

The Underfunding of Pakistan's Armed Forces is to Allow the Rise of India as the Regional Hegemon

Introduction:

The destruction of Khilafah (Caliphate) State deprived Muslims of their strength and clouded their political vision. The chief among many calamities afflicting Muslims, post-1924, was the loss of ability to defend against foreign aggression. Making matters worse, artificial Muslim nation-states were absorbed in Western or Soviet alliances, which enabled Kaffir colonialist powers to fully control development of the defense sector. Major Muslim countries like Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and Egypt organized their defense needs according to US or NATO priorities. On the one hand they were easing the labor of the Western alliance system against the Soviet Union, whilst on the other hand, at the regional level they were engaged with regional rivals. These rivalries were managed out of so-called decolonization and agent rulers bounded Islamic resources within the regions.

The Pakistan-India rivalry, born out of the British managed partition of the Islamic Subcontinent, has seen both nations field large armed forces, and allocate significant defense spending, to counter each other in South Asia. Pakistan, through the first 40 years of its existence, became part of the Western alliance system of SEATO and CENTO, while India was ostensibly aligned with the Soviet Union, though actually under British influence. With the global strategic landscape changing after the end of Cold War, the regional military situation in South Asia also began to shift.

Analyzing the recent comparative trends in the defense spending of India and Pakistan is critical. It is important to understand why Pakistan is spending less in defense in order to sensitize the dangers it carries to the people of power. The arguments are both strategic and data driven showing the growing differential in military capabilities, between India and Pakistan and how to solve the situation under a new paradigm. It is critical to increase awareness on an important subject, close to the people of power, from whom Muslims seek Nussrah (material support) of establishing the Second Khilafah Rashidah (rightly-guided Caliphate) State.

The US Agenda Post-Cold War

The US global agenda shifted towards consolidating post-Soviet sphere of influence in Europe, and to prevent any major power emerging in Asia, after 1991. During the Cold War, the US allied itself with China, to contain and isolate Soviet Union. However, the US, being wary of China being a potential rival in the Asia-Pacific, sought to integrate China into liberal free market global institutions, in order to temper and control its rise. The second potential rival to US global hegemony is the unification of the vast Muslim World, under a single powerful Khilafah state. Muslim societies around the world are rejecting colonialist values of the West, and yearn to return to the Islamic way of life. It is a trend closely monitored by US and Western intelligence.

South Asia thus became a strong focus for United States during the mid-1990s. South Asian politics is traditionally defined by Pakistan-India rivalry, since the partition

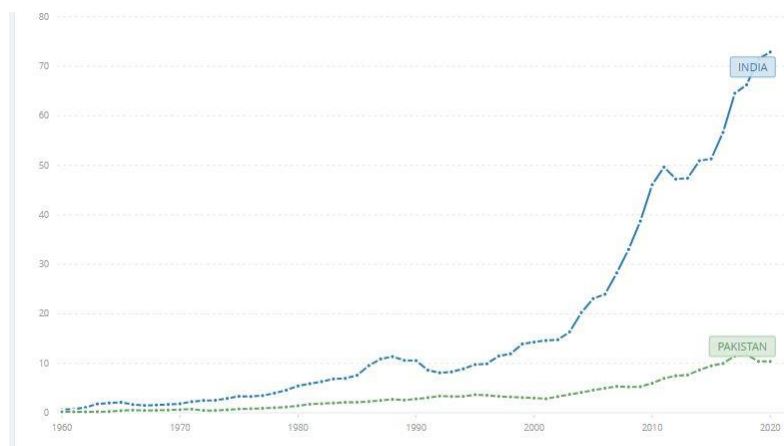
of Islamic Subcontinent in 1947. The United States no longer needed a strong Pakistan, as opposed to the Cold War regional strategy, particularly its strong-armed forces, as it chose India as its strategic partner, to counter both rising China and threat of Khilafah. It is the Khilafah state that would unify Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Central Asia into single powerful Islamic state. To achieve these regional objectives, the US waged a twenty-year war against the warring Pashtun tribes in Afghanistan, in the name of the “War on Terror” from 2001 till 2021. The US led NATO alliance maintained its physical presence in Afghanistan, for twenty years, until it was no longer tenable for them to maintain a costly presence, amidst a strong resistance of Taliban-led Pashtun tribes.

To weaken the Pakistan Army and consume its resources, whilst focusing it towards internal security, the US through its agents in the Pakistani leadership made the Pakistan Army fight against Pashtun tribes, both inside and across the Durand line. Pakistan’s economic losses in the twenty years of America’s “War on Terror” amounted to 150 billion dollars, 82,000 casualties and a 3.5 million internally-displaced population. The Pakistani leadership deliberately focused away from the traditional Indian threat, thereby enabling India to increase its military potential against China.

War on Terror and Low Budget Allocations for Pakistan Armed Forces

The institutional suspicion of Pakistan’s armed forces towards United States, particularly the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), had traditionally prevented US to generate a debate, within Pakistan, on reducing the size and budget allocation of Pakistani armed forces. However, as the Pakistan Army embroiled itself in tribal regions, US was able to gradually penetrate the argument of rationalizing the size, and the budget of, the army, as per the requirement of counterterrorism operations, internally, and not facing India, externally. On the other hand, India increased its defense spending, while Pakistan decreased its spending adjusting to war on terror focus.

Data shows a major surge in Indian defense budget during from 2000-2010, with a continuing increase, relative to Pakistan, subsequently. This is the same time when Pakistan intensified war on terror in tribal regions.



(Source: SIPRI International)



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‘Bajwa Doctrine’ and its Impact on Pakistan’s Defence Spending

Pakistan’s armed forces saw steepest cuts made during the tenure of General Qamar Javed Bajwa (2016-2022), as the army chief. General Bajwa promoted the US narrative of economic security or geo-economics, to continue underfunding of armed forces, despite the conclusion of the ‘War on Terror.’ This was the time when the anti-Muslim radical Hindutva party BJP regained power in India, with Narendra Modi as Prime Minister. The BJP government in India adopted a proactive and aggressive approach towards Pakistan, with backing of successive American administrations. Apart from being aggressive at the diplomatic front, the Modi government escalated militarily against Pakistan. Despite these visible indicators, General Bajwa continued to exercise restraint, and advocated an ‘optimized army,’ that does not seek an arms race with India.

The basic premise of the Bajwa Doctrine was to place economic security at the center of Pakistan’s strategic thought, whilst subordinating geo-strategy and geopolitics to economy. This approach is disastrous for Pakistan in a multiple of ways.

Firstly, the defense spending gap between Pakistan and India will increase to a level that it will be impossible for Pakistan to qualitatively match Indian military capabilities. The Bajwa-Imran regime froze Pakistan’s defense budget for a consecutive two years (2019-2021), whilst marginally increasing over other years. All the while, India made leaps in increasing its defense spending as highlighted in the table below:

YEAR	PAKISTAN (\$ M)	INDIA (\$ M)
2014	8,655	50,914
2015	9,483	51,295
2016	9,974	56,638
2017	11,461	64,550
2018	11,732	66,258
2019	10,388	71,469
2020	10,376	72,887
2021	11,305	76,598

Similarly, Bajwa-Imran regime also froze spending for the nuclear and missile program. Pakistan also conducted a fewer number of missile tests as compared to India, which was part of the strategy of restraint, and normalization towards India under the Bajwa Doctrine:

Year	Indian Arms Import (Million Dollars)	Pakistan's Arms Imports (Million Dollars)
2014	3,347	828
2015	3,117	779
2016	3,003	837
2017	2,909	837
2018	1,485	799
2019	3,075	521
2020	2,799	759

Secondly, the gap between the import of arms between India and Pakistan is widening. This directly improves the war fighting capability of India, over Pakistan. The US and other Western suppliers have ended their Cold War era arms export ban on India, and have opened up their arms sales. The table below gives the import data of India and Pakistan in millions of dollars from 2014 to 2020, from SIPRI's arms transfers database:

The table above indicates that, on average, India has been importing around four times more than Pakistan, over the years under review. India remained the world's largest importer of major arms in 2017-2021.

Year	Tests Conducted by Pakistan	Tests Conducted by India
2016	1	2
2017	3	10
2018	3	26
2019	5	22
2020	3	8
2021	4	5
2022	0	2
Total (2016-2022)	19	75

Thirdly, the conclusion of the "War on Terror" and exit of United States from Afghanistan, provided Pakistani decision makers the opportunity to pivot the army away from counterterrorism, towards the conventional doctrine. However, the US backed leadership led by General Bajwa solidified counterterrorism institutions, while neglecting the need for the conventional doctrine, by using the precarious economic situation as an excuse. On the contrary, the history of Pakistan's development suggests that it successfully build a strong army and nuclear assets, under constrained budgets. It kept India at bay and defeated USSR in Afghanistan, under reasonable budgets. Freezing defense spending, which is actually reduction when settled with inflationary pressures, will have a disastrous effect on our war fighting potential. It is vital to establish the Khilafah, rallying the region around the Khilafah's

Islamic leadership, and the military mobilization for the liberation of occupied Muslims lands.

The Way Forward and a New Vision

Pakistan's decision makers, the people of Nussrah, must realize that the reduction in Pakistan's war fighting capabilities will not bring any geopolitical change, which is beneficial for the Ummah and the region. Moreover, no change can come about through the shallow paradigm of either choosing between United States or China, as both global powers are exploitative and colonialist in nature. They only require submission of our interests and place their priorities over ours. What we require is a bold vision that is global in nature, and fights evil (munkar) and enjoins goodness (khair). This is what our beautiful Deen Islam demands, to fight to eradicate oppressive ideologies and spread the Deen of Allah (swt), which is the salvation for humankind.

With Islam as an enlightening vision and the Khilafah as a state executing that vision, the armed forces of Pakistan must be equipped to carry the Islamic Dawah through Jihad. That means a fundamental change from the current Western dominated military paradigm, to an Islamic paradigm, that ensures an allocation of appropriate budget for proactive offensive doctrine. It is the Islamic military doctrine that will take the war to our enemies, therefore ending externally supported insurgencies in our Islamic lands.

Pakistan has the requisite funds and capability to lead the change, if it implements Islam. Islam forbids interest (riba). The colossal chunk of approximately 45% of the expenditures being spent on interest payments, will be immediately stopped and redirected towards defense and industrial development. This will expand our industrial base which will result in the building a world class defense and social sector. Pakistan does not require the 'Bajwa Doctrine,' which has only resulted in underfunding of our armed forces and therefore combat capabilities. We require Islamic Aqeedah to be the source of our new state: the Khilafah state, that will unify Islamic lands and resources to fund which will be the world most modern and feared military. A military led by the likes of Khalid bin Waleed, Sultan Muhammad Fateh and Tipu Sultan, which will not only liberate occupied Srinagar and Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa but will subjugate Washington, London, Paris, Beijing and Moscow to Islam.

It is then that the Ummah will be under the shade of Rayat Al U'qab (banner), the Rayah of La Ilaha illa Allah, and returns as before a noble Ummah, strengthened by its Lord and dignified by its Deen.

﴿وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ * بِنَصْرِ اللَّهِ يَنْصُرُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾

“...And that day the believers will rejoice * In the victory of Allah. He gives victory to whom He wills, and He is the Exalted in Might, the Merciful” [TMQ Surah Ar-Rum: 4-5]

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