious Breach] in *Partnerstvo tsivilizatsiy: net razumnoy alternativy* [Partnership of Civilizations—No Reasonable Alternative] (Moscow, 2011).



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## Summary

For at least the next decade, threats emanating from South Asia will directly challenge Russia's security. The ongoing Afghan conflict and cross-border issues such as terrorism, organized crime, and nuclear security, all of which reverberate in Moscow, guarantee long-term engagement between Russia and Pakistan. To address these shared challenges, Moscow needs a new approach to South Asia that prioritizes developing Russian-Pakistani relations.

### The Evolving Russian-Pakistani Relationship

- Russia has articulated its national objectives in specific South Asian countries, such as fighting drug trafficking in Afghanistan, capitalizing on India's economic growth, and working with Pakistan, but it lacks a cohesive South Asia strategy.
- Regional instability and Pakistan's weak political regime mean the country may face serious security threats in the coming years.
- Pakistani and Russian security interests are increasingly intertwined, so Moscow cannot afford to ignore the emergence of new threats in Islamabad.
- Officials from Pakistan and Russia participate in various bilateral and multilateral forums to address their shared security concerns.
- Developing relations would benefit both countries, but there are obstacles to closer cooperation. Moscow does not want to provoke India, Pakistan's regional rival; a history of conflict has damaged Russian-Pakistani trust; and security concerns make Russian companies reluctant to do business in Pakistan.
- Constructive dialogue is taking place on potential Russian-Pakistani civil nuclear cooperation. Although such collaboration is unlikely, these talks allow the two countries to address shared concerns on issues like nuclear security and nonproliferation.

### Steps Russia Can Take to Improve Relations

**Develop an integrated Russian policy on South Asia.** Instead of pursuing different interests in each country, Moscow should formulate a coherent, overarching regional strategy to better address threats from South Asia.

**Promote intensive Russian-Pakistani dialogue.** Discussion between members of civil, military, and economic institutions in both countries will help further endeavors to deepen cooperation on a range of issues.

**Enhance existing contacts between officials.** Increasing ties between representatives of the Russian and Pakistani power structures will build trust, promote transparency, and boost confidence in the developing relationship.

**Help Pakistan respond to security threats on its territory.** Providing political, economic, and military support will help Islamabad address security issues before they threaten Moscow. This assistance should not alter the regional balance of power or provoke India.

**Reach out to the Pakistani public.** Informing the Pakistani audience of Russian positions and projects in South Asia will help Moscow build trust with regional countries and make its policy more transparent and predictable.

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## Moscow's Changing Views on Pakistan

In recent years, Russia has begun to take a more pronounced political interest in Pakistan than ever before. Instability in South Asia reverberates in Moscow, and Russia and Pakistan in particular face a number of common challenges, especially on security issues. Developing closer Russian-Pakistani relations will help Moscow counter some of these shared threats. In order to accomplish this, however, the two countries will have to overcome existing difficulties—including their long and conflict-ridden history and potential objections from neighboring countries—and forge a new Russian-Pakistani relationship.

Historically, Moscow's interest in Pakistan seems to have been primarily academic. Despite the geographic distance, Soviet researchers began analyzing what would become Pakistan over half a century ago—the first Soviet work on Pakistan appeared in 1943, before the state was actually created.<sup>1</sup> But Moscow's political interest in Islamabad has been less consistent.

Several years ago, the view that Pakistan belongs to the American and Chinese spheres of influence was quite common in Russian political circles. Many in Moscow believed that even serious threats to Pakistan's security would affect Islamabad's close partners and neighbors but would not impact Russia. Moscow seemed largely uninterested in developing its relations with Pakistan, especially as these ties did not promise to yield quick and large dividends for Russian state corporations. It also feared that moving closer to Islamabad could harm Russia's more lucrative relations with India, whose relationship with Pakistan has long been fraught.

Today, Russia's views on Pakistan seem to have shifted. Despite the absence of a common border, Russia and Pakistan face a number of similar problems, from terrorism to organized crime to nuclear security. Moscow also has interests in South Asia that have forced it to develop its ties with Islamabad and other regional actors in recent years. And while Russia approaches Pakistan as part of its larger strategy in South Asia, Moscow and Islamabad have their own agenda that is not dependent on other countries. Further developing the relations between these two nations can be an important instrument of economic growth and security in both South and Central Asia.

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**Russia and Pakistan face a number of common challenges, especially on security issues.**

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## Russia's Fragmented South Asia Policy

Russia has adopted several doctrinal documents that devote a great deal of attention to the South Asian countries—primarily Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan. These foundational documents reveal that Russia's relations with the various South Asian countries constitute independent and occasionally interconnected strands of the country's overall foreign policy, but they do not form a cohesive regional strategy.

For instance, according to the Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, an overview of the principles guiding Moscow's foreign policy that President Vladimir Putin approved in 2013, Russia intends to continue developing a "privileged strategic partnership" with India.

As for Afghanistan, the document indicates that Russia's aim is to "achieve a post-conflict recovery of Afghanistan as a peace-loving sovereign neutral state with a stable economy" by working with other concerned countries and various multilateral institutions, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Together, these partners will "make consistent efforts to find a just and lasting political solution to the problems faced by . . . [Afghanistan] with due respect for the rights and interests of all its ethnic groups."<sup>2</sup>

A similar document outlining Russia's foreign policy that was adopted in 2008 referred to developing relations with "Pakistan and other leading regional states." In the 2013 document, however, Pakistan is not mentioned at all.<sup>3</sup>

It is impossible to say whether the omission of Pakistan from the more recent document signals a shift in policy on the part of Moscow. Neither of these documents is legally binding. Rather, as the 2013 document states, each constitutes "a systemic description of basic principles, priorities, goals and objectives of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation." Therefore, the mention of Pakistan in 2008 but not in 2013 can serve as the basis for assumptions about a possible correction in Russia's policy toward Islamabad but not for the conclusion that a change of course indeed occurred.

Russia's approaches to South Asia and nearby regions are also outlined in two documents on military strategy, the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation to 2020 and the Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation to 2020. The national security strategy notes the negative impacts that the situations in Afghanistan and a number of South Asian countries have had on the international climate.<sup>4</sup> The maritime doctrine states that Russia is interested in "a course focused on the transformation of the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace, stability and good neighborly relations."<sup>5</sup>

In February 2012, Putin published an article in the *Moscow News*, a daily English-language Russian newspaper, called "Russia and the Changing World." This article also contributes to an understanding of Russian policy in South Asia. In it, Putin states that Russia is "an inalienable and organic part

of Greater Europe” that is trying to take advantage of Asia-Pacific growth, particularly the growth of China and India.

The article describes Russia’s policy on China in great detail, but there are only two sentences on India and no mention of Pakistan. Putin names terrorism and “heroin-related aggression” as the main threats coming from Afghanistan, but when he writes of Russian interests in this country, he does not refer to the war on terror at all. Instead, he identifies Afghanistan’s stable and peaceful development and the fight against drug trafficking as Russia’s major interests.<sup>6</sup>

Putin’s article, particularly when read in combination with Russia’s other policy and strategy declarations, makes it clear that Moscow expects South Asia to have a place in Russian foreign policy for the foreseeable future. It sees the region’s integration as important to Russia and its economy and considers India to be the main engine of growth in South Asia. In addition, for at least the next ten years, Moscow predicts that the region will pose numerous threats to Russia’s security, including those stemming from political instability, interstate conflicts, terrorism, and drug trafficking.

To address these issues, Russia intends to develop bilateral relations with South Asian countries and will actively participate in various multilateral political forums. It has also prepared for a potential military response to these security threats.

Russia intends to maintain a military presence in the areas closest to South Asia. According to the maritime doctrine, the Russian Navy will have a periodic presence in the Indian Ocean.<sup>7</sup> In addition, Moscow will work closely with the other members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), a military alliance of post-Soviet states, to address cross-border challenges. According to the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation, which was approved in 2010, “the Russian Federation assigns troop contingents to the CSTO Collective Rapid-Response forces for the purpose of responding promptly to military threats to CSTO member countries.”<sup>8</sup>

The overall impression from these official documents, statements, and strategies is that Russia’s priorities in South Asia are clearly delineated. India is its privileged strategic partner; Afghanistan is a close neighbor; and Pakistan is a leading regional state whose place in Russia’s foreign policy is similar to that of Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, or Turkey. According to the 2008 document outlining its foreign policy concept, Russia intends to deepen relations with these and other important regional players in bilateral and multilateral formats.

## **Pakistan: Alive and Important**

Russia has good reason to view Pakistan as a leading regional state, especially because Islamabad has been in the global spotlight for the last few decades. It is not as large a regional player as India, nor does it boast as many energy resources as Iran. But Pakistan’s “natural resource” is its advantageous strategic

location, which makes it an important link between the Middle East and Central and South Asia.

Nevertheless, experts have questioned Pakistan's viability throughout its history. In the first few years after the creation of India and Pakistan in

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1947, Pakistan was often treated as a nonviable state. Few believed the partition of the British Indian territories would last. In the words of one of Pakistan's early settlers, an employee of the colonial state given the chance to help form the Pakistani bureaucracy, "partition happened all of a sudden, and people were not well informed. Many thought that it was a temporary thing and that one day the two countries would be one again."<sup>9</sup>

But a close look at history, culture, politics, and life in Pakistan reveals what journalist and Pakistan expert Anatol Lieven has referred to as the "idiocy of portraying Pakistan as a 'failed state.'"<sup>10</sup> In addition to being inaccurate, this "idiocy" is also quite harmful—it hinders the understanding of Pakistan's political processes, since an outsider might consider the whole sociopolitical system ineffective based on the perceived lack of conventional political institutions.

Today, experts are once again making dire predictions about Pakistan's fate. The country's current domestic situation is characterized by political and economic instability, serious security threats, and complicated relations with neighboring states.

Yet, an analysis of the political and socioeconomic situation in Pakistan indicates that despite these numerous problems, the country is unlikely to face the sort of catastrophic scenarios that have been discussed in recent years. For example, there have been predictions that ethnic strife could lead to the disintegration of the country, but these fears appear groundless—neither Islamabad nor the neighboring countries are interested in Pakistan's breakup. Along the same lines, it would be virtually impossible for radical elements, although they exist, to come to power. For the first time in the country's history, Pakistan's political system has endured a full electoral cycle, from the general elections in 2008 to those in 2013, and it seems relatively stable. Forecasts of another military coup also seem quite improbable. Pakistan's armed forces display an unwillingness to take power at this time (although they claim to be ready to come to the aid of the country's political leadership).

Still, Pakistan will face difficulties. In the coming years, it is quite possible that the weakness of the political regime will lead to the buildup of military, political, and religious forces. And the country may be in for a host of other foreign and domestic exigencies, including political and economic crises, natural calamities, terrorist incidents, ethnic conflicts, temporary loss of control over certain areas of the country, and conflicts with India and Afghanistan.

It is nearly impossible to guess which, if any, of these challenges Pakistan will face. In addition, uncertainty about the plans of the United States and

the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Afghanistan complicates any attempts to predict possible developments in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the entire region. But one thing is certain: any of these developments would affect more than just Pakistan's immediate neighbors and have ramifications in Moscow as well.

## Russia's Security and Pakistan

Russian and Pakistani interests are increasingly intertwined, especially with regard to security concerns. In particular, the issues of terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking, and nuclear security make Pakistan important to Russia in the long term.

Russia cannot remain indifferent to what is happening in Pakistan, a fact that was made abundantly clear when Pakistani police and military servicemen shot and killed four Russian citizens and one Tajik national on the basis of reports that they were suicide bombers. The incident took place at a checkpoint in Kharotabad, in Pakistan's eastern province of Balochistan, on May 17, 2011. As became known in the course of a subsequent investigation, Pakistani law enforcement agents used excessive force. The victims were unarmed and posed no threat. The investigation also revealed that the victims had entered Pakistan's territory illegally by way of Iran, possibly for terrorist training.<sup>11</sup>

While this group was not implicated in acts of terrorism in Pakistan, there is evidence that citizens of Russia or other countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)—a regional association of several post-Soviet nations—including minors, may belong to terrorist organizations with Pakistani ties and receive instruction in training camps or religious schools, known as madrassas, on Pakistani territory.

The exact number of foreign terrorists in Pakistan is unknown, although there are some estimates. Tariq Hayat, secretary of law and order in Pakistan's Federally Administrated Tribal Areas, claims that in 2009 there were 1,500 foreign militants, including Arabs, Chechens, Sudanese, and Uzbeks, in the region of South Waziristan alone.<sup>12</sup> The situation has hardly changed for the better in recent years. In March 2013, when the Pakistani Taliban took over most of the Tirah Valley in North Waziristan, up to 3,000 foreigners, predominantly Chechens and Uzbeks, fought for the Talibs.<sup>13</sup>

There is also official data on the number of foreigners in religious schools. According to the Ministry of Interior, 2,673 students were enrolled in these schools as of September 2012, and 43 percent of the students were from Afghanistan. The rest were from China, the Netherlands, Russia, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Uganda, and other countries.<sup>14</sup>

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However, this information may be incomplete. It only includes data on registered madrassas, which number from 24,000 to almost 30,000, but thousands of unregistered madrassas also operate in Pakistan.<sup>15</sup> Unofficial estimates of their numbers range from 15,000 to 25,000, with some as high as 40,000. Given the extreme variance, it is hard to guess how many citizens of Russia and other CIS countries study at these schools.

Unlike foreigners who underwent terrorist training and therefore certainly pose a potential threat, foreign graduates of Pakistan's religious schools may or may not be dangerous. But given the links between some madrassas and extremist groups in Pakistan, national security services should closely monitor foreign graduates of Pakistani madrassas once they return home.

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Both terrorist training camps and madrassas have given rise to a network of contacts between Russian and Pakistani extremists, although these contacts do not yet look like a large-scale phenomenon. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that Russia, in addition to having endured terrorist attacks itself, also functions as a transit point for terrorists migrating from South Asia to Western Europe. Thus, a vast territory from Pakistan and other Asian countries to Russia and Western nations is linked by a network of illegal migration.

Former Russian Federal Security Service spokesman Alexander Murashov notes that most illegal migrants who crossed Russia's borders ten years ago came from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. He estimates that law enforcement agencies were able to stop 80 percent of this migration flow.<sup>16</sup> While most were labor migrants, there may also have been some terrorists among the 20 percent who crossed into Russia.

In addition, there is a distinct connection between terrorism, illegal migration, and organized crime that complicates efforts to combat national security threats to both Pakistan and Russia. Smuggling or drug trafficking, for example, can provide terrorists with new options for mobility and additional resources. It can even transform the terrorist threat by allowing potential terrorists to use smuggling schemes to transport nuclear material and technology that can be used in attacks of catastrophic proportions.<sup>17</sup>

Judging by the significant volume of narcotics smuggled into Russia from Afghanistan, Russian and Central Asian law enforcement agencies are not capable of entirely ruining smuggling schemes. This might make such schemes appealing to terrorists, a possibility that should make Russian authorities concerned about nuclear security in Pakistan. If nuclear material were to be stolen, it might make its way to Russia through these smuggling networks, raising the risk of nuclear terrorism on Russian territory.

In the middle of the last decade, Pakistan took serious steps toward improving national nuclear security. In addition to enacting comprehensive

organizational and technological changes that affected the entire nuclear complex, Pakistan instituted mandatory personnel monitoring. It seemed, for a time, that these measures effectively ensured the state's control over its nuclear arsenal, including nuclear material and technologies.

But this sense of security was short-lived. The high-profile murder of Punjab Governor Salman Taseer shocked Islamabad on January 4, 2011, and demonstrated that these reforms had not eliminated the threats to Pakistani nuclear security. Taseer was shot by his own bodyguard, who, as a member of an elite unit, had to undergo regular security checks in accordance with the state's regulations. As a result of one such check, the bodyguard was deemed a security threat—and yet he continued to serve until he committed the crime.

It is impossible to say whether the bodyguard's commanders were criminally negligent in ignoring the security threat or whether they made a conscious choice to allow the known threat to materialize. Either way, the incident proved that Pakistan's efforts to increase its nuclear security were insufficient. This shortcoming will have a direct bearing on Russia—and the world—should it facilitate the rise of nuclear terrorism.

## Moscow's Relations With Islamabad

Russia is aware of the security threats coming from Pakistan. These concerns have led officials from Moscow and Islamabad to regularly participate in joint working groups on international terrorism and strategic stability since 2002.

Similar issues have also been discussed at summits of the Dushanbe Four, a grouping that includes the Afghan, Pakistani, Russian, and Tajik presidents. These summits have taken place in Dushanbe (2009 and 2011) and Sochi (2010) and at higher levels in New York (2010) and Trieste (2009, without Tajikistan).

The four presidents adopted a joint declaration at the conclusion of the Dushanbe Four summit in Sochi on August 18, 2010. The declaration stressed the importance of cooperation for maintaining stability in the region and advised that collaboration on such issues as terrorism and drug trafficking was to be carried out through international and regional structures.

They also called for a more active use of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure, a permanent body of the SCO designed to enhance collaboration in fighting terrorism, separatism, and extremism. And all sides expressed their commitment to implementing the recommendations set forth in a statement by the SCO member states and Afghanistan on combating terrorism, illicit drug trafficking, and organized crime that had been adopted at the Special Conference on Afghanistan under the aegis of the SCO in Moscow on March 27, 2009.

Pakistan is not a member of the SCO, but it has been able to actively participate in SCO initiatives designed to strengthen regional security thanks to frequent meetings of the Dushanbe Four. Pakistan has been an observer state at the SCO for nine years, but it has had rather limited success developing

relations with the organization. An observer state has the right to be present at open meetings of the SCO's Council of Foreign Ministers as well as at the meetings of heads of ministries or departments. It can also take part in discussions without the right to vote and has access to unrestricted SCO documents. However, an observer state cannot prepare or sign the organization's documents, and it cannot participate in decisionmaking.<sup>18</sup>

Developing Pakistani-Russian relations will benefit the two countries on both bilateral and multilateral levels. Russia can use its relations with Pakistan to improve its position in the SCO. For instance, the Dushanbe Four, which includes two SCO members (Russia and Tajikistan) and two observer states (Afghanistan and Pakistan), allows Russia to strengthen its position in the SCO by establishing an internal club to discuss issues of mutual interest.

To encourage further cooperation, Moscow can also enter organizations in which Pakistan is a member. In the past, Russia supported Pakistan's bid to join the SCO as an observer state. Pakistan, in turn, supported Russia's intention to join the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (known as the Organization of the Islamic Conference before 2011). Indeed, Russia now has observer status in this organization. There are also no obstacles to Russia's seeking observer status in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, an economic and geopolitical union of eight South Asian nations, including Pakistan.

However, there are three factors that may limit the further development of Pakistani-Russian relations. The first has to do with fears of offending India. Some in Moscow are concerned that a deal between Pakistan and any other state, including Russia, could cause New Delhi to suspend its cooperation with that state. India is likely to balk at any agreement it perceives to be upsetting the balance of power in South Asia. As a result, New Delhi would likely be extremely irked by military cooperation between Pakistan and other states, especially on the issues of missile technology, strike aircraft, missile defense, or submarine technology.

Russia has no intention of working with Pakistan on the military issues that might upset India, barring a few exceptions. In 2007, Pakistan received the first shipment of JF-17 Thunder jet fighters, jointly developed by China and Pakistan (as of now, the Pakistan Air Force has 40 such jet fighters). They are being fitted with Russian RD-93 engines under a contract between China and Russia that provides for the shipment of 100 engines and possibly 400 more.<sup>19</sup> Some Indian analysts strongly believe that these jet fighters can carry nuclear weapons.<sup>20</sup>

Moreover, some Russian experts believe that Russia could sell MiG-35 jet fighters to Pakistan without upsetting India.<sup>21</sup> They point to the United States and France, which have established extensive ties with both India and Pakistan in the field of military technology. Russia itself is a good example that military cooperation in diplomatically sensitive situations is possible—it exports modern weapons to both India and China, whose relations have been tarnished by a border dispute and deep mutual mistrust.

These exceptions notwithstanding, the fear of damaging Indo-Russian relations remains a significant factor in relations between Moscow and Islamabad. This fear essentially derailed the Dushanbe Four summit in Pakistan in October 2012. Putin, who was scheduled to attend the summit, decided not to visit Islamabad until he had first visited India. He canceled his trip to Pakistan and sent Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to Islamabad in his place.

At the time, Lavrov explained that Putin's decision did not contain any messages. The president's press secretary, Dmitry Peskov, went so far as to claim that Putin never had plans to visit Pakistan at that particular time.<sup>22</sup> But Pakistan, which had expected this visit until the last minute, interpreted Putin's decision as a clear signal of Moscow's reluctance to deepen cooperation between members of the Dushanbe Four.

In addition to fears of offending India, a history of conflict between Moscow and Islamabad that dates back to the Soviet era could hamper the development of closer relations. First there was the U-2 crisis of 1960, when an American reconnaissance plane that had taken off from Pakistani territory was shot down in Soviet airspace. Then came the Soviet presence in Afghanistan, which lasted from 1979 to 1989, during which Pakistan and other states aided the military resistance against the Soviet Union. Since many of Russia's current mid- and high-ranking officials were either directly or indirectly involved in the Afghan conflict, they are unsurprisingly reluctant to work toward closer cooperation with Pakistan.

Enhancing existing contacts between representatives of the power structures in both countries would contribute to building greater mutual trust. In this context, work on locating the grave sites of Soviet soldiers buried in Pakistan and searches for soldiers who went missing during the conflict may help build a better foundation for future relations. The perennially underfunded Warriors-Internationalists Affairs Committee, a Moscow-based nonprofit organization, is currently conducting this sort of work.<sup>23</sup> In addition, a greater exchange of information between Russia and Pakistan on the events of 1979–1989, which could be conducted as a jointly sponsored research project, would help close this painful chapter in the history of what was effectively an undeclared war between the two countries.

Lastly, it will be difficult to improve relations between Moscow and Islamabad until Russian investors become more confident doing business in Pakistan. This will not happen until Pakistan addresses Moscow's concerns about the security of its personnel and investments.

Pakistan's strategic location means it has the potential to be an important center of cooperation and regional development, but it will require massive investments in building a complex infrastructure. Since achieving stability in Pakistan and improving regional security to the south of its borders are

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important to Russia, Moscow is certainly interested in developing infrastructure projects that will help promote South Asian stability, such as work in the fields of transportation and energy. But these projects can be successfully developed only if the long-term security of Russian personnel and investments is guaranteed. At present, Russian companies are reluctant to send their employees even on business trips to Pakistan for fear of possible terrorist attacks, and any further deterioration of the security situation between Pakistan and Afghanistan could entirely prevent Russia from implementing long-term projects there.

Russian investors also question whether the Pakistani authorities can protect their investments.<sup>24</sup> In 2006, for example, the full support of the Pakistani prime minister was not enough to save a deal in which a Russian steel company, Magnitogorsk Iron and Steel Works, was attempting to privatize a Pakistani company, Pakistan Steel Mills.<sup>25</sup>

In addition, there is the possibility that Russian investments in Pakistan could upset some of Moscow's other partners, particularly India. On the whole, Pakistani-Russian infrastructure projects should not concern other states. But if Russia, for example, were to take part in projects to modernize and develop Pakistan's railroad network, India might interpret it as Moscow's helping to increase the mobility of the Pakistani armed forces. To alleviate Indian concerns, such projects should be as transparent as possible without compromising Pakistan's interests.

## Dialogue on Civil Nuclear Cooperation

The prospect of potential cooperation between Russia and Pakistan in the field of nuclear energy may seem far-fetched. Indeed, the chances for such cooperation are almost nonexistent at this time. But this may not always be the case, and discussing the possibility of Russian-Pakistani civil nuclear cooperation is productive for a number of reasons.

First, evaluating the prospects of nuclear cooperation will provide a clear idea of the level of trust between the two countries. It will also make it possible to assess the real limits and possible goals of such cooperation.

Second, looking into this cooperation reveals a great deal about Pakistan's domestic energy challenges and about the potential of nuclear energy to alleviate the country's current energy crisis. Extreme electric energy shortages have prompted Pakistan to contact a number of countries, including Russia, on the issue of nuclear cooperation. Only 20 percent of Pakistan's energy resources are produced on the country's territory. The use of the Tarbela Hydroelectric Power Plant in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, the largest plant in the country, is complicated by a long-standing dispute with India on sharing the Indus River water resources. Decreases in precipitation also affect the plant's capacity, forcing the authorities to impose strict limits on energy consumption during droughts.

Some authors believe that flaws in the Pakistani government's energy policy rather than economic and climate factors are primarily responsible for electric energy shortages.<sup>26</sup> Either way, developing the country's nuclear energy program could be part of a long-term comprehensive program to improve Pakistan's energy sector.

Third, the issue of Russian-Pakistani civil nuclear cooperation is important because it is related to larger problems of the nuclear nonproliferation regime. The question of whether Pakistan should be permitted to cooperate with other countries to develop its nuclear energy program has received a great deal of attention since India was granted a waiver that allowed it to engage in civil nuclear trade in 2008.

The waiver, proposed by the United States, lifted restrictions on India's cooperation with members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), a multinational body that sets global rules for nuclear trade. The NSG was created as a response to the peaceful nuclear test that India conducted in 1974 with the help of technologies obtained as a result of its cooperation with the United States and Canada.

India was granted this waiver despite never having signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Pakistan—which also refuses to sign the NPT—believes it should be granted the same waiver. Russia, which consistently supported both the nonproliferation regime and the Indian waiver, cannot ignore the problem of how to answer Pakistan's demand. The solution will affect both Moscow's nuclear cooperation with India and the nuclear nonproliferation regime more broadly.

Unlike India, Pakistan will probably not receive U.S. support as it seeks a nuclear waiver. An article published in the Russian *Yadernyy Klub* (Nuclear Club) journal concludes that broad cooperation between Pakistan and the United States on nuclear energy, even though it could have certain benefits, is ultimately impossible because it would not contribute to greater global security.<sup>27</sup>

According to the author, nuclear cooperation would allow Pakistan and the United States to overcome mutual suspicion, which would, in turn, help solve other problems in South Asia, such as stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan. It would also strengthen the nuclear nonproliferation regime if Washington required Pakistan to commit to nonproliferation as a precondition for civil nuclear cooperation.

However, the author concludes that arguments against U.S. nuclear cooperation with Pakistan outweigh the possible benefits. Pakistan is not committed to transparency regarding its past violations of the nonproliferation regime, such as the transfers of nuclear technologies to other countries that were organized by Pakistani nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan. It also does not demonstrate a readiness to consistently combat terrorism on its territory, and it is hard to expect Pakistan's unstable government to reliably adhere to any agreements in the long term.

Thus, a U.S.-Pakistani deal on peaceful nuclear cooperation is not likely to be supported by American lawmakers, and other nonproliferation regime members would probably be unhappy with such an agreement as well. It stands to reason that if the United States, Pakistan's closest strategic partner, is not interested in broad nuclear cooperation with Islamabad, then Russia—whose relations with Pakistan have long been complicated—would be even less interested. However, there are some indications that nuclear cooperation between Pakistan and other countries is possible.

Although Washington officially declares that there is no nuclear cooperation between the United States and Pakistan,<sup>28</sup> some unofficial contacts do take place. In private conversations with one of this work's authors that took place between 2008 and 2012, representatives of the White House, the U.S. State Department, and U.S. military agencies confirmed these occurrences.

The contacts intensified after 2001, when Pakistan became a principal non-NATO ally of the United States. Most conversations seem to primarily concern securing nuclear facilities. According to the *New York Times*, the United States has spent almost \$100 million to assist Pakistan with nuclear security.<sup>29</sup>

In addition, not all American experts share the view that U.S.-Pakistani civil nuclear cooperation would do more harm than good. For instance, in a policy brief published in February 2011, Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institution recommends offering Pakistan a nuclear deal allowing for this sort of cooperation. The deal would be similar to the 2008 U.S.-India Civilian Nuclear Agreement that permits nuclear cooperation between Washington and New Delhi. In O'Hanlon's view, Pakistan has successfully improved nuclear security and export control, so greater cooperation between Washington and Islamabad on nuclear energy would not compromise the nonproliferation regime. He believes that cooperation is possible if Pakistan agrees to comply with any future treaty that cuts off the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.<sup>30</sup>

Other experts seem to agree. In an article published in *Time* magazine in April 2013, another expert on Pakistan, Christine Fair, stresses that the last chance for the United States to salvage its relations with Pakistan is to offer Islamabad a deal on peaceful nuclear energy.<sup>31</sup>

Nuclear cooperation already takes place between China and Pakistan, and it testifies to the opportunities that collaboration in this field offers, regardless of Pakistan's being outside the nuclear nonproliferation regime. In 1986, Beijing and Islamabad reached an agreement to cooperate on the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Since it began working with Pakistan on nuclear energy projects before it signed the NPT and joined the NSG (in 1992 and 2004, respectively), China does not believe it is breaching its nonproliferation obligations.

As a result of the Chinese-Pakistani cooperation agreement, contracts for shipping a total of four light-water reactors, which are used in generating nuclear electricity, to Pakistan's Chashma Nuclear Power Plant were signed in 1991, 2004, and 2010. The first two reactors, which have an aggregate capacity

of 600 megawatts (MW) were launched in 2000 and 2011. Two more reactors with a total capacity of 680 MW are slated for launch in 2018.

And the cooperation between Beijing and Islamabad goes beyond the Chashma projects. For example, in 1998 Pakistan acknowledged the existence of a 50 MW heavy-water reactor in the Khushab Nuclear Complex, which might have been put into operation ten years earlier with China's scientific and technological input.<sup>32</sup> This reactor is probably related to Pakistan's military program; in fact, it is not subject to International Atomic Energy Agency inspections, which can be interpreted as indirect evidence of its military purposes.

So Pakistan has not been completely denied a chance to cooperate with other countries on nuclear issues, and it is trying to take advantage of the opportunities it has. But if Islamabad were to approach Moscow on nuclear cooperation, the answer would probably be no. This response would be dictated by the non-NPT status of Pakistan, Russia's ties to India, and uncertainty as to Pakistan's ability to protect Russian investments and citizens from instability and terrorism. In addition, Beijing would not be happy to see a competitor in a market on which it probably believes it has a monopoly.

While it is theoretically possible that Russia and Pakistan could engage in nuclear cooperation and use China as an intermediary, this scenario also appears unlikely. It would require greater transparency on Chinese-Pakistani nuclear cooperation, but since that collaboration probably includes both civil and military components, neither Beijing nor Islamabad is likely to agree to that condition.

Therefore, those Russian analysts who write about possible and productive Russian-Pakistani nuclear cooperation are probably incorrect.<sup>33</sup> However, opportunities for productive and useful dialogue still exist. As Andrey Alekseyev correctly pointed out in 2006, "one may find ways to establish contacts" on peaceful nuclear cooperation between Pakistan and Russia.<sup>34</sup>

Such contacts, which are already taking place both officially and unofficially,<sup>35</sup> help share Russian concerns on nuclear security with Pakistan. They also afford Moscow an understanding of the current state of and prospects for Pakistan's energy sector. In addition, they provide a forum for the two states to discuss each other's positions on the issues of nonproliferation in light of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which Pakistan has yet to ratify, and the proposed Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty.

As long as the dialogue between Russia and Pakistan continues, there are prospects for eventual nuclear cooperation. But the future mostly depends on Pakistan, which must create favorable conditions for its long-term cooperation with Russia.

## A New Approach to Pakistan and South Asia

The Afghan conflict ensures long-term engagement between Russia and Pakistan. Terrorism, organized crime, drugs, nuclear safety, nonproliferation, and various other issues will also call for closer cooperation between the two states.

Indeed, Moscow is paying greater attention to Pakistan than ever before on doctrinal, expert, and practical levels. Russia's priorities in South Asia are clearly delineated, even if its approach to the region remains piecemeal.

In the future, Russia would benefit from a balanced and stable development of Russian-Pakistani relations. In order to do so, Moscow should replace its

separate approaches to the countries of South Asia with a unified concept of Russian policy in the region, which would include its policy on Pakistan.

This Pakistan policy should support intensive dialogue between the civil, military, and economic institutions of Moscow and Islamabad on issues involving bilateral and multilateral relations. Regular exchange visits by the countries' highest officials would be helpful in facilitating these conversations. Establishing a continuous informal and semiformal dialogue between Russian and Pakistani rep-

resentatives would increase transparency and confidence in the burgeoning relationship. Moscow should actively use regional organizations and initiatives to promote these various levels and forms of dialogue.

In addition, Russia should support Pakistan's efforts to respond to security threats on its territory politically, economically, and militarily. This support can include cooperation on military technology as long as Moscow is careful to take into account India's concerns and respect the delicate balance of power in the region.

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**Establishing a continuous informal and semiformal dialogue between Russian and Pakistani representatives would increase transparency and confidence in the burgeoning relationship.**

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## Notes

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