

The u.s. and pakistan

[History](#)



The U. S. and Pakistan The world is changing rapidly. Only last month, the United s' War on Terror appeared to be dragging on into its tenth year, with no end in sight. Suddenly, last week it was announced that the mastermind of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Osama Bin Laden has been killed by American special forces in Pakistan. How does this change America's relationship with Pakistan? What should the U. S. do now? There were some who were quick out of the gate to accuse the Pakistanis of complicity or incompetence. But it was useful to carefully examine President Obama's speech, given as he announced the death of Bin Laden. Pakistan featured prominently in it. " Over the years, I've repeatedly made clear that we would take action within Pakistan if we knew where bin Laden was. That is what we've done. But it's important to note that our counterterrorism cooperation with Pakistan helped lead us to bin Laden and the compound where he was hiding. Indeed, bin Laden had declared war against Pakistan as well, and ordered attacks against the Pakistani people" (White House). He seemed to suggest that things with Pakistan would not change a great deal. But that might not be the best policy. As the Arab Awakening or Arab Spring has taken hold in numerous countries in the Middle East, few observers have pointed in the direction of Pakistan, one of the most dangerous and unstable countries in this arc of instability. Pakistan is a concern for many reasons. To begin with, there is a serious fault-line in its relationship with India, its arch-enemy. The two countries have fought numerous wars against one another over the years, but none since both developed nuclear weapons around a decade ago. The stakes have been raised dramatically, and still the blood between the two countries is bad. Additionally, Pakistan is seriously politically unstable. There are frequent terrorist attacks against foreigners

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and civilians throughout the country. Most worrying is the number of high profile political assassinations in recent years, after committed by Islamic fundamentalists. This is part of the reason why the U. S. should be very sensitive towards Pakistan. Some believe that these facts militate in favour of the United States' increased involvement in Pakistan. The area is too unstable to leave to its own devices, they suggest. And yet, America's involvement in Pakistan appears to be doing more harm to Pakistan than good. It has made the current government profoundly unpopular and tied its hands in many policy aspects. Even the head of Pakistan's army appears to want less American involvement, saying in a statement, "'Any similar action violating the sovereignty of Pakistan will warrant a review on the level of military/intelligence cooperation with the United States.' General Kayani had decided that the number of American troops in Pakistan was to be reduced 'to the minimum essential,' the statement said" (Perlez). It appears as though Pakistan is entering a period of severe instability, that America's involvement may only heighten. The fact that Bin Laden was able to hide out for years, only a short distance from the capital of Pakistan suggests that years of pressure applied by the Americans on the government of Pakistan have been relatively useless. Billions of dollars have been wasted by Pakistani recalcitrance. The events of the last week throw into profound question whether or not Pakistan is truly a partner in the War on Terror. It appears as though elements in the country are playing a double game. While some leaders may promise support to the Americans, others are all too happy to take American money and use it for other purposes. This is a profound problem. It seems advisable that the United States should take a long and hard look at its relationship with Pakistan, especially the billions of

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dollars sent to Islamabad each year. The continued recalcitrance and the unlikelihood that a transparent inquiry into Bin Laden's activities in Pakistan will be conducted by the Pakistani government suggest this is the best course of action. It is impossible to find Pakistan credible on issues of counterterrorism when they were unable to detect (or else were complicit in the fact) that the most wanted man in the world lived in a garrison town near their capital (Al Jazeera). That is not acceptable. The recent response of the Pakistani prime minister to the U. S. is fuelling additional concern. He was reported to have said: "'Allegations of complicity or incompetence are absurd,' Gilani said in a televised address to parliament, adding that it was disingenuous for anyone to accuse Pakistan, including its spy agency, of 'being in cahoots' with the al Qaeda network" (Reuters). Cutting aid to Pakistan and reevaluating the American relationship with that country will not be easy. A great deal is at stake. Pakistan has been a central player, for good or ill, in the fight against terror, and it will remain such. But it appears to have been playing a double game, one which the U. S. cannot afford to encourage any long. Aid should be cut to this difficult country and American involvement should go forward only as necessary. Work consulted Chalmers, John. "Pakistan PM says bin Laden accusations absurd." Reuters. May 9, 2011. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/05/09/us-binladen-idUSTRE7410D320110509> Perlez, Jane. "Pakistani Army Chief Warns U. S. on Another Raid." New York Times. May 5, 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/06/world/asia/06react.html?scp=4&sq=PAKISTAN&st=cse> Phillips, Macon. "Osama Bin Laden Dead." White House Blog. May 2, 2011. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2011/05/02/osama-bin-laden-dead> "Pakistan army threatens to reconsider US ties." Al Jazeera. May 6, 2011. <https://assignbuster.com/the-us-and-pakistan/>

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